

What List Loading and Anthony Bourdain's Advice on Not Ordering Fish on Mondays Have in Common

On the way to the SiriusDecisions Tech X event last week, the conversation with my Lyft driver turned to Anthony Bourdain, the celebrity chef, author, and travel writer who passed away last year. All foodies are familiar with his advice that you should never order fish in a restaurant on Monday. The rationale is that the fish was likely delivered on Friday, and because most fish—even when properly refrigerated—only lasts three days, the fish in a restaurant's Monday Special is likely priced right, but way past its prime.

The same is true with event leads.

The Tech X event I attended starts with a reception on Monday night. The event runs through Wednesday. Most field marketers will download the leads from the event on Wednesday night or Thursday morning. They might clean up the lead file a bit and normalize field values to adhere to a company's standards, or they might not if they have too much on their plate, and who doesn't after being out of the office for three days? They'll upload those leads into apps like Marketo and Salesforce on Thursday morning, and if they're routed correctly—which is a big "if" at many companies—famished ADRs and AEs will be served up a new batch of leads that can be as old as three days. Just like Anthony Bourdain's Monday fish special. Pity the poor ADR following up on leads from an even longer event like Dreamforce.

Marketers' List Loading Process is Broken, Just Like the Restaurant Supply Chain

Everyone from the Harvard Business Review to SiriusDecisions has emphasized the connection between quick follow-up and conversion. Salespeople don't want three-day-old fish—or three-day-old leads. Marketers with MBOs tied to generating pipeline, not just MQLs, don't want three-day-old anything either.

How to Address the Problem: A 15-Minute Daily SLA on Event List Loading

To add a somewhat appropriate food metaphor, we eat our own dog food here at Openprise. This week I announced to our sales team that the field marketing team's SLA on event leads is now fifteen minutes after the close of the show floor for each day of an event. That's because we're using the list loading bot in the Openprise Data Orchestration Platform. Why fifteen minutes? The moment the show floor closes at the end of the day, that's the time it takes for a field marketer at the booth to:

1. Log into a lead retrieval portal like CVENT and download the booth leads for the day.
2. Add a column to that spreadsheet to indicate the campaign ID.
3. Upload the file to G Drive and walk away.

That's the level of effort we expect from our field marketing teams. Not too much to ask of a physically and mentally drained team that worked a 10-hour shift at the booth. They can even do it sitting down (I did).

But What About All the Other Stuff Marketers Have to Do to Load a List and Send Leads to Sales?

The secret sauce to making this work is to automate all the other painful, manual processes behind the scenes. A few of the processes that Openprise bots do (so we don't have to) are:

1. Keeping an eye on that G-Drive directory 24/7 waiting to automatically upload a new lead file.
2. Automatically cleaning and normalizing event leads—things like changing the State field values from "CA" to our standard in Marketo of "California." This makes segmentation far, far easier.
3. Deriving missing fields like Job Function, Job Sub-Function, and Job Level, based on Job Title, for lead scoring and buyer persona identification.
4. Matching leads to accounts for use with lead scoring, lead routing, and attribution.
5. Merging duplicate leads and contacts to make good scoring and attribution possible.
6. Enriching those leads with fields from a couple of data providers in our Data Marketplace, and normalizing those providers' field values to our standards.
7. Routing leads to AEs and ADRs based on opportunity and account ownership, not just geography).

That whole end-to-end process might take 10 to 100 hours to do manually. Even longer if outside parties are in the mix or if a few of your point solutions

aren't working nicely together. We get it done here before our field team closes the booth and makes it back to their rooms. (In the spirit of full transparency, they might have time for one drink on the way back if we're working with a particularly big list of new leads and if we also do enrichment with lots of data providers.) If you've got West Coast-based salespeople, leads from this Denver event get delivered to ADRs and AEs while they're still in the office.

Why Sales Teams Get So Excited about a 15-Minute List Loading SLA

Salespeople and sales ops teams love this capability because AEs and ADRs can get leads much faster. And they can now coordinate with the team onsite while prospects are still at the event! Particularly hot leads can, for example, be invited to a dinner with the leadership team there. They can also be offered a gift for scheduling a demo onsite where the team can learn even more about a prospect's issues and start to build a real, face-to-face relationship. Not only does this boost conversion rates, but it can also shave weeks off a sales cycle.

Why Marketers are Behind a 15-Minute List Loading SLA

Without automation, no field marketer would ever agree to an SLA like that. But when you automate the entire process, everybody's on-board. Automation eliminates the tedious, manual process of cleaning up data in spreadsheets and all the work associated with manual uploads into sales and marketing automation solutions. Marketing Ops and Demand Gen people love the automation because it helps them maintain a clean database that makes segmentation easier. They also like that faster follow-up boosts campaign performance so they're more likely to hit their MBOs. They also get more accurate attribution since AEs and ADRs onsite would often otherwise follow up with hot leads using a business card, rather than waiting days for a lead to

get entered into the system, losing the true source of a lead.

We Did It, So Can You

I mentioned this new SLA to a few sales ops folks who stopped by our booth at Tech X. No surprise, they came back again later with teammates in tow because they recognized that this is a real, concrete capability that delivers tangible ROI and kudos from Sales.

The next time you're in a room with your CRO before a meeting, I'd suggest you mention you've been hearing about the value companies are seeing in delivering event leads to the field the same day an event takes place, and watch your CRO's facial expressions. You'll know what your next MBO should be.