A COMPLETE GUIDE TO LEAD GENERATION
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Overview

A Nurture HQ report indicates that generating high-quality, sales-ready leads remains one of their top three priorities for 60% marketers and their highest priority for 26% marketers. Lead generation remains the most important objective for any marketing campaign. In fact, lead generation is the rocket fuel that runs modern marketing engines.

The mere mention of “lead generation” tips or tactics makes most marketers’ eyes sparkle. This is especially true for marketers struggling with sales and leads. Given this fact, it wouldn’t be a hyperbole to say that lead generation is an integral part of any business, be it an ecommerce website or a traditional brick and mortar shop.

Smart marketers cleverly use best practices, explore digital channels, and apply social techniques to turn today’s self-directed buyers into potential leads.

Are you too looking to do what smart marketers do? If you’re nodding your head in a yes, you’re at the right place!

This handy guide will help you understand the lead generation process, planning and strategies in detail. By bridging the gaps in your knowledge, you can definitely get the most out of your lead generation strategies, no matter how large or small your business.
What is a lead?

“Leads are defined as prospective consumers who visit your website, get interested in your products or services and voluntarily provide their contact information.” – TruConversion.com

Simply put: in a marketing context, a lead is a potential buyer who expresses interest in the products or service that you’re selling and voluntarily provides his/her contact information. A visitor to your site turns into a lead only when they do one of the following things:

- Register for a free trial, product demo or a webinar
- Fill the lead capture form and voluntarily provide their contact details
- Call you or send you an email to get more information about your products, services or offers

This vital information that represents a potential customer is a ‘lead’ as this may eventually result in a sale and conversion. Remember, a steady flow of leads can help your business thrive. However, the problem with a majority of buyers is that they actually never buy from you the first time around.

In fact, according to Kissmetrics, approximately 96% of visitors are cold and not ready to buy. This means that only 4% are ready to buy from you.

As a marketer or an online business, your focus should be to turn these 96% website visitors into buyers. So, how will you turn these 96% people into paying customers? The answer is simple: you’ll need to understand the nuances of lead generation and put it into practice.
What is lead generation?

“Lead generation is the collaborative process of tempting strangers to your site, warming them up as potential customer, and getting them to spend on your products or services in order to boost your conversion rates.” – TruConversion.com

In marketing context, lead generation is the process of tempting visitors to your site, getting them interested in your offerings and persuading them to willing provide their personal information. You may create leads for the purpose of list building, e-newsletter list acquisition or for sales.

Generating leads - both high in quantity and quality - is any marketer’s number one objective. But a fair share of marketers believe that lead generation is an art and one needs to master this art to generate more and more high-quality sales-ready leads. However, it’s more science than art for it is based on a systematic approach, a well-defined process, best practices, continuous testing and constant improvement.

Generating constant leads is vital for businesses looking to thrive in today’s ever-so-competitive and ever-so-chaotic market. In fact, the success of a business can be measured by how well it is able to generate leads.
Lead generation is easily the lifeblood for a business. It helps you build brand awareness, bridge relationships with your users, generate sales-ready leads, and ultimately boost your conversions.
Why Do You Need Lead Generation?

In a bid to make sales and take your business off-the-ground, you need to have a line-up of sales-ready and high-quality leads. This is where lead generation strategies come to your rescue. It helps you establish interest of your target market in the products or services you’re offering. Lead generation is the act of spreading awareness about your brand, persuading interested customers and making sales.

But different buyers have different levels of interest and their interest level may widely vary from non-existent to sales ready. So, how will you tap the wide ranging interest of your prospective buyers? The answer is simple! You’ll need to devise segregate your prospects on the basis of their interest level and then devise mature lead generation strategies to capture their attention and interest towards what you’re offering.

A study by Marketo reveals that businesses with strategic lead generation practices achieve 133% greater sales revenue. In addition, sales reps at companies that practice mature lead generation strategies spend 73% of their time selling as against companies without mature lead generation strategies where sales reps spend only 57% of their time selling.

Given these figures, it isn’t too difficult to understand that by using more mature lead generation techniques, you can sell more and generate more revenue for your business. But the rise of social techniques and overabundance of information readily available online has changed the buying process. Now, marketers are faced with the challenge of constantly finding new ways to reach out to prospective buyers and get heard through the noise.

Around 41% marketers believe that marketers their highest marketing priority is to generate more leads. But pushing through a large amount of prospects or potential buyers into their lead generation funnel is easier said than done.
A recent study reveals that 78% marketers struggle with lead generation and more than 60% marketers say improving lead quality is their biggest challenge. Now, the big question here is how would you push through a large amount of high-quality leads and sales-ready prospects into your lead generation funnel?

If you’re focused on boosting conversions, you’ll need to use lead generation strategies to keep the top of your lead funnel full without wasting your time or budget.

Wait what is a Lead Funnel?
What is Lead Funnel?

“A lead funnel is a system that focuses on capturing a large amount of prospects and push them down from the top of the funnel to the bottom end of the funnel turning these prospects into actual buying customers.” – TruConversion.com

Understanding the mechanics of lead funnel is important as it will help you optimize your marketing activities and advertising campaigns to ensure that your prospects come out the end of the funnel as actual, paying customers.

Lead Funnel takes the typical AIDA (Awareness, Interest, Desire, and Action) to the next level, defining the stages buyers’ journey from landing up on a website to the point of sale. While for buyers the funnel is segmented into four different stages, the stages that lead passes through on the journey through the funnel is a little complex for marketers.
Mapping Lead Generation to Your Funnel

Now that you understand what a lead funnel is, the next step is to define your lead generation process and map your lead funnel to understand where your prospect exactly are in their buying journey so that you can devise an appropriate strategy to lure them into making a purchase. Mapping your lead funnel is extremely important as it helps you devise your strategies, create campaigns, build messages and measure your performance.

A typical lead funnel is divided into three parts – Top of the Funnel (TOFU), Middle of the Funnel (MOFU) and Bottom of the Funnel (BOFU). As a marketer, you devise different set of strategies for each stage of your lead funnel to effectively push your prospects from the top of the funnel, qualifying them as sales ready leads at the middle of the funnel, to finally turning those leads into buying customers at the bottom of the funnel.

Here’s how the three stages of lead funnel look like.
Top-Of-Funnel (TOFU)

The top of the funnel is the stage where you get the broadest amount of leads. Prospects in this stage are at the very beginning of their sales journey and are only aware of your product or service but aren’t still ready to buy from your site.

A large segment of marketers believe that the top of the lead funnel isn’t that important stage. On the contrary, it is perhaps the most important part of your lead funnel. After all, without optimizing the top of your lead funnel, how would you draw people in?

This is where you grab a customer’s attention and keep it all the way through the buying process.

This stage is further divided into three sub-stages.

- **Name**: This is the stage where a prospect visits your site and willingly provides his or her name and contact details. But be advised, by just providing their name and contact details, they don’t become leads for you. They aren’t yet ready to communicate with your company.

- **Engaged**: This is the stage where your prospects has engage into a meaningful communication with your company. These prospects are aware that their name and contact details has been added to your database and they expect your company to communicate its offerings to them via emails, or calls.

- **Target**: This is the stage where you determine if the engaged prospect is a qualified buyer or not. This means that you’ll need to analyze if the engaged prospect fits well into your demographic and behavioral criteria. Only when you qualify the engaged prospects, they are moved to the next stage in the funnel.

By tailoring your messages, offers and communication, you can effectively move your visitors in the TOFU stage down to the Middle of the funnel.

Middle-of-Funnel (MOFU)

Remember, you don’t just need to acquire leads, you’ll also need to nurture them till they become actual, paying customers. The lead nurturing takes place in the Middle of the Funnel or the MOFU stage. The goal here is to get your leads acquainted with your business, products and services. You’ll need to give those who have come to your blog, your website, your landing page, etc. a better understanding of how your business can help them.

This is also where you deliver the offer that you’ve promised at the top of the funnel. Middle of the funnel is your opportunity to produce, to gain trust, and to gently advertise what it is that you have to offer.
This stage is further divided into two sub-stages.

- **Lead**: Finally, you have been able to convert a target into a qualifying lead. A lead or Marketing Qualified Lead (MQL) is a person who is indeed interested in spending on your offerings. In this stage, you reach out to the lead and connect with them. If they are ready, you simply convert them into an official sales lead. But if they aren’t, you don’t just leave them thinking that the conversation was a waste of time. You’ll need to move them back to the target stage for more nurturing.

- **Sales Lead**: Also called Sales Accepted Lead, these are the lead passed from you to your sales team who will then follow up with the lead directly. In this sub-stage, your sales team can either turn the sales lead into an opportunity (an actual paying customer) or to send that lead back to the target stage for more nurturing.

**Bottom-of-Funnel (BOFU)**

Bottom of the Funnel is where the actual buying (conversion) takes place. It is at the bottom of the funnel where you finally turn your sales ready leads into an actual paying customer. Quite naturally, bottom of the funnel remains one of the most critical stages of your lead generation process. In this stage you’ll need to promote offers that are specific to your products or services.

This stage is also divided into two different sub-stages.

- **Opportunity**: Leads in this stage of the funnel are all set to spend on your offerings. All you need to do is to pursue them properly and keep their interest high in your offerings. Here, you’ll want to offer something that will get them into a commitment such as a free trial, a demo, or a discount offer for your products or a free consultation.

- **Customer**: Customer is the lead who has finally spent on your services or products. This is perhaps the most important stage for any ecommerce marketer for it adds to the overall conversion for a business.

Remember, today customers are bombarded with a variety of offers, products, and services. Quite naturally, you’ll need to fully understand their behavior and journey through your lead funnel to map out an effective lead generation strategy to not only generate sales, but also create loyalty and advocacy amongst customers.

After you have successfully mapped out your lead funnel and have a good idea of what happens to the visitors who come to your site, it’s critical to build lead generation programs that resonate well with the buyers and influence their purchasing decisions. And to do that effectively, you’ll need to understand how to build a robust lead generation plan.
How to Build a Robust Lead Generation Plan?

Over the years, there has been a dramatic change in the buying process. With the rise of Internet and abundance of information, today’s buyers have become ‘self-directed’. Buyers now complete around two-thirds to 90% of their buying process before they even reach businesses. Grabbing a customer’s attention and keeping it all the way through the buying process has become difficult than ever.

Given all this, marketers are faced with the challenge of discovering innovative ways to reach out to customers and create lead generation plans that cuts through the noise and gets them heard. Devising a solid lead generation plan is the only way out for marketers to capture the interest and attention of your buyers and build trust.

But creating such a foolproof lead generation plan is easier said than. In fact, 46% marketers believe that lack of an effective strategy is perhaps the biggest challenge in reaching the next level of lead generation performance.

This is precisely why you need to spend some time planning your lead generation strategies. Check out this seven step plan to create a successful lead generation strategy.

1. PLAN: A great campaign starts with a great plan. You must have heard this many times, it’s a cliché, but it is true – a well laid out plan is critical to lead generation success. It aids decision making and increases the efficiency of your strategies by reducing the risks involved.

   - **Analyze your current needs:** Carry out an in-depth analysis of your needs beforehand. Perform a needs analysis early in the process.

   - **Set smart goals:** Now, this may sound rhetorical, but it’s important to set smart goals. Once you have determined what you need to accomplish with your lead generation strategy, do well to set a specific, measurable, accurate, relevant and time-bound goal for your lead generation program.

   - **Develop buyer personas:** To map out a perfect lead generation strategy, figure out who your ideal customer is, where do they come from, what’s their average age, what do they do, what they require and how your products or services can address their concerns.

2. CREATE: Now that you’ve figured out your needs, set your goals and understood what your customers want, it’s time to create offers, messages, content and communication that they simply can’t resist. Remember, you must focus on creating lead generation plan that is likely to turn even the most discerning souls into new clients.
- **Create lucrative offers:** The process of lead generation begins and mostly revolves around one thing: creating an irresistible offer for your prospects. You need to create offers for each stage of your lead funnel.

- **Create amazing content:** You’ll need content at every stage of your lead funnel. You’ll need content to educate, engage your prospects and even get them into a commitment. Be careful of mapping out a different and creative content strategy for each stage of the funnel.

3. **DISTRIBUTE:** Now that you have created compelling content and offers to tempt and engage your audiences, it’s time to evenly distribute your content to ensure maximum impact. Remember, an effective distribution is the key to a successful lead generation program. Don’t forget to use relevant keywords your content and offers. Use a content calendar to schedule strategic content distribution.

- **Use owned media channels:** Distribute your content on your website, your company blog and your social media pages to drive in traffic. In addition, use your email and send out your content and offers to your email contacts too.

- **Use earned media network:** Use social proof, press coverage and customer reviews and testimonials to your advantage to increase brand awareness and grab the attention of users towards your business and brand.

- **Use paid media platforms:** Paid media is third part channels that you may leverage to catch and hold the attention of your target audience. Paid media channels can get you quick results in terms of surging traffic and inbound leads.

4. **CAPTURE:** Now that you have created compelling content and offers and have started getting traffic, the next step is capturing their information so that you can convert them from a visitor to a lead. You’ll need to get your leads acquainted with your business and get them to your call-to-action and get them to fill out the lead capture form on your landing pages.

- **Provide lucrative offers:** Remember, offers are the most critical component of your lead generation process. Add a sense of urgency to your offers to make visitors act fast. Don’t forget to align your offers with trending topics.

- **Use compelling call-to-action** Call-to-action is what guides your users to complete the conversion action. Therefore, do well to ensure that your CTAs capture your visitors’ attention and tempt them to click on it. Keep your CTAs above the fold and use contrasting colors to make them stand out.

- **Optimize lead capture forms:** Remember, the goal here is to make your visitors provide their contact information willingly. In order to do it effectively, keep your
forms short and ask for only the most relevant information. Add privacy assurance to gain the trust of your visitors.

5. **ANALYZE**: Just like anything else, you’ll need to find out what’s working and what’s not working in order to make necessary changes to lead generation strategy. It is important to closely track your key performance indicators to identify areas of strength and discover the areas that aren’t performing well and need improvement.

- **Check top lead sources**: Analyze your lead sources to find out which source is driving you the most traffic.

- **Analyze your content**: Track the performance of your content in every stage of the funnel to see what type of content is the most successful for your business. Check out what topics are read most and which ones aren’t able to get any clicks or views.

- **Monitor your offers**: Just ensuring an offer doesn’t guarantee that your audiences will like it. That’s why you’ll need to constantly track and monitor if your offers resonate well with your target audiences.

6. **CULTIVATE**: Remember, not every visitor who comes to your site is ready to buy from you. You’ll need to use best practices to move your leads through the funnel. You’ll need to constantly work on retaining the interest of your leads to prevent them from dropping off and establishing their desire to interact with your company.

- **Use email campaigns**: In order to help you visitors know your business, products and services better, do well to use email (DRIPP) campaigns. Retaining their interest in being part of your email list is vital.

- **Nurture relations**: Work on Strategies to build this lead into a long-term relationship that involves both trust and loyalty with your business.

7. **CONVERT**: Finally, it’s time to devise a conversion strategy to persuade your customers to the point of sales. You’ll need to implement a careful plan of approach and conversion strategy to close new customers.

- **Segment your visitors**: Now, when you’re finally able to get the top of your lead funnel overflow with customers, it’s time to segment your users as per their site behavior and browsing history.

- **Personalize offers**: Personalize offers as per the taste and preferences of your users to tempt them into making a purchase and cultivate the relationship with your business for long time.
Remember, a lead generation plan involves stimulating attention and interest of prospects towards your product or service. But you will be surprised to know that even the most carefully sketched plan may backfire if you’re clueless about the mechanics of lead generation. So if you’ve already drew out a robust plan and are all set to give it a try, do well to take a moment and get acquainted to the mechanics of lead generation. It will help you give your lead generation plan an overhaul.
The Mechanics of Lead Generation

Now that you understand what lead generation process and what are the major challenges associated with lead generation, we’re sure that you’ll be all set to start capturing leads and building your subscriber base.

But remember that the task is easier said than done.

You’ll need to first determine the mechanics of the lead generation process in order to successfully achieve your desired objective.

There are 4 major components of the lead generation process. These are:

- Landing Page
- Lead Capture Forms
- Offer
- Call-to-Action

By simply putting all these elements together and integrating them with your lead generating strategy, you may drive oodles of traffic to your site and start generating high-quality and sales ready leads.

Now that you know the major components of lead generation process, let’s discuss a little more on how to optimize these elements for maximum lead generation.
Part 1: Landing Pages

“A landing page is a web page that serves as the entry point for visitors who click on your banner ads or social media links. Landing pages are most frequently used to capture leads.” – TruConversion.com

Companies with 40+ landing pages get 12 X more leads. Quite naturally, landing pages are often the most critical elements of your lead generation process as they help you direct your website visitors to better targeted pages and facilities lead capturing at much higher rate.

Here are some top tips to optimize your landing pages for maximum lead generation with minimum efforts:

1. Images
   - Select brand focused images.
   - Add picture of customers.
   - Ensure clutter-free space.
2. Copy

- Use short landing page copy.
- Keep it action-oriented.
- Convey your USP.

3. Pop-ups

- Don’t use more than 2 pop-ups.
- Keep pop-forms short and crisp.
- Don’t let pop-ups slow your page.

4. Headline

- Use powerful headlines.
- Make headline offer specific.
- Keep your headline action-oriented.

5. Call to Action

- Select contrasting colors.
- Use bigger buttons.
- Make it action-oriented.

6. Design

- Avoid visual clutter.
- Take care of proper formatting.
- Use consistent design and navigation.

Part 2: Lead Capture Forms

“A lead capture form helps you gather user data. The form contains a series of fields to collect information from users in exchange for an offer.” - TruConversion.com

Lead capture forms are perhaps the most important component of a lead generation process for they facilitate the overall process by collecting personal information of the users. You may then use the data to personalize your offerings to better target the user. These forms actually make it possible for marketers to successfully capture leads.
But remember people don’t just give up their personal information on a whim. In order to collect the data, you’ll need to optimize your lead capture forms.

Here’s how you can do it:

1. Include a privacy statement to assure your visitors that their information will not be shared with third parties or misused in any other way.

2. Keep your form short and only a fewer necessary elements. Too lengthy forms can startle your visitors and put them on edge.

3. Don’t leave a lot of space in between your form fields. But make sure that all the fields are in a clutter-free space.

4. Use optional fields on your form to reduce the amount of information requested from the prospects.
5. Try out a two-step form. It has been noticed that two-step forms can convert better than one page ones.

6. Place your form above the fold and avoid using captcha on the forms.

**Part 3: Offer**

“An offer is something that you’re offering to your prospects in exchange for their personal information.” – TruConversion.com

Offer is the most critical component of your lead generation process. Remember, this is why your visitors have come to your landing page. Therefore, it is important for you to ensure that your offer has enough value to persuade your visitors to provide their personal information in exchange for access to it.

Here’s how you can make your offer irresistible for your visitors:

1. Make it a limited time and/or quantity offer. This will help you add a sense of urgency to your offer persuading your visitors to act upon it before it is gone.
2. Add social proof. Use customer testimonials to show how popular is your offer. Remember, 72% users say that positive reviews make them trust a local business more.

3. Align your offers with trending topics. This process is called “newsjacking”. It can help you increase your traffic as more and more people tend to search for trending topics.

4. Promise what you deliver.

5. Don’t forget to keep testing your offer.

Part 4: Call to Action

“Call-to-Action is an image, button, or message that guides visitors to take some action. In terms of lead generation, this action is filling out the lead capture form on the landing page in order to redeem the offer.” – TruConversion.com

Call-to-action (CTA) remains the key component to drive users to your offers. Remember, if you’re CTAs fail to capture users’ attention and tempt them to click, then all your lead generation efforts will go down the drain.

HOW CTA IS IGNORED BY MARKETERS

70% businesses do not have call to action buttons.

47% websites feature properly placed call-to-action buttons that takes users 3 seconds or less to spot.

72% businesses don’t have any calls to action on their interior pages.

70% of websites don’t display call-to-action buttons on their home page.
Though CTAs remain one of the integral components of the process, not all CTAs are able to facilitate lead generation. That’s why it is important to optimize your CTA to boost your lead generation efforts.

Here’s how you can do it:

1. Keep your CTAs above the fold. Don’t forget to keep your CTAs simple.
2. Use contrasting color schemes to make CTAs stand out on the landing page.
3. **Be creative with your CTAs.** Use words that provoke emotion or enthusiasm. But don’t forget to keep your button copy short.
4. Make your button a size that makes sense. Test your CTA size to understand what works better with your audiences; a bigger CTA button or a smaller one.
5. Ensure that your CTA looks clickable.
How Do You Qualify Someone As A Lead?

Not properly qualifying prospects before taking them through the sales process leads to 67% lost sales according to keynote speaker - Steven Tulman.

This results in a considerable amount of wastage of your valuable time and resources. Here’s what you must keep in mind to qualify someone as a lead.

- **Need** – Identify the needs of the prospect.
- **Uniqueness** - Provide a unique solution to meet the needs of the prospects.
- **Budget** – Find out if your prospects have or can find the budget to invest into services or products they need to address their concerns.
- **Influence Level** – Determine if your prospects have the authority or influence to make a purchase decision.
- **Timeline** - Understand the kind of timeline your prospect is looking for.
Lead Generation Methods

According to the 2015 B2B Lead Generation Report, marketers are now more focused on lead quality than lead quantity. But when it comes to measuring the effectiveness of existing lead generation programs, a large number of marketers aren’t satisfied.

80% believe that their lead generation efforts are only slightly effective, while 4% report their lead generation programs as not effective at all.

Another survey conducted by Bright Talk reveals that company website, SEO, email marketing, and social media marketing are the most effective lead generation tactics being used today.

Effectiveness ratings of B2B Lead Generation Tactics

- Company Website: 83%
- SEO: 77%
- Email Marketing: 80%
- Social Media: 61%

Source: B2B Lead Generation Trends Report 2015, Holger Schulze for BrightTalk
Lead generation strategies are broadly segmented into Outbound Lead Generation and Inbound Lead Generation.

Outbound Lead Generation strategies majorly includes:

- Display Ads
- Pay-per-Click Ads
- Content Syndication
- Direct Mail Advertisements
- Event Marketing

On the other hand, Inbound Lead Generation strategies include:

- Content Marketing
- Social Media Marketing
- SEO
- Website Optimization
- Email Marketing

In the next chapter, we’ll discuss the Inbound & Outbound Lead Generation Strategies in greater details.
Part-1 - Outbound Lead Generation

“Outbound lead generation, also commonly referred to as interruption lead generation, is the traditional lead gen strategy where marketers send messages directly to their prospects at times best suited to their business.” – TruConversion.com

Outbound strategies are generally helpful to reach out to consumers who are not yet aware of your business or brand. Though a fair share of marketers and experts dismiss this traditional method as outdated and ineffective, it’s highly targeted and can push a prospect down the lead funnel at an extremely faster rate.

Let’s discuss some of the most popular outbound lead generation strategies.

Part 1 (a) - Display Ads

“Display ads are the search engine advertisements that typically include an offer, company logo and images.” – TruConversion.com

Usually display ads are highly-targeted to demographic or behavioral actions of prospects and buyers. Display ads allow you to select where you want those ads to be seen by your target audiences.
Display advertising significantly affects click-throughs and traffic when combined with paid and organic search.

Source: Cobalt Business Intelligence

Display ads serve a specific purpose at every stage in the funnel. They help you build brand awareness at the Top of Funnel, capture the interest of visitors at Middle of Funnel, and persuade customers to spend on your products or services at the Bottom of Funnel. No wonder, U.S. display ad spend is likely to reach $37.36 billion by 2017.

But generating leads with display ads is easier said than done. The average ad CTR is 0.06% across all ad formats and placements. Quite like your CTA, the copy of your display ads is important too. Be creative with your ad copy.

Part 1 (b): Pay-Per-Click Ads

“PPC is an online advertising model where advertisers display ads for their products, services or offers. The model allows advertisers to pay only when a user actually clicks on their ad.” – TruConversion.com
Pay-Per-Click (PPC) ads are affordable advertisement option for marketers as such ads allow you to pay for each click on your ad displayed on a search engine or on a website. PPC ads make for the best way to capture attention of your audience to latest content or service offerings. These PPC ads are highly-targeted ads and help you generate very high quality leads.

Part 1 (c): Content Syndication

“Content syndication is the process of promoting and pushing your content on third-party sites.”
– TruConversion.com

Content syndication helps you drive more and more traffic to your site by wiring your content into related digital contexts in order to boost traffic or get exposure for your brand. If done rightly, content syndication can prove to be a very effective way to boost your reputation and visibility online.
Part 1 (d): Direct Mail Advertisements

“Direct mail advertisements mean contacting carefully targeted prospects with custom tailored offers or promotional material (such as brochures, circulars, letters, newsletters) on one-to-one basis via ordinary mail or email.” – TruConversion.com

Direct Mail is not yet a thing or concept of the past but is still as effective as it used to be. Direct Mail technique can be used to keep consumers aware of new products, new services and changes made. It is a simple way to grab the consumer attention and add more potential customers.

Direct mail continues to be used heavily, with a 43% share of total local retail advertising. 39% of customers try a business for the first time because of direct mail advertising (DMA). According to a USPS study, over 60% of direct mail recipients were influenced to visit promoted website – with the greatest influence on first-time shoppers.
Part 1 (e) – Event Marketing

“It is the lead generation activity that involves designing or developing of a themed occasion, display, or exhibit (such as a sporting event, music festival, fair, or concert) to promote a product, cause, or organization.” – TruConversion.com

Events are one way for B2B marketers to engage and advance their relationships with customers. In fact, 79% of marketers rank events as important to their business and 67% of B2B marketers think that event marketing is their most effective lead generation strategy.

Despite this trend towards digital, one interesting paradox remains: as internet and inbound-based marketing efforts continue to rise in popularity and efficacy, marketers across the US continue to cite live events and experiences as one of their most effective tactics.
EVENTS

- Conferences
- Seminars
- Presentation
- Workshops
Part-2 - Inbound Lead Generation

“Inbound lead generation is the process of helping prospects find your company, even before they plan to make a purchase, and then turn that early awareness into brand preference, and ultimately into leads and revenue.” – TruConversion.com

According to Forrester, buyers strive for three pieces of content about a vendor for every one piece provided by a marketer, and for every one piece sent by sales. Modern day discerning buyers are more educated and aware about their choice of products, hence, making your job as a marketer hard enough to spring up with new tactics for generating leads.

Try to develop interest by offering an appropriate mix of informative and engaging content that creates a meaningful bond with your audience. Also ensure the right channels have been employed to distribute your content – find out where your buyer invests his time the most.

Let’s discuss some of the popular strategies for inbound lead generation.

Part 2 (a): Content Marketing

“Content marketing is the marketing practice focused upon creating and distributing relevant, informative and consistent content to attract, acquire, and engage a well-defined target audience.” – TruConversion.com

Content is the very center of your lead generation efforts. No wonder, it is so popular amongst modern-day marketers. It was found out in a survey that 90% marketers’ use
content marketing and around 83% marketers rely on content marketing for lead generation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATION GOALS for B2B Content Marketing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand Awareness</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
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</table>

Content marketing yields enough power and substance to engage prospects in today’s ever-so-competitive market. However, to effectively do so, your content must educate, inspire, and persuade your users to be shared.

**Part 2 (b): SEO**

“SEO or Search engine optimization simply means strategies to rank higher on the online search engine result pages.” – TruConversion.com

SEO is one of the best tools that comes in handy when it comes to generating more and more high-quality and sales-ready leads. SEO leads have a 14.6% close rate, while outbound leads (such as direct mail or print advertising) have a 1.7% close rate. No wonder, 89% marketers’ worldwide rate SEO as the most successful practice for achieving objectives of improved lead generation. In addition, 57% B2B marketers and 41% B2C marketers say that SEO hugely impacts lead generation.
But generating leads through SEO is easier said than done! This is because SEO is an ever-evolving industry and trends keep on shifting like a clock. And that’s why it is important to stay current on trends in SEO if you’re looking to be at the top of your game.

**Part 2 (c): Website Optimization**

“*Website optimization is the process of designing or ameliorating your website to rank well on SERPS, provide ultimate user experience and generate more leads.*” – TruConversion.com

Commonly confused with Search optimization, Website optimization is one of the most sought after ways to generate more high-quality and sales-ready leads. It comes as no surprise because lead generation is all about driving traffic to your site and turning the strangers to site into paying customers.
Optimizing your website is very important because approximately 96% of visitors who come to your website are not ready to buy. A 1 second delay in your site speed can result in a 7% reduction in conversions. Still 61% of companies do less than 5 tests per month and 63% of marketers who optimize their websites do it solely on intuition and best practices.

Part 2 (d): Social Media Marketing

“Social media marketing essentially means using social networking sites such as Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter and Instagram to market a brand, products or services.” – TruConversion.com

Over the years, social media has become one of the most important lead generation tools for businesses. In fact, 58% marketers who have been using social media for three years or longer cite that it helped them increase sales manifold.

51% users say that social opinions influence their purchase decisions; and 46% count on social media when buying online. Social media has a much higher lead-to-close rate than outbound marketing. 61% of marketers use social media to generate leads!
Given the fact that such a staggering number of companies are using social media to their advantage, you may feel a little confused on how to make your strategy, stand out from the crowd and generate more and more leads.

**Part 1 (e): Email Marketing**

“Email marketing is a way to introduce your message and content to your prospects, typically via electronic mail.” – TruConversion.com

Widely considered to be one of the best ways to connect with buyers and prospects, email marketing remains a crucial part of any marketing mix. Email marketing continues to dominate the playing field as long as driving traffic, building brand awareness and generating conversions is concerned.

59% marketers prefer to use email marketing for lead generation. It’s no wonder since email marketing helps businesses generate **50% more sales-ready leads** at 33% lower cost, according to Hubspot. In fact, email marketing provides **4,300% ROI** for businesses in the United States.
What Should You Choose Inbound or Outbound Lead Generation?

It’s certainly a great debate. Should you choose to invest in inbound lead generation strategies or go with the traditional outbound lead generation approach? To understand it better, let’s take a look at the basic difference between the two.

Outbound lead generation techniques involve cold calling, direct mail advertising, and event management. With a little careful approach and well-thought out plan, you may generate maximum number of high-quality, sales-ready leads. However, HubSpot’s State of Inbound 2015 Report reveals that 3 out of 4 marketers prefer inbound approaches.

Check out the graph below to see how inbound techniques have been steadily growing in popularity,
Now, why is that?

Because inbound lead generation methods cost less and drives more leads and sales. Yeah! You heard it right! Inbound lead generation techniques are 61% more cost-effective than outbound lead generation techniques.

**Average Cost Per Lead Inbound Vs. Outbound Lead Generation Methods**

The one thing that most businesses, especially startups and small businesses, remain obsessed with is cost-reduction. And inbound lead generation proves to be less expensive than outbound techniques.

All you require is to create high-quality content and leverage SEO, social media, and your website to attract visitors to your site and turn them into leads. A report by SEOprocessor.com reveals that inbound techniques cost an average of $36 per lead, whereas traditional, outbound techniques cost $41 per lead.

The report further reveals that the average cost per customers acquired through outbound techniques is $268. In comparison, the average cost per customer acquired by businesses leveraging primarily inbound techniques is $254.
Let's also talk about the Average Cost involved in inbound lead generation methods such as SEO, blogging, and social media and outbound lead generation methods such as direct mail, trade shows, and telemarketing. A survey conducted by Hubspot reveals that found out that blogging, social media and organic searches proved to be the least expensive lead generation techniques, whereas trade shows, direct mail, and telemarketing were more expensive.

Though the survey was conducted in January 2012, the findings of this survey are still very much relevant. The survey found out that blogging had the highest instance of being reported as 'Below Average Cost' and 52% of companies who blog indicated leads from this channel were 'Below Average Cost.'
Findings of the survey clearly reveal that inbound marketing proves to be a great option to drive high-quality and sales-ready leads to your business.

Remember, a solid lead generation strategy is all about building trust and capture the interest of your buyers. And inbound lead generation does just that. It involves attracting qualified leads by creating content designed with target audience in mind.

However, traditional outbound lead generation practices are intrusive and often make buyers resilient towards a business. This is because outbound practices usually bring you a potentially disinterested audience. Since you are contacting people who don’t expect to hear from you, you’re spoiling prospects’ perception for your brand. Remember, today’s modern day discerning customers are much more likely to go with an organization that they believe are trustworthy and helpful.

If you’re still in a dilemma of what to choose – inbound or outbound lead generation strategy, here’s a quick points of differences between the two to help you make a well-informed decision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INBOUND MARKETING</th>
<th>OUTBOUND MARKETING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permissive</td>
<td>Interruptive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pull tactics</td>
<td>Push tactics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two-way communication</td>
<td>One-way communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marketers provide value</td>
<td>Marketers provide little to no value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customers come to you</td>
<td>Customers are sought after</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Channels: Search engines, referrals, social medias</td>
<td>Channels: Print ads, TV ads, radio, telemarketing...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost Effective</td>
<td>Costlier</td>
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Given the comparison table above, it isn’t difficult to understand why the days of outbound lead generation are done and over with.

Over the years, there has been a dramatic shift in the preference of buyers. Buyers prefer to discover answers to all their questions on their own. They prefer business that provide
answers to their questions without being too pushy. This brings us back to generating leads through inbound lead generation.

As discussed, inbound lead generation is all about creating high-quality content and leveraging SEO, social media, and content marketing to attract and engage your target audiences. Inbound lead generation strategies help you start a dialogue with your target audience. Then, once they are part of the discussion, it becomes easier for you to convert them into high-quality sales ready leads.

Before we proceed any further, let’s check out some statistics that inbound vs. outbound lead generation techniques.
Statistics on Inbound vs. Outbound Marketing

1. 32% brands are decreasing spending on outbound marketing to spend more on content marketing. (Source: Inbound Marketing Agents)

2. Because 61% of consumers say they feel better about a company that delivers custom content, they are also more likely to buy from that company. (Source: Custom Content Council)

3. 90% of consumers find custom content useful and 78% believe that organizations providing custom content are interested in building good relationships with them. (Source: McMurry/TMG)

4. 84% of 25-to-34-year-olds have abandoned their favorite sites due to intrusive advertising. (Source: Mashable)

5. Companies that spend more than 50% of their lead generation budget on inbound marketing report a significantly lower cost-per-lead. (Source: HubSpot)

6. Inbound marketing costs 62% less per lead than traditional outbound marketing. (Source: Mashable)

7. 86% people skip television ads. (Source: Mashable)

8. 21% marketers believe telemarketing was reported as being “above average” in cost by 21% of respondents. (Source: Mashable)

9. Marketers allocate 34% of their overall budgets to inbound tactics – 11% more than they dedicate to outbound strategies, like banners, direct mail and more. (Source: Gannett Local)

10. 200 million Americans have registered their phone numbers on the FTC’s “Do Not Call” list. (Source: Mashable)
Lead Generation Trends For 2016

For marketers looking to generate more and more high-quality and sales-ready leads, there is simply no moment to waste. This is because 2016 promises to be the time when the world of lead generations will undergo a complete transformation. But how can marketers stay prepared to kick start your lead generation efforts with a bang with 2016? Simple! They need to get schooled on the top lead generation trends of 2016.

1. **Rise of ‘Exit Intent’ technology** - Exit intent technology is set to become a trend in the world of lead generation for it assists in capturing as many leads as possible and nurturing them to conversion. Exit intent technologies such micro surveys and pop-up surveys can help you address Shopping cart abandonments and engagement related issues.

2. **‘Personalization’ will rule the roost** – With so many websites, leveling the playing field has become difficult than ever. And this is why personalization seems to have become an important component of lead generation strategies. Personalization makes it easy for you to present your content, offers and message in a way that speaks to your target audience and resonates with them in the best way possible. With the way things are going, personalization is likely to still dominate lead generation strategies for a few more years to come.

3. **‘Retargeting’ is set to break the mold** - Retargeting is a brilliant method to elicit response from prospects. With retargeting, you can follow your prospects wherever they are, making sure that your business is able to grab the eyeballs of your target prospects. Retargeting supports your leads generation endeavors with as little disruption as possible. Expect to see retargeting taking the center stage in 2016.

4. **‘On-site Tracking’ will become a norm** – It has become important for businesses and marketers to collect data and get an insight on the site behavior of their visitors in order to use target ads. Doing so will help you build targeted ads with your visitors’ interests and behaviors to engage them in a conversion.

5. **‘Testing' will become important than ever** – Smart marketers know that they can’t rest on their laurels. Constantly testing the efficiency of your lead generation strategies keeps them increasing their amount of leads and level of engagement. We’re sure other marketers will follow suit and constantly test their strategies to stay ahead in the game in 2016.
Inbound Lead Generation Trends

Now that you know the difference between inbound and outbound lead generation strategies, it is important to know some inbound lead generation trends to stay ahead of the game.

Here are some such trends revealed in report published at Onpath.com.

- Increasing the quality of leads is the top priority for 68% marketers followed by increasing lead volume which is a priority for 55% marketers.
- 59% marketers believe that generating high-quality leads is their biggest B2B lead generation challenge.
- Lack of resources such as staff, funding and time remains the biggest obstacle to successful B2B lead generation for 61% marketers.
- 58% marketers who say their lead generation budget will increase in 2016.
- Despite the hype around mobile marketing, 45% marketers aren’t sure what role mobile marketing will play in their lead gen strategies.

With this trends, it wouldn’t be an exaggeration to say that targeting right people to generate high-quality leads is more important than ever for marketers.
What Inbound Techniques Generate Highest Volume of Leads?

Ok! Now you understand that inbound lead generation methods are more helpful than outbound ones. But the big question here is – which inbound lead generation techniques generate the highest volume of leads? A recent survey of marketers from over 219 small and midsize U.S. organizations by Formstack reveals the channels that generate highest volume of leads.

The survey report reveals that biggest generator of high-volume leads is website optimization (approx.24%), followed by email marketing (approx.18%) and social media marketing (15%).
Inbound Lead Generation Challenges

Inbound lead generation could easily be the lifeline for any business. But is it such an easy process? The answer is NO!

Identifying, qualifying and generating new leads can prove to be one of the most difficult challenges any marketer can face. Issues such as resources, time and budget are the biggest threats to successful B2B lead generation.

It is really difficult to realize your ROI targets with lead generation, particularly when converting leads into actual buyers is a major struggle for many. In fact, 90% marketers aren’t satisfied with their lead generation efforts. This means only 1 in 10 marketers feel their lead generation campaigns are effective.

Here are some stats that reveal lead generation challenges that today’s marketers are faced with.

- 61% B2B marketers believe that generating high-quality leads is the biggest challenge. (Source: B2B Technology Marketing Community).
- 73% all B2B leads are not sales-ready. (Source: MarketingSherpa)
- 79% marketing leads never convert into sales. (Source: Sales Staff)
- 96% website visitors are not ready to buy. (Source: Marketo)
- Only 1 in 10 marketers feel their lead generation campaigns are effective. (Source: Immediatefuture.co.uk)
You are now aware of the lead generation challenges. But how would you optimize each inbound generation strategy that you intend to use in order to generate maximum leads? Well, you’ll need to learn the challenges associated with each inbound lead generation technique, and how to optimize your campaigns. Doing so will help you devise inbound campaigns to achieve a higher ROI.

But is that all? NO! You’ll also need to learn lessons from companies that have emerged as shining examples of inbound lead generation genius and put their examples into practice. So, let’s start with content marketing.
Content Marketing

Part 1 - Challenges

A report by Content Marketing Institute revealed that 54% of B2B marketers and 50% of B2C marketers believe that building content that creates opportunity for engagement is one of the biggest content marketing challenges.

Content marketers face a difficult conundrum. They lack the time and sustained effort to create the content in order to execute a sophisticated, tailored content marketing strategy. However, those very content creation activities are the cornerstones of attracting new leads.

Let’s take a look at some of the biggest content marketing challenges for 2016.

Despite the fact that more and more companies now use content marketing, a large number of marketers are still struggling to produce the type of content that engages their audiences. In fact, nearly all organizations are creating content, but less than 50% are able to build content that create opportunity for engagement and lead generation.
It’s perhaps the most critical content marketing problem. Think about it. If your content doesn’t engage your audience, how would be able to turn them into leads. Other common content marketing challenges include creating enough content and building a variety of content. 21% marketers are faced with the challenge of producing enough content and 20% of them lack the budget to create engaging content to strengthen their lead generation strategies. Around 9% marketers believe that creating a variety of content is their biggest challenge.

**Part 2 - How to Optimize Content Marketing for Lead Generation?**

Content marketing yields enough power and substance to engage prospects in today’s ever-so-competitive market. However, to effectively do so, your content must educate, inspire, and persuade your users to be shared.

**Here are just some of the many ways to do it:**

1. When conceptualizing a solid, lead-generating content marketing strategy, focus on creating content for your ideal buyer personas. Identify their needs and requirements and answer all their questions through your blogs, articles, white papers and eBooks.

2. Involve your customers in your content development process. Ask your customers on what they would like to read about. This will help you find new ideas to write about and highlight certain pain points and business/product opportunities.

3. Constantly developing content that creates opportunity for engagement is pretty daunting task. So, it makes sense to repurpose your existing, evergreen content. Turn your old content into a data point, infographic, podcast, Slideshare deck or a video.

4. Include creative, strong and persuasive CTA within your content. Remember, leads that come from the content section of the site yield a higher ROI. By including call to actions to convert this traffic, you’ll be able to boost the significance of your content dramatically.

5. Today users consume content through a host of different multimedia resources. Therefore, it is important to optimize your content for different devices, and carefully create content that can easily be consumed on different multimedia resources.
6. Don’t forget to do guest posting. It allows you to reach beyond boundaries and connect with a range of wider audiences. Don’t forget to add hooks to your guest posts to ensure direct readers back to website.

7. Use clever, strong and powerful headlines and images to capture the attention of readers’ right from the outset. Test out different headlines and images to see which ones grab the attention of your users.

Part 3 - Case Study – InsideOut

4-step content marketing strategy helps InsideOut improve lead generation by 388%, achieve 20% higher click-through rate and decrease the ‘unsubscribe’ rate by 87% within just 6 months.

The Challenge: Corporate training company, InsideOut was faced with the challenge of improving its lead generation and decreasing its unsubscribe rate. The company also wanted to increase awareness of its brand and push leads through its funnel.

The Campaign:

The company started creating and marketing engaging and interesting content to create opportunity for engagement and lead generation. InsideOut divided its content marketing campaign in four different stages.
Here are the steps:

1. The very first step involved creating easy to comprehend, bite-sized content. The company also ensured that the content was well-written and visually appealing.

2. The second step was to present the content in different formats to make it easy for visitors to consume the content as per their preferences. The company released its content in the form of videos, slide decks and articles and presented them in the form of a visually appealing story.

3. The third step was keep the content consistent with the brand. They published content regularly.

4. The fourth step involved distributing, sharing and promoting the content through company’s owned, paid and earned channels.

The Results

- 388% improvement in lead generation.
- 20% increase in click-through rate.
- 87% decrease in ‘unsubscribe’ rate.
Search Engine Optimization

Part 1 - Challenges

It’s not just content marketing, marketers are faced with many SEO challenges too. One of biggest challenges that most marketers face is keeping up with Google’s frequent updates, which constantly changes the world of SEO.

In addition to changing the dynamics of SEO, frequent updates also influence the best practices within the industry. Staying abreast with the constantly changing practices and methods pose a challenge for marketers looking to boost their lead generation through SEO. In fact, 17% of marketers are faced with the challenge of creating and maintaining smooth SEO workflow to constantly generate leads.

Reports reveal that the majority of links and shares goes to the top 5 or 10 percent of content out there. For 34% businesses, managing keywords/phrases remains the biggest challenge, while 33% identified lack of quality content as their biggest challenge.

Keeping up with the frequent Google updates is also challenging for marketers. Google has been updating its Panda algorithm to punish keyword stuffers and reward quality content for the past decade.
The changing user behavior is also posing challenges for marketers. Around 13% believe that the mobile optimization is a big challenge for them. The top two challenges—changing search algorithms and budget constraints—are factors that are often outside of marketers’ control.

**Part 2 - How to Optimize Your SEO for Lead Generation?**

You need to improve your efforts on local SEO. Search results depend on many factors, among them are full details about products/services (pricing, location), reviews, and local citation. All of which are important factors to get your site ranking highly in search results.

It is now important to make your apps search friendly. Apps are becoming more integrated within Google search results since Google has started indexing app content. Accordingly, businesses can make sure their app appear in search results under web and applications, making it more accessible to users.

But generating leads through SEO is easier said than done! This is because SEO is an ever-evolving industry and trends keep on shifting like a clock. And that’s why it is important to stay current on trends in SEO if you’re looking to be at the top of your game.

To help you stay ahead of the curve, here are just some of the many SEO tips for maximum lead generation.

1. **Use videos to ensure better chances of ranking high on the search engine result pages.** Remember, videos make for 62% of all Google searches universally. Video searches get 41% higher click-through rate as compared static text content. But remember to keep your video short and interesting.

2. **Remember, over 1.2 billion people access the web from their mobile devices.** Therefore, it’s important to SEO optimize your website for mobile. It will not only help you generate more leads but will also help you rank higher as Google provides better ranking to sites that are mobile-friendly.

3. **Social content is indexed by Google and other popular search engines.** 76% marketers use social media content and you should too use your social media content to support and boost your SEO efforts.

4. **Create local pages for your business with vital details to rank high on popular search engines.** According to Business2community.com, more than 60% consumers have used local information in ads. Use location-specific keywords and localize your content to match the search queries of your target audiences.
5. Knowledge Graph, wiki, local, maps, social media, news, images and videos make for 85% of Google search results. This means that searchers now want all information at one place. So, do well to aggregate content and display useful relevant content from different sources to your prospects. This will definitely help you generate more leads.

Part 3 - Case Study - Bryan’s Cleaning Services

Summary – Search engine optimization helps a startup get 370% ROI.

The Challenge: Being a startup, Bryan’s Cleaning Services was challenged to quickly acquire customers and maintain a steady flow of revenue to compete in the competitive market. The company also wanted to establish itself prominently in the market. However, the company had limited resources to spend on sales & marketing.

The Campaign: In a bid to establish itself in the competitive market, the company created a SEO-friendly website. Since gaining organic search engine rankings take time, the company launched a Google Adwords campaign.

The company ensured long-tail keyword terms targeting search queries. In addition, the company ensured high Quality Score for the Ads thereby stretching the given budget for maximum response. The Ad Scheduling, Keyword match criteria and Ad Copy were tweaked and modified on a weekly basis to maximize Click Through Rates.
The Results

- 564 Ad Clicks
- 54 leads (generated via Online Form, direct email & Calls)
- 12 Sales
- SGD 165 Profit

This means that for every $1 invested into marketing, Bryan’s Cleaning Services was able to generate $3.7. Giving a 370% return on investment.
Website Optimization

Part 1 - Challenges

It is important to carefully optimize your website to ensure that you’re driving in the right prospects to your site and turning them into leads. But website optimization is easier said than done.

When it comes to website optimization for lead generation, there are umpteen challenges that marketers are faced with. Some of the most common ones include relying only on your homepage to generate leads and inability to have a clear value proposition. Other challenges include search optimization and mobile optimization of their websites.

A fair share of marketers also cite inaccessibility of engagement points as their biggest challenge, while many others identify the inability to reduce barriers to engagement as the most pressing lead generation challenge.

Part 2 - How To Optimize Website for Lead Generation?

Website optimization is no-brainer, but it isn’t too simple too. Here are just some tips to optimize your website and watch the leads pour in.

1. Optimize your website for mobile. Remember if your website takes more than 3 seconds to load, people will abandon your site. Measure how long your page takes to load and ensure that your website loads faster.

2. Do a keyword research and use bet keywords for your industry in your website. Ensure great and compelling content. Sources on the Internet suggest you to go for long form content as they are better at engagement.

3. Remember, there are 3.65 billion unique global mobile users. So, do well to optimize your website for mobile usage.

4. Photos, charts and graphs are worth a thousand words. Using visuals effectively can enhance readability when they replace or reinforce long blocks of textual content.

5. Make sure that your CTA stands out from the crowd and is marked with an action word in order to tempt your user to click it.
6. Give text blocks sufficient spacing. How type is set on your webpages can dramatically impact your lead generation.

7. Use the title attribute to give hyperlinks additional context and let users know what to expect once they click the link.

Part 3 - Case Study - Open Mile

Summary – Lead generation rates increases by 232% with website optimization.

The Challenge: The truckload freight broker, Open Mile was struggling to generate leads on the primary landing pages of its website and the major objective for the company was to increase the lead generation rate from their landing page, http://openmile.com/shippers/freight-rates/.

The Campaign: Open Mile optimized its website landing page. The company majorly modified the page masthead making it larger enough to occupy a large part of the page and tested it against the original version of the page.
The company also tested the CTA color and CTA text. Red proved to be the most effective CTA color and “Get a Quote” was declared the winner CTA text in the A/B test. The company also removed all distractions from the page including the social media buttons.

The Results

With minor changes in the website page, Open Mile was able to increase lead generation rate by 232% increase.
Social Media Marketing

Part 1 - Challenges
A large number of marketers cite that measuring ROI remains a critical challenge for them that they face with their social media efforts, reveals a report from Trust Radius. The report is based on the data collected from a survey of nearly 600 social media marketers conducted in February/March 2015.

60% marketers cite measuring ROI as one of the most challenging aspects of their social media marketing programs, while 50% indicate that tying social activities to business outcomes is their biggest challenge. For 48% marketers, developing a functional social media strategy remains a critical challenge.

What are the THREE MOST CHALLENGING ASPECTS of your social program?

- Measuring ROI: 60%
- Trying Social Activities to business outcomes: 50%
- Developing our Social Media Strategy: 48%
- Securing Enough Internal Resources: 40%
- Tracking results in a centralized dashboard: 32%
- Keeping up with ever-changing social networks: 27%
- Integrating various social tools: 20%
- Monitoring our Competition: 16%
- Other: 7%

Source: 2015 Social Media Marketing Trends
Major social media marketing challenges vary little among companies of different sizes and measuring ROI and tying social activities to business outcomes remain the significant challenges across all groups. However, developing a functional and useful social media strategy is a common challenge for a large number of small businesses.

The challenges also vary depending upon businesses expertise with social media marketing. Measuring ROI is a more common problem with organizations that have considerable social media marketing expertise, whereas developing a strategy is a more common challenge among companies without much social media experience.
Part 2 - How to Optimize Social Media Marketing for Lead Generation?

Given the fact that such a staggering number of companies are using social media to their advantage, you may feel a little confused on how to make your strategy, stand out from the crowd and generate more and more leads.

Don‘t worry, here are some tips to generate leads with social media marketing.

1. Promote gated content on your social media accounts. Gated content can be anything from webinar to white papers or any other forms of detailed content. This will help you collect contact information of your prospects.

2. Contests and giveaways remain yet another popular techniques to collect vital information from your prospects.

3. With its advanced targeting opportunity, social media advertising remains yet another popular strategy to generate high-quality and sales ready leads for your business.

4. Choose to geotarget your social media posts and ads to reach beyond boundaries and connect with audiences closest to your business.

5. Create a social media listening dashboard. Set up alerts and search streams for any social media message mentioning your brand or products.

Part 3 - Case Study – Webtrends

Webtrends was able to achieve 996% acceleration in lead acquisition, 500% improvement in cost per lead and 300% improvement in cost per engagement with its social media marketing campaign.

The Challenge: The digital marketing company, Webtrends was faced with the challenge of increasing the flow of inbound from Twitter. The company was also struggling to keep the cost per lead and cost per engagement as low as possible without increasing its marketing budget.

The Campaign: Webtrends started using Promoted Tweets with Lead Generation Cards to connect with users, build its email database of qualified prospects and start moving them through the lead funnel. The target audience of the company included key decision makers working in areas like email marketing, optimization, social and mobile.

The company used Google Adwords to build keyword lists around interest areas such as landing pages and social analytics. Once the Promoted Tweets campaign began, the brand used keyword targeting in timeline and search with these existing lists to save time and
effort. Keywords aligned with the content being shared, so a Tweet offering information about landing pages was targeted to terms like “build landing page” and “optimization.”

The company also used the @username targeting to connect with digital marketers.

The brand used Promoted Tweets to share content like white papers, and PDF resources to engage its audience. Tweet text featured stats to capture the attention of people.
The results

- 996% improvement in lead acquisition.
- 500% improvement in cost per lead.
- 300% improvement in cost per engagement.
Email Marketing

Part 1 - Challenges

According to a recent report from Campaigner, attracting new subscribers is the biggest email marketing challenge of 2016. The report is based on data from a survey conducted in November 2015 of 506 email marketers.

The outcomes of this survey are rather surprising, around 44.3% respondents identify earning new subscribers as one of their top two email marketing challenges for 2016, while 41.5% cite creating compelling email content as their biggest challenge. Around 26.3% email marketers are more concerned about their open rates.

In 2015, increasing open rates was one of the two biggest email marketing challenges for around 51.4% marketers. Around 43.7% felt lack of compelling email content was the biggest hindrance, while 41.5% cited earning new subscribers as their biggest challenge.
Part 2 - How To Optimize Email Marketing for Lead Generation?

So, if you too are planning to use email marketing to generate high-quality leads, check out these easy tips to make your emails enticing enough to get your recipients to click through and visit your website.

1. Make sure that your subject line is relevant to your audiences. Do well to personalize your email subject lines so that your email resonates well with your audiences. Don’t forget to use actionable language.

2. Use behavioral and demographic segmentation to personalize your emails. Use location specific content in your emails.

3. Ensure that your body copy clearly conveys your offer and does well to inform recipients about why your offer is great for them. Keep your body text short and to the point.

4. Ensure that your emails are visually appealing. Use relevant images in your emails to appeal to the emotions of the recipients.

5. Use compelling call to action in your emails. Make it stand out and catch the viewer’s eye.

6. Include social share links in your emails to make it easy for your recipients to connect with you on social media.
7. Make it easy enough for your recipients to unsubscribe from your mailing list of they wish to. Don’t forget to optimize your emails for mobile friendliness.

Part 3 - Case Study - Craghoppers

Travel clothing company Craghoppers was able to achieve an ROI of 711% and successfully re-engaged 56% of registered users abandoning a purchase with email marketing.

Challenge

Craghoppers was faced with the cart abandonment rate challenge like most other ecommerce companies. The company was looking for ways to retarget customers who abandoned their online shopping cart. The company was looking for ways to improve its ROI.

The Campaign

The retailer used personalized follow up emails in their inbox by using browsing data and email engagement. The follow up email offered up to six alternative products that the customer might be interested in, based on what’s in their abandoned cart, as well as their demographic information. Two emails were then sent to customers 24 hours and three days after abandonment. The campaign used multiple designs and content types based on previous customer behavior and interaction with the emails.
The Results

- 711% improvement in ROI.
- Re-engagement of 56% registered users
- 10% improvement in sales.
10 Lead Generation Mistakes & How to Avoid Them By Industry Experts

No matter how much time, money and efforts you invest in your optimizing your inbound lead generation strategies to capture and stimulate the interest of your prospects, even a simple lead generation mistake can make your lead generation program run into hot weathers.

From simple design errors to missing key features of a lead generation strategy, it’s possible that you’re making some lead generation mistakes without even noticing. Therefore, to help you avoid applying the wrong tactics and getting stuck with your lead generation program, here we present to you 20 biggest lead generation mistakes that marketers make according to experts.

Check out this list of advice from industry experts and do well to avoid these when conceptualizing, planning and implementing your lead generation strategies.

Connie Bensen
Director of Marketing, CloudCheckr
@CBensen

“Content that doesn’t resonate with target audiences is the biggest mistake. Placing content intended for conversion in people’s paths in the social channels is a waste of time and resources (if paid amplification is used). People will recognize it for the advertising that it is and not engage with it.”

What Should You Do?
Always aim to create high-quality, engaging and interesting content. Ensure presenting targeted content depending upon what stage of lead funnel your prospect is in. Make sure that your content is targeted to the lead sources that generate maximum leads for you. In order to this effectively, you’ll need to get acquainted with your customers. You’ll need to know where your users come from, what their needs are and what do they expect from your business. To help you do this, it’s essential to create your personas.
David Berkowitz
Chief Marketing Officer, MRY
@DBerkowitz

"A huge mistake is trying to force feed lead generation campaigns into situations where consumers aren't as focused on taking actions. Most social media activity is best at impacting earlier stages of the purchase funnel, so many lead gen campaigns wind up looking like square pegs in round holes."

What Should You Do?
Leverage social media channels to reach out to prospects, generate leads and promote your brand. Start by identifying which social media channels -- Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Pinterest, Instagram drive most user engagement for your business. Once you identify most engaging social channels for your business, Create a social media lead generation strategy and use all available opportunities to promote your gated content on your social media channels. Take advantage of social media ads to gained traction with organic lead generation.

Ian Cleary
Tech Blogger, Razor Social
@IanCleary

"The biggest lead generation mistake is not building email subscribers. The majority of your website visitors will never come back to your site unless you encourage them back through regular communication. One of the best ways of doing this is building up email subscribers."

What Should You Do?
Remember, all leads are not the same. Whenever you capture leads, it is important to segment them into different lists basis the offer they converted on. Not doing this may lead to a considerably higher unsubscribe rate. Ensure your marketing automation software is automatically segmenting leads.

Break these lists into smaller groups in order to target your offers and content to address the common concerns of these groups. You may choose segment such lists basis demographics, industry, age or buying behavior. Segmentation of leads will help you create a stronger lead generation plan and well-planned lead nurturing campaign.
Heidi Cohen
President, Riverside Marketing Strategies
@heidicohen

“Lead generation is skipping the romance portion of the buying process. The objective is to turn hand raisers into satisfied customers.

Here’s where marketers can go wrong.

1. Don’t understand your target audience. This includes your customers, influencers, end users and the public. Without appreciating your key market, you can’t create marketing that drives and converts leads. This means creating a marketing persona.

2. Don’t drive leads. You can’t assume that your audience will buy from you without getting the 5 basic types of content. Ensure that this information is both search and social friendly.

3. Don’t give prospects a reason to share their contact information. This means incorporating a contextually relevant call-to-action (CTA).

4. Don’t have a process to close sales. Just because your target market raises their hand, that doesn’t translate to sales unless you’ve answered all of their questions and converted them.

5. Don’t track results. It’s critical to measure your results to appreciate where your process isn’t converting prospects.”

What Should You Do?
Remember, if you are looking to generate high-quality, sales ready leads, you’ll need to deliver exactly what your prospects want. Map out a comprehensive content strategy to address the concern of your prospects in different stage of lead funnel.

Too often, businesses offer content that doesn’t fit with the needs of their target audience. This may annoy visitors persuading them to abandon your site. Did you know that over 70% visitor who abandon your site never return? That means that approximately 90% of your marketing spend, efforts and resources and going down the drain.

Send emails to your prospects asking them what they would like to read about or what needs they currently have. Put up microsurveys at your site to collect feedback from website visitors. Such microsurveys help you gather qualitative research data and synergize your offerings with your visitors’ needs and wants and not just impose your ideas and notions on your target users.
Asking too many questions up front. For example, If I’m registering for a white paper download, don’t ask for a phone number or even the full name. An email address should be sufficient to start the process. It’s shocking how many times I see organizations asking for First Name, Last Name, Email, Phone, Company Name, Full address all for a white paper. Structure how much information you require based on the value of what you’re giving away. For a free software download, Name and phone number might justified to both you and the person requesting it.”

What Should You Do?
Reports reveal that 86% visitors leave a page if the lead generation form is too long or too complex. When it comes to lead generation, a long or overtly complicated form can put off your visitors. Do well to use indicate which fields in your lead generation form are mandatory and which are not. Eliminate fields that are not required. Ensure just 3-5 fields for your lead generation forms. Place your form above the fold and avoid using captcha on the forms.

Poorly designed and placed calls to action or not having a call to action is the most critical mistake one must refrain from! Not having a call to action can confuse your prospect discouraging them to take the desired action. By not placing your call to action prominently, you’re making it difficult for visitors!

What Should You Do?
A call-to-action (CTA) button is one of the most important feature of lead generation strategy. Without a call to action button, you’ll not be able to turn your visitors into actual paying customers. Keep your CTAs above the fold and keep it simple. Use contrasting color schemes to make CTAs stand out on the landing page. Keep it large enough to be noticed easily.
“Stop thinking “we tried that already and it didn’t work.” Figure out all the reasons why a campaign didn’t perform like you wanted and test again later. Test strategically – and don’t be afraid of failure.”

What Should You Do?
If you don’t test, how will you find out what’s not working for your lead generation strategies? It is important to regularly test your lead generation page, offers or even the overall voice of the design. If you’re not testing, then you don’t know for sure if the design and text elements on your website are the best ones for attracting and converting visitors. Without testing and hard data, you’re simply guessing on what will catch people’s attention, and too often our instincts are wrong about what works and what doesn’t. Keep testing time and again to ensure that you’re able generate maximum high-quality, sales ready leads.

“Offering content without collecting email addresses is the biggest lead gen mistake marketers make!”

What Should You Do?
Remember, any visitor to your site is initially hesitant in providing personal details. Therefore, it is important to ensure that as for information in relation with the offer that you’re giving away. For example, if you’re offering an ebook download, it makes sense to just ask for an email address and the first and last name. The less questions you’ll ask for, the more willingly people will provide their details. Ask for only the most relevant information. Don’t forget to add privacy assurance to gain the trust of your visitors.
“Many marketers make assumptions about what their target audience want from them. They don’t reach out to their prospects and ask them about their needs, preferences about your content and your site.”

What Should You Do?
To understand the needs and wants of your target audience, you’ll need to have access to qualitative data. Remember, quantitative data only indicates that something is wrong with your site. On the other hand, qualitative data is what helps you understand ‘WHY’ it’s wrong. Microsurveys are a great way to collect such qualitative data. It can help you learn who your customers are, what they want, what language they use and more. In order to generate high-quality and sales-ready leads, you must gather qualitative research data and synergize your offerings with your visitors’ needs and wants and not just impose your ideas and notions on your target users.

“The biggest mistake I’ve seen is asking TOO much information off the bat on a lead form. Remember, it should be an equal exchange of content value for personal information. You must gain someone’s trust right here at this form before they even get to the download. If a person feels that they’ve given too much information in exchange for what they then receive, you could have just lost a potential customer. Gain trust on the lead form and deliver matching value.”

What Should You Do?
A common lead generation mistake is asking visitors for too much personal info too soon. You need to build trust and credibility in their eyes in order to persuade them to willingly provide their personal information. Try to just ask for the most important information. You may do so by asking for just name and email address. You may ask for other details when they are ready to communicate with your brand.
How to Calculate the ROI on a Lead Generation Program?

Formstack found out that 42% marketers expect to generate more sales for their business in 2016. But only 39% of the marketers are proving ROI on their paid campaigns by measuring the number of new customers brought in or the number of sales resulting from lead generation efforts on paid channels.

Remember, it is important to calculate your estimated return on investment (ROI) in order to measure the impact of your lead generation campaign. This can help you determine, analyze and allocate proper budget to your lead generation strategies.

To determine your lead generation ROI is a bit complicated. However, the easiest way to do this by working out how many leads it takes you to close a sale on average, using the largest timeframe possible. Once you have worked out the number of leads it takes to close a sale you can then work out the average profit per sale and a rough estimate of the value of each lead to your business.

\[ \text{Gross Profit} = (\text{Average Profit Per Sale} - \text{Leads Required For One Sale}) \times \text{Leads Generated} \]

For example, if a sale is worth $15,000 profit to your business and you invest $20,000 in Google Adwords which generates you 30 leads and on average your sales team manage to close 1 sale for every 5 leads that come in, your ROI would be as follows:

\[ \text{Gross Profit Per Lead} = \frac{15,000}{5} = 3,000 \]

\[ \text{Gross Profit} = 3,000 \times 30 = 90,000 \]

\[ \text{ROI} = \frac{(90,000 - 20,000) \times 20,000}{90,000} = 3.5 \text{ or } 350\% \]

This formula can be used to determine the return on investment for your lead generation campaign quickly and accurately.
Conclusion

In conclusion, it wouldn’t be a hyperbole to say that the measure of any marketing strategy is the quality and volume of leads they drive in. By generating leads, you’ll be able to drive revenue for your business and successfully take your business off-the-ground.

But the ever-increasing competition on the web has made lead generation a difficult and a daunting task. Despite the wealth of actionable data available at your disposal, marketers are still struggling to generate high-quality leads.

This is where this handy guide comes to your rescue. This guide will help you make solid returns on investment by converting website traffic into leads. Combined with techniques discussed in the guide, you may easily position your business as a thought leader, build market share, penetrate new markets and generate high-quality, sales-ready leads.

About The Author

Daniel Louis is Co-founder and CMO of TruConversion.com, one of the youngest integrated conversion optimization platform. With over 15 years in B2B marketing, working with clients ranging from start-ups, to SMEs and global brands, Daniel has the knowledge and hands-on experience to help clients create a strong market profile, build customer engagement and generate sales leads right from the get-go.

About TruConversion.com

TruConversion.com can be an integral part of your lead generation efforts. It can help you customize your website’s contact form so as to maximize your submissions, strengthen your leads, and boost your conversion rates. And the heatmap tool, live chat capability, analytics software, and trigger options can help make your lead generation strategies as effective as it can possibly be.

See how TruConversion.com can bolster your lead generation strategy today!
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Hubspot.com
NurtureHQ.com
Kissmetrics.com
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