

START WITH A LEAD

The eight critical factors for lead/sales generation in the complex sale

The complex sale focuses on specific needs and wants within the target audience. The complex sale is most often found within the business-to-business marketing environment. Better sales leads result in long term, happy and profitable customers; in turn these customers were captured by the complex sale.

The following eight factors are critical for success within the lead generation campaign:

- i. Conversation, not campaign
- ii. Sales and marketing as a team
- iii. Ideal customer profile
- iv. Universal lead definition
- v. Effective lead management process
- vi. Foundational database
- vii. Integrated multi model tactics
- viii. Consistent lead nurturing

Conversation not campaign

We evolve relationships between people through dialogue that positions the lead generation effort as a conversation to identify, initiate and nurture productive selling situations for both parties.

Companies don't buy, people do

Executive buyers choose the person who is a resource, who has taken the time to nurture the relationship regardless of their timing to buy. Customers love people who understand their business and needs whilst also understanding the personal pressures under which they operate. Meeting these criteria makes us a trusted advisor/ company. "How you sell to me is how you will serve me", analogy.

Buying process tactics funnel

Intelligent selling means that we learn and adapt to each customers buying process. Each touch, or contact should add value through ongoing relevance to the targeted individual; consistency extends to the style of delivery within the message. Each company has a staged buying process; by nurturing the lead via regular and meaningful communication we aid the process to progress.

Lead generation model

- i. Enquiry
- ii. Lead
- iii. Sales ready lead
- iv. Qualified prospect
- v. Customer

A targeted lead is highly interactive and highly measurable. Bottom line sales performance measures how well sales and marketing are working together. Lead generation is the most significant touch point between sales and marketing. Effective lead generation both provides and benefits from feedback from both of these departments. A well-oiled sales and marketing machine produces great sales leads and positive results.

Like the complex sale, lead generation with all its facets and interactions, is fueled by the leader and the team. Sales and marketing should have a unified understanding and consensus on what the definition of a sales lead is.

An ideal customer profile

The ideal customer profile helps identify decision makers and key influencers and serves as the basis for a sales ready lead. The ideal customer profile is a framework with which to pursue potential customers, it helps decisions on energy, time and budget allocation. By measuring the value of each customer via attributes of best revenue, easy to do business with and most profitable we can tally a point score which will help in our assessment of pipeline strength and capabilities.

The profile will have certain standardizations, which have been listed below.

- i. Annual revenue
- ii. Industry code
- iii. Number of employees
- iv. Level of contact and functional area
- v. National/ International scope
- vi. Business situation
- vii. Psychographics assessments, (where possible)

(Psychographics aspects include; corporate values, culture, philosophy, leadership plus any internal/ external factors affecting the company. These profiling points will be under development and adjustment as time goes on.

A universal lead definition

The lead fits the ideal customer profile. It prioritizes and defines sales readiness; it spells out responsibility and accountability for the team, (to succeed it needs the team agreement). “The job of the marketing department is to develop a lead generation system that matches the readiness of the buyer with the expectation of the sales person”.

It is important to differentiate between near term, mid term and long term leads by establishing an evaluation/ implementation time frame. Knowledge is focused and driven in order for a compelling solution; this is done with due consideration of the usual factors involved, (buying team, current initiatives and so on).

An effective lead management process

Lead management has the role of watching and directing the conversion of sales leads into customers. Universal lead scoring definitions help implement and enforce standards through clear process and handling. Consistent methodology based on our sales and the buyer's process ensures responsibility for lead tracking and feedback. Measurement of sales performance against objective criteria is thus enabled, (sales lead acceptance – follow up by the sales team); it also facilitates mechanisms and incentives for sales team feedback, updating this contribution leads to better marketing investments.

Lead management process

The marketing mix consists of; e-mail, direct mail, print media, website, outbound calls, webinars, tradeshow. At the top of this pipeline come enquiries, nurturing, then leads. The leads are handed off to the sales department, they are then known as sales ready leads, once qualified they become known as sales generated leads from this they will either become customers or will be passed back to the marketing nurturing phase.

Effective lead management

Lead generation is an ongoing brand building process, quality leads are the order of the day, and improper or inappropriate lead chasing leads to problems throughout the system. Key factors for success include;

- i. Multi model tactics, (effective lead nurturing), via full marketing mix
- ii. Sales closed loop feedback incentive, (leads are never wasted, simply passed back for reworking where possible).
- iii. Effective, utilized well maintained database
- iv. Conformance with the lead generation program

A foundational database

Because many are involved in the complex sale it is important that the useful information is captured in a central location. Profiles and lead definitions will drive the database and lead generation; control of the lead naturally passes over when appropriate. The value of the database is only as good as the buy in of everyone on the lead generation team.

Integrated multi model tactics

A strategy with a multi modality of tactics and repetition of message are key elements, the aim is to heighten response rate potential due to effective impact on contacts and their sphere of influence. Other tactical modes of contact keep the prospect involved and are brought in to play when necessary.

Measuring return of investment in the org', leads generated, business closed, opportunities in the funnel are all vital, these tactics should be analyzed against market tactics and utilized to ensure best practice.

Consistent lead nurturing

“Lead nurturing is not a single marketing campaign, but rather a series of steps and communication tactics with the objective of developing and building a relationship with the potential customer. The relationship will result in conversations, which may lead to sales. A sustainable, long term lead nurturing process is proactive, intentional and actionable. It incorporates multi model tactics designed to move prospects from awareness to interest to trial to action.

A lead nurturing program might ask;

- i. Whom do I want to nurture?
- ii. What problems does the prospect face?
- iii. What is the prospects top priority?
- iv. What does the prospect worry about?
- v. What is my messaging?
- vi. What is the best way to deliver my messaging?
- vii. What action should the prospect take?
- viii. Should my product or service be demonstrated?
- ix. What are the incentives or inducements?
- x. How often should I stay in contact?
- xi. Which tools require direct sales involvement?

Earn the distinction of being a trusted advisor/ expert. Provide insight and solutions rather than pitches. Offer relevant content as the key to nurturing; show we understand the person, the company, the industry. The true value of nurturing comes from staying in touch, providing the right information throughout the evaluation and buying process, resulting in top of mind share, profitable relationships and increased business.

In the end

The complex sale depends on long term diligence and intelligence, as lead generation specialists we dig for leads by educating prospects, navigating the variables within the long term complex sale and therefore benefit from high level return on investment which is the reason for its employ.

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