



How to Win Business and Influence Your Bottom Line

8 STEPS TO LEADGEN SUCCESS ▼

by Kate Gluck

"FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES, LEAD GENERATION MUST BE LOOKED AT TO DRIVE MORE SALES. IF NOT, CONSIDER IT WASTED EXPENSE, TIME AND EFFORT."

Points to remember:

- » *Understand your goals and objectives*
- » *Understand your buyer*
- » *Target, refine and revisit your lists*
- » *Communicate a clear value*
- » *Educate, don't sell*
- » *Ensure sales and marketing are in synch*
- » *Follow up*
- » *Measure success*

Understand Your Goals and Objectives

Sound simple? Maybe it is. However, unless you understand what your campaign is trying to accomplish you will be in no position to measure its success or failure.

Understand Your Buyer

Knowing who your buyers are, what drives them, what their buying patterns are and what their pain points are is essential for creating empathy with your prospects, closing sales and winning long-term clients. Knowing your market is equally critical to creating an effective lead generation campaign.

Look at the traits and characteristics of your best customers. What do they have in common? Where are they located? What business are they in? The more information you can glean the better.

Once you have defined your targets, streamline them by industry or vertical market. In doing so, you can build a list of quality prospects and craft messaging that will truly resonate with your audience. **Remember, one size does not fit all.** Trying to market to too broad of an audience will lessen the effectiveness of your campaign.

Target, Refine and Revisit Your Lists

One of the most critical assets you have is your prospect list. So how do you get that perfect targeted list? — Strategic trial and error.

Use the abovementioned market research as a starting point and understand that the more detail you can provide a list provider, the greater the chance of getting a quality list to start with.

When it comes to turning lists into leads, "one and done" is not an option. **Think of your list as a living thing which needs to be nurtured in order to thrive.** As you acquire new names via sales calls, inbound marketing, trade shows or referrals, add them to your list. After each outbound campaign, adjust it based on opt-outs, bounced email addresses or phone numbers, those who show interest and those who make it all the way to customer. If your list is not up to date, your credibility takes a hit.

Communicate a Clear Value

When you spend day in and day out living and breathing your company mission, strategizing, refining and positioning your product or service, it is easy to get caught in an insider mentality. "Of course our product is the best... look at all we've put into it," or "Anyone who doesn't see the value of this is just not looking..." It is also easy to start communicating in terms that only insiders understand and assuming that prospects already know why they need your product.

For this reason, it is critical to take a step back and take a good hard look at what your

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CUSTOMERS value about your product or service. (Your sales force should be a valuable source of information in this regard.) Armed with this information you can craft a succinct value statement that speaks to your customers' needs and demonstrates how you can add more value than the competition.

This value statement should then be embraced by your entire organization, so that all communications with your prospects in any given vertical (whether via phone, email or direct mail) concisely convey the same message. **There should be no question about what you do and even less about why your product or service is the panacea for what ails them.**

Educate, Don't Sell

Don't forget that lead generation is about building name recognition, rapport and credibility – about positioning your company as the “go-to resource” in your industry.

As sales and marketing guru Chet Holmes writes in *The Ultimate Sales Machine*, “You will attract way more buyers if you are offering to teach them something of value to them than you will ever attract by simply trying to sell them your product or service.”²

This is especially critical with email marketing because it is so easy to hit the delete key. If you offer quality educational content, not only do you entice more people to open and read your messaging and click through to your website, you create brand awareness. You also give them a reason to open (and even better forward or Tweet) the next message from you that arrives in their inbox.

Ensure Sales and Marketing Are In Synch

Almost as important as defining who your ideal customer is, is defining what constitutes a quality lead so that you can avoid the “80% trap.”

As Brian Carroll writes in *Lead Generation for the Complex Sale*, “There is consensus from numerous sources that sales fails to act on upwards of 80 percent of the leads it

gets... more than likely that number is so high because most of the leads that sales receives aren't qualified leads or appropriate buyers for what is being sold.”¹ (In other words, those passing on the leads have a different opinion of what constitutes a good one than those who are tasked with acting on those leads.)

If sales and marketing define in advance what constitutes a good lead (a prospect with a budget, timeline, interest and intent to change) and work accordingly, return on investment can be optimized.

Follow Up

The reality is that the majority of leads will not lead immediately to a sale. Most will need to be nurtured and developed so that your solution is in the forefront of the prospect's mind when the time comes for them to buy. Because of this, follow up is absolutely essential.

All leads, whether they be attributed to outbound calling, responses to email blasts or inbound inquiries, should be captured in your CRM system, ranked by a pre-defined objective set of criteria and followed up on systematically in order of importance with those closest to a sale first, followed by those which need nurturing. All conversations should be tracked and call-backs scheduled. Over time, you will not only close sales, you will build a strong pipeline of qualified prospects.

Measure Success

Trying to do LeadGen without tracking results is like spitting into the wind. You need to consistently track outbound activities and responses generated from those activities. Log the number of opens or clicks in an email campaign, the number of phone calls made, conference calls held or demonstrations given. Track the number of opportunities created and deals closed.

Remember your objectives and give your plan time to succeed.

¹ Carroll, Brian J. *Lead Generation For The Complex Sale*. New York: McGraw Hill, 2006.

² Holmes, Chet. *The Ultimate Sales Machine*. New York: The Penguin Group, 2007.