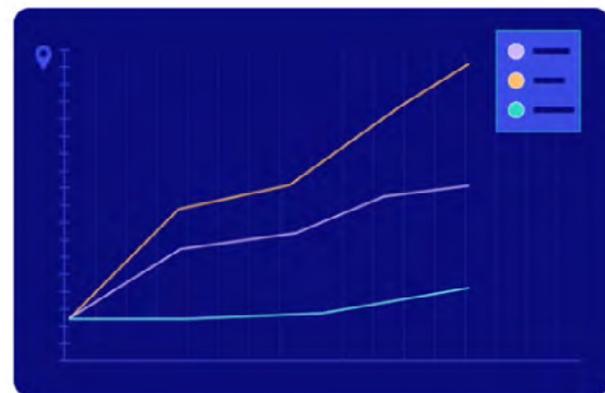
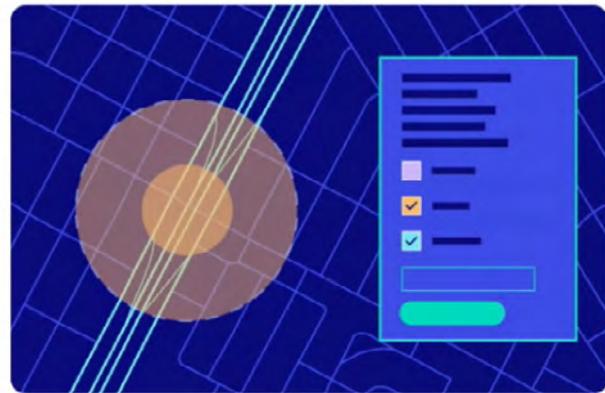
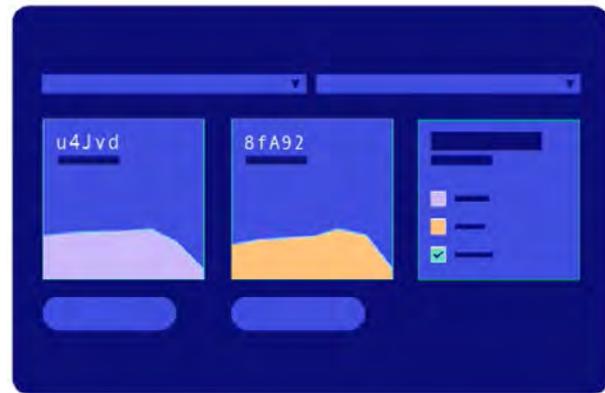




Every time a product or service is purchased, companies have access to valuable information about the date and time of the transaction, the place where it occurred, the price point, the payment method employed, discounts, and other quantities and qualities associated with the transaction. Captured along with this are troves of information about the customers making those transactions.

This high-quality transaction data can be used by businesses to build customer relationships, understand consumer spending, identify top-selling products and services, uncover potential areas to improve products and grow, and measure financial performance.

While transaction data is extremely valuable, it is often inconsistent, incomplete and mixed with irrelevant information, making it difficult for analysts to find context and use the data effectively.



### Transaction data is often underutilized. Why?

The data collected is cryptic

Information is highly abbreviated and contains lots of numbers and text that lack context, making it difficult to interpret.

The data lacks categorization

There is no clear grouping or sorting of the data, making it hard for businesses to organize, analyze, and effectively use.

The data is duplicative and incomplete

There are often numerous duplicate entries, long complicated strings of texts, and lots of incomplete information.

# Merchant Record Cleansing Makes Valuable Transactional Information Useful

Merchant data cleansing turns indiscernible data into actionable insights, giving businesses the quality data they need and can trust to make confident decisions and drive business success.

Data cleansing is a key step in any data analytics process. When cleaning your transaction data, it's not just about deleting incorrect or duplicate information. It's about preparing and validating your data to ensure the reliability of the insights extracted.

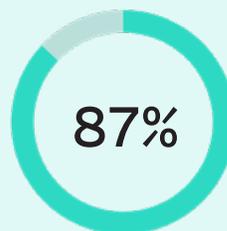
Often it is difficult to distill data. For example, if you're not given a clean merchant name, it can be unusable for data modeling, customer analysis, or integration with other solutions.

Data cleansing can take this convoluted raw string of data and turn it into a cleansed business name with added details, giving you the ability to categorize and classify the data. You can now discern whether a business is a restaurant, a retail shop or entertainment venue.

The goal is to keep your data as intact as possible, by working to identify and fix inaccurate data within a dataset that may be corrupted, incorrectly formatted, or incomplete. Doing so will ensure you have the quality data you need to get insights you can trust and use to inform your business decisions.



of financial services executives say location data / mapping is important to getting business results.



of financial services executives say it will be even more essential in 3-5 years.

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Source: Global BCG Survey

Drive better  
business outcomes  
by cleansing  
and enriching  
transactional data  
with location data.



of data strategy leaders say that location intelligence is important to achieving better business outcomes when it comes to merchant record cleansing, according to a recent [Forrester study](#).

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FORRESTER®



of data strategy leaders say that location intelligence will be as or more important to merchant record cleansing in the next 3-5 years.

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FORRESTER®

Appropriately cleansed, tagged and categorized transaction data provides more accurate metrics for analysis and ultimately leads to better business results.

Including location data like addresses, phone numbers and business categories within your dataset can help the transaction data cleansing process by adding a source of truth to help fill gaps, verify existing data and provide more context.

Enriching your dataset will give you the ability to:

### **Clean data**

Ensure you've cleaned business names and supplemented missing data with validated data, to get data you can trust for accurate analytics and modeling.

### **Reduce redundancy and inconsistencies**

Increase productivity by eliminating duplicate business entries and inconsistent data.

### **Supplement data with rich attributes**

Enrich data to turn cryptic and ineffective data into intelligible and valuable data businesses can understand and use.

### **Provide greater context for transactions**

Add metadata like location to better understand transactions.

### **Categorize transaction data**

Sort the data to extract even more value from it.



Categorization can help identify that a retail store transaction was a 'shopping' expense, or that the money a person spent went to 'restaurants', and that a supermarket purchase was most likely 'groceries.'

# Competitive Advantages and Use Cases

Cleaned transaction data can improve functions across a business, it can help data strategy leaders address use cases such as:

## Enhance consumer experiences

Banks can make it easier for consumers to understand their own spending or saving patterns, providing cleaner credit card statements that help consumers easily identify merchants and spend less time reconciling their expenses.



57% of data strategy leaders expect investing in location intelligence to improve decision making.



55% report it will drive better customer experiences, according to a recent study by Forrester.

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## Reduce operating costs

Demystifying transaction data for consumers can also reduce cardholder inquiries, saving businesses significant amounts of time and resources.

## Get a fuller view of clients' financial picture

Financial institutions can increase transparency over an individuals' finances, aiding financial service providers or credit bureaus in determining investment strategy or risk.

## Develop targeted marketing campaigns

Businesses can deliver personalized messaging to the right audience at the right time to support customer retention, credit card marketing and more.

## Answer business questions more definitively

Procurement departments can give more specificity when it comes to answering questions like: How much did the company spend with a supplier in a specific period? What are the top 10 suppliers being paid by credit card?

# Securing the Right Location Data

Quality location data is essential to ensure both the data enrichment and data cleansing process result in effectively cleaned transaction data that can be used to produce accurate and trustworthy insights.

## 3 Key considerations for sourcing location data to support merchant data cleansing:

### Accuracy

To ensure the transaction data cleansing process delivers the trusted dataset needed for actionable insights, it is vital to have quality location data for deduping and filling gaps in the data. Location technology providers like Foursquare not only provide reliable points-of-interest (POI) data, but have the breadth of data necessary for effective data enrichment and cleansing. Foursquare's Places data maintains a global dataset of 100M+ POIs that combines ground truth datasets, authoritative third-party sources, and first-party data from Foursquare's consumer-facing apps, to deliver the most accurate location data available.

[Explore FSQ Places data →](#)

### Speed and reliability

Getting accurate and readily accessible data to quickly enrich and clean datasets for faster insights and faster decision-making is essential. Look to a location data partner that can provide up-to-date data quickly, conveniently, and regularly. Foursquare continually refreshes its POI data with 2.4+ million updates each month, to ensure the freshest and most accurate location data in today's ever-changing landscape. And the data can be delivered quickly and reliably via flat file or API, on a schedule or whenever needed.

### Granularity

Granularity of the data is important as it can provide more specific details on the categorization of a business, to gain added context about each transaction and greater insights for more strategic decision-making. It's easy to list a business to a general category, like a retail store, however being able to further classify this as a men's or women's clothing store or home goods shop, adds more context. Location data providers like Foursquare can supply a greater level of granularity, with its Places data offering 115+ rich attributes that includes location, brand and category, consumer preferences, and more.

# Merchant Data Cleansing Checklist

Here's a list of the steps and items needed for an effective merchant data cleansing strategy:

-  **Dedupe and remove irrelevant data**  
Anything that does not fit into your planned analysis. This is one of the biggest steps in the merchant cleansing process and will lead to a more manageable and performant dataset.
-  **Clear personal data**  
Take careful measures to protect consumer privacy. For example, remove information that isn't PCI DSS compliant like credit card information.
-  **Correct structural errors**  
Fixing strange naming conventions and typos is essential as incorrect entries can cause mislabeled categories and inaccurate analysis.
-  **Fill in missing data**  
Any algorithms you implement will not accept missing values. Removing data with missing values should be your last option, since eliminating the data could mean potentially losing valuable information. Enriching transaction data with location data can help you input missing values based on other related data.
-  **Validate your dataset**  
After cleaning your data, you need to validate it to ensure it is sound and ready for analysis.

## PRO TIP

Consider leveraging a data visualization platform, making it easier to integrate location data and transactional data, and share insights with broader audiences and key decision-makers with ease.

[Try out FSQ Studio →](#)

# Get Started On Cleaning Up Your Merchant Record Data

Remember that messy data can lead to poor decision-making and business strategies. Investing in finding the right data to enrich your dataset with and use to support the transaction data cleansing process is essential to achieving a high level of data quality.

With this, you can perform more accurate analyses to get the insights you need and can trust. And ultimately, make more informed and reliable decisions that can lead to improved responsiveness to customer needs, increased efficiency, added revenue, and better business outcomes.

Learn more about merchant data cleansing  
and how location data can help.

[Connect with our team →](#)

