



DATA-INSPIRED GUIDES TO B2B SALES & MARKETING

# LEAD GENERATION

dun & bradstreet

A person is writing on a whiteboard with a blue marker. In the foreground, there is a blue funnel. The background is slightly blurred, showing a person's hand and a blue funnel.

# Introduction

There have never been more opportunities than there are today for B2B marketers to increase the number of leads they pass to their sales teams. But the proliferation of touch points for marketers to enhance lead generation also creates one of the biggest challenges: identifying and prioritizing the right leads during the right point in their buying journey.

According to a survey we conducted in partnership with Ascend2, 57% of the marketers surveyed cited the difficulty of improving the quality of leads as the most significant barrier to achieving lead-generation success.

Because there are so many ways to connect with prospective customers, marketers must navigate complex logistics when running successful campaigns. That could mean sorting through volumes of undeliverable email addresses, a lot of trial and error,

the lengthy process of finding the appropriate decision-makers, and the difficult task of capturing and engaging an online audience that is already bombarded with hundreds, if not thousands, of messages a day.

Providing sales teams with quality leads increases the chance of higher conversion rates while reducing the amount of time and resources allocated to chasing down individuals that cannot be converted. The question is, how can marketers cultivate a lead-generation strategy that will garner an improvement in the quality of their leads?

In this installment of our *Data-Inspired Guides to B2B Sales and Marketing* series, we'll share ways for you to optimize your demand-generation efforts with a focus on quality data. Let's go!

# Data-Inspired B2B Lead Generation

Acquiring new customers is a top priority for sales and marketing organizations. A higher percentage of quality sales leads, alignment between sales and marketing teams, and insightful account intelligence can help sellers improve the efficiency and success of their interactions with prospective clients resulting in revenue growth for your business. Follow these tips to help your campaigns garner stronger results.

## Use the Buddy System

According to our research, 44% of respondents noted that content marketing was the most effective online tactic for lead-generation purposes, but it was also found to be the most difficult to execute. The more time and resource intensive a tactic is to execute, the more likely an organization is to require outside assistance to execute it. In fact, 81% of marketing leaders outsource at least some aspect of their lead-generation tactics.

Consider leveraging the services of creative agencies, third-party writers, and social media consultants so you can optimize the internal resources you have – and avoid stretching your team thin and obliging them to own critical tasks they aren't fully trained for.

## Buckle Up for a Complex Sales Cycle

The modern B2B sales cycle is more complex than ever and the approval of multiple influencers within an organization is required in order to convert a lead into a sale. This winding road to becoming a customer can be full of off-ramps where a qualified lead may fizzle. But if your marketing team plans ahead, there is an opportunity to nurture and cultivate a stronger relationship before passing the prospect along to sales.

Take the time to understand the world of your customers: Understand their needs, how they buy, and why they buy.

Agree on a buyer's journey with your sales team and develop supporting content that makes sense for each stage of that journey and each group of prospects you want to influence. Creating content and messaging that speaks directly to your target audience while also providing valuable information is the best way to build trust. By aligning your resources and overall sales and marketing strategy across content, email, digital, and sales, you will be able to create a more streamlined buying experience for your customers.

## Leverage Predictive Targeting to Model Your Ideal Customer

Analytics are more prevalent and easier to leverage than ever before. Using analytics to ascertain common traits shared by the leads you've converted in the past is likely to help you cultivate a better way to target and score new leads in the future.

Predictive and look-a-like targeting will ensure that your efforts are focused on the key personas, reducing the resources spent tracking and soliciting parties with a low likelihood of purchasing from you. It can also pull from broader datasets to help you locate leads that, though they may not be ready to act now, may be interested in procuring your services down the road. As marketing technology evolves and becomes more effective, marketers will be able to improve the effectiveness of their campaigns.



## Stop Wasting Time on Email

Don't worry – we don't want you to stop using email. Email remains a staple of marketing campaigns because it is one of the easier, and more familiar, lead-generation strategies to implement. It also tends to reap the greatest rewards. According to Campaign Monitor, 59% of marketers see the most ROI from email.<sup>1</sup> But asking your team to manage email marketing manually is like asking them to find a needle in a haystack – a lot of effort for very little reward.

Many email addresses remain active long after they've stopped being used. In addition, the email that you send out may reach the wrong individual – or reach the right individual but at the wrong stage of their journey. But an email marketing automation platform can make life easier – and can help increase your ROI – by handling everything from list management to scheduling and targeting. Not only will it free up your team's time, but you can tailor your efforts to connect with the right audience, track campaign progress, and help improve future initiatives.



### QUICK TIP

We can help! Get access to the Dun & Bradstreet Data Cloud to integrate better quality data directly with your CRM – including Salesforce, Microsoft Dynamics 365, Marketo, Oracle Eloqua, and more. This can help you improve segmentation efforts, increase conversion, and generate faster growth for your business. Learn more [here](#).

## Rise Up Through the Ranks

There are active buyers using their browser's search function right now to find services and solutions that your organization offers. If your website ranks highly on popular search engines, you'll have no problem increasing the quantity of your leads. But if you don't rank, you won't be able to capitalize on buyers' interest or stand up to the competition. A little-known fact: Ranking highly with uncommon keywords can be just as effective as placing in the middle of the pack using more popular terms.

### Don't Be a Social Wallflower

To increase the quality of your leads from social media, you need to determine what type of content will resonate with and entice your target audience. While pictures of dogs wearing sunglasses may get views, they're not going to get you the engagement you need to meet your goals and objectives.

To determine the kind of content you should be creating and promoting, conduct social listening exercises and find out what questions your sales team is fielding from your customers. And be sure to get sales involved from a social-sharing perspective. Provide them with your latest content and insight into current campaigns so they can share info across their valuable social networks.



## Ranking Guide

Want to move up the ranks? Here are a few ways you can improve your standing in search results:

- Populate your website regularly with authentic, industry-related content that pertains to your target audience. Think about the needs of your customers as you create the content that will live on your site.
- Develop a keyword strategy. Research the words that your leads are using to find your site, and be sure to include those words or phrases in your content. But be prudent: Your search rankings may slip if you begin inserting keywords without purpose. Dedicate resources who understand the process, and don't be afraid of trial and error.
- Create cross-traffic through link-building. This includes adding links between pages on your site, which will help keep traffic out of the hands of your competitors. Linking to outside sources of information can also be beneficial. But just like keywords, adding links just for the sake of bolstering your SEO can dilute your message and lead to penalization by search engine bots. Cross-traffic takes time. Be patient and thoughtful with your strategy and execution.

## Be Selective When It Comes to Virtual Events

When was the last time you sat through a webinar or attended a virtual event? Chances are, it's not a frequent occurrence. So by implication, when you've attracted an audience's attention, it's likely that they're genuinely interested what you have to offer. It's also likely that you've made it into their decision mix – which means you need impactful content and an enticing call-to-action.

Plan digital events around new product launches or releases, new research, relevant content, or special offers. Don't host webinars for the sake of drawing attention or chest thumping. Showing you respect their time and have something beneficial to share can help gain your audience's trust and, ultimately, their business.

## Improve Digital Experiences

In today's digital age, the easiest way for someone to interact with your company is through your website. But what do you truly know about your visitors? Marketers continue to struggle with optimizing their websites and identifying traffic. Fortunately, there are tools that can help.

Identifying visitors in real time empowers you to create a better experience for them through personalized messaging and helpful content. You will also be better able to measure the effectiveness of your marketing campaigns, see which tactics and channels are driving the most

targeted traffic to your site, and convert visitors into qualified leads for your sales team.



### QUICK TIP

D&B Visitor Intelligence pulls rich business information associated with cookies and IP addresses hitting your website, providing you with a better view of who is engaging with your content. This can help you enhance engagement and turn unknown visitors into leads. [Learn more here.](#)

## Conclusion

Marketers are being asked to go beyond generating traffic and engagement. Scoring leads and delivering detailed, high-quality data to your sales team early on in the selling process is a must.

The more a seller can personalize a conversation, the faster and easier it will be to help the prospect and gain their business. This begins with providing access to the most accurate, actionable data across your organization. Ready to get started? Learn how Dun & Bradstreet can help [here.](#)



## Is Data Driving or Derailing Your Strategy?

For the sixth consecutive year, we surveyed hundreds of B2B sales and marketing pros in order to understand the state of data quality and how data is being used to guide their go-to-market strategies. See how you stack up!

[Read the Report](#)



Source:

1. Campaign Monitor. "2018 Annual Email Marketing Industry Report." 2018.

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## About Dun & Bradstreet

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