

Finding Leads Online



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OVERVIEW OF FINDING LEADS ONLINE

Entrepreneurs, scaling startups, and enterprise companies are all in business to do one main thing: generate revenue.

Over the last 10 years, inbound marketing has proven to be a great way to do this. But it's important to understand that people don't go from being completely unaware of your business to being a brand-loyal customer in one fell swoop.

There are levels to this kind of thing.

Potential customers need to go through a few different stages before they're ready to entertain a conversation about what you sell: Awareness, interest, consideration, intent, evaluation, and finally purchase.

The second stage is where you get leads.

Getting people interested in what you have to sell doesn't have to be difficult thanks to Inbound marketing. This practice is a holistic, data-driven approach where a business leverages content on its website to attract interested buyers and convert them into leads — typically after they've become aware of the products and services online.

It mirrors the way people buy in today's digital environment and works in both B2B and B2C situations.

But what if you don't have a marketing department or your marketing team doesn't practice inbound? What if you have to generate your own sales leads?

Here, we'll review the online channels that will help you generate leads and tactics, which you can apply to fill your pipeline today.

What is a **SALES LEAD**

What is a sales lead?

Sales leads are individuals or businesses that are prospective buyers. A sales lead is identified via marketing, referrals, social media, networking, product trials, or consultations. A lead does not become a prospect until they've been qualified to determine their level of interest and fit as a potential customer.

Many sales professionals don't have the marketing support to rely on a steady flow of inbound leads, but still have to hit their quotas. Luckily, the inbound sales methodology provides many ways to fill that need.

Inbound sales is a way to identify and connect with prospects by leveraging the inbound mindset of building relationships way before someone is ready to buy.

Most successful salespeople already practice some version of solution selling. They know sales is about consulting around the prospect's problems, not closing the deal.

It's about letting the prospect define the pace of the process and offering education and advice as a way to build confidence and trust. This makes it easy and safe for a client to buy.

Leads vs. Prospects

The difference between a lead and a prospect comes down to one thing: qualification. Whether you adhere to marketing-qualification or sales-qualification, a prospect is simply a lead that is ready to speak with a salesperson. Your business may have lead qualification software that makes this determination for you based on a set of criteria that you provide.

You might be wondering "What makes a lead ready to speak with sales?" And that can depend on several factors set by your sales team. Perhaps the type of lead generation tactic that brought them into the pipeline determines who becomes a prospect. Or maybe, an SDR reaches out to the lead to qualify them manually by asking a set of layered questions.

Lead qualification should be based on your revenue goals with input from both the marketing and sales teams. But before you set criteria to qualify leads, you need to generate them first.

HOW TO GENERATE **Sales Leads**

1. Optimize your social media profiles.

When was the last time you actually updated your LinkedIn or Twitter profile? Keeping your social media profiles fresh and up-to-date is a great way to bring in more leads.

LinkedIn is hands-down the most beneficial social media platform for salespeople. Make your profile stand out (and potentially show up in search queries) by drafting a stellar LinkedIn headline and descriptive summary that tells those who visit your profile exactly what you do and who you serve.

2. Find prospects you can help on relevant social media networks.

Most salespeople are on LinkedIn, but may not be using it effectively for generating top-of-the-funnel activity. It is a salesperson's dream to be able to connect in a high-value, low-effort way to find interested prospects, and social media is a great way to do so.

A few quick recommendations to leverage your social media presence for lead generation:

- Try to connect with as many people as you can. The more connections you have, the wider your reach will be. You don't have to be best friends with the people you connect to. Tangential connections can be amongst the best for potential prospects.
- Post in the "Share an Update" section that you are currently looking to identify and help a specific type of prospect with a specific type of problem by a specific date. For example, "We are looking to work with three new commercial landscaping companies by September 1 that are interested in building their business in the greater Phoenix, Arizona area".
- Get three recommendations from current clients demonstrating high-quality work who will vouch for your value, professionalism, and effectiveness.

3. Post a blog article on LinkedIn with an offer for a 15-minute consultation.

When I mention "blogging" to my audience, people's eyes glaze over. They think of blogging as a structured and difficult way of writing a college essay — and writing is up there with public speaking on the list of things that people hate and fear.

But blogging is really just a conversation, and a blog topic can be as simple as answering the standard questions about your product that you do every day, such as "The Beginner's Guide to [*Common Business Challenge*]" and "X Things You Need to Know About [*Business Area*]."

4. Guest post to other websites and blogs.

Are you writing blogs yet? You should be. Start by writing about what you're an expert in. It could be sales process optimization, referral marketing, or your product/service — but whatever you do, start writing, and share it on your company's blog, your personal social media channels, and your customers.

It's important for you to be a visible expert in your field. Not only will it display your expertise, but you'll educate your prospects as well. Need some help on your first post? Reach out to your resident marketer or blog editor for a quick lesson. They might even offer to help you write a post or two.

CONCLUSION

No matter how small or large your business is, you can generate quality leads online to increase revenue. Whether you're more of a writer, networker, or public speaker, the opportunity to connect with people and generate leads online is definitely worth your while. Try these online tactics to close more deals this quarter.

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Our goal is to provide a comprehensive Marketing Program that integrates smoothly with existing marketing and advertising programs.

Effective Marketing takes quality and consistency over time to build interest and a following. We work to create an innovative and consistent marketing presence for your company.

All information is generated and approved before posting and integrates your company's expertise in your industry...

AND WE CAN MANAGE **EVERYTHING FOR YOU!**

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