



Identifying And Verifying Key Decision Makers In B2B Chemical Markets: An Applied Study

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Abstract

In contemporary B2B industrial markets, especially within the chemical manufacturing and export sector, the ability to identify and contact the correct organizational decision makers plays a pivotal role in sales effectiveness and international business expansion. Empirical studies indicate that nearly 55–65% of B2B sales leads fail due to inaccurate, outdated, or irrelevant contact data, while organizations using verified decision-maker intelligence report improvements of 30–40% in lead-to-conversion ratios. This research paper presents an in-depth, practice-oriented study based on a Market Research Project conducted at Indenta Chemicals India Pvt. Ltd., a globally active chemical manufacturer and exporter. The study documents a systematic, multi-stage process adopted to identify, verify, and validate contact details of key decision makers namely Procurement Managers, Purchase Managers, and Managing Directors using a combination of B2B directories and advanced online intelligence tools. Further, the paper evaluates the reliability of these tools through internal sales team feedback and proposes a structured, replicable decision-maker identification and verification model for B2B organizations. The findings contribute practical insights for market researchers, sales strategists, and export managers operating in industrial markets.

Keywords: B2B Market Research, Decision Maker Identification, Contact Verification, Sales Intelligence, Chemical Industry

1. Introduction

At the outset of the research project at Indenta Chemicals India Pvt. Ltd. did not follow a formally documented or standardized process for B2B decision-maker data collection. Data gathering was largely ad hoc, tool-dependent, and varied across individuals, leading to inconsistencies in accuracy and usability. Through systematic observation, hands-on execution, and iterative refinement of data collection practices, a structured and replicable workflow was developed. This resulted in the B2B Decision Maker Identification and

Verification Model, which formalizes the end-to-end process of identifying, validating, and finalizing role-specific contact intelligence for B2B sales and export operations.

1.1 Context of B2B Market Research in Industrial Markets

B2B markets differ fundamentally from B2C markets in terms of purchasing complexity, relationship orientation, and decision-making structures. In industrial sectors such as chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and manufacturing, purchase decisions are rarely made by a single individual. Instead, they involve a Decision-Making Unit (DMU) comprising procurement managers, purchase managers, technical evaluators, finance heads, and top management. Among these, procurement and purchase managers act as operational gatekeepers, while managing directors and senior executives often influence vendor approval and long-term sourcing strategies.

As competition intensifies and global trade expands, chemical manufacturers increasingly depend on targeted outreach rather than mass prospecting. Accurate identification of relevant decision makers therefore becomes a strategic activity rather than a clerical task. Market research teams are expected to deliver high-quality, verified contact intelligence that enables sales and export teams to initiate meaningful business conversations.

1.2 Company Profile: Indenta Chemicals India Pvt. Ltd.

Indenta Chemicals India Pvt. Ltd. is a well-established chemical manufacturing and exporting organization with a legacy of over five decades. The company specializes in the production and global supply of a wide range of chemical products, including sodium hydroxide pellets, potassium hydroxide pellets, laboratory reagents, solvents, pharmaceutical salts, aroma chemicals, and specialty compounds. Indenta serves diverse industries such as pharmaceuticals, personal care, research laboratories, electronics, and advanced manufacturing.

The company follows a pure B2B and export-driven business model, with operations spanning more than 40 countries worldwide. Its revenue model is based on long-term institutional relationships, bulk orders, repeat contracts, and compliance-driven supply chains. Within this model, the effectiveness of sales and export teams is heavily dependent on the availability of accurate and role-specific contact data for potential buyers and distributors.

1.3 Rationale and Purpose of the Study

The research project undertaken at Indenta Chemicals India Pvt. Ltd. focused on bridging the information gap between potential B2B customers and the company's sales and export teams. The primary purpose of this research is to systematically document the end-to-end process used to identify, verify, and validate decision-maker contact details, assess the effectiveness of various sourcing tools, and develop a structured framework that can be replicated by future market researchers in similar B2B contexts.

2. Literature Review

The reviewed literature collectively positions B2B market research as a strategic, theory-driven function rather than a clerical activity. Organizational buying theories explain the need for role-specific decision-maker identification, while information quality and resource-based perspectives highlight data accuracy as a source of competitive advantage. Digital relationship and socio-technical theories further support the integration of technology with human judgement, underscoring the relevance of structured, multi-source, and validated contact intelligence frameworks in industrial B2B markets.

Author(s) & Year	Core Theory / Theoretical Lens	Key Focus of the Study	Key Insight	Relevance to Present Study
Sheth & Sharma (2020)	Organizational Buying Behavior Theory; Buying Centre Theory	Structure of B2B buying and role of DMU members	B2B purchasing decisions are formalized and involve multiple stakeholders performing distinct roles such as gatekeepers, influencers, buyers, and decision-makers	Establishes the importance of identifying role-specific decision-makers rather than generic organizational contacts in industrial markets
Homburg et al. (2019)	Information Quality Theory; Resource-Based View (RBV)	Impact of CRM data quality on sales performance	Poor-quality contact data leads to inefficiencies in sales forecasting and CRM, with significant time lost due to inaccurate information	Highlights accurate contact data as a strategic organizational resource critical for sales and export effectiveness
Järvinen & Taiminen (2016)	Social Network Theory; Digital Relationship Marketing Theory	Use of digital platforms for B2B lead generation	Professional networking platforms enable real-time, role-based organizational intelligence and transform traditional prospecting	Supports the use of digital platforms for precise and targeted B2B market research
Guenzi et al. (2021)	Triangulation Theory; Risk Reduction Theory	Reliability of multi-source data validation	Reliance on a single data source increases risk of outdated or misleading information; multi-source validation improves credibility	Justifies the need for multi-source verification in identifying B2B decision-makers
Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2022)	MarTech Adoption Theory; Socio-Technical Systems Theory	Effectiveness of sales intelligence tools	Hybrid approaches combining automated tools with human verification outperform standalone databases	Reinforces the value of a technology-enabled yet human-validated framework for B2B contact intelligence

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The present study adopts a qualitative, exploratory, and process-oriented research design. The research is grounded in an applied organizational context and aims to develop a structured framework for B2B decision-maker identification and verification. Given the absence of a pre-existing formal process within the organization, the study follows a practice-based research approach, where systematic observation, execution, and refinement of activities were used to derive the final model.

3.2 Research Objectives

1. To identify key decision makers in B2B chemical and industrial organizations.
2. To analyze the effectiveness and reliability of B2B directories and online intelligence tools used for contact sourcing.
3. To develop a structured and replicable workflow for decision-maker contact identification and verification.

3.3 Research Approach

An inductive research approach was employed, wherein patterns and insights emerged from direct involvement in real-time B2B market research activities. Rather than testing predefined hypotheses, the study focused on understanding existing practices, identifying operational gaps, and progressively structuring an effective workflow through iterative application and validation.

3.4 Research Setting

The study was conducted at Indenta Chemicals India Pvt. Ltd., a B2B chemical manufacturing and export-oriented organization. The research setting involved the sales support and export market research function, where decision-maker data is critical for initiating international business development and maintaining long-term institutional relationships.

3.4 Data Sources

The study relied primarily on primary qualitative data, supported by secondary sources for contextual understanding.

- Primary Data Sources
 - Direct observation of existing data collection practices
 - Hands-on execution of B2B market research tasks
 - Internal team discussions and validation meetings
 - Iterative feedback from sales and export teams on data usability
- Secondary Data Sources
 - Company websites and annual reports
 - Professional networking platforms (e.g., LinkedIn)
 - Industry directories and trade portals
 - Paid sales intelligence and email verification tools
 - Relevant academic literature on B2B buying behaviour and data quality

Tool Gist:

- Trade India & IndiaMART: Strong coverage of Indian B2B firms and suppliers.
- Exporters India: Useful for export-oriented firms.
- Justdial & Yellow Pages: Helpful for basic verification and contact triangulation.
- Association Directories: Provided industry-validated company listings.
- LinkedIn: Best for role confirmation and organizational mapping.
- Easyleadz & Powerlead: Indian market-focused databases with decision-maker insights.
- Hunter: Email pattern identification and domain verification.
- RocketReach & SignalHire: Multi-source contact enrichment with confidence scoring.
- Kompass: Industry-verified company intelligence.

- Scribd: Occasional access to uploaded company documents and directories.

3.5 Sampling Technique and Data Reliability

A purposive non-probability sampling technique was adopted, focusing on companies with high relevance to Indenta's business. Data reliability increased significantly when contacts were validated through at least two independent sources.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was carried out through a structured, multi-stage process, which evolved into the B2B Decision Maker Identification and Verification Model. The procedure included:

1. Target Company Identification – Strategic filtering of relevant B2B firms.
2. Role Identification – Mapping decision makers using LinkedIn and websites.
3. Directory-Level Data Collection – Gathering baseline contact information.
4. Tool-Based Contact Enrichment – Extracting role-specific details.
5. Cross-Verification – Validating contacts across multiple platforms.
6. Internal Team Validation – Practical verification by sales and export teams.
7. Final Database Creation – Deployment-ready contact intelligence.

3.7 Feedback Analysis from Sales and Export Teams

The validated contact database prepared during the research project was systematically reviewed by Indenta's sales and export teams, who regularly engage with procurement and senior management personnel in domestic and international markets. Feedback was documented in structured Excel sheets and analyzed to assess the effectiveness of different sourcing tools and platforms.

The feedback was classified into three categories:

- Fully Verified Contacts: Contact details that were accurate, role-specific, and directly usable for sales or export outreach.
- Partially Verified Contacts: Contacts where the organization and role were correct, but contact details (email/phone) required minor correction or reconfirmation.
- Not Verified Contacts: Outdated, incorrect, or non-relevant contact information.

Based on the consolidated feedback analysis, the following effectiveness patterns emerged:

- Approximately 65–70% of contacts sourced using LinkedIn in combination with paid intelligence tools (RocketReach, Hunter, SignalHire) were marked as *Fully Verified* by the sales team. LinkedIn proved highly effective for confirming designations and organizational hierarchy, while intelligence tools added accuracy to email and phone details.
- Around 45–50% of contacts obtained from B2B directories such as Trade India, IndiaMART, Exporters India, Justdial, and Yellow Pages were categorized as *Partially Verified*. These platforms were effective in identifying relevant companies but showed limitations in providing role-specific or updated contact details.

- Nearly 20–25% of contacts sourced solely from single directories without cross-verification were marked as *Not Verified*, indicating a higher probability of outdated or generic information.
- Contacts that underwent multi-source cross-verification (minimum two tools) showed an overall acceptance rate of approximately 75%, highlighting the importance of layered validation in B2B contact research.

This feedback-driven evaluation enabled prioritization of high-performing tools and reduced dependency on low-accuracy sources, thereby improving the operational effectiveness of market research outputs.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Key Findings

The study revealed that directory-only sourcing resulted in lower accuracy, while tool-assisted verification significantly improved reliability. LinkedIn emerged as the foundational platform for role identification, while email verification tools enhanced outreach readiness.

4.2 Proposed B2B Decision Maker Identification and Verification Model

The proposed model consists of eight sequential and iterative stages:



1. Target Companies

The process begins with the identification of target companies aligned with the organization's export markets, product portfolio, and industry focus. Companies are shortlisted based on predefined criteria such as industry relevance, geographic location, regulatory fit, and business potential. This step ensures that research efforts are directed toward high-probability prospects rather than broad, unfocused listings.

2. Role Identification

Once target companies are identified, relevant decision-making roles within each organization are mapped.

This step focuses on identifying members of the Decision-Making Unit (DMU), such as procurement managers, purchase managers, technical heads, quality managers, and senior executives. Role identification ensures alignment with organizational buying structures rather than individual-level assumptions.

3. Directory Search

Public and paid business directories, company websites, trade portals, and professional networking platforms are then used to extract preliminary contact information. At this stage, the emphasis is on breadth—gathering names, designations, email formats, and organizational affiliations associated with the identified roles.

4. Tool-Assisted Verification

The collected contact details are subsequently validated using sales intelligence and verification tools. These tools assist in checking email validity, employment status, role accuracy, and organizational association. Tool-assisted verification helps eliminate inactive, generic, or outdated contacts, thereby improving baseline data quality.

5. Team Validation (Initial Review)

Following tool-based checks, the data undergoes an internal review by the research or sales support team. This step focuses on contextual validation—assessing role relevance, seniority, and alignment with sales objectives. Team validation introduces human judgement to compensate for the limitations of automated tools.

6. Cross-Verification

Contacts are then cross-verified using multiple independent sources, such as LinkedIn profiles, company announcements, trade databases, and email domain checks. This step strengthens data credibility by reducing dependence on a single source and minimizing the risk of misinformation.

7. Team Validation (Final Review)

A second round of team validation is conducted to confirm accuracy after cross-verification. At this stage, discrepancies are resolved, duplicates are removed, and only role-appropriate, verified contacts are retained. This step ensures consistency and readiness for operational use.

8. Final Database

The verified and approved contacts are consolidated into a structured final database. This database is formatted for direct integration with sales and export workflows and serves as a reliable input for outreach, lead generation, and relationship-building activities. The final database represents the output of a systematic, repeatable, and quality-controlled research process.

5. Limitations of the Study

1. The study is limited to a single organization, Indenta Chemicals India Pvt. Ltd., which restricts the generalizability of the findings across other B2B industries and organizational contexts.
2. The research is based on an research-driven, applied case study, and therefore reflects processes, tools, and practices specific to the company's business model, target markets, and sales structure.
3. The effectiveness of decision-maker identification tools was evaluated using internal sales and export team feedback, rather than external performance indicators such as conversion rates or revenue impact, which may limit objective measurement.
4. The sample of companies and contacts was selected using purposive non-probability sampling, focusing only on firms relevant to Indenta's product portfolio, thereby excluding broader B2B segments.
5. The study primarily captures short-term usability and accuracy of contact data and does not assess long-term outcomes such as sustained relationship building, repeat business, or long-term sales performance.

6. Scope For Future Research

1. Future studies may include multiple organizations across different B2B industries to test the general applicability of the proposed decision-maker identification model.
2. Comparative research can be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of various online intelligence tools across sectors, geographies, and firm sizes.
3. Longitudinal studies may examine the long-term impact of verified decision-maker data on sales conversion rates, customer retention, and relationship management.
4. Future research may incorporate quantitative performance metrics, such as lead-to-conversion ratios and revenue contribution, to objectively assess the business impact of verified contact intelligence.
5. Qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews with sales and procurement professionals can provide deeper insights into decision-maker accessibility, trust-building, and B2B communication effectiveness.

7. Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that systematic identification and verification of key decision makers is a critical success factor in B2B chemical markets. The research confirms that a multi-source approach—combining professional platforms such as LinkedIn with B2B directories and paid online intelligence tools—significantly enhances the accuracy and usability of decision-maker contact data. Internal validation by sales and export teams indicated that contacts verified through layered cross-checking were substantially more actionable compared to single-source directory data, highlighting the importance of structured workflows in B2B market research.

The study also establishes that while B2B directories are useful for initial company discovery, they are insufficient for role-specific decision-maker identification without further enrichment. Online intelligence tools, when supported by manual verification and internal feedback, improve efficiency and reduce lead wastage. Overall, the research concludes that the proposed B2B Decision Maker Identification and Verification Model provides a practical and effective framework for supporting sales and export operations in industrial markets. However, given the organization-specific nature of the study, broader validation across industries and firms is required to strengthen its academic and managerial applicability.

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