

Street*

Three Reasons Retailers Need Valid Contact Records

City / Town*

Why your customer journey starts
and ends with contact data

Email*

ucantaffordtoignorethis@email.com

A one-way ticket to retail hell

The reputation of your retail operation lives and dies by one thing — the experience.

Are all your customers having a **great** experience? Whether they're visiting your site, meeting your staff, or using your products, are they consistently delighted?

Given that, it makes sense that, as a retailer, you're obsessed with the art and science of customer engagement.

What **doesn't** make sense is ignoring the fundamentals — like contact data: email, postal addresses, and phone numbers.

Because nothing sours a customer's experience quicker than a failed delivery. And nothing guarantees a failed delivery like poor contact data.

It happens all the time, and most retailers don't even know how big the problem really is.

Which is particularly painful. Because having used every trick, tip, and trend in the book to get your customers to the point of conversion, you end up tripping at the last critical hurdle in the customer journey.

More important, this stumble makes a major impact on the customer's impression of your brand. Which makes the damage as expensive as it is embarrassing.

It's why so many retailers are realizing they desperately need high-quality phone, email, and address verification.

If you aren't one of them, then welcome to this crash course on why contact verification is central to your ecommerce challenge.

Don't think retailers get address data wrong that often? Think again. This infographic shows the size of the problem.

Three reasons you need phone, email, and postal address verification

Your customers' contact data touches three crucial aspects of your ecommerce offering. Compromise the integrity of even one, and you run the risk of undermining the other efforts you've made to please your customers.

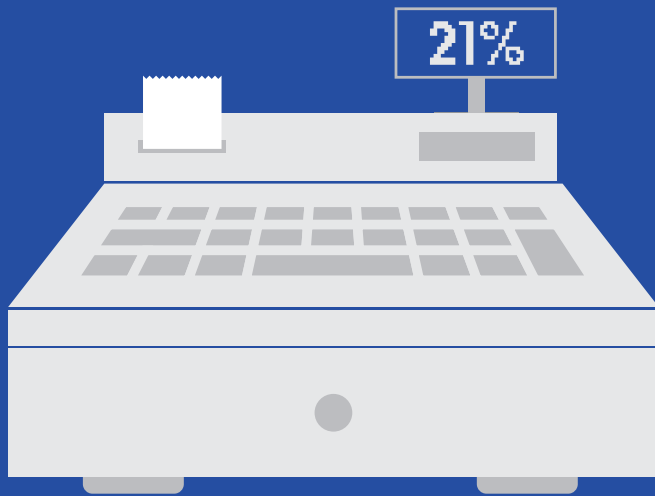
1

Your user experience

Every click, scroll, and swipe on your site counts. Anything less than the most intuitive, helpful user experience, and you're just giving your customers an excuse to abandon their carts and move on from your site.

The need to craft an accommodating experience is even greater when you consider your checkout process. As many as 21 percent of abandoning users don't complete their purchases because 'the process takes too long.' Make no mistake – every second your customers have to spend typing in their phone, postal, and email addresses could be their last on your site.

Which is why clear, simple, inline contact verification isn't just a nifty add-on – it's the difference between a high checkout abandonment rate and a high conversion rate.



2

Your reputation

As far as the customer's concerned, their experience isn't over until they're holding their purchases in their hands.

So when they reasonably expect you to send them what they paid for, there is no justifiable reason why you should fail to do so. But if your site doesn't have rigorous contact verification, any number of the addresses, numbers, and emails you collect could be inaccurate.

Which means a mysterious number of customers are going to be furious. **Guaranteed.**



The background of the entire image is a dense, overlapping collage of Indian 1000 Rupee banknotes. The notes are scattered in various orientations, showing the portrait of Mahatma Gandhi, the Reserve Bank of India logo, and the denomination '1000'. The colors are primarily orange, red, and white.

You pay the price

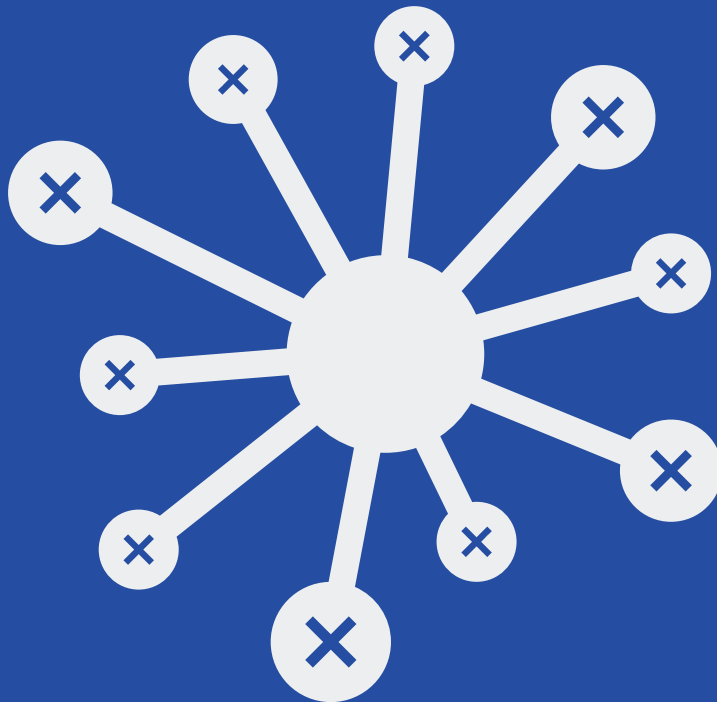
Not only does this damage your reputation, it's also just plain expensive.

Aside from the price you pay for alienating your customer, you also pay for your returns department to process both a failed delivery as well as a re-delivery. Additionally, you're paying for your customer service agents to handle a case they can't actually resolve.

3

Your view of your customers

Address data is a rare form of data that actually maps back to your customers' physical lives. If you're trying to manage your customer data into a single view of the people paying your bills, then you need to make sure the information is accurate enough to be relied upon.



But if the address data going into your systems hasn't been verified, you can't trust the foundations upon which your customer profiles are built. That compromises all future initiatives to personalize the customer experience, and it throws into doubt any effort you make to analyze purchasing patterns.

Why? Because without accurate, standardized, and normalized global address data, the process of managing master data will be riddled with inefficiency and questions. It's the harsh, long-term price you pay for not verifying your customer data as soon as it's entered into your systems.

Why high quality is non-negotiable

And what high-quality address verification looks like

Considering the number of ways poor contact data hurts your retail operation, your solutions need to be effective. If they aren't, you'll be installing a false sense of security that the problem's being tackled.

That isn't something you can tolerate. Because three inescapable factors define your retail reality:

1. Accuracy is the bare minimum
2. 'Global' is a series of local challenges
3. Insight demands data discipline

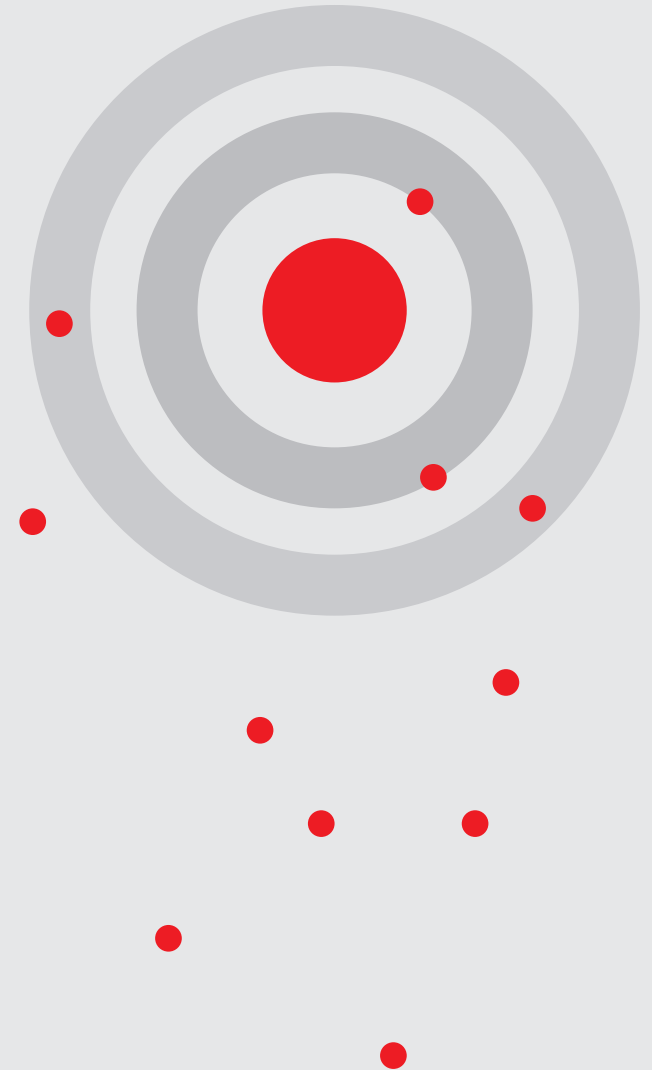


1. Accuracy is the bare minimum

When it comes to the products your customers have already paid for, you can't take any chances. The damage to your reputation is unequivocal, unforgiving, and – in the age of social media – discussed in public.

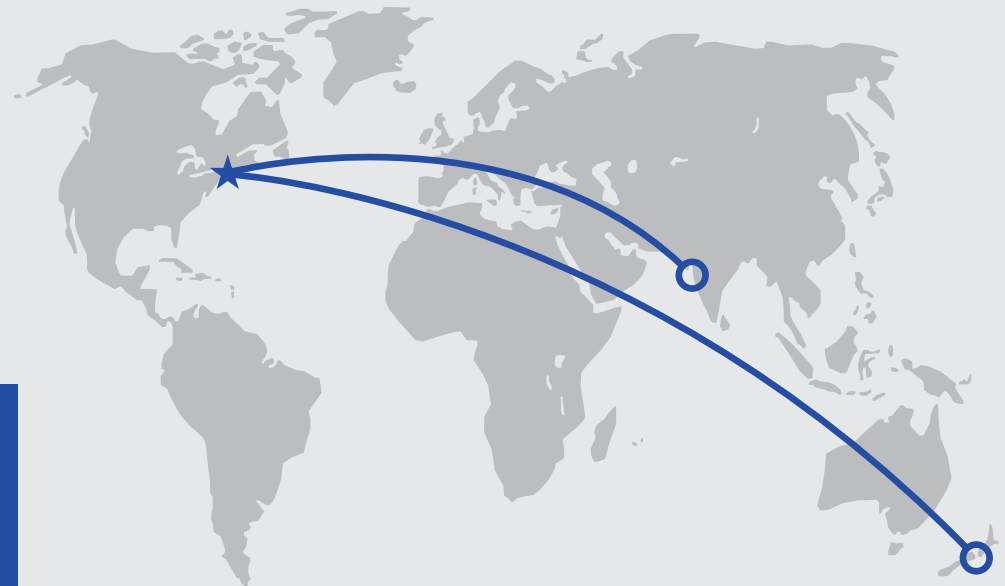
So when you're judging the quality of contact verification tools, the first test is always about the degree of accuracy it affords you. That is, can it detect and correct more errors than your next best option?

Every error it fails to deal with is an unhappy customer. It might sound simple, but the ability to do so relies on amassing reliable reference data from every country you have customers in, which is anything but simple.



2. 'Global' is a series of local challenges

The reputation of your brand as a global entity relies on your customers in New Zealand receiving the same level of service as your customers in India. When you get either one wrong, the complaints are directed at the brand – not the branch, not the local site, and not the local delivery company. The global competency of your address verification is a microcosm of your brand's global competency.



High-quality contact verification means appropriately verifying and transliterating the contact data for all the countries in which you do business. That means being able to handle

the different conventions, writing systems, and standards of every country into which you're selling. Are you verifying data entered in Greek as easily as you would verify data entered in Cyrillic?

3. Insight demands data discipline

The reality of your database is that you can't just keep dumping information into it, hoping it will sort itself out. If you want to leverage your customer profiles for research and analysis at any time, the data has to be of sufficient quality. Equally though, it has to be normalized to play well with the data from other countries and systems.

If your contact verification tool doesn't appropriately normalize the data from various countries into a format that is fit for your system, it isn't fit for action. Any initiatives that rely on

a clean, reliable source of data need your contact verification tool to structure the data in a standardized format as much as they need it to actually clean the data.



Values, value, and the decency to deliver

From the first time a customer makes an order through to the first time they use your products, your record of their contact data plays a crucial role. And return visits invariably depend on first experiences.

Which means the onus is on you to give them something worth coming back for. That means creating a user experience that doesn't take too long. And it means delivering on their expectation that they'll get what they paid for – on time and without any fuss.

But it also means maintaining the order and structure of your customer data so you can continue to evolve the way you bring value to them.

The success of your global brand depends on your ability to get the basics right. And handling your customers' contact data

so that it's accurate, clean, and standardized is about as basic as it gets. The key learning here, though, should be that their data doesn't get that way all on its own.

It takes the best contact verification tools to verify, correct, and normalize the data in a way that helps you give your customers the experience they want. As far as your reputation as a retailer is concerned, quality is as quality does.



Further reading

If you're going to get to the bottom of your contact data problem, you're going to have to figure out how big it is.



Read our eBook [‘Three Ways to Measure Address Quality’](#) to find out how you can size up the holes in your bottom line.

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Let's talk.

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