

Co-Registration White Paper

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Introduction

Co-registration refers to the practise of collecting consumer leads. This is normally in the form of a separate tick box, which can be shown when a user is signing up to a website. Users can opt in to receive information from a third-party. For example, if a user is signing up for a free subscription to a newsletter, they will be shown some offers, and if interested can opt in. These offers are usually shown after the registration process. Co-registration is a sub area of Online Lead Generation and refers to a set of variables defined in this document.

Campaign objectives

Campaign objectives can vary with different products. The main objective is to see a ROI, and to achieve the same metrics or be more cost effective than other forms of marketing.

Co-registration is a strong marketing tool when campaign objectives are to:

- Build a prospect database for ongoing newsletter activities
- Generate call centre leads
- Collect addresses for brochure or catalogue requests
- Distribute product samples (online or offline)
- Carry out any other activity that involves user data capture and permission to contact them with marketing material.

Co-registration is used as a marketing tool to generate high volumes of leads

Clients are usually looking for one of three things when looking into lead generation; a lead, a customer, or an action. A lead on its own gives an advertiser an excellent opportunity to build a prospect database. Every lead delivered will be from a user who has expressed an interest in the product, therefore sales should increase more than if you were to rent a list for lead generation purposes.

Large mobile companies, tend to give free SIM cards out, using lead generation to help build a larger loyal customer base. When they send the user the free SIM card they work under the premise that users will continue to use them as their service provider.

Cost models

Lead generation normally runs on a cost-per-lead (CPL) pricing model. The CPL rate will vary depending on the product/service, the brand and the amount of data required. If particular targeting is needed such as specific age, gender or region, this will normally add to the cost. For an accurate quote an advertiser should speak directly to their lead provider who will determine pricing according to KPIs that the advertiser shares.

The better the payout the better placement an ad will have, and the more exposure the ad will get. This system is very similar to Google ad words and other bidding systems.

Collection of data

It is crucial that the right data is collected, and that a wide net is cast to capture as many potential leads as possible. Once this net is in place the provider needs to ensure they are only picking the best leads. This mainly refers to the ads being placed with the right hosts.

Manage information

Once the data is collected, what you do with it will go a long way to determining whether a campaign will work as it should.

Quality – It is important to check that all leads meet the collection criteria laid out at the start of the campaign, and the only way to do that is through thorough verification software.

De-duplication - If you cast your net wide and use multiple suppliers, the first challenge is to de-duplicate the data and ensure that you do not pay two suppliers for the exact same lead – that is a waste of money. The buyer of leads should clarify what their definitions are for de-duplicating.

Data analysis – Once data is collected and verified, it is important that it is used in the most effective ways and the campaign evolves as a result. If one website is producing higher conversion rates than another with its leads then that site should be elevated and the other dropped from the campaign.

Reporting – It is essential to know exactly where the spend goes on a campaign, so seeing regular reports on activity and results can help to not only evaluate the spend for your operational purposes, but also justify marketing activities to company directors.

Expert Advice – With high levels of reporting and analysis comes the need to make the right decisions based on the information in front of you. Expert advice can be invaluable here.

Produce ROI

The most important thing for any campaign is whether it actually delivers the goods.

Act on data in the best way – There are many different ways to use the data and ROI can be enhanced by making the best decisions of how to use it. The provider can telephone leads immediately to try and convert a sale, email them new offers and use their contact information to conduct customer research. All of these activities can contribute to both the value from purchasing the data and from the campaign.

Some recent examples of using data is to circulate vouchers and special promotions. Many of these offers are becoming great ways to kick off a viral marketing campaign – examples include a money-off voucher for Pizza Express or the Handmade Burger Company. These are the kinds of campaign that companies are finding very beneficial at the moment, because they get customers through the door.

Reduce CPA – Because you can expend less resource on trawling through poor quality leads, agents in contact centres can make fewer calls to make a conversion. The value of the lead is higher and less of a cost to you when you execute the campaign.

Refine the campaign – Data gathered through proactive online lead generation can be used to set up an on-going marketing effort. Don't just do one follow-up activity, create a long-term campaign to make sure that customers use your company and keep coming back.

What data to collect

As well as price, the data asked for can have a huge effect on how successfully a campaign performs. It is important not to collect data for the sake of it. It is generally beneficial to collect a small amount of information when using a co-registration campaign, as the user is simply showing an interest, and any unnecessary information could be seen as too intrusive and will deter the user. For example, only ask for a telephone number if you really need it and will use it.

What should I do with my data?

It is important to understand how data should be used for achieving the optimum results, and reducing your CPA. Before a campaign is launched ask yourself: how quickly do you want to receive the data? It is essential to have a plan in place that enables you to immediately convert a lead. Your lead generation supplier will be able to advise you on this.

It is also important to remember that depending on the product, the time the leads take to convert will differ, and therefore realistic expectations are needed. For example, SMS leads should convert instantly, whereas a catalogue request campaign could take weeks or even months before the user buys something.

By using lead generation you are building a database of users interested in a particular product, and this data can be reused.

Some problems that may occur are email delivery problems, delivery of catalogues or samples taking too long, and call centre employees not being trained well enough. These factors can all result in a campaign not working at its best. As long as data is managed properly a good ROI will be produced.

Part of the marketing and media mix

Lead generation fits perfectly with other marketing tools; it provides an environment to present users with offers and opportunities that they may not have been looking for. This opens up opportunities to a much wider audience compared to other marketing methods.

Providing promotions with a product or service is also an effective way to grab the consumer's attention, and encourage them to try something they may not have tried otherwise.

All elements of online marketing serve a purpose. Lead generation is still considered one of the most accountable and cost effective methods of marketing online if the data it produces is managed effectively.

User permission and opt-in procedures

Opt-in

Opt-in describes the action of a user who has consented to being contacted. The most common Opt-in mechanisms is a checkbox where the user "ticks" to indicate acceptance or clicks "Yes" in a radio button selection. Users can opt in to receive information from a third-party. For example, if a user is signing up for a free subscription to a newsletter, they will be shown some offers, and if interested they can opt in. These offers are usually shown after the registration process.

Pros

- User actively shows an interest by opting in
- Can give a clear message to users
- Branding on individual campaigns

Cons

- More expensive, however you get what you pay for

There are other options available which your lead supplier can discuss further with you depending on your campaign objectives.

Delivery channels

Media planning

As an advertiser, there is not much media planning to do when buying lead generation. Lead suppliers will handle the media planning, buying and optimization according to your conversion targets. As lead generation works on a cost-per-lead model, the suppliers are taking the advertising risk and therefore optimising impressions and clicks to best performing offers.

Media channels which perform will be prioritised and up-weighted, whereas media which doesn't perform on an impression/click-to-lead conversion will be down-weighted or replaced with a better performing offer. It is therefore rarely possible to set a fixed media plan beforehand as performance may vary from campaign to campaign, from time of the week, according to influence by other media channels (offline or online), competitors actions, news events etc. The co-registration offer which shows best performance gets access to the co-registration space with first priority. As an advertiser you may be inclined to buy on a CPM basis and secure ad space. This may be beneficial for planning, however, this may not be the most effective way to generate ROI for co-registration campaigns.

Where does my ad appear?

Co-registration ads appear in various online placements. It is rare that they will be booked for specific sites. The ads appear where a site or list owner has the opportunity to display the ad when the users data is about to be or already is captured. Typically, a co-registration ad appear when a user is registering their details for example, when a user signs up to a seminar, sponsors of the seminar will have their ads displayed for the user to register to at the same time.

Many co-registration campaigns have the objective to build newsletter databases and therefore to collect personal details like name, address, email and most importantly the permission to be contacted. Co-registration offers can be placed in any environment where these conditions exist.

For broad targeted co-registration campaigns, the volume of leads is key and therefore ads are displayed in environments with lots of user traffic. Most popular are websites and promotion sites with prize draws, competitions and sweepstakes which are magnets for user attention.

For more narrow targeted co-registration offers, where the conditions of leads may be limited to specific user requirements, lead suppliers may carry out further targeting in terms of contextual placements or demographic targeting. E.g. a user registering to purchase football tickets may be exposed to an offer targeted to men with sports interests.

Below is a description of the most common environments where co-registration offers appear:

Registration paths

Co-registration offers can appear on websites where you have to register to become a member, subscribing for a service or purchasing a product. Co-registration offers will be displayed on same page as the registration form and the users' details submitted to the advertiser when the user opts-in to the co-registration offer.

Log-in paths

Co-registration offers can be served to users whenever they are surfing a website where the user is logged in. e.g. when you visit a social media or community site where the user has registered and thereby been identified with a profile. Co-registration offers may appear anywhere on the site in various ad formats and require as minimum an opt-in selection for a user to accept an offer. When a user selects to opt-in, his data from the website owner's database will be passed on to the advertiser without the user having to enter his details again.

In this case there is a time gap from when the user initially gave his details to the time when his details were registered for the co-registration offer.

Sweepstakes and competitions

The majority of co-registration leads appear as part of sweepstakes, prize draws or competitions arranged by a third party, typically a website owner. Users register with personal details to enter a prize draw and will at the same time be presented with co-registration offers from advertisers. Co-registration offers may be shown on the same page as the registration form and/or on the success page.

Surveys and questionnaires

Online surveys, questionnaires and polls have become a main source for asking peoples opinion as distribution costs are much lower than traditional media. Survey questions can be related and relevant to the advertising offers and when users register with personal details to submit survey replies, a co-registration opportunity exists. Co-registration offers may be shown on the same page as the registration form and/or on the success page. There are often incentivised by sponsors of the survey.

Overlays and interstitials

Some community sites - typically competition, lotto, cash-back and point websites operate with more direct formats like overlays and interstitials which interrupt the users experience on the site. These are a bit like TV commercials within a program, where you have to watch or take action before you can continue your viewing/action.

An overlay will freeze the screen and ask users directly if they are interested in the offer. The user will need to answer yes (and accept T&Cs) or no. When the user accepts the offer, his details will be submitted from the site owner to the advertiser.

Interstitials work in a similar way often displaying an ad in between pages.

Contextual placements

This is when a co-registration offer is placed according to content on a website. Here co-registration offers are operating as a service to the user when browsing certain areas. E.g. you may read an article about travelling in Mexico and at the end of page you will have option to order brochures from travelling companies offering holidays to the destination.

Creatives and incentives

How to make your offer stand out

As with other media channels your offer rarely stands alone, but will be displayed in an environment where you have a split second to catch the attention of the user. In a co-registration environment your ad is often displayed as part of a registration path or sign-up process to something that might be of greater interest to the user than the advertising offer in

itself. Your offer will often be displayed together with several other offers which make it important that it immediately catches the attention, is visually attractive and prompts action.

- Attention:** Catch the user's eye
Attraction: Present the message simply and in an easy to understand way
Action: Give the user a motivation to act immediately

Try to imagine your offer standing right next to that of your three largest competitors. Which offer is the best and would you choose it if you were a neutral user in your target group?


Creatives and copywriting

Creative for co-registration normally consists of (but is not limited to) the following elements:

- Logo or button, size 120x60 pxl (or similar) jpg, gif, png. Size can vary across partners/networks. Some make restrictions on animation. This button/logo is the principal graphical element and should therefore represent the nature of the promotion visually (i.e. it isn't necessarily the company/brand logo).
- Headline to clearly explain the promotion in one simple and punchy line.
- Body copy to give a few lines explanation of the offer (avoid too much text).
- A box to check, giving opt-in permission from the user allowing you to contact him/her. The text alongside must explain the user what he gives his consent to. Often this is combined with a link to T&Cs and data privacy links.
- Links to T&C and Privacy.

Ask your lead supplier for support and recommendations. Because lead suppliers work on a pay-per-lead basis they share the same objective of meeting campaign objectives with the most effective creative and copy.

Example

<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No		<p>Get your Free Sample of xx today Yes, please send me a free product sample from xx the new product xx that gives me product benefits a, b and c. I will also receive regular information from advertiser about promotions, offers and events per email, post or by telephone.</p> <p>By ticking the box, you confirm that you have read, understood and agree to the advertiser's Privacy Policy and T + C's of entry.</p>
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Question blocks

Some lead generators can insert additional questions in order to qualify the lead further. It is recommended that the advertiser considers which parameters are most important for converting the lead into a customer. Questions must be relevant to the offer and answer options should be easy to select as this is more user-friendly to complete.

E.g. Provide dropdown lists with options, check boxes or radio buttons.

Relevant questions for a travel advertiser may be preferred departure airport, holiday preferences and destinations. For a financial advertiser it may be more relevant to know if the user is a homeowner, what the household income is and details of current service providers.

Advertisers should be aware that the more sensitive the data request, the less likely the user is to complete it. As a result you may lose valuable leads on the way. Examples of sensitive data are personal income, sexual/political orientation or questions that the user is not able to answer off the top of their head. E.g. how much do you pay for your current xx subscription, or which month/year did you purchase xx service.

The recommendation is to balance relevancy in terms of qualifying the lead without losing user interest during the registration process.

Sweepstakes/prize draws as incentives

Sweepstakes and prize draws are often used as an incentive to attract attention and increase the number of leads for a campaign.

You can argue that users only sign-up to win the sweepstake / prize draw and have no genuine interest in your product or service, which can be the case if you are not careful about how your offer is put together.

The following factors help to ensure you can get the most out of using a sweepstake / prize draw:

- Relevancy: Make sure the prizes are strongly related to your product or sub-products
- Audience: Your incentive should attract your ideal target group
- Branding: Make users spend time with your brand e.g. in a game or ask for feedback that is relevant to increase interest in your product
- Closer to conversion circle: Consider if users can be entered into the prize draw in separate steps bringing them one step further around your conversion circle. E.g. Incentives to visit a website, a local retailer or redemption of coupons.

Terms and conditions for sweepstakes and prize draws must be clearly be stated in a set of Terms and Conditions. Be aware that it is not legal to force the user to make any purchases in order to enter the competition as it must be open to everyone.

Legislation regarding sweepstakes and prize draws is different across the EU and the USA. Lead suppliers who also operate outside the UK will be able to support you on how to run lead generation campaigns with sweepstakes and prize draws in local markets.

Sweepstakes and prize draws influence the volumes and attractiveness of your promotion. A good incentive will also draw down your acquisition price per lead as users are more interested in incentivised offers.

Product related incentives

Your co-registration offer may also include a directly related product incentive. This could be an instant discount on purchases, money-off vouchers or extra features/upgrade give-aways.

Product related incentives are especially attractive for users who are closer in their buying decision about your product and service. These therefore have a strong effect on leads close to purchase; however, they do not have the same impact in terms of attracting new fresh leads into your database.

Third party incentives

With co-registration you may come across registration paths where incentives are added by the lead generators or a third party sponsor. This incentive is not related to your campaign as such but supplied on top e.g. a survey to attract user attention to the initial registration forms.

Make sure your advertising offer does not force people to opt-in to participate in any 3rd party incentivised promotions. This may significantly influence the quality of your leads. Best practice for co-registration is for users to (at the minimum) click a tick box to give his or her permission to be contacted by you as an advertiser.

Validation and data cleansing

Validation is an essential component of lead generation. It involves ensuring that the details in every lead captured are accurate.

Full 100% validation can never be achieved due to margins of human error when filling in a data capture form. However, the objective is to achieve as close to 100% validation as possible, and every effort should be made to reach this level.

The lead generation industry has become increasingly aware of the costs and waste associated with poor quality data, and has introduced more and more methods for ensuring that data is of a quality level acceptable to clients.

There are essentially two types of lead generation validation – front end and back end – and each type can deploy “automated” systems only, or be augmented by “human” verification checks.

Front end validation

Front end validation involves ensuring that the data captured on the initial data capture form is accurate. This means verifying that the details provided at the moment of capture are correct and congruous. These processes generally involve checking that postcode data corroborates with street names.

Additionally, validation methods ensure that other provided information such as email addresses and phone numbers are correct, at least from a syntax perspective and at best from a cross-referenced congruity.

De-duplication

At the obvious level, no lead generator should provide a duplicate data set to a lead buying customer, and so “de-duplication” should be offered and implemented as standard on all lead generation contracts.

De-duplication should be defined by contract, as it may be possible that an advertiser would be happy to receive two requests from one prospect, perhaps if the two requests were months apart.

Postal address validation

Addresses are typically verified using Royal Mail’s Postcode Address File (PAF). This is a complete address database in the UK containing over 28 million addresses.

Lead generation companies can purchase the PAF file and ask their own software developers to create an address validation program. In this way, data being submitted can be validated at

the front end, in real time. However, it is costly to acquire and integrate this file to front end data capture systems.

For this reason, most lead generation companies have a contract with a PAF “reseller” which has already developed the software and can offer address verifying on a nominal ‘cost per look-up’ basis. In essence this means that every address provided can be verified by the lead generation company for a small fee.

Phone Numbers

Typically, front end validation of phone numbers consists of ensuring that the number of digits in the number provided is correct. Numbers are typically a total of eleven digits long, but some areas, mainly rural, have numbers one or two digits shorter.

Unlike the Post Office, Ofcom does not operate or distribute an equivalent to the PAF. Therefore, it is not easy for front end validation to ensure that a given phone number is genuine. Instead of relying on national services, lead generation companies may require the assistance of specialist companies – independent database owners – who can validate phone numbers. Again, this is generally achieved by way of a “cost per look-up” model, in which the lead generation company queries the phone number database and pays a small fee for the validation.

Email Addresses

Traditionally, lead generation companies have verified the accuracy of collected email addresses by measuring the level of bounce backs when the data is first used. However, emails bounce for several reasons, meaning that this is not an accurate measurement of whether the email address provided is valid.

Some commercial companies do now offer solutions that ensure the validity of email addresses by instantly checking email addresses against a database of known dead domain names, malicious “spam trap” email addresses, and other common typographical errors in email address submissions.

Front end validation of email addresses is possible if the lead generation company sends an immediate email to the registrant – and requires the registrant to click on a “confirmation link” within this email to confirm that the registrant does indeed “own and use” the email address provided. This is referred to as double opt-in. However, even this method is no longer failsafe.

The lead generation industry is working to implement as many methods of front end validation of email addresses as possible. At the very least, the email address syntax should be valid. However, corroborating that the email address belongs to the “lead” is more difficult, and this field of data cannot be corroborated against physical address or phone numbers.

Profanity

Validation and data cleansing can be taken to another level with the use of ‘profanity’ filters which identifies swear words and profanities entered on data capture forms. These can then be deleted instantly. However, there are a number of well known profanities which also exist within genuine customer names and addresses. For this reason, front end profanity filters cannot be “comprehensive” without offending prospects.

Nonsense

Additional filters can be applied to ensure that “nonsense” cannot be submitted to lead generation fields. For example, names that consist of six consonants in a row are most certainly nonsense, and can be deleted instantly.

Back end validation

The objective is to provide an audit on the data, and ensure that it is genuine and relevant both from a data accuracy perspective, but also a valid unit worthy of purchase from a contract perspective.

Ideally, back end validation will be completed within 24 hours of data capture, to ensure that both the buy and sell side of the market are aware of the delivery statistics and financial implications – ensuring smooth and efficient order fulfilment, billing and reconciliation.

Back end validation is therefore completed on behalf of the lead buyer, and represents a further level of validation and verification – ensuring that some of the validation measures that are not possible at the front end are still in situ.

The back end validation process should ensure that all the front end processes described above have been implemented, and that the data resulting from these processes is valid as supplied. In addition, further data checks may be more financially viable when completed by a dedicated verification service provider.

Standard commercial models suggest that a single back end validation program can run checks across multiple lead generation companies more efficiently than the individual lead generation companies can acquire the “cost per look up” solutions. Invariably, back end lead management platforms have invested in the database files, and have implemented them into the platforms, in order to run look-ups more cost effectively.

Date and time checks

A back end system should first check that the data supplied is “date stamped” and “time stamped” upon receipt. In this way, an accurate record can be produced, which will aid the fair and independent “de-duplication” stage. A back end system will be able to identify patterns and idiosyncrasies in such data, which may identify the freshness and integrity of data provided.

IP address checks

A back end system may also scan the IP addresses of the data, to identify patterns and idiosyncrasies in such data which enable the data integrity to be challenged. It is important to ensure that each lead is a valid, fresh, and genuine lead, submitted by an individual and not by a machine.

De-duplication across multiple suppliers

One critical service provided by a back end system is to provide an independent de-duplication service across the range of front end suppliers. If a lead buyer is using more than one front end supplier, then the risk of de-duplication (and therefore double payment) rises.

Assuming that most lead buyers would only like to pay “once” for each unique lead, it is necessary to operate with a lead management platform to confirm which lead supplier generated the “valid lead” and which supplier generated the “duplicate”. Without the use of a single system, there is no way that the date and time audit can clarify this.

Human verification

At the highest level of data validation, human verification is deployed. This is demonstrated in the above profanity example. Only a human is able to verify “Joshua Pillock” or John Alcock as valid, when an automated filter might decline the data because of the presence of a “swear word” within the character set.

Choosing the level of validation and verification

In simple terms, the economics are clear. If the cost of additional data checks is greater than the money these checks save, then such processes are not valuable to a lead buyer. Conversely, if the back end system saves the buyer more money than the back end management system costs, then it makes commercial sense to implement such a solution. Of course, knowing what savings and efficiencies can be achieved will invariably require some kind of check.

For the highest level of validation, it seems to make sense to ensure that lead generation companies implement front end solutions, and lead buying companies implement back end solutions, to ensure that the full range of validation and verification services are available.

Successful co-registration

How to measure effect

The methods of determining the effect of a co-registration campaign are similar to those used to measure the effect of any advertising or recruitment programme - drill it down to a target return on investment (ROI). It is essential not only to determine the impact but to optimise co-registration campaigns.

It is important to be able to attribute ROI on a per source basis and be able to track the source of a lead through your CRM and conversion process. When measuring the ROI for a campaign, it is also important to give the leads sufficient time to convert and to judge the derived revenues over a fair period of time.

Conversion targets

To help achieve your target return on investment (ROI), you should first determine the type and source of co-registration that is most appropriate for you, as covered earlier in this document. This will help determine your target ROI. To achieve it the following points should be considered:

Determine your conversion costs

Call centre cost, email delivery cost, postal cost, etc should all be factored in when determining your conversion costs. Ensuring your leads have verified data, for example telephone number or postal address, will help minimise these costs.

Know your target audience

Is there a specific type of audience that has a greater affinity with your offering? This will help determine the types of co-registration that you can use but also target your lead generation within each source.

Define your lead criteria

From your target audience, define the demographic and/or geographic requirements, and (depending on the abilities of the source of the lead generation) any qualifying questions that determine eligibility for your offering.

What is your target ROI and over what period?

Experienced campaigners will already have established a target ROI. Your real or perceived new customer value divided by your lead cost and conversion costs will give you your return on investment. This value will improve over time and the optimal period over which to measure it will be dependent on the buying cycle of your customers.

Prioritise your leads

Use your knowledge of your target audience and your lead criteria to categorise your leads according to likelihood of conversion. Funnel these leads into the most appropriate conversion path - focussing on the hot prospects but also ensuring all the leads are given the best opportunity to convert.

Follow up on your leads

Regardless of the method, quality, or volume of leads being generated, the most important is initial and subsequent contact with your leads. Effort must be made to contact your lead within minutes while a lead's interest is piqued either by telephone or email. Failure to do so in a competitive market could result in what would have been a quality lead becoming worthless - either the lead is no longer interested or worse, a competitor has beaten you to the post. After the initial contact, follow up with a planned customer relationship management (CRM) programme: maintaining a lead's interest, educating them about your product or service will ensure you are giving that lead the best possible chance of becoming your customer.

How well your leads are converting and the methods you are using should be shared with lead sources to help optimise a campaign and drive down conversion costs. To provide a list of those leads that have converted will give the source the best information to help refine the campaign and ultimately improve your ROI.