

## Generating Sales Leads

Generating sales leads is a critical and central component to your sales effort. Often Tudog witnesses companies struggling in their sales efforts because they either fail to engage in lead generation, or equally as critical, fail to qualify the leads they have.

It is not enough to have a lead. Often we know someone – or know of someone – and begin to build our sales expectations on this relationship. We become both disappointed and disillusioned when the sales don't result, only to learn that the individual was not the proper contact. We need to qualify our leads before we engage in active pursuit of sales.

But first, we need to generate the leads.

The first step in sales generation is learning your market and classifying companies you wish to contact as targets and potential targets, with the differentiation lying in the priority. Priority is a strategy issue. At times it is best to pursue industry leaders in the belief that other companies will follow. Conversely, there are times when beginning with the smaller companies makes sense so they serve as verification when you approach the larger ones. In all cases, you need to profile your targets and potential targets, writing down the following critical points:

- Name of decision maker
- Name of contact
- The problem your product or service solves, or the benefit you offer
- The type of deal your prospect has already done that you can use as a precedent
- The structure and payment plan for the deal that your prospect will find agreeable.

Once you have done your homework, there are 8 lead generation strategies Tudog can recommend. They are:

### 1. Direct Referrals

Networking is still the best lead generation mechanism. This falls short sometimes only because you do not do your homework or qualify the leads, which leaves you chasing down deals that can never (and will never) happen. However, if you do your work, you will find that leads provided by industry partners, deal flow channels, clients or customers, association members and others will be a highly successful means of lead generation.

### 2. Cold Calling

It is almost a universal fact that every salesperson hates cold calling. It is tough selling, but it can also be a highly effective lead generation tactic. Once again, if you do your homework and qualify who it is you call, know the name of the person you wish to speak to, understand the needs of their company and explain why you offer a solution or a benefit, you will find people receptive to learning more. Cold calling is painful because we are random in our approach, unsure of our value and often are speaking with the wrong person. Correct these fundamental errors and cold calling will generate genuine leads.

### 3. Industry Events

Provided the industry event is targeted to your prospects they can serve as an opportunity to generate sales leads. People attend these events with the intention of doing business, learning about the opportunities before them, and seeking solutions to the challenges they are facing. Your opportunity is enhanced by a compelling presentation, an understanding of who is attending and what their needs are, and an understanding of your competitors. Keep in mind that while the company decision makers most often do not attend these events, but nonetheless you are before individuals with influence that can serve to promote your products when decision making time arrives.

### 4. Advertising

Advertising can be highly effective when executed appropriately. Execution depends not only on placement, but also message and style of presentation. Placement should be in publications that are sought out by and considered credible authorities by your targeted market. Your message should be compelling, benefit or solution oriented, and demonstrate a clear understanding of the needs of the market. Your presentation should be consistent with the tone and attitude of the market, being quirky where quirky is permitted and conservative where that is required.

### 5. Online Strategies

There are a number of online strategies that can be pursued to generate sales leads. These include advertising on appropriate sites, affiliation programs, use of permission granted emails, and the operational of a highly professional website. These strategies will draw web sophisticated users to your company, providing a sales opportunity.

### 6. Snail Mail

Sure it's old fashioned to even mention the mail as a tool for lead generation, but it's still there and it's still effective. People generally wish to remain informed of the choices they have, and direct mail pieces are as useful as other means of information gathering. The trick, again, is in the preparation, both in terms of how it looks and what it says, and, more importantly, to whom it is sent and when. The former is a question of understanding your targets. The latter is a function of the effort and prep work you put into it.

### 7. Company Sponsored Events

Company sponsored seminars, lectures and other informative events are helpful in generating sales leads because it positions the company as an authority, gives prospects a chance to genuinely understand your offering, and, if you go beyond your own company interests and are broad and informative in your presentation (which you should be), earns you the gratitude of your prospects.

### 8. Company Generated Publications

Like company sponsored events, company publications offer you the chance to inform, present your company as the expert, and earn respect and appreciation by providing

useful information not necessarily directly associated with your company. Through emails and a newsletter you can position your company as among the few in your industry that are considered when buying time rolls around.

Generating leads is never a simple task. But by doing your homework, knowing your industry, understanding the needs, staying visible, and remaining credible, you will find it a bit easier.

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