An Introduction to
Lead
Generation

How to Use
the Internet to
Drive Leads and
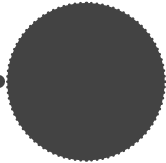Revenue

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INTRODUCTORY ◄······· This ebook!

Introductory content is for marketers who are new to the subject. This content typically includes step-by-step instructions on how to get started with this aspect of inbound marketing and learn its fundamentals. After reading it, you will be able to execute basic marketing tactics related to the topic.

INTERMEDIATE

Intermediate content is for marketers who are familiar with the subject but have only basic experience in executing strategies and tactics on the topic. This content typically covers the fundamentals and moves on to reveal more complex functions and examples. After reading it, you will feel comfortable leading projects with this aspect of inbound marketing.
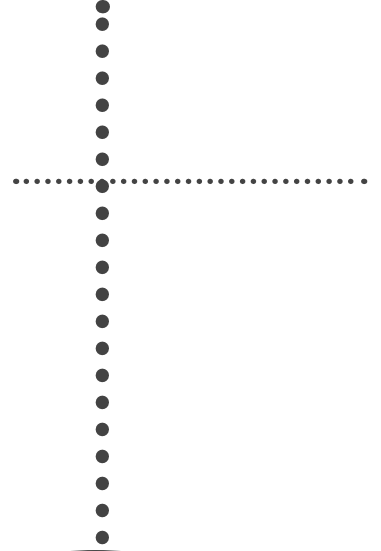
ADVANCED

Advanced content is for marketers who are, or want to be, experts on the subject. In it, we walk you through advanced features of this aspect of inbound marketing and help you develop complete mastery of the subject. After reading it, you will feel ready not only to execute strategies and tactics, but also to teach others how to be successful.

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AN INTRODUCTION TO LEAD GENERATION

By Kipp Bodnar

Kipp Bodnar is an Inbound Marketing Strategist at HubSpot. He is co-author of The B2B Social Media Book: Become a Marketing Superstar by Generating Leads with Blogging, LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Email, and More (John Wiley & Sons), the definitive guide for B2B marketers who want to master social media and drive leads.

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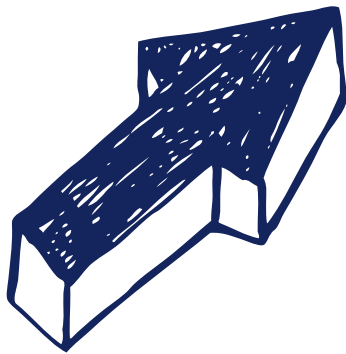
CONTENTS

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CHAPTER 1

DEFINING A LEAD

"Having a person's email address doesn't make them a lead for your business."

What is a lead? A lead is a person who has indicated interest in your company's product or service. Online, a lead is traditionally defined as a person that completes a landing page. A landing page is a webpage with a form through which a person supplies contact and business information in exchange for free information provided by a company, such as an ebook, webinar, product consultation, or product demonstration.

Having only a person's email address does not make them a lead for your business. Instead, view that person as a contact. Because they have provided their email address, possibly as a subscription for your blog or email newsletter, you now have the opportunity to use targeted and relevant email marketing efforts to convert this person into a lead.

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How Much Information is Enough?

Since information transactions through landing pages generate leads, one of the first questions a marketer is likely to ask is, how much information should I ask for from a person visiting my landing page? This is a challenging question to answer. The more information you ask for, especially sensitive information such as a person's age or phone number, the lower the likelihood that a prospect will complete and submit your form.

The knee-jerk reaction to that is to think that you should only ask for a couple of pieces of information such as name, address and phone number. The problem with this is that too little information can burden your sales process and make it difficult for sales and marketing team members to prioritize leads. Thus, the solution to this problem involves compromising. When planning or updating your lead generation strategy, talk with your sales team. Ask them what information they NEED about leads in order to have a smooth and productive sales process. If certain information isn't actively being used by either sales or marketing, then don't ask for it.

This simple compromise can ensure that you get the landing page conversion rates you want and the information that your sales team needs to close deals.

The Mechanics of Inbound Lead Generation

Inbound leads rock. Instead of cold calling or other forms of sales prospecting, generating leads through inbound marketing makes your sales team's job way easier. Think about it. If a person is an inbound lead, it means that they have visited your website because that is where they submitted their contact information.

This means that they should have some idea about your business and your product or service. This saves your sales team a ton of time and allows them to establish credibility and trustworthiness earlier in the communication process. not only do better educated customers make a salesperson's life easier, but they can also be happier customers in the long-term because expectations were properly set prior to their purchase.

When driving leads online, a business needs to have a few key elements in place. From a tactical perspective, a marketer needs three crucial things to make inbound lead generation happen.

MECHANICS OF
LEAD GENERATION:

1. Landing Pages - A landing page is a website page that has one distinct purpose: lead generation. This page contains a form that captures contact information from a visitor in exchange for an offer. Check out our Landing Pages ebook for more information on how to build awesome landing pages.
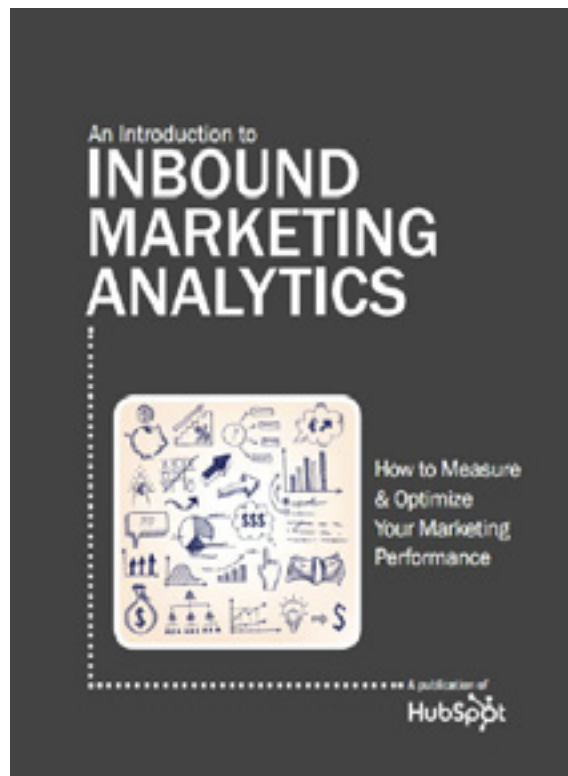
MECHANICS OF
LEAD GENERATION:

2. Offer - An offer, in the context of lead generation, is some sort of content or product that is of enough value for a person to provide contact information in exchange for access to it. Traditional lead generation offers include: ebooks, whitepapers, webinars, free consultations, and product demonstrations.

An Introduction to
INBOUND
MARKETING
ANALYTICS

How to Measure
& Optimize
Your Marketing
Performance

A publication of
HubSpot

MECHANICS OF
LEAD GENERATION:

3. Call-to-Action - Landing pages and offers are useless if no one sees them. To send people to a landing page, you need a call-to-action. Often abbreviated as CTA, a call-to-action is text, an image or button that links directly to a landing page. Check out our Call-to-Action ebook for more information on how to create and place calls-to-action effectively.

The Ultimate Inbound Marketing Glossary

INBOUND MARKETING GLOSSARY

Don't let terminology prevent you from achieving success with inbound marketing.

Download the free glossary to review all the definitions you will ever need to be a marketing rockstar.

LEAD GENERATION
EXAMPLE:

Scenario: A person visits your homepage. Then they see and click a call-to-action on your homepage. The call-to-action takes that person to your landing page where they see a description of your offer and have the option to complete and submit the form on the landing page. Once the person submits the form, they receive your offer and your sales team has a new lead to contact.

CTA ..... Landing Page ..... Offer

A GUIDE TO GENERATING LEADS WITH YOUR WEBSITE

GENERATE LEADS WITH YOUR WEBSITE

Now that you have a clear understanding of the mechanics needed to generate leads online, there is only one thing missing: traffic. In order for calls-to-action, landing pages, and offers to actually generate leads, people have to see them.

You want to make sure that every page of your website contains a relevant call-to-action.

Home Page: Your homepage, for example, might have a general product-focused call-to-action, since many different stakeholders visit that as the main page of your website.

Product Pages: On more product-focused website pages you should have a call-to-action that is more tailored to that specific product, since someone who is visiting that page is doing so because they have some level of interest in that specific offer.

Blog: Your blog should be a source of fresh content that is not overtly product promotional. This type of more general content can attract a wide range of new visitors through search engines, social media, and other sources. Because your blog will be the first website page that many of your visitors see, it is important to use a more general, less product-focused call-to-action that would appeal to a wide portion of your target market. These calls-to-action are typically for ebooks, webinars, or other forms of educational content. See our Blogging ebook for a deeper dive into how to generate leads with your business blog.

Taking the time to think through your choices of calls-to-action for each of your webpages makes a major difference in your visitor-to-lead conversion rate.

25 LEAD GENERATION BEST PRACTICES:

1. Improve Positioning of Your Calls-to-Action (CTAs)

Calls-to-action do best "above the fold" - the space where your webpage is viewable to the user without having to scroll down. According to heat map analysis, anything "below the fold" will only be viewed by 50% of people who visit your page. Doubling impressions on your CTAs can significantly increase your lead count.

25 LEAD GENERATION BEST PRACTICES:

2. Be More Clear About What You're Offering

Be crystal clear about what the offer is in your CTA. And be specific. If you're giving away a free guide, say "Download our FREE guide to X". If you're hosting a free webinar, say "Register for our FREE webinar on X." X should clearly convey a compelling benefit of receiving the offer. This is much more effective than "Download Now" or "Get a Free Article." These simply aren't specific enough.

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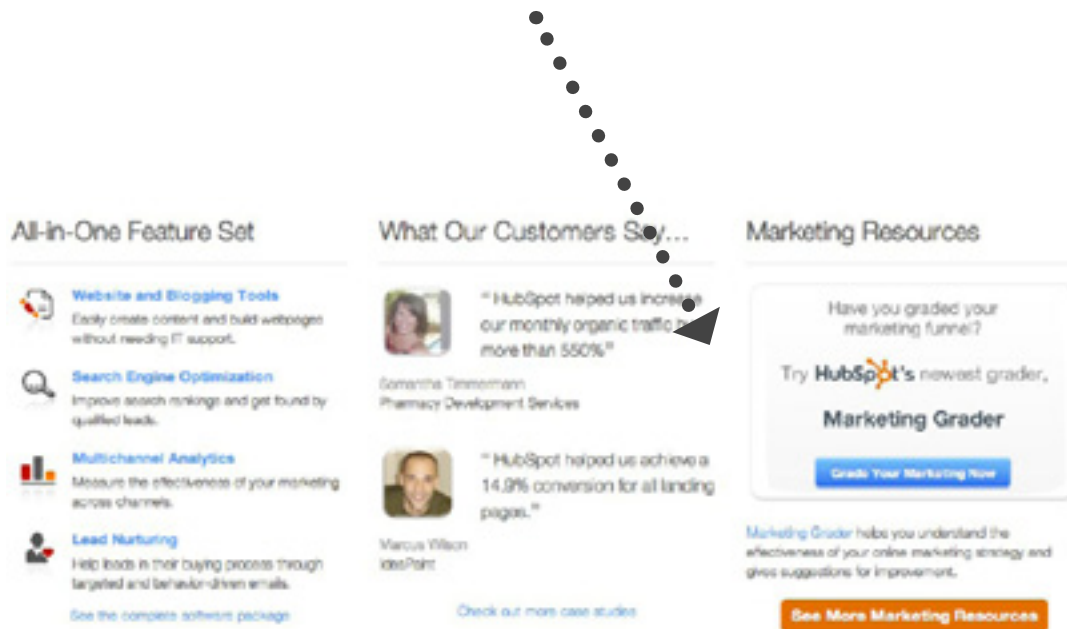
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25 LEAD GENERATION
BEST PRACTICES:

3. Use Images, Not Just Text

Images stand out on a webpage more than text does, and get a lot more attention, as proven by the heat map study. Additionally, using an image will allow you to show off the offer in a way that you can't necessarily convey using text alone.

25 LEAD GENERATION

BEST PRACTICES:

4. Use Colors that Contrast with Your Site Color Scheme

Your web designer might kick and scream about this, but if your call-to-action blends in too much with your site design, it won't stand out as much. You want as many eyeballs to land on that call-to-action as possible, so use contrasting colors to make the CTA stand out.
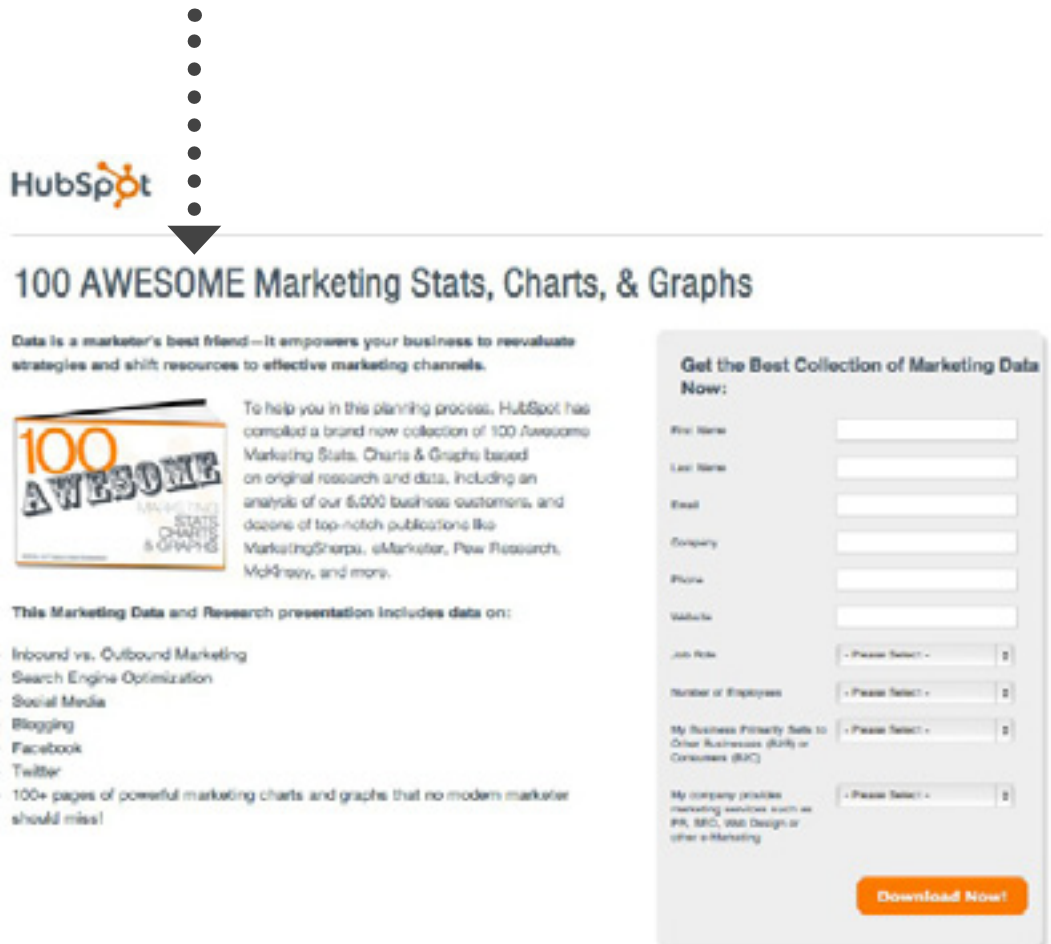
25 LEAD GENERATION
BEST PRACTICES:

5. Make your CTA a Hyperlink to the Corresponding Landing Page

You'd be surprised how many times I've seen calls-to-action that aren't links. Whether intentional or a matter of forgetfulness, not linking the CTA to your landing page will make it much harder for visitors to find out how to get the offer, and they'll likely give up. So double, triple, and quadruple check to make sure all of your CTAs link to their corresponding landing pages.

25 LEAD GENERATION

BEST PRACTICES:

6. Place CTAs on the Most Relevant Pages

CTAs shouldn't be one size fits all. If your company offers various products or services, you may want to consider creating a different offer for each of them. Then you can place CTAs linking to each offer on the website pages that are most relevant to that offer.

25 LEAD GENERATION
BEST PRACTICES:

7. Add CTAs to Each Blog Post

Whenever you create a new blog post, choose an offer that's most relevant to the content of the post. Then add a call-to-action to the bottom of that blog post linking to the landing page for that offer. Informational offers such as ebooks, guides, and webinars do very well in this space, because people reading your blog likely be eager to get more free information from you.

25 LEAD GENERATION
BEST PRACTICES:

8. Match the Headline of the Landing Page to the Corresponding CTA

Keep your messaging consistent on both your CTA and the headline of the landing page. If people click on a link for a free offer and then find out there's a catch on the landing page, you'll instantly lose their trust. Similarly, if the headline reads differently than the CTA, it might lead to confusion, and the visitor might wonder if the CTA is linked to the wrong page.

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HubSpot

Free eBook: 25 Website 'Must Haves' for Driving Traffic, Leads and Sales

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First Name *

We all know how important a website is to a business's online strategy, but what does it really take to have a great website that drives visitors, leads

Last Name *

25 LEAD GENERATION
BEST PRACTICES:

9. Be More Clear About What You're Offering on Landing Pages

This is the biggest mistake I see in landing pages. People often try to be too clever or witty in the headline, and it's not clear what the offer actually is. Again, if you're giving away a free guide, say "Download our FREE Guide to Improving X". Plain and simple.

We all know how important a website is to a business's online strategy, but what does it *really* take to have a great website that drives visitors, leads and revenue?

This free, 52-page guide is the ultimate resource to having a killer website. You'll learn:

- **How to get found online** with Search Engine Optimization (SEO), including building inbound links, meta tags and more
- **Important design and usability** factors you need to know
- **Tips for creating awesome content** that *attracts* and *keeps* visitors on your website
- **Best practices for converting traffic into leads**, including Calls-to-Action, Landing Pages, and Forms

25 LEAD GENERATION BEST PRACTICES:

10. Improve the Positioning of the Form

Just like you want to have your call-to-action above the fold, it's ideal for the form to be above the fold as well. This way, there can't be any confusion as to what's expected from the viewer on this page: they need to fill out the form to get what you're offering.

25 LEAD GENERATION BEST PRACTICES:

11. Keep the Form as Simple as Possible

"Simple" does not always mean "short." What you ask for on a form should match the information your sales team needs from your leads to make the sale. For top of the buying cycle folks at the beginning of their research process, name and email address might suffice. For more committed prospects at the bottom of the buying cycle, you might want to ask for some qualifiers like job title or city/state, and perhaps ask for a phone number. Just try not to ask for more than what's necessary.

25 LEAD GENERATION BEST PRACTICES:

12. Use Images to Show Off What You're Offering

Your landing page doesn't have to be a visual masterpiece, but it should show what your offer is all about. If your business is something a bit more abstract, just take a screenshot of your guide/whitepaper/eBook/etc. and add the image to your landing page. You can use freeware like Jing to easily capture and save screenshots.

25 LEAD GENERATION
BEST PRACTICES:

13. Keep the Text Concise and Easy to Scan

Be brief and to the point; it's in the offer itself where you give more information.
In addition to your headline, include a brief paragraph explaining what the offer
is, followed by a few bullet points outlining the benefits of the offer.

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on your website

- **Best practices for converting traffic into leads**, including Calls-to-
Action, Landing Pages, and Forms

25 LEAD GENERATION BEST PRACTICES:

14. Emphasize the Benefits of the Offer

Make it clear in your brief paragraph and/or bullet points what the benefits of the offer are. It's more than just listing what the offer is comprised of; it takes a bit of spin. Instead of "Includes specifications of product XYZ," say something like "Find out how XYZ can increase productivity by 50%." In other words, convey the value of your offer clearly and effectively.

25 LEAD GENERATION BEST PRACTICES:

15. Remove Links and Navigation to Maintain Focus

When a prospect reaches your landing page, you're just a few keystrokes away from getting their contact information. So don't distract them with links that will take them further away from your goal of getting a lead. The thank you page, to which you direct your prospects after they fill out your form and become leads, will give you the opportunity to return the navigation and links to other parts of your site.

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To help you in this planning process, HubSpot has compiled a brand new collection of 100 Awesome Marketing Stats, Charts & Graphs based

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First Name

25 LEAD GENERATION
BEST PRACTICES:

16. Create a Thank You Page that Keeps New Leads on the Site

When creating a thank you page, not only can you bring back the navigation, but you can provide other links to keep the lead engaged. You can include calls-to-action to the next step in the buying cycle, link to your blog, encourage them to follow you on Twitter, ask them to subscribe to your newsletter, and more. You can do a lot more with your thank you pages than just adding tracking code!

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25 LEAD GENERATION BEST PRACTICES:

17. Make Sure Your Offers are Compelling

Your landing page should always be able to answer the question: "What's in it for me?" Things like pricing brochures, specs, and self-promotional videos are not compelling offers, because they do not provide enough value to answer that question. Informational items like whitepapers, guides, and webinars are compelling offers because they do. See the difference?

25 LEAD GENERATION BEST PRACTICES:

18. Link Back to Your Site in Your Offer

Although lead nurturing is a very powerful tool, you should provide a way for your leads to find you again besides email, especially if they are more inclined to ignore email from people they don't know. If they enjoyed your whitepaper (which is full of remarkable content, so of course they did!), make it easy for them to remember where they got the whitepaper from by linking to your site on your cover page.
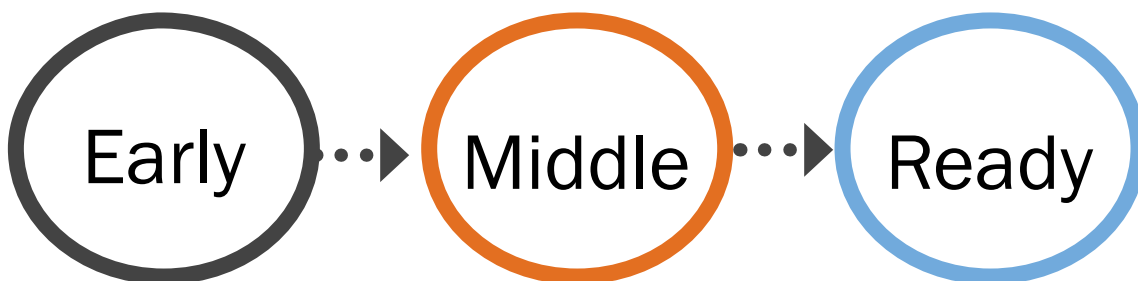
25 LEAD GENERATION BEST PRACTICES:

19. Create Offers for Each Phase of the Buying Cycle

Just like your forms might vary for each phase of the buying cycle, your offers should as well. Someone at the top of the buying cycle may be more interested in an informational piece like a guide or ebook, whereas someone more committed at the bottom of the cycle might be more interested in a free trial or demo. You don't need to pick and choose; create offers for each phase, and include a primary and secondary CTA to these offers on various pages throughout your site.

Early ⋯► **Middle** ⋯► **Ready**

25 LEAD GENERATION BEST PRACTICES:

20. Be More Clear About What You're Offering With Your Email Copy

I'm being repetitive about this for a reason: I've seen this mistake made too many times, and it's such an easy fix. Always be crystal clear about what you are offering. Keep your email short and sweet. Instead of prefacing your offer with two paragraphs about your company's background, get to the point. What are the tips you want to share with your prospects? How can they benefit from subscribing to your blog? Why should they care what new offer you have on your site?

DON'T WASTE LEADS

" Lead generation isn't the end goal. Generating revenue is the end goal. "

As a marketer, your work doesn't stop the second that a lead hits the submit button. As a marketer, you have a couple of clear priorities after lead arrives in your database. Your top priority is to ensure that the lead makes it to your sales team quickly. This could mean using the HubSpot software to automatically sync your leads with your customer relationship management (CRM) software or uploading them manually into the CRM.

Your second job as a marketer it to aid the sales team in converting that lead into a customer. One of the best ways to do this is through a process called lead nurturing. This involves using a marketing automation system like HubSpot to send customized messages to leads as they reengage with specific content and pages on your website or in social media. This type of communication can support the sales process and help to reduce the sales cycle for your business.

Lead generation isn't the end goal. Generating revenue is the end goal. Work closely with your sales team and your leads to maximize the revenue generated directly from your marketing efforts.

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CONCLUSION & ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

CONCLUSION:

Lead Generation Rocks!

Generating leads online using inbound marketing methodologies has the power to transform your current sales and marketing processes. Using landing pages , calls-to-action and offers to can help reduce your cost-per-lead while also delivering leads with a higher level of inital education to your sales team.

The basics are jsut the beginning. We gave you many best practices for aspects of lead generation to help bolster your conversion rates, but those tactics are only the tip of the iceberg. Continue to tweak and test each step of your inbound lead generation process in an effort to improve lead quality and reduce cost-per-lead.

Get started today! Leag genration is the foundation to your inbound marketing success!

START GENERATING LEADS TODAY

Sign up for HubSpot's 30-day Free Trial to start creating effective calls-to-action, landing pages, and offers to generate leads with your website.

www.HubSpot.com/Free-Trial