

Direct Marketing Data Quality Management Award

helpIT

Congratulations to helpIT Systems for scooping the 2007 Data Quality Management Award, the Corporate Times are proud to be associated with such a prestigious company, who are leading the way in IT solutions

Established in 1991, helpIT is headquartered in Leatherhead, has a USA office in San Jose, California and partnerships with companies throughout the UK, EMEA, USA and Australia.

helpIT systems are a leader in professional data-cleansing software and analytics solutions. Its expertise covers deduplication, merge/purge, data suppression, Mailsort, addressing software and high-level business-data analysis using unrivalled phonetic algorithms and fuzzy-matching routines for all kinds of data.

helpIT centres on generating high-quality, innovative products to help professional direct marketers manage their databases effectively. With his extensive IT experience of both software and financial services organisations, founder and chief technical officer Steve Tootill recognised the inefficiency resulting from duplicated and inaccurate entries name and address data.

Working in collaboration with his father Geoff Tootill, a skilled linguist and computer pioneer, he created the world's first genuinely phonetic-based data cleansing system. By converting words to strings based on their pronunciation, the software identifies duplication in databases caused by both phonetic and other errors in minutes and forms the basis for all helpIT's subsequent software.

Originally developed for financial services companies with extensive customer databases, helpIT's solutions have also generated keen customer bases in further marketing sectors and other industries. For example, the advance of the direct mail and customer service industries such as CRM increased the need for database cleansing. In addition, organisations with limited resources such as charities enjoy helpIT's savings of time, resource and cost. helpIT's professional solutions are easy-to-use and so minimise the need for training. For companies with high staff turnover, this is essential.

A major partnership with analytics and

reporting specialist Blue Tahiti brought two significant innovations. First, Blue Tahiti integrated helpIT's advanced deduplication software into its own solutions. Subsequently, helpIT's latest innovation, segmentIT – online subscription-based analytics – is the result of ongoing collaboration between the two companies. segmentIT offers business intelligence analysis at a price affordable to smaller and mid-sized enterprises.

helpIT has also established a strong global presence through its wholly owned USA subsidiary in San Jose, California and business, technology, website-linking and reseller partnerships around the world.

As one of the world's longest established companies in its space, helpIT now serves nearly 1,000 companies globally, from niche organisations to major blue-chip corporations. Major customers include Microsoft, Cable & Wireless, IBM and Barnardo's.

helpIT continues to innovate and produce solutions to ensure maintaining critical databases is as simple and low-cost as possible. Already a leader in its current markets, the company remains an active seeker of new opportunities in all areas of public and private business.

In addition to continued development of its products, helpIT remains at the forefront of improving collaboration between providers within the direct-marketing technology industry. In so doing, it aims to bring leading technologies together to ensure customers have increased choice of better-quality products.

helpIT is unusual in offering not only a fully integrated all-encompassing data cleansing solution, but also a fully modular approach. Its flagship matchIT suite can encompass any configuration of the company's core offerings, including intelligent dedupe, merge/purge, salutation creation, casing, name splitting and much more. It incorporates a sophisticated fuzzy matching engine for unrivalled results.

Core products and modules include:

- suppressIT – delivers automatic data suppression against major industry standard files, including MPS, GAS and TBR;
- addressIT – ensures accuracy and completeness of postcodes and addresses. Using a leading post coding engine and helpIT's own quality routines, addressIT is also available as a standalone product;
- sortIT – the complete solution for Mailsorting and address outputting; also available as a standalone module;
- dedupeIT – ideal for smaller databases (up to 50,000 records), dedupeIT eliminates duplicate entries easily and at low cost;
- segmentIT – an online, subscription-based analytics tool, created in partnership with Blue Tahiti. segmentIT offers comprehensive analysis of data files and delivers business intelligence to support board-level directors, sales managers and front-line marketers making business-critical decisions;
- matchIT API (application programming interface) – a data-cleansing software component for system developers to enable them to build advanced data-cleansing at the heart of any system.

All helpIT's flexible products work with any hardware or software platform. In addition, helpIT has created plug-in versions of matchIT, specifically for users of the Goldmine CRM package.

helpIT also offers data bureau services for cleansing and deduplication including online telephone and fax preference services, software training, comprehensive consultancy and full technical support.

For further information regarding the award winning helpIT systems telephone: 01372 360070 or visit their Website at: www.helpIT.com

Case Study

After examination of several in-house options and on high recommendation from previous users, Bank of Scotland selected matchIT Plus from helpIT systems. With its sophisticated fuzzy matching, matchIT gives Bank of Scotland the ability to find duplicate records which were previously virtually impossible to detect.

Return on investment

To date, matchIT has helped Bank of Scotland to identify business written as a result of marketing campaigns, where otherwise they may not have been able. In addition, "we are sure there will be significant cost savings over time as we can now do complex de-duplication and file matching in house as and when required. matchIT aids in reducing overall campaign costs by making sure we only mail or call each company once," concludes Paul Airey.

Bank of Scotland has always been renowned for technological advancements within the finance industry. Using matchIT helps to ensure outgoing costs are low, incoming profits are high, and company time and resources are not wasted. matchIT is another way that Bank of Scotland continues to stay a leap ahead of the competition while offering more to their customers.

Firstly, when data is merged from various source files, there are a number of inherent

problems such as field misalignment and disparate data entry methods. Such issues can make accurate data matching extremely difficult. matchIT allows Bank of Scotland to overcome these hurdles easily. Data files can now be merged regardless of field structure or file format and, where elements of the address are stored in the wrong field, matchIT can correct this.

Secondly, matchIT allows Bank of Scotland to detect complex phonetic and miskeyed variations and acronyms often found in company names.

Results

Although Bank of Scotland Corporate is still in the first year of using the product, the tangible results of matchIT's fuzzy matching capabilities were seen immediately. "The first time we used matchIT we were matching multiple files to help us identify converted business on different systems where address information could potentially be different. We managed to identify a significant number of records, which we would not have been able to discover using exact matching techniques," says Paul Airey.

Saving Time

The product has saved the Bank of Scotland Corporate division time. Searching for duplicate files manually or by using several types of different database tools takes up unnecessary time, which could be better spent on other projects. "MatchIT has been extremely beneficial in saving time on large file and complex matching requests. In addition, the product was easy to pick up with little help."

Saving Money Mailing and attempting to actively market to duplicate and inaccurate names and addresses is an intrusion Bank of Scotland would not want to make. Such inaccuracies would not only have a negative effect on the Bank's reputation, but could prove to be very costly through gone-aways and wastage. "matchIT has helped with our management information. Without having any results to demonstrate the success of a marketing campaign, it is difficult to justify repeating something similar."

Saving Resources Bank of Scotland

Corporate is benefiting from a database cleansed and deduplicated by matchIT. Not only can the marketing department profit from using the product, but it also ensures they are mailing and telephoning potential Corporate customers using the most accurate information available. Additionally, the reduction in wastage has a positive impact on the environment.

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