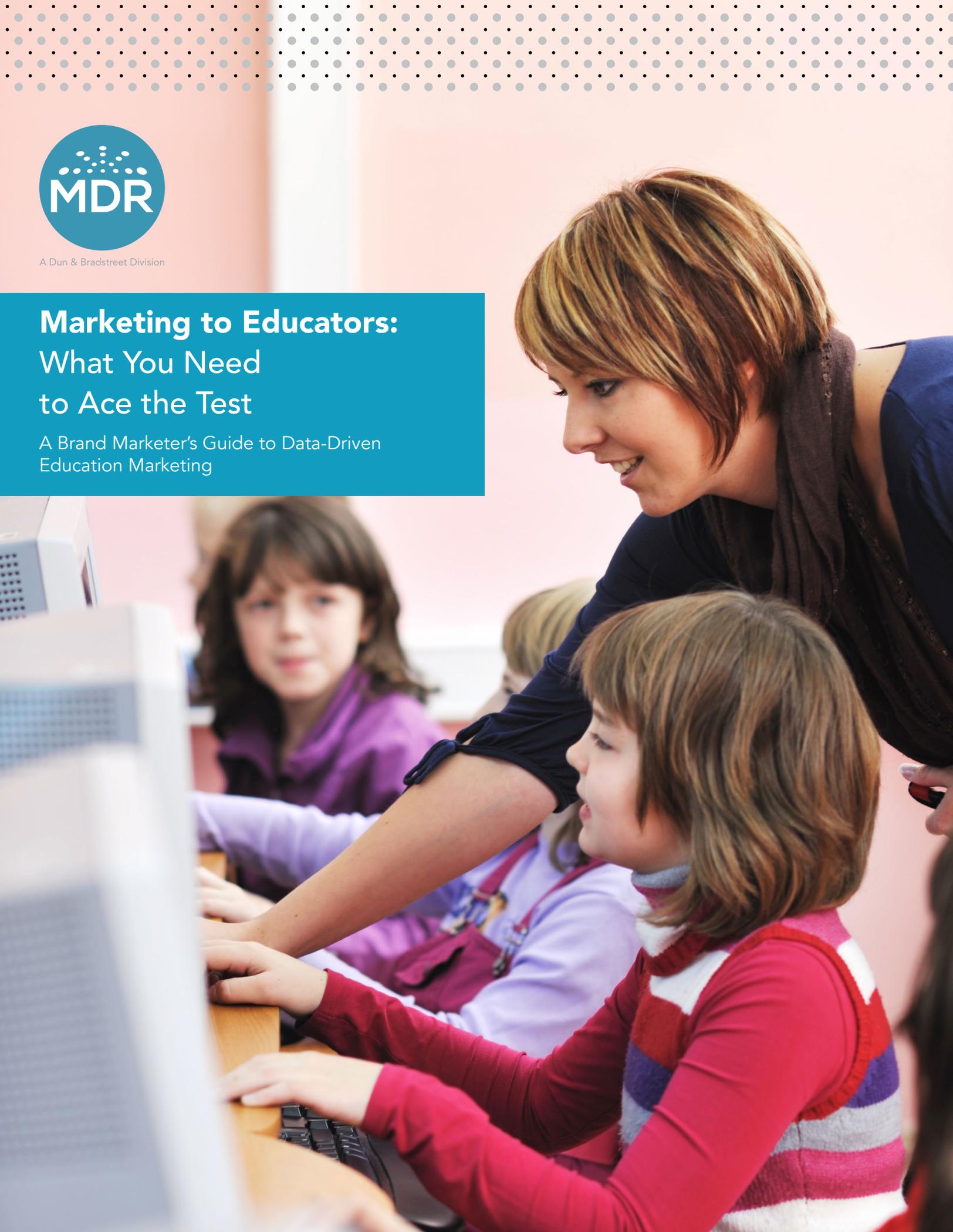




A Dun & Bradstreet Division

Marketing to Educators: What You Need to Ace the Test

A Brand Marketer's Guide to Data-Driven
Education Marketing



MDR is a full-service school and community engagement partner.

A division of Dun & Bradstreet, MDR is a different kind of integrated marketing agency that combines rich data with unique digital, creative, and branding capabilities. For nearly 50 years, it has connected brands with educators, youth, and parents through data and marketing services. Today, it helps businesses reach targeted audiences through its database and digital communities, including SchoolData, WeAreTeachers, WeAreParents, and School Leaders Now.

Why Brands Team Up With Teachers

They're not just innovators and influencers; they're professionals on a mission to change our world. Each year, teachers build relationships with hundreds of students and community members who trust their judgment.

The average educator spends 180 days per year teaching and even more time focused on school-related responsibilities. As part of their routine, they can:

- **Grow corporate causes.** Teachers want brands' help to develop good citizens and plant the seed of philanthropy. They're teaming up with companies like Ford to make the world a safer, smarter place.
- **Supercharge sales.** Teachers are brand-loyal. [Seventy-seven percent](#) of them shop exclusively at their favorite stores to buy from brands they trust, spending hundreds of dollars of their own money on supplies and influencing thousands more in school spending.
- **Recommend top brands.** Americans rate grade school teachers as more trustworthy than any occupation other than nurses and pharmacists, according to Gallup. Students and parents take teachers' advice on everything from backpacks to restaurants to travel destinations to college choices.



Ford Gets an A

Ford Motor Company got teachers in its corner by developing [Ford Driving Skills for Life](#), an innovative program aimed at reducing the 3,000 annual teen deaths linked to inexperienced, distracted, or impaired driving.

By offering a free "Electronic Educator" packet featuring classroom videos, brochures, and related items, Ford DSFL has made its mark in secondary schools around the country. Beyond saving lives and making teachers' lives easier, Ford DSFL gives teachers and parents another reason to buy from the blue-oval brand.

Despite how easy Ford makes it seem, reaching and engaging educators takes real planning and research. In this handbook, we'll discuss why data needs to be the focus of campaigns, as well as how to collect and properly use that data before, during, and after launching a campaign.

The key to connecting with educators? Up-to-date, high-quality data.

Never have companies had access to as much data as they do today. By culling the right data and choosing the right moment for teacher interaction, brands can see revenue skyrocket by as much as 66 percent, according to our internal research.

So how are brands using data to woo teachers?

1. They're taking a hard look at who teachers are.

Like all niche markets, teachers have unique habits and lifestyle choices. Our recent [Teachers as Consumers](#) report shows they shop at low- to mid-priced traditional retailers like Walmart, Target, Kohl's, and Costco; their hobbies lean toward cultural activities, reading books, and recreational fitness; and they appreciate domestic and international travel, with 90 percent of them traveling over the past year. At the same time, they value peers' recommendations — 75 percent said they buy products suggested by fellow educators.

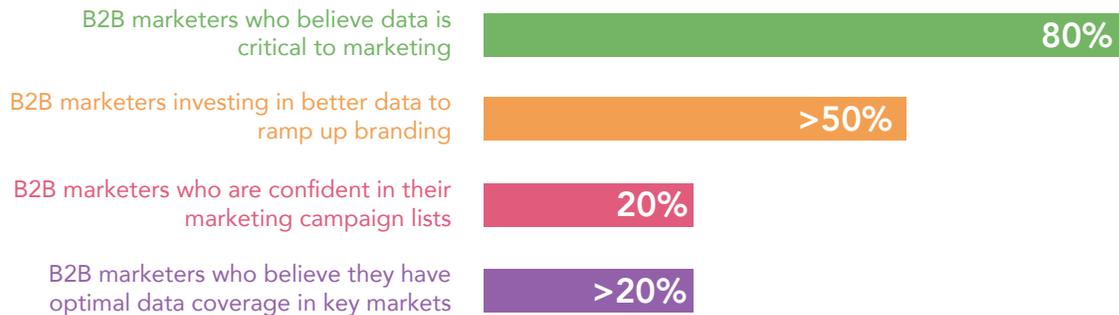
2. They are mapping teachers' buying journeys.

Teachers are famous for doing their homework — pun intended — before buying a product. At the same time, they're loyal, with 61 percent being willing to become fans, friends, or followers of brands online. To reel in repeat purchases, brands need to think past the funnel approach to one that takes a broader look at teachers' habits and preferences.

3. They're shaping go-to-market strategies.

MDR data allows brands to fill in missing information about their customers to achieve growth goals. Did you know, for example, that teachers are more influenced by email ads, webpage links, and search results than other forms of internet advertising? Were you aware that nine out of 10 U.S. teachers traveled last year for business or personal reasons? A fuller picture of educators gives you the ability to create more personalized content and more effective campaign spend.

Marketers Know Data Matters — And That They Need More of It



Source: "[The B2B Marketing Data Report](#)," Dun & Bradstreet, 2017.

Data, like a bottle of classroom hand sanitizer, only works if it remains germ-free.

That's why every campaign targeting teachers should start with thoroughly scrubbed data. The proper segmentation, targeting, and personalization for one campaign may be inadequate for another.

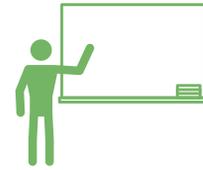
In most cases, companies that want to reach educators need to collect three key data points:

- **Basic contact information:** Don't forget the foundation: first and last name, city and state, email address, and title.
- **District- and school-level demographics:** Effective, personalized campaigns require information on school size, budget, grade level, and subjects taught.
- **Online and offline behavioral data:** For true relevance, incorporate social media and web activity based on tracking pixels. Layer past campaign data such as opens, clicks, and pageviews. And don't forget about what happens offline. Do the teachers you're targeting coach a soccer team? Host a fundraiser every year? All of these insights will make your campaign more likely to resonate.

Is that a be-all and end-all list? Of course not. Use surveys and focus groups to collect anything else you might need to conduct an informed campaign.

For example, to ensure high campaign performance, WittyWe, an online learning environment for kids, asked MDR to conduct an online teacher survey and focus group about a new product. The real-time raw data we collected together gave WittyWe a smart start on a related article, giveaway, and PR program to promote the new product launch.

Why Your Campaign Deserves Fresh Data



>1 million

The number of teachers new to their schools each year



>800,000

The number of teachers no longer at the same school after a year



2,900

The number of schools that open or close annually

Source: "[The Risk of Dirty Data](#)," MDR, 2017.

Given how frequently teachers and schools change, it's essential to scrub your list at least twice a year, if not monthly. What's the risk of leaving your list as-is? You could ruin your internet protocol — not to mention your brand — reputation with dirty data.

By leveraging three metrics during your campaign execution phase, you can polish off tarnished data:

1. Open rate

Sound self-explanatory? There's a catch: Some platforms automatically open emails, skewing raw numbers. It's best to use your open rate for comparison purposes. If your open rates continue to rise with each campaign, you're on the right track. See blips on the radar? Irrelevant subject lines, poor segmentation, or uneven send frequency could be to blame.

2. Click-through rate

This shows the percentage of people who clicked on your message, so if your click-through rate won't budge, investigate. Perhaps your link text isn't clearly indicated, or maybe you don't have enough links. Maybe you're not compelling readers to click because you haven't given them reason in the copy. Or you might simply be sending your email to the wrong recipients.

3. Bounce rates

Remember that there are two types of bounces: soft and hard. Soft bounces often happen when mailboxes are filled up, and they're usually delivered when the user deletes emails. Hard bounces indicate the email address no longer exists. Email providers penalize senders for too many hard bounces, which is why it's so critical to eliminate bad email addresses immediately. Have tons? Spring-clean your list. Another best practice to keep your lists clean is to send a confirmation email to each new subscriber to ensure you have the right information.

Positive Self-Talk Campaign Makes Waves With Educators



When a client wanted to raise awareness around its social emotional learning product line, MDR helped it create a downloadable classroom poster and corresponding campaign. The poster promoted positive self-talk to build student resilience. Teachers received an email with links to download the poster and visit the [WeAreTeachers](#) website. Throughout the campaign, metrics were monitored constantly.

The results?

One million impressions, 20 percent open rate, 6 percent email click-through rate, and almost 15,000 downloads — and one very happy client.

Just because a campaign has ended doesn't mean your analysis should. Consider how well your campaign converted teachers, whether through sign-ups, purchases, inbound calls, emailed inquiries, or downloads.

Dig into the data with the following questions:

1. Was my data really clean?

Too few teacher conversions? Dirty data could be to blame. Bad leads waste investment money to the tune of more than \$3 trillion per year, according to an IBM study. Stop leaching resources, and start jettisoning bad data.

2. Did I deliver the right content at the right stage?

If teachers weren't converting, your content might have missed the mark on their interests, pain points, and preferences. So what content do teachers care about? Check out our [Hearts and Smarts](#) report for real-world examples of content that has worked for our customers.

3. What creative elements caused the most conversions?

Take a hard look at how your creative performed. Did the question subject line get the most clicks? Did illustrations do better than stock images? Did the emailed whitepaper get the most love? Roll your findings into your next campaign, which should begin with the benefit of fresh eyes and fresh data.

Pay Now — and Later — for Low-Quality Leads

“ The difference between the best- and worst-performing lists was almost \$600 per lead.”

— Brian Carroll, executive director of revenue optimization at MECLABs, on the realization that [bad leads cost 60 percent more than good leads](#).

Reaching teachers takes data, of course, but it also takes education-sector expertise. To blend both into a seriously successful campaign:

- **Ground yourself** in clean data about what teachers think, buy, and care about.
- **Get a partner** like MDR to guide your strategy, channels, messaging, and more.
- **Create content** specific to your audience's needs and wants.
- **Monitor your metrics** during the campaign to optimize performance.
- **Perform a post-mortem** after the campaign concludes to inform your next initiative.

Need help getting started? No problem — this is an open-book test. Choose MDR as your lab partner and snag top marks from today's teachers.

If you found this guide valuable and want more insights into educators and the education market, visit MDREducation.com, [check out our blog](#), or [browse our other reports](#).

MDREducation.com

203-424-2303

mdrinfo@dnb.com

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