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4 Essentials for Generating High-Quality Sales Leads

Don't spin your wheels on leads that won't end up purchasing from you. Improve your conversion rate with these expert tips.

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Lead generation is essential for building a business – an effective, intentional process can help you to build your client portfolio while using your time wisely.

Yet too often, sales reps end up chasing leads that won't become paying customers. A recent study by inbound marketing platform Hubspot found that half of leads are in fact not a good fit for what a company offers and therefore, are highly unlikely to become customers.



At the same time, according to the most recent State of the Industry data from ASI, the biggest challenge for distributors right now is increasing the size of their customer base (<https://www.asicentral.com/news/web-exclusive/july-2022/soi-2022-it-feels-like-everybody-is-buying/>), with 26% of firms citing it as a concern. So, it behooves reps to spend their valuable time and resources on pursuing those leads who offer the best chances of buying and becoming loyal clients.

Here, sales experts give us their best advice on finding high-quality leads.

1. Define Your Ideal Customer

Don't fumble in the dark or cast a wide marketing net that tries to target everyone. Be intentional by defining your ideal customer profile (ICP). Then, spend time pursuing leads that best match your ICP.

"Your ICP should include the problem they face and the value your solution provides them, which ultimately drives them toward a business outcome," says Mike Pych, senior vice president of global sales at Airmeet (<https://www.airmeet.com/>), a virtual event platform. "Make sure all parties involved are marching in the same direction."

Before actively targeting a lead, see how they measure up to your ideal. "The best lead is one with attributes that overlap with your ICP," says Amanda Georgoff, area vice president of enterprise sales at Salesloft (<https://salesloft.com/>), a sales engagement platform. "This should be the first question you ask yourself when pursuing a lead: How do they relate to my ICP? There's no 'one size fits all' definition of a high-quality sales lead."

2. Establish a Lead-Scoring System

Take the process further by scoring leads, that is, by assigning a value to the attributes that make up your ICP and seeing how the lead measures up. It could be things like budget, authority, need and timing (the BANT model of qualifying prospects), or actions they've taken, such as opening an email you've sent, attending one of your webinars or visiting your website. Similarly, if they unsubscribe from your email list or the message bounces, or if their budget is too low and timing is indefinite, the lead loses value.

"Set a scoring threshold," says Georgoff. "If a prospect meets that criteria, you can move them to one-to-one engagement, which helps you prioritize time with those interactions most likely to yield a successful customer relationship. And be sure to revisit your lead-scoring model regularly as your ICP, market and technology evolve."

26%

the percentage of distributors that cite “increasing the size of my customer base” as their top challenge.

(ASI)

3. Know Where Leads Spend Time

In addition to their purchasing profile, know what's important to your ideal lead and align your messaging with their priorities. Shavon Jones, chief content officer at law firm consultancy Sales for Lawyers (<https://sales4lawyers.com/>), suggests thinking deeply about a day in the life of a decision-maker that you're targeting. Think about what online and print media they're consuming, the podcasts they listen to, the social media platforms they use, the corporate events they attend, the industry trends that are most important to them at a given time and how they want to communicate to their own target audience.

"Make sure your messaging resonates with them," says Jones. "Make deliberate decisions, and only chase the people who are most likely to say yes."

4. Don't Pursue Everyone

It's a universal challenge for sales reps – despite knowing their ICP in and out, they often spend too much time on leads that won't become paying customers. "Sales reps try to serve everybody," says Pych. "But then they spend endless hours trying to make things work, only to lose out in the end."

It's especially hard when things seemed promising at the beginning. Perhaps the lead expressed solid interest, but then became cagier as the rep pursued them. "Walking away can be difficult," says Georgoff. "Even if they showed early indicators of making a purchase, there are factors behind the scenes that reps won't always see. Get out of the mindset that you must pursue a lead at all costs; you'll save valuable time and energy and be able focus on leads that are more qualified."



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