



Getting More Leads: 6 Reasons Your Efforts Are Dead In Their Tracks.

Lead generation is not complicated.

1. Select a group of potential customers
2. Find them and encourage them to buy your product/service
3. Even better, they find you and you encourage them to buy your product

But if lead generation is so simple, why is it that most companies we talk with say that finding new customers is a persistent source of frustration? There are also 6 major factors we've discovered that hold companies back when they want to grow their lead generation efforts.

Mistake #1: Lead Generation Mindset

More than any other activity, lead generation requires both good technical execution and the right attitude to be effective. You are trying to interest people who don't know you, most who will not give you the time of day, which often means rejection. Rejection is hard to take, and it is humbling, which does not put us in the best mindset for success. Without the right mindset you are getting in the way of your own success.



What is the right mindset for lead generation?

We find that most lead generation conversations focus on technical aspects such as knowing your target audience and creating offers. But that is only half of the story. You also need to commit to working through a process and you have to be prepared for frustration.

Lead generation requires creativity and imagination which will be subjectively criticized by your prospects. Some of your best stuff will not work. At times it will feel like you are just throwing money away.

When developing a new lead generation system be ready to be discouraged and frustrated. Lead generation is hard work but once you get a working system it becomes much easier to improve it. Follow a process to minimize the work.

Demand 2 things from your lead generation

Let's make sure that we are in agreement on the two things that lead generation must accomplish to be successful.

1. It must get attention.
2. It must take advantage of that attention—make an offer.



Attention getting is one of the most important tasks your lead generation tactics must accomplish. If you can't get someone's attention it does not matter how good your offer is...**no one will hear it**. That applies to any media: direct mail, telemarketing, advertising, and email.

Mistake #2: Ignoring Or Disregarding Marketing Principles

To be effective at stealing attention you don't use sales principles, operations principles, and certainly not accounting principles. You use marketing principles. Specifically, merge what you know about your prospect; blend it with psychology; apply proven marketing principles; and willingly test and follow the data.

Your intuition and gut feelings are not enough. Just because you think it is good or because it is clever does not matter if it is not effective.

If you run a tax preparation business and standing out on the corner in a Statue of Liberty costume gets attention: do it. At least until you come up with a better way.

Grabbing attention is THE place to be creative. You want out of the box thinking, be dramatic, maybe even crazy. **You need to do what it takes to get your prospects attention or nothing will happen.** (Assuming, again, that you have an offer that is valuable to your prospect.)

People Attract People

I am going to let you in on a secret....sex sells. Okay, that's not much of a secret (and really not useful for most of us) but do you know that even people with a lot of clothes on sell? And that faces are even better at attracting attention? People notice people; that's why people watching is so popular. Here's the point: use photos of people when you can.



Liberty Tax Service is:*

- The fastest growing tax preparation company
- One of the top three tax preparation companies

The moral is: wear the stupid costume.

*Source libertytax.com



Personalization

We are all interested in ourselves; we pay attention to those who pay attention to us. But your prospects are more demanding than that. They want you to pay attention to them and they also want you to be interesting.

The good news is that you don't need to be a comedy writer or movie star to be interesting or entertaining. You just need to be human. You have a personality. That's good enough to be interesting.

People do not want to deal with a soul-less organization.

People buy from people.

Tests have shown that by personalizing your lead generation conversation and your response rates will go up.

What do these examples have to do with mindset?

The point is that you will be more successful if you use what has been shown to be effective. A technically correct campaign can still fail if it is not built on solid marketing principles.

What do I do now?

If you are not familiar with marketing principles work with someone who is.

Roadblock #3: Marketing Activities Not Playing Well Together

Like all marketing activities, effective lead generation is becoming more integrated. Prospects want more contact with your company before they surrender contact information (becoming a lead) to you. For example, "call us" is being replaced with "visit our web site" as a first call to action. Whether you are using email, direct mail or you are on the speakers' circuit you will be much more successful when you connect all of your activities together in a process.

More than ever, effective customer acquisition requires that all of your marketing activities work together. Trying just one thing after another to see what sticks ignores the new reality of how buyers interact with companies. Your web site, direct mail, emails and webinars all need to work together to generate a lead.

For example, emailing prospects from a purchased list with a link to your web site's home page will not be as effective as sending them to a specific page on your web site tied to the email message. Even better, send them to a landing page specifically for their segment.

Hey bald guy! Want more hair?

Personalized message

Hey bald guy! Want more hair? I know I did.

Personalized message with personality

Warning!

Uncoordinated marketing activities are usually a symptom that your lead generating offer and your prospect profile are not detailed enough.



What do I do now?

Marketing is a process. Lead generation is the first of several steps that prospects go through in their path to becoming your customers. Know how all of your lead generation activities work together. If you're not sure how to pull it all together, reach out to experts who do.

Roadblock #4: Losing Focus And Chasing The Shiny Object

Online marketing has a lot of benefits, but the rapidly changing pace, of social media particularly, makes it easy to jump from one hot activity to the next. As users flood to each new social site the temptation can be irresistible to jump on with millions of others flocking to the site. The result is that your marketing effort is diluted, unfocused, and does not produce the results you need.

Jumping from activity to activity is not limited to Internet, either. It is just as easy to jump from direct mail to email marketing for example.

But some companies can quickly take advantage of new social sites and marketing technology—which ones?

Companies that already have a successful lead generation model are much more likely to be able to quickly evaluate and adapt to new marketing opportunities. **Modifying a successful approach is much easier than trying to build one from scratch.**

For example, if you have been successful in generating leads through direct mail, you know how to develop a targeted list and make an offer that is motivating to that list. With this foundation developing an email campaign is easier than starting from scratch: convert your headline to a subject line (not necessarily easy) and develop a list much like you did for direct mail.

What do I do now?

1. Commit to getting one lead generation process working.
2. Take time to evaluate your options so that you can learn from your efforts. (See how to narrow the choices appropriate for you)
3. Before you launch a marketing activity, be clear about the results you expect it to produce. Write down how many leads you expect this activity to create.
4. After you complete the activity compare the results to what you were expecting. Evaluate what worked, what didn't and what was surprising.
5. Before you decide to try a new activity consider if it is worthwhile to improve the last one. If you decide to choose a new activity, have an opinion on why it will be better than the last one.

Roadblock #5: Losing Sight Of Results



Marketing, when done well, always takes into account the numbers. If you are not testing the effectiveness of your marketing, you are wasting money. If you prefer the positive: you have opportunity to get more customers for less money.

A trial and error approach is not likely to produce an optimum result.

Without specific measures in place it is easy to drift off track. Perhaps you are creative, intuitive, and act from the gut when it comes to marketing. That's a great thing, but it can be distracting. Without measurements, creativity and intuition don't necessarily lead to getting the desired results.

It is easy to get off-track and create marketing pieces that you think are great but have no effect on your target audience. (We've been there. Some of our most creative ideas have been total flops.) You are too biased to objectively evaluate your ideas. You know everything about your company and your product - your prospects know little about you and your product. They don't think like you do. Let the numbers tell you when you have it right.

For lead generation there are only three numbers that matter.

1. How many people did you reach with your marketing initiative?
2. How many people engaged with your marketing: read it, listened to it, watched it?
3. How many people did what you wanted them to do?

You need to evaluate all three.

Some examples:

If you speak to 1,000 people at an industry event but if most of them are not listening they won't hear your really great offer. The problem then is not your offer but that your presentation was not interesting.

Or if you are convinced you have the right email list, but your open rate is lower than it should be, it might be that your headline needs work.

If you believe you have the right headline AND the right list, but your open rate is lower than it should be, you may need to try other media (e.g. direct mail) to increase your targets familiarity with you. (Email open rates go up dramatically when the sender is known.)

What do I do now?

There are three ways to bring numbers, and objectivity, into your process:

1. Let the numbers speak for themselves. Be willing to let go of your favorite ideas if they are not delivering the results you need.
2. Bring others into the process who do not share your bias.
3. Test your ideas. Compare one headline to another, change subject lines, frequency. Try a different list source. Make changes, predict the outcome, measure and compare the results with your prediction.



Roadblock #6: The Low Hanging Fruit Is Biasing Your View Of Lead Generation

If your company has relied on referrals and repeat sales for growth: Congratulations! You are doing a lot of things right. But your success has set up some very real challenges for you as you try to increase your growth rate beyond referrals.

1. Creating happy customers means that you have operation systems that customer's value.
2. Generating leads requires that you are interesting to people who do not know you.

These two outcomes are the result of very different processes.

Marketing to prospects who do not know you is very different than marketing to prospects that come to you based on a recommendation from someone they trust. It is important to change your mindset when marketing to this new group of prospects.

Marketing to non-referred prospects is more difficult and it costs more.

A referred prospect starts from a position of trust and understanding. For non-referred prospects, your marketing materials need to create that trust.

A lead that comes to you from a referral is well into their buying process. They have determined that they are interested in what you do, and might have made the decision to buy. Because of the referral they are already leaning toward liking you.

On the other hand, prospects who don't know you are leaning away from you. We are all so burned out on selling that our automatic response to an unsolicited offer is to back away.

Lead generation to non-referred prospects is humbling. Response rates are often less than 2%; while in the past you may have closed 25% of your leads from referred prospects. With cold prospects it's harder to schedule meetings with people, and they will require more information than referred prospects.

Lead generation can feel like failure, and it is humbling if you are not prepared for it.

What do I do now?

- Understand that you will have to work harder and it will cost more money to generate leads beyond word of mouth and referrals.
- Expect that much of your marketing material will need to be revised or rewritten. You will need to provide prospects with reasons why they should listen to you e.g. prove your claims.



Your Best Next Step: Lead Generation Roadblocks

About Your Best Next Step

Your Best Next Step is a system designed to help you identify, and actually implement, the best, next step that is right for you and your company.

Whether you just need a little help, or you want a done-for-you solution, we help you focus on your highest priority. We help remove roadblocks so you can **market, grow and run your business.**

Need some more advice? Call us today at **952-896-0062**, and we'll give you 45 minutes of time to help you find a path past your roadblocks.