

## **B2B Lead Nurturing: Which Works Best? Direct Mail, Email or Phone?**

Tuesday, February 25, 2014 - Written by: [Jeff Kalter](#)



### **Words Alone Cannot Substitute for Conversation**

Of course, face-to-face communication is the most powerful way to build understanding because 55% of communication comes through body language alone. But that doesn't mean you want to send a field sales rep out to ferret out a lead's requirements. It's just not cost effective because if you haven't had a conversation, you don't know if they're qualified.

But after body language, the next most powerful communication tool is the tone of the voice. It accounts for 35% of communication. The actual words provide a miniscule 10% of communication.

## **Tone in Emails is Misinterpreted 50% of the Time**

Given that words only provide 10% of the communication, how effective is email? The Journal of Personality and Social Psychology conducted a study that showed the tone in an email is misinterpreted 50 percent of the time. So you only have a 50% chance of getting it right! That's a high risk to take with valuable leads. And, of course, direct mail has the same issue plus is hampered by the slow pace at which it reaches the lead.

## **Phone Provides Deeper Understanding**

Following up by phone is the best way to share information and gain insights on a lead that's not yet qualified. The phone allows you to dig into the person's issues, see where your products and solutions might help them, and discover where they are in the buying cycle—initial research, assessing vendors, or making a final decision. Your goal is to listen to the prospect and learn enough to establish next steps in the sales process.

Talking with a prospect enables you to establish a follow-up plan which helps them to solve their problem at their own pace. Once you've started a relationship with the prospect, it's okay to follow up with email. You learn enough in the initial conversation to send information that can help them, on a schedule that fits their timeline.

## **The Human Touch Builds Relationships**

Phone calls are also powerful because they add a human touch to the lead nurturing process, helping to build a person-to-person relationship. And in the end, even in business-to-business sales, people buy from people. Thus, you need to add real, live human beings into your lead nurturing process.

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