GET MORE FROM YOUR LEADS
INTRODUCTION

Acquiring new customers is the primary goal of most business-to-business sales organizations. Leads are the crucial link between prospects’ first interactions with the company and their relationship throughout the buying journey. Yet the majority of sales reps and managers have a love/hate relationship with leads.

While most marketing teams are measured on lead quantity, sales teams – and really, the rest of the business – are compensated based on the leads they turn into customers, so quality is more important to them. The result is a complex and sometimes tense lead management process, with sales and marketing often at odds over who should have more credit for doing their jobs best.

But where is the customer in all of this? What if you could aim for large quantities of leads and improve their quality and management at the same time, all while giving your customers a better buying experience?

In this e-book, we’ll explain how to get more from every lead that enters your pipeline, routing them effectively and measuring every step of the way.

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The State of Lead Generation

Let’s start from scratch and define lead. To connect with potential buyers, companies use marketing and business development tactics that generate awareness and stimulate interest. Companies also employ sales professionals for more targeted and direct contact.

The signal of a potential buyer’s interest typically comes in the form of a business individual’s contact information. When a name, location, and contact data are captured by a company, that collection of information is classified as a lead. This usually indicates the lead is comfortable speaking with a sales representative and gives the business permission for them to initiate a conversation with them and follow up – so it’s the sales team’s job to do just that.
Unfortunately, this interplay between vendors and buyers has become increasingly complex. Buyers are aware of your desire to make them a lead and sell to them. So marketing and sales focus on value exchange tactics: you offer customers something valuable — content, trials, consultations, and so on — and prospects reciprocate with their information. But even those tactics can make buyers wary, so generating quality leads is increasingly difficult.

In a recent study by IDG, 61% of marketers reported that generating high-quality leads was problematic for their organization. In fact, according to Gleanster Research, only 25% of leads in a given sales pipeline are legitimate prospects.

Even when leads make it into the system, data is often missing or questionable. A recent eMarketer study revealed that the majority of US B2B marketing executives say over 25% of their marketing database contains old, inaccurate, unusable, or duplicate leads.
Besides the hard dollar costs associated with poor data, there is also a significant opportunity cost associated with CRM adoption as well as the time that could have been spent engaging with quality prospects.

For the portion of leads that contain usable data, companies struggle with managing them effectively. InsideSales found that only about 27% of leads ever get contacted and the average response time is over 61 hours. In today's world of immediate solutions, customers are looking for quick and personalized responses from salespeople or they're going to take their business elsewhere.

To grow faster and sell smarter, sales teams need to focus on improving the entire lead process at every stage, including:

- Prospecting
- Data enrichment
- Routing and scoring
- Qualification
- Tracking
- Conversion
- Measurement

In the next three chapters, read best practices and technology tips for finding new sources and improving the quality and management of your leads - which helps you close more business.
Quality, Quantity, Or Both?

Marketing, sales, and other lead generators often feel they must compromise lead quality to coax potential customers into giving up information, even if the information given isn’t enough for a sales rep to act on. Clearly, quality leads are the end goal. But what comprises a quality lead, and do companies have to sacrifice quality for quantity?
Usable leads boil down to complete and accurate data. Considering where most leads come from, reaching that standard can be a hefty challenge. Ask yourself:

- How do leads make their way into your systems?
- What portion of your leads come from web forms with manually entered information from sales-averse window shoppers?
- How many leads come from marketing tactics like event lists, lead programs, webinars, or third-party lists?
- Are your reps scouring social networks like LinkedIn, collecting business cards, or using personal contact lists to enter data into your CRM?

No matter the method, most of these sources suffer from data deficiencies. To be clear, we aren’t recommending you scrap any of these lead generation efforts. But you should consider improving the quality and management of the leads from your existing channels and discovering new, valuable sources for high-quality leads.

Usable leads boil down to complete and accurate data.
Here’s how to get started.

First, enrich leads with trusted data.
While marketers need to limit the amount of information they ask for to boost conversion rates, effective lead management can only be done with a baseline of contact and company information. Contact data will help you better connect with the right buyers and stakeholders, while account data will help determine fit, aid in scoring and routing, and offer insights to have more informed interactions.

Next, use the data in your system to uncover opportunities you might have otherwise ignored.
As a foundation, you need a solid understanding of the attributes of existing customers so you can search for and recognize the next-best targets that look similar. This understanding can also give you clues to specific verticals/industries, competitors, or other lanes where you might want to devote targeted energy for lead development.

Many B2B companies find major value in exploring corporate relationships or hierarchies. You can find white space in the corporate family tree with parents, subsidiaries, and sister companies of accounts where you’ve already had success. Even better, you can expand relationships within corporate families to grow revenue, cross-sell, up-sell and extend partnerships.

Data.com Helps You Get More, Better Leads

Data.com Clean
The only native data management solution for Salesforce, Data.com Clean enables you to automatically enrich and update lead data based on contact match or company append. Company-matched leads get advanced firmographic data — like industry, financial, and company size — to improve scoring, routing, nurturing, and qualifying.

Learn More

Data.com Prospector
Get connected with the right people in your target accounts and grow pipeline with Data.com Prospector, which gives you the tools to search for and add target accounts and leads, with complete business information and insights, directly into Salesforce. You also get account insights such as business and financial details, competitive landscape, industry trends, and call prep questions to get your reps ready for that crucial first call.

Learn More
Tracking Leads from Click to Close

Getting leads into your system and improving the data is a crucial first step. By improving lead quality alone, you’ll start to see a measurable impact on your funnel. But there’s much more room for improvement across the pipeline.
A high-functioning lead management system helps you in four important ways:

- Reduce the amount of time to follow-up, improving your chances of contact and conversion
- Make better use of reps' time and help them prioritize the best opportunities
- Prevent leads from falling through the cracks, which wastes your time and resource investments
- Provide an optimal buying experience for potential customers with better-informed reps

A successful lead management system covers every stage of the buying cycle. This puts your reps in a stronger position to convert those leads into new, happy customers. Once you begin tracking your leads from initial click to close, each of these five selling phases will flow naturally to the next:

1. Get the lead to the right person quickly
2. Prioritize and manage the lead queue
3. Give reps easy access to relevant data
4. Provide guidance and reminders for next steps
5. Make it easy to convert or move to the next stage

Over 71% of successful companies cite lead scoring as most responsible for improving revenue contribution.

—The Lenskold and Pedowitz Groups
Converting More Leads to Opportunities with Sales Cloud

So how can you make sure every step of the process is covered? With Sales Cloud, set up automatic lead scoring and routing to ensure leads never fall through the cracks. You can ensure that the right sales reps follow up on leads while they’re hot.

With complete and enriched data, your scoring and routing is faster, is more accurate, and can be done at more strategic levels. Score and route by any combination of lead attributes like behavior, demographics (like title, function, and seniority), lead source, firmographics (including industry, geography, size, and revenue), and more.

From the main Leads screen in Sales Cloud Lightning, you have powerful features to help you see and prioritize your leads. You can see all the leads assigned to you or create custom views for easy management. Sort, filter, and use powerful charts to better visualize and single out the most important leads.

The Lead Record Screen in Lightning gives you a complete control center for making the most of each opportunity. See the activity history, easily log new activity, and create tasks with reminders. You also get information on campaigns or other touches the lead has been exposed to. Use the Sales Path guide to easily manage the conversion process, and even connect a Twitter account right within the lead record.

Once the lead has been converted to an Opportunity, you have all the information and history in a similar view. Here, Sales Path offers hints and best practices for moving the opportunity to the next stage. You also get additional space to add notes and attachments so your team has access to all the important details.
Measuring Success

Whether you’re a sales rep or a sales manager, you need to rely on data to better manage and prioritize leads – and ultimately measure your success. You need to be able to closely monitor lead volume, conversion rates, lead stage SLAs, time to follow-up/convert, logged activities, and more.
With a better handle on your key performance indicators, you can more quickly and accurately address problems, forecast pipeline, and prove success. Can you easily check your team’s numbers on closed/won business, expected to close, forecast, quota, and more? If not, you may be missing critical insights about your lead generation and sales process.

Data on leads and prospects can live across a variety of systems and formats. Make sure you’re consistently answering these questions with data:

- **Who is my next big customer and which segments should we target?**
- **Which existing line of business should we grow?**
- **How are revenue streams performing compared to previous months/quarters/years?**

Whatever data you use, make sure it’s accessible from your mobile device so you don’t waste time simply because your laptop isn’t nearby. Wherever business takes you, let data take you to the next level, staying flexible so you can add greater coverage to the areas that need it most.
To close more deals, it’ll be key to regularly track your own lead and prospect data and adapt your personal selling strategy accordingly. Only by measuring the right data can you adjust and improve your selling tactics, qualifying and routing leads more effectively as the year goes on.

Go into every sales call armed with a 360-degree view of your customer, from information about their company to their latest social media posts. Track your leads through the entire sales cycle and always have the next steps and right information on hand. The more you sell, the more data you’ll have about what works, improving results with every click.

Anytime you review your sales numbers, don’t let them sit there – take action. Always act on what you’ve learned and adapt accordingly, focusing your selling efforts on the prospects, territories, and products that make the most sense.

Measure your Lead Pipeline with Salesforce

With Sales Cloud Lightning, customizing reports is easy and intuitive, through stunning charts and graphs. You can create sophisticated reports and dashboards without bugging IT or your CRM administrator. Track team and individual performance, and monitor every stage of the pipeline in real time to prevent leads from going bad. Even more, all these reports and dashboards are available on your mobile phone, with the Salesforce1 Mobile App, so you can make critical decisions anywhere.
Conclusion

As we’ve explained in this e-book, it is possible to have more and better leads by employing best practices and the right technology. Start by improving lead quality and looking for leads in new places. Then score and route those leads efficiently and accurately, guiding reps through the next steps to move the lead through the pipeline. Finally, measure and optimize your lead pipeline in real time with dashboards.

For more on how it works, check out a guided tour of Sales Cloud.
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CONNECT TO YOUR CUSTOMERS IN A WHOLE NEW WAY