

Generating Leads For Your Business

A 'lead' is the essential first step to any sale. Whether a telephone call, e-mail or website enquiry seeking a brochure, more information or technical help; without leads, you will have no sales.

Some of these will come to you automatically as your business grows but, if your business is to reach its full potential (and you are to get the best price for it when you come to sell your business), you need to put in place a 'machine' that routinely generates leads for your business.

Generating leads can be done in many ways but this article explores two potential lead generation sources: Networking and Telemarketing.

Both can be very effective - and the mistake is often to expect immediate results when both benefit from a consistent and persistent approach.



Networking

In the case of networking, you will only get the desired results when you approach it with the right attitude and apply the following principles of good business networking:

- Be pro-active and build your network,
- Not reactive and hoping that people will come to you
- Stretch yourself outside your comfort zones



- Be patient yet persistent
- Choose the right type of clients for you
- Make the first move
- Create the right impression from the start
- Use an interesting introduction
- Spend more time listening than talking
- Follow up your contacts after the event
- See 'giving' as the key to networking

Networking groups are springing up far and wide to help business with their lead generation. Be an effective networker and therefore one of the business owners to benefit.

Telemarketing

Equally, with telemarketing, it takes the right approach to find success.

The fact is that not many really know how to deliver a successful telemarketing campaign. But telemarketing is like any other approach to lead generation.

It is actually quite simple and, if you take the time to get the basics right, you can reap the rewards of increased business and improved understanding of your market.

Here is our 10-point plan for telemarketing success:

1. Objectives

Define your objectives and understand what can be achieved

2. Target

Segment your market and know whom you want to focus on. Develop as good a list of targets from your existing database then supplement it by buying a list. These are surprising inexpensive and can often target your potential customers very precisely.

3. Proposition

Develop a proposition tailored to the segment(s) you're targeting – this is NOT your generic corporate proposition.

4. Collateral

Ensure you have collateral that is relevant available to support the campaign – this may or may not be your existing marketing collateral.

5. Mailing

Decide if your calling campaign will benefit from being supported by a mailing piece or e-mailer, or if you want to move straight to the calling phase.

6. The Golden Rule

Make sure your caller(s) is/are sufficiently long in the tooth to understand the business issues that face your contacts.

This is just as important as understanding your own proposition – before we listen to someone telling us what they have to sell we want to feel they understand our needs.

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Converting Prospects To Customers

Whatever your lead generation process, once you have a sufficient flow of leads coming into your business, you need to make sure that you can convert a significant number of them into business or you will be wasting your marketing effort.



The best way to achieve this is to document who says what to the prospect.

This will give you a clear process that can be used consistently and improved based on the results that follow.

This will also make it more and more effective.

Whatever your process, it will need to include the following elements:

Establishing Rapport

If there is no rapport, there will be no sale.

Make the prospect comfortable with you so that you can build a relationship and continue to build that rapport (and the consequent trust) throughout the selling relationship.

Establishing An Upfront Contract

It is important to establish at an early stage what you and your prospect have a right to expect from the forthcoming sales conversation.

This establishes behavioural boundaries and facilitates the decision-making process. It also avoids misreading of the situation.

If your prospect starts making positive statements, you can be confident in relying on them.

Uncover And Probe your Prospect's "Pain"

People buy emotionally (and justify their decisions rationally) and the most intense emotion is pain.

Without a sense of pain, your prospect will favour the status quo and there will be no sale for you.

What "pain" must your prospects experience before they are ready to buy your product or service?

Get All The Money Issues Out On The Table

You must address the cost of your product or service but, equally, you must address the cost to your prospect of not buying from you.

With the scales tipping in your favour, your prospect will buy. If not, no sale as the option of doing nothing remains attractive.

Discover Your Prospect's Decision Making Process

Can they decide alone? Who else is a decision-maker or influencer? Can they decide now or is something missing?

Present A Solution That Will Take Away Your Prospect's "Pain"

When the time is right, present your solution.

A good way to determine when that time has come in the conversation, is to ask "On a scale 0-10, with zero being interest and 10 being ready to buy, where are you? Five or less and you have work to do, 6 to 9 and you can ask "What do you have to see to go to 10"

Above all, make your sales conversations 'win-win' and you will find that you are turning more and more of your leads into sales.

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7. Briefing

Write a detailed briefing document covering every aspect of the proposition, your company's background and – CRUCIALLY – the objectives you believe you can realistically achieve.

8. Preparation

Ensure your caller(s) is/are properly briefed, understand the objectives and have copies of the briefing document and all of the collateral that will be required.

9. Feedback

Once calling begins ensure you are in regular contact with the caller(s) and are aware of the feedback they are receiving.

If you're not getting the results you need you should be ready to react by changing the parameters of the programme at an early stage.

10. Report

When the calling campaign is complete, ensure that a final report is prepared highlighting the actual performance against the objectives set out in the brief and detailing lessons learned and recommendations for future actions.



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Next month: 10 Tips For Finding More Customers ~ Making Your Customers Feel Like They Can Always Come To You

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