Inbound Lead Conversion Tips You Need to Know

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1. **Set the Parameters for Sales and Marketing Qualified Leads**

   Contrary to popular opinion, when someone fills out a form on your website, it generally is not a qualified lead.

   In fact, the stats from Gleanster Research show that about **one in four leads is qualified** and ready to buy when marketing first receives them. Another 25 % are never going to purchase a thing. Nada. That's because they're just surfing the web, doing a little research, dreaming of solutions they can't afford or writing term papers for their college courses.

   So, what's going on with the other 50 % of your leads? These people are interested in what you offer and may even have the budgets to buy it, but they're "just looking." They're not ready to buy yet. Don't give them the cold shoulder, though—they'll be ready someday, and you don't want them leaving your fold for the competition.

   In marketing, you cannot afford to waste time on the people who are *never* going to buy. Similarly, your salespeople have no interest in leads that are *not yet* in buying mode. You need to sort your leads into buckets—sales worthy, marketing worthy and not worthy. To make the organization process easier, first define a marketing qualified lead. This definition lets you know which leads to feed into your nurturing campaigns. Also, work with your sales team to create a shared definition of a sales qualified lead. When you think through qualifying criteria, consider:

- **Demographics** and firmographics, such as company size and industry, and individual responsibilities and title
- **Level of interest** demonstrated through the individual's interaction with your web content and emails
- Budget, authority to buy, need for your product or solution, and time urgency **(BANT)**

What's the beauty of defining both marketing qualified and sales qualified leads? It enables you to invest your time where you'll get the greatest payoff.

2. **Determine *How* You Will Qualify Leads**

Now you need to figure out *how* you're going to qualify your leads.

To determine interest level, you can **use your marketing automation system to score your leads** based on their behavior. For example, if someone has watched a webinar or is trying out a free demo, you can probably be justified in giving them a high lead score, indicating that they have a greater chance of converting than the lead that has just downloaded your tip sheet.

You may **get some of the demographic and firmographic information from your web forms**, however, you probably won't be able to attain all the data you need. It's even less likely that you'll be able to gain insight into someone's responsibilities, their budget, timing to make a purchase and whether your solution or product is a good fit for them.

Given the unknowns, you will need to **pick up the phone to learn more about your prospects and how you can help them to solve their problems**

. Enlist your inside salespeople or seek out a professional B2B telemarketing company. They'll have business development specialists available when you need them who can talk peer-to-peer with high-level executives.

3. **Set Up a Lead Nurturing Program**

   Remember the 50% of your leads that are not yet ready to buy? You can't afford to let them waste away in no man's land, serving as easy pickings for your competition. You have to stay top of mind, building their interest and trust as they move closer to making a purchase decision.

   That means you need to outline your nurturing campaign.

   In many cases, nurturing will include a series of emails that help to answer your prospects' questions. But don't limit yourself. You may need to **make phone calls to build the human relationship and provide a more personalized perspective on your offering**. Conversations enable you to show the specifics of how you can help a prospect and their organization. They give you the opportunity to answer questions and counter objections.

4. **Determine Whether Inside Sales or Field Sales Will Convert Your Leads**

   When the leads are sales qualified, it's time to hand them off to your salespeople even though you may continue to offer marketing support. Decide whether to use inside salespeople or a field sales force to conquer conversion. Usually, your decision depends on the complexity of the product or solution that you're offering and whether you can convey your message successfully on the phone or via an online meeting. The key is to think the whole sales cycle through upfront and decide which methodology is likely to provide the greatest return on your investment.

Clearly, you need to map out your inbound lead conversion methodology to get the most value out of your online marketing initiatives. It's essential to:

- Define sales and marketing qualified leads
- Qualify leads
- Nurture those that are not yet ready to buy
- Have an inside or field sales available ready and eager to convert sales qualified leads in a timely manner

Call us at +1 718-709-0900 (US) or +39 06 978446 60 (EMEA), or contact us online to learn more about B2B inbound lead conversion.

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