

# Why marketers should rely more on consumer intent data

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## Google Data Shows Customer Intent Beats Demographics for Modern Marketers

Given the size and diversity of the modern marketplace, it makes sense that there is a focus on using data to find the best audience for a particular message. Even before **digital marketing** and the age of big data, business owners, advertisers, and marketers relied on demographic data to help them target potential customers.

Using demographic data may be ubiquitous, but it may also be the low-hanging fruit when it comes to usable **marketing** data. According to one [2015 study from Millward Brown](#), marketers that try to reach their audience solely on demographics risk missing more than 70 percent of potential mobile shoppers. It's just one of many data points that show why marketers need to move beyond simple demographics for choosing their target audiences.

In a recent report on this subject, [Google suggests that marketers and brands need to start using data on intent](#), rather than data on identity. To put it in another (slightly more afterschool special sort of) way, what people do is a more important than their race, gender, ethnicity, etc.

That's not to say that demographic data is worthless, but it doesn't give the whole picture. It's like trying to shoot targets with one eye closed. Even if you hit every target you see, you're not seeing half of the potential targets.

To take this from the realm of analogy, here are some concrete examples of ways that relying on demographics can leave marketers blind to potential target audiences:

- More than half (56 percent) of the people searching for "sporting goods" online are women.
- Nearly half (45 percent) of searchers looking for home improvement information are women.
- Two out of three (68 percent) of skin and beauty of influencers during the second half of 2015 were men.
- Two out of five (40 percent) of purchasers of baby products live in households without children.

Business owners and marketers can focus more on intent by creating a content **marketing** strategy that produces content that people with the proper intent will find useful. According to research from **Google**, this is a good way to increase traffic and even revenue. A 2015 study from **Google** showed that the majority (51 percent) of smartphone users have purchased from a company or **brand** other than the one they intended to because the information provided was useful.

One of the reasons demographic data has persisted is that it's easy to collect. However, with modern search analysis tools, such as **Google** Trends or **Google** Analytics, it's possible to see the search terms that show the intent of customers who come to a site or those who click the buy link on a certain page.

Once marketers have identified the intentions and preferred keyword choices of people who visit a site, they can use that data to create more effective **marketing** campaigns.

This can be done in several ways. The most obvious and simplest method is to create blog posts that have useful information for potential or current customers of a **brand**. For example, a cabinet maker can write a guide on preserving the finish of wooden cabinets. It doesn't matter what the demographic of the viewer is, anyone who finds that article useful is very likely to be in the target audience.

The same concept can be applied to video content. How-to videos on YouTube are an excellent way to reach people looking for information related to home improvement, car repairs, etc. For images, infographics are an excellent way to use images to attract fans and potential customers without relying on cute cat pictures. It truly is the Information Age, so providing useful content has become the best way to gain the attention of modern consumers.

Demographics will always be an important part of categorizing and analyzing consumers, but in a modern age and with **digital marketing**, demographics alone will leave huge holes in potential target audiences that savvy competitors will be happy to fill.

IMAGE: Getty Images

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