

How to Build a Lead Generation Machine

WITH AN “INBOUND” MARKETING SYSTEM USING YOUR WEBSITE, SOCIAL MEDIA AND REFERRALS

Let's face it, the world as we know it has changed. With technology progressing at lightning speed, today's customers are inundated with information and choices. The internet has increased competition and forever changed the way customers buy. Traditional forms of promotion like newspaper ads and mass mailings aren't working any more. Technology has trained consumers to expect more – they don't want to be bombarded with generic one-size-fits-all advertising.

For salespeople, it is getting harder and harder to reach prospective customers and develop new business using the traditional forms of prospecting. It is almost impossible to reach decision makers via cold calls or prospecting over the telephone. Attendance at trade shows and networking events continues to decline. Our prospects and customers are surrounded by electronic fortresses and screening devices.

The prospecting strategies and tactics that were effective just a decade ago simply no longer work today. Today, being “introduced” is becoming a necessity - whether that introduction comes from a client, a strategic partner, social media or your marketing programs.

But gaining an introduction means more than simply asking your clients “who they know that would benefit from your products and services.” In order to succeed at generating leads consistently, you have to make it easy for clients and strategic partners to introduce you. You need a referral

marketing system. In fact, you need to systematize your entire lead generation process utilizing the internet and whole host of new tools and technology that have arrived on the scene over the last ten years. In this report, we lay out the steps that sales organizations need to take to build that system.

Salespeople need to become better marketers.

As the owner of my own small business for the last seventeen years, I have often thought about the luxury of meeting a prospect who takes the initiative to contact me on their own instead of through my proactive prospecting efforts. For years, I have weighed the pros and cons of investing in advertising and other forms of marketing to make my phone ring. Although advertising is expensive, I found that my odds of closing a sale once a client reached out to me were exponentially better.

At one time, sales and marketing were entirely different disciplines and these two sides of an organization's revenue generating machine often had a dysfunctional relationship. Marketing didn't listen to sales and sales criticized (or at best, ignored) marketing. Yet today, both of them are equally important. With the growing ineffectiveness of traditional methods of prospecting, marketing is becoming essential. In fact, salespeople need to learn how to market themselves today. Fortunately, technology has made this easy to accomplish.

Marketing is the system you set up to generate leads. Selling is the process of turning those leads into customers. Marketing is the process of getting someone, who has a need or a want, to know, like and trust you (and better yet – contact you!)

- Know
- Like
- Trust
- Try
- Buy
- Repeat
- Refer



Once that initial contact is made, it is a salesperson’s responsibility for getting that prospect to try and ultimately buy a product or service. Furthermore, once a customer has bought for the first time, the salesperson’s goal is to get them to buy again and again and ultimately refer the business to others.

A major change took place in the world of selling 25 years ago when Neil Rackham and other sales experts like him disproved the transactional sales model of “Always Be Closing.” With the introduction of SPIN Selling and other consultative selling models, the professionalism and effectiveness of sales organizations took a dramatic leap forward.

Similarly, the world of marketing was turned upside down a little over a decade ago when Google arrived on the scene. Over the last fifteen years the focus of marketing has shifted from finding customers or “outbound marketing” to the concept of being found or “inbound marketing”.

For years salespeople talked about prospecting in terms of “hunting”. Today, a salesperson’s prospecting efforts should be focused on “being found” as much as on “finding”. In other words, instead of merely hunting, salespeople need to become better “trappers” as well. The following

chart provides examples of how marketing has shifted from outbound to inbound methods.

Outbound (Prospecting, Hunting, “Interrupting”)	Inbound (Attracting, Educating, “Getting Found”)
Print Ads	Blogs, E-books, White papers
Radio Ads	Podcasts
Television Ads	Videos
Tradeshows	Webinars
Cold Calling	Search Engine Optimization
E-mail Blasts	RSS Feeds

With these changes in mind, we have identified seven steps for building a lead generation machine.

Step 1: Define Your Target Market

The first thing you need to do is identify your target market. In many cases, when I ask small business owners or sales professionals to describe their target market, they describe it as anybody that will buy their stuff. Unfortunately, too often small business owners and salespeople take whatever business comes their way instead of being strategic about who they want to do business with.

This lack of specificity presents two fundamental problems. The first problem is a marketing issue. Customers prefer to do business with sellers who specialize in handling their types of problems and opportunities as opposed to a generalist who works with anybody. When you sell your products and services to anybody, it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish your business from competitors that claim to do the same thing.

A good example is an accountant who works exclusively with family-owned businesses. If you are a principle in a family-owned business, you'll be predetermined to believe his accounting expertise is more suited to your needs. After all, everyone thinks their situation and circumstances are unique. We are more comfortable working with someone who understands and specializes in handling our unique set of circumstances than with a generalist. The business owner or sales professional who says he works with anybody presents himself as a "jack of all trades, yet master of none."

The second problem of failing to identify your target market is a time management issue. Time is your most precious resource. You want to invest your time wisely – with prospects who are most likely to buy your products and services and who will sincerely appreciate the value you provide.

Before investing your time in a proactive sales effort, you must have a solid understanding of your target market and how you can help that market. It is virtually impossible to go out and find prospects to buy your products or services if you don't know what market to search or who to target. If you choose to go after anybody and everybody, it becomes tougher still because you will wind up trying to sell to people who aren't well-suited to the products and services you provide. Consequently, your selling cycle will grow longer, and the time available to you will dwindle.

There are essentially two ways to go about defining your target market. The first is to examine your current customers and define your ideal customer based on those observations. Your ideal customers are not always your biggest customers. Your ideal customers are those who trust you, who value what you do, and who look to your specific expertise to deliver the results they want.

The second method for defining your target market, such as in the case of a new business

without customers or an existing business that is launching a new product, is research. One way of conducting research is to talk with complementary businesses – ones you admire and ones that serve the same target market as you but wouldn't perceive you to be a competitor. Ask them to describe their ideal customer. Find out to whom they sell and how they do it. It may even lead to a strategic alliance.

Referrals and introductions are also one of the benefits of clearly identifying your target market. Therefore, it's important to identify your target market in a way that is easy to understand. If you sell to consumers, define your target market using the demographics of age, sex, marital status, education level, income and geographic location. If you sell to other businesses, define your target market according to the type of company, its industry, geographic location, number of employees and annual sales volume. When you sell to other businesses, you also need to identify the person inside the organization who generally makes the decision to buy your products or services and the conditions that create a sense of urgency surrounding this type of purchase.

Step 2: Find and Communicate a Core Difference

This can be as simple as serving a very tight niche market. It also can be the way in which you package or price your services. It could be your reputation for a special process.

The problem in small business is that your prospects really can't tell the difference between you and your competitors. To a prospective client, one accountant looks just like another; all electricians look the same and so on. It may not be true, but unless you're spending millions of dollars in advertising to tell your story, in many cases your prospects will think you are just like everybody else.

As a result, when they need the kind of help that you can provide they ask the age-old question of "How much?" With nothing else to go on, that is how they differentiate you from your competition. They base their decision simply on price.

If you can find a way to differentiate yourself, something that really makes you the obvious choice in your industry or marketplace, and you can tell the world about it, you will very quickly rise to the top of your market. Even better, price will never again be a big issue.

Many times people say they that what differentiates them from their competition is that they provide quality work at fair prices. Unfortunately, these aren't differences. These are expectations. Your prospects believe that if you're in business, if you've got a business card or a sign out in front of your store, that you meet those expectations.

So how do you determine what makes you or your business unique? You have to ask your customers. Interview 8-10 of your best clients. Ask them specifically why they buy from you; how they found you, what makes them stay with you and why they refer business to you. This can be done by an outside firm if you want, but you can also do this yourself very effectively.

In most cases I have found that a person who buys from you is better prepared to tell you how you are different or unique than you'll ever be. The reason your customers buy from you instead of your competition stems from your uniqueness – in terms of your product, your service, your process, your people, your experience, your guarantee, your packaging, your delivery or your location. All of these things matter more than your price and we often take all of them for granted. Your customers are the ones who are best suited to tell you how you are different. Often you'll uncover little things that are a big deal to your customers. These are the

things you want to tap into and communicate in your marketing efforts.

Step 3: Create Marketing Materials That Educate

You probably have a box or two (or five!) of old glossy tri-fold brochures that you wrote years ago touting the features and benefits of working with you. Not to pick on anybody, but that's just what a lot of small business owners believe they need to create. They think they need brochures.

What I believe and what I teach all of my clients is to create something called a marketing kit. It's a series of documents that can be easily personalized and afford you with far more flexibility. Your marketing kit is not something, you will print in advance. It's something you can actually customize for specific industries or personalize for a specific prospect. It can come in many forms, but I like to use a pocket folder that I get custom printed. Then I like to create a series of documents that I can print on special pre-printed marketing kit paper right from the color laser printer in my office.

The first document I like to create is something I call "How You Are Different." Start by sitting down and picking out the three biggest benefits of doing business with your firm or the three ways in which you know you are superior to your competition. Use the actual words and examples that your clients gave you as to how you're different. This can come directly from the client interviews you conducted in step 2.

It's often little things that differentiate you from your competition. It's not the grandiose things we all want to put out there about our many years of experience or our stellar education. Often it has to do with how you treat people, how you follow up, how you clean up, how you actually do the work. You want your prospects to get a sense of how you are different.

The second element of your marketing kit is “Case Studies.” Once again, you can go back and use the actual stories you obtained from your clients in Step 2. A case study is proof. You’re showing a prospect somebody that got the result they are also hoping to get. If you do case studies for different industries, you can personalize your marketing kit by inserting those case studies for the specific prospect you are calling on.

Every marketing kit should have a “Story,” either about how you got started, how you overcame adversity, or how your business got into the specific niche that you’re in. People love stories. People relate to stories. Stories build trust. This all goes back to our childhoods when a parent or sibling read stories to us. Create some document in story form that really gets to the heart of what your business is all about.

More than ever before, people are trying to find businesses they can relate to and connect with. Let your guard down and make your story personal, even if doesn’t make you sound as big or as important as you think you should sound. In many ways, that kind of honesty is what people are craving.

“Descriptions of your Processes” are another good thing to add to your marketing kit. Many of your competitors can talk a good game about why they are better or what they can do for their customers. What if you showed them why you are better? For example, what if you created a checklist or a description of your system for guaranteeing that your customers get the service you are promising? Or maybe you could describe your process for ensuring on time delivery or how you can guarantee that they won’t have to go before the IRS if you do their accounting? If you can present your process and prove how you’re going to deliver, in many cases, this alone will be enough to differentiate your business.

“Testimonials” and “Client Lists” are also great things to add to your marketing kit. All in all, your marketing kit should contain some combination of the following pages:

- Your Case Statement (Why somebody should buy from you.)
- Your Difference Summary (explained earlier)
- Your Ideal/Client Customer Description
- Your Marketing Story
- Your Product Service Offerings
- Case Studies
- Testimonial Proof
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Client List
- Processes and Checklists
- Articles

In addition, one of the best things about creating a marketing kit is that it can also serve as the content for your website. Many people design their websites to be nothing more than an online brochure. Instead of filling your website with the typical fluff found in a tri-fold brochure, imagine having a website filled with case studies, testimonials, processes, checklists and other proof sources of the results your customers can expect to receive by working with you.

Step 4: Design a Two-Step Approach to Your Marketing

A lot of small business owners tell me that they’ve tried advertising, that it doesn’t work and that it’s a waste of money. For most small businesses, it is a waste. Not because it doesn’t work, but because of how they do it.

Most businesses use advertising that is basically trying to sell something. The ads say, “Call us” or “Buy from us.” Maybe they’ll throw something in about how they’ve been in business for 10 years;

or how they are trusted technicians; and all the other fluff that customers ignore. Instead of wasting your money on an ad like this you should use advertising as a means of gaining your customers permission to begin marketing to them and to start educating them on the types of problems you solve.

This is called two-step advertising. You're not going to sell them anything or try to get them to make an appointment with you. You are simply inviting them to come to you to get information that you are willing to provide for free in exchange for their permission to begin marketing to them.

This free report is a perfect example of this. Imagine if I had sent you an email or postcard that told you to enroll in my sales training program for thousands of dollars? Would that be as interesting to you as my inviting you to come to a free marketing workshop or to read one of my free reports?

All of your advertising should be the two-step variety. You need to think in terms of creating information products. It can be a simple one-page checklist. It can be a report. It can be a review of new tools and resources that people in your industry use. It can be an article on something like the "Ten things you must know before you hire an accountant." It can be recorded material. It can be written material. It can be in the form of a PDF document on a website. It can be in the form of something you might mail them.

What it allows you to do is to clearly demonstrate a willingness to build a relationship before you would take the step of asking them to buy from you. You should give out lots of great information. Through this information your prospects get to know you and they get to learn what you're about. It's how they come to know, like and trust you.

Step 5: Build Your Lead Generation Machine

One of the great things about technology and the web is that it really allows you to market to prospects over time. In Steps 3 and 4 I talked about creating marketing materials that educate and the need to create a free report or white paper from which your clients can learn more about you and how you can help them solve you're their problems. In addition, you should have an electronic newsletter that people can subscribe to or unsubscribe to automatically. It keeps you in front of your prospects over time so that they don't forget you when the need arises.

These marketing tools only work if you commit to doing them on a consistent basis and can automate their delivery. This is where today's latest marketing technology comes into play. First of all, you need a website. Without it, you may as well not even be in business today. Load it with high quality educational content that is easy for search engines to find and index.

You should build into your website some manner of capturing the email addresses of the people who visit your website. If you don't capture an email or some other contact information when a prospect visits your website you've lost the opportunity to market to them over time.

That's where you'll utilize a free report, a free e-zine or one of the different components of your marketing kit. These things are given away in exchange for your prospect's email address and their permission to stay in contact with them.

With your prospect's email address you can stay in constant contact with them by utilizing a "drip marketing" or "nurture marketing" system that touches them via email on an ongoing basis.

Blogs are another great way to build trust, spread your expertise, gain visibility as a thought leader and cultivate PR opportunities. It's also a great

search engine tool, in terms of enabling the search engines to find you and index your content. Blogs are link bait and every blog post is an SEO opportunity.

For those of you that want to do business on a local basis, make sure you're using local search terms (the names of the cities and location where you do business) on your website, in your content and in your links. It's amazing how those little touches will help you get found. Frankly, that's how people search. If they're looking for somebody locally, they will often utilize the name of their city or locale in their search.

Make sure you get listed in the local directories of all of the major search engines including Google, Yahoo and Bing. All of them are now building local directories, so that if somebody searches "Sales Training Pittsburgh" the first couple of results that come up are basically like phone book listings.

The good news is that these local directories are still free. Google, Yahoo and Bing all have an online form you fill out. It can really be a great source of local traffic. For many people, the web has become their phone book.

Take advantage of the burgeoning forms of social media. While your website should be the hub of your marketing efforts, various social media sites serve as mini-websites to attract prospects and lead them back to your primary website where you can capture their contact information. As of this writing, the big three social media sites are LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter.

On LinkedIn you should create a profile with elements of your marketing kit, keywords, and links to your website and blog. Repurpose your content by adding it to Slideshare, YouTube, Biznik and others. Use LinkedIn to search for leads and to profile companies and individuals you want to target. Recommend colleagues and gather testimonials. Ask questions and provide answers.



Implement a similar strategy on Facebook. Build a fan page. Promote your business with special modules and content. Link to your website, your blog and other social media sites. There are some tremendous marketing automation tools out there that can really work for you 24 hours per day, 7 days a week. These tools really help a small business or a sales professional become better known and develop relationships with prospects and customers.

Step 6: Develop a Referral Marketing System

We have a whole program on how to build a referral marketing system. But for now, I'm going to give you just a couple of ideas that I want you to really think hard about. First of all, some of the people who are the best at generating referrals do nothing more than make it an expectation of doing business with their firm. In other words, when they sign up a new client or when somebody decides they want to buy a product from them, part of their sales presentation involves letting them know that in exchange for their stellar service they will be expecting their new customer's help in growing their business.

This is incredibly simple, but also incredibly powerful. First of all, it sends a very positive marketing message. You're telling your customer that you know they'll be thrilled. In essence, you're guaranteeing that they're going to be extremely

satisfied and you are putting your performance on the line.

The biggest thing it does is that it establishes an expectation up front. While not every customer will follow through, a much greater percentage will provide referrals than if you were to wait six months before asking if they know of anybody who needs what you do.

A lot of people look to their client base to generate referrals. Obviously, that's not a bad place to look. Who better to ask for introductions than somebody who has experienced your brilliance and is able to talk about it? But in a lot of cases, your clients can't be properly motivated to generate referrals or they really don't know that many people who need what you do. In these situations, the best place to look for referrals is with a different kind of client -- strategic partners.

Strategic partners are businesses who serve your same market or, even better, businesses that have a product or service that complements what you do. Think about proposing a joint venture or a referral partnership with one of these businesses. Be very clear about what your ideal market is and what it is that you do of value. You may even go as far as creating tools that your strategic partners can use with their clients. Would your strategic partner's

clients like one of your free reports, or a white paper, or a checklist or some other offer that you could provide to them at a relatively low cost which would make it easy for them to introduce you?

Like it or not, you are in the "marketing" business

Unfortunately, being good at what you do is not enough anymore. You cannot expect your clients to spread the good word about you without your help and coaching. You have to make it easy for people to introduce you and for your prospects to find you on their own terms. Like it or not, you are in the "marketing" business.

Fortunately, there are a host of new tools that you can use to facilitate this process, but you have to put them to good use. Nobody can do it for you. Nobody understands your business or the problems you solve for your customers as well as you do. You can hire a marketing agency to do the work for you, but you are going to have to spend your money along with many hours of your time to educate them about the things you already know. Why not put that time towards building your own lead generation system that you can manage and control. Marketing is not as hard as you think, if you know what to do. At Client Builder Sales & Marketing, we can show you how.

About Larry Lewis and Client Builder Sales & Marketing

Larry Lewis is the founder and president of Client Builder Sales & Marketing LLC and the creator of the Client Builder Selling program. Larry's practical, street-smart approach to prospecting and selling has helped hundreds of sales executives, business owners, and independent professionals increase their sales and profits with more control, greater confidence and less effort. You can learn more about him and his system for selling at www.ClientBuilderSelling.com.

For a more in depth look at the Client Builder Selling process we strongly recommend that you purchase the book titled "Client Builder Selling" from our e-store located at: <https://www.createspace.com/3759929> or Amazon.com.

About Pauline Stark and Business Evolutions - NE

Pauline Stark is an authorized trainer of the Client Builder Selling sales training program and the owner of Business Evolutions – NE, a coaching and training organization dedicated to helping businesses improve their sales performance.

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