

Secrets of Lead Generation

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Peter Drucker once stated that there is only one reason for any organization to be in business- the customer. CEO's and entrepreneurs currently conduct myriads of activity to generate prospective clients. Organizations must function to create and develop customer relationships. Prosperous issues include sales promotions, direct mail even cold calling. The practical issue is not the generation of leads; it is what happens when they arrive.

Lead generation is a vital aspect for any organization. Prospective leads are the source for new revenues. Leads when properly handled create a funnel of activity for present and future growth. However, with the time, expense and requirement for ROI, many organizations typically collect leads without the proper follow through. It is imperative to understand that lead generation is a vital portion of the marketing process and requires a strategy.

The strategy for any lead generation campaign is for every organization to depict the required return. Leads for leads sake will not invoke sales. Further it is not the quantity of the leads but the quality. In research for this article, several clients utilize the Internet for sales leads with less than 5 percent reaching closure. CEO's and sales managers must decide on a plan that includes a return on investment. The answer to the question, "What is the intended result we seek?" is vital to the overall plan. Will leads be used to generate sales, build upon a marketing campaign, and fill the newsletter funnel? A result is vital for campaign success.

Strategies must be developed to understand demographics, geographic, psychographic and behavioral issues. Lead generation is a marketing process and requires similar tools to reach potential clients. Market Segmentation assists sales representatives and entrepreneurs to dissect markets into silos congruent with the organizations products and services. Dissection enables marketers to divulge value required by consumers by honing in on client issues. In addition, by segmenting leads by market value, organizations gain better returns with higher placement in smaller markets.

A growing concern for many sales managers and business owners is optimization of sales leads. Each year selling professional's get a plethora of business development leads unfortunately unearthing less than 47 percent. Worse, over 50% remain dormant. One of the largest issues with leads is they sit idle simply awaiting action. Lead generation campaigns cost time and money to every organization from profit to non- profit. It is unconscionable that leads sit. Sales and marketing plans must be revisited to ensure that accountability coincides with every campaign.

Finally, many individuals misunderstand how to obtain leads. One of the perceptions of lead generation is that is simply stems from cold calling- untrue. A second misperception is that leads must be paid for and a third is that outside agencies are required. Lead generation is nothing more than an organizational culture. If businesses truly believed in the quotation from Peter Drucker then all individuals from the CEO to the entry level employee would be involved with lead development. Business leads are gained everyday from typical client interactions. First, every employee must be involved with generating new organizational leads. There is no reason

why the receptionist, customer service representatives and executives cannot ask customers, vendors and suppliers if there are individuals that might be interested in the company's product/service. When all are impassioned with building the business lead generation becomes systemic. Second, leads come from cold calling, trade shows, article marketing, referrals, testimonials and over 30 other methods. There is no reason for any company to pay for a lead especially when current customers become marketing adjuncts. Third, if the culture and selling representatives are working efficiently outside agencies and lists are unnecessary. If momentum provides a consistent leads, organizational internals will provide enough leads. Selling professionals should never complain they have too many leads, nor should they complain that there is little follow-up.

Lead generation is the lifeblood of any business. Leads create new opportunities to move inventory, to build upon brand and to create new revenue. The secrets lie in a thought provocative plan, a series of accountable and a culture that exudes client desire and value. Typically when organizations think of leads, they think numbers. Not true, leads must be thought of as new opportunities to build the business and build the current customer base.

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