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Secrets of Successful Online Lead Generation

By Talbert Williams

For the majority of high-tech marketers, direct marketing is most often used as a vehicle to generate leads, not sales. Most companies with products that list for more than a few hundred dollars are smart enough to realize that it's difficult, if not impossible, to "sell" their product through the mail.

Whether it's generating prospects for a field sales force, attendees at a product seminar, or leads for channel partners – one of the keys to success for any lead generation program (after the right list) is the offer.

Phrases like "For more information ..." and "To learn more ..." should be banished from your marketing vocabulary. Instead, ask yourself: What specifically are we offering to send the reader? A brochure? A white paper? A demo disk? Remember, even if your readers think your product sounds like the best thing since Windows, if they don't want your offer, they won't respond. Period. So be specific.

Of the hundreds of direct mail campaigns to cross my desk in recent months, one of my favorites is a mailer from Pitney Bowes, the postage meter company, promoting their line of office copiers. In bold letters, the copy on the outer envelope reads: "Complete the enclosed Office Copier Downtime Survey and receive a FREE GIFT ..." Putting aside my prejudice against envelope copy, this is a terrific example of effective, lead-generation direct marketing.

What the folks at Pitney Bowes know (and their agency does too, presumably) is that they're not going to sell copiers through the mail. They simply want to find people who are unhappy with their current machines. And what better way to identify those people than to present an attractive offer (in this case, a free coffee mug with their name on it) just for complaining?

This is the same type of objective you should keep in mind when planning your next lead generation campaign. Simply aim to identify people with a problem, one that your product or service can help solve, and get those people to raise their hands and say "tell me more." After all, what's a good lead if not somebody who has a problem (that you can solve) and who wants to do something about it?

Whatever the offer, don't worry about whether it sells your product. (Like Pitney Bowes does, you can always send the prospect your product information as well.) In your copy, just sell your product in the

context of the offer. Don't say, "Our product increases network performance by 100%." Instead, say, "Send for your free white paper and learn how to increase network performance by 100%."

Design your offer in such a way that it attracts people with the right problem. Technical white papers make effective offers because they provide information of value, not just fawning praise for your technology. Titles like "Moving to Windows NT: Development Challenges and How to Overcome Them," "7 Key Steps to a Successful Data Warehouse," and "High Availability Clustering: Next Generation Protection for Business-Critical Environments" work well because they serve to identify people with the problem that your technology can solve.

Consider "upgrading" your white paper by increasing the production quality. Give it a spiffy 2-color cover (but downplay your company logo), or print it in a 5 x 7 "booklet" format with Wire-O binding. (Be

careful not to make it look too much like a brochure.) Many companies shy away from investing extra in materials like these, but even little touches can significantly increase the perceived value of the offer – and ultimately the success of the campaign.

Beef up your offer with a videotape or audio cassette of your top executive making a presentation on the current state of technology in your market niche. Add a CD-ROM or demo diskette, particularly if you're marketing to a technical audience. Include press reviews, analyst reports, success stories – anything that offers a "third party" view on how great your technology is. Then bundle everything together in a custom envelope or box and call it an "Information Kit," "Technology Guide" or "The Manager's Guide to (Insert Your Technology Here)."

Pitney Bowes notwithstanding, be wary of including ad specialties and other promotional items like coffee mugs, t-shirts, posters and the like. Sure, they raise response, but at what cost? Offer a coffee mug and you're likely to attract coffee drinkers, not prospects. You won't generate fewer leads, but the incremental responses you produce aren't likely to be as qualified.

Few things make less sense than spending tens of thousands of dollars on a beautiful, 6-color direct mail campaign, and then offering the recipient a measly product brochure, or worse yet, not even mentioning the offer at all. Treat your fulfillment materials as part of the campaign planning process. Divert part of the budget into making the offer as attractive as possible. And then sit back and watch the phone ring.

Talbert Williams offers debt consolidation, debt reduction, credit card debt referrals and lead generation services. For more information, articles, news, tools and valuable resources on debt solutions, visit this site:

<http://www.1debtfreedom.com>

Achieve Independence Through Web Lead Generation

By Trevor Marshall

Before setting up anything, it is important that you understand the high relevance of lead generation to your business' success. It is highly important for you to be able to find ways for lead generation because without lead generation, your business will really suffer. Leads potentially lead to shoppers, and shoppers potentially lead to sales and profits. Thus, with no leads, you can have no shoppers, and so forth.

1. Business Breeds Business

A poor quality of lead generation will end up costing you a lot of wasted time and money. The initial impression people have about your business is very important. And if people hear that many of their friends are shopping somewhere, they are likely to try shopping there also. Take command of your company's lead generation – never leave the sales of your business as well as its growth, efficiency, and image, to fate.

2. Growth Is More Important Than Profits

You always need to supervise your company's lead generation so that you won't be left in the dark when it comes to your company's growth (or lack of it). If you are now interested in taking command of your company's lead generation, here are some simple tricks of the trade.

3. Use The Internet

Since hundreds of millions of people are logged on to the internet every single day, whether they are looking for something specific or just browsing around, it is highly important that you are able to bypass all the lead brokers as well as the other competition on the internet and just directly connect to your desired customers straight to a company's web site. You **MUST** have a website. In this day and age, your customers not only expect it, they demand it.

4. Lead Generation

Choose a lead generation that you can efficiently control and which is highly dependable. Make sure that your lead generation system is cost effective and specifically targeted to internet lead generation. Start getting off the lead generation habit of merely doing internet sales leads. It is advisable for your company to be able to develop a type of lead generation program where you will be able to cut out the middleman. You will not only be able to increase your company's lead generation but it can also improve the quality of your company's internet lead generation wherein you will be able to cut your costs per lead.

It is important to note that being able to create an effective internet sales lead generation system or program comprises of being highly sensitive of what you prospective clients want such as the right keywords or phrases that prospective clients usually use in the internet search engines. It is to the client's advantage that he or she will be able to choose the right keyword or key phrase (the ones that are most likely to be used by their prospective clients) because the whole point of lead generation is to basically be able to gain as much exposure over the net as possible as well as being able to provide all

relevant information to their prospective clients.

For more great lead generation related articles and resources check out

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