



DATA-INSPIRED GUIDES TO B2B SALES & MARKETING

LEAD GENERATION

dun & bradstreet



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: targeting the right leads at the right time.


According to a recent survey we conducted in partnership with demand generation research and marketing firm Ascend2, 57% of the 244 marketers surveyed cited 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 the complex logistics of running successful campaigns. That could mean sorting through volumes of undeliverable email addresses, numerous amounts 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 your sales teams with quality leads increases the chance of higher conversion rates, while reducing the amount of time and resources that must be allocated to chase down individuals that cannot be converted. The question is, how can marketers cultivate a strategy that will garner an improvement in the quality of their leads?

In this installment of our Data-Inspired Guide to B2B Sales and Marketing series, we'll share ways for you to optimize your demand generation efforts with a focus on quality data. You'll also find helpful insights from our recent study on lead generation created in partnership with Ascend2. Let's get started!



Stronger Leads Make a Stronger Sales Force

52% of our survey respondents indicated that acquiring new customers was their organization’s highest priority, trailing only the need to improve the quality of leads, which was the most critical goal of 78% of marketing decision-makers. A higher percentage of quality leads, alignment between sales and marketing teams, and insightful account intelligence can help an organization’s sales force improve the efficiency of their interactions with prospective clients.

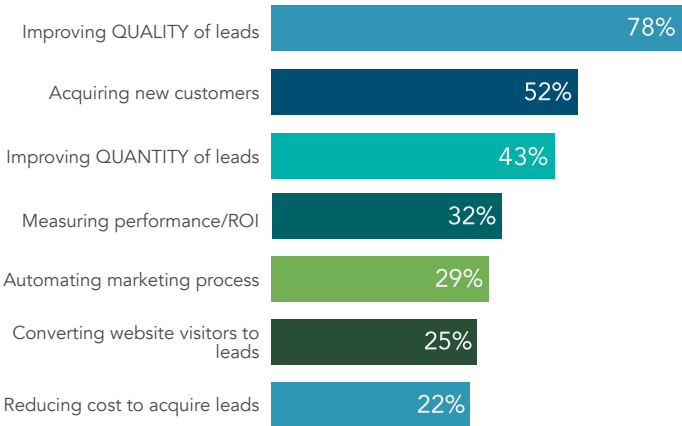
Follow these tips to ensure your campaigns garner strong results and generate a higher percentage of quality leads for your teams.

Use the Buddy System

44% of our survey 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. In fact, 81% of marketing leaders outsource at least some aspect of their lead generation tactics. The more time and resource intensive a tactic is to execute, the more likely an organization is to require outside assistance to execute it.

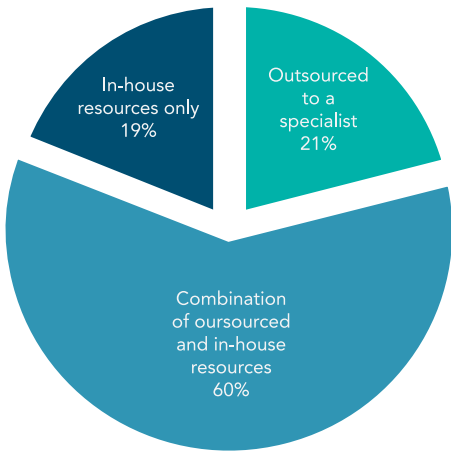
Consider leveraging the services of creative agencies, third-party writers, and social media consultants so you can optimize the internal resources you have, rather than stretching them thin and asking them to own something they may not be 100% comfortable with.

What are the most important goals of a lead generation strategy?



State of Lead Generation Trends Survey, Dun & Bradstreet in Partnership with Ascend2

Which best describes the resources used to execute lead generation tactics?



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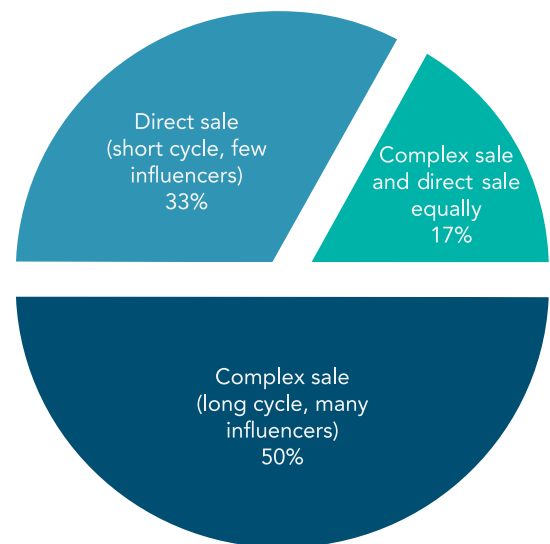


Buckle up for a Complex Sales Cycle

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

Take the time to understand the world of your customers and urge your sales teams to lead conversations with their needs. Agree on a buyer's journey and supporting content that make sense for each stage and each group of prospects. Creating content and messaging that speaks directly to your target audience while providing valuable information is the best way to build trust. By aligning your resources and overall strategy across content, email, digital, and sales, you will be able to create a more streamlined buying experience for your customers.

Which best describes the type of sales cycle your organization most often encounters?



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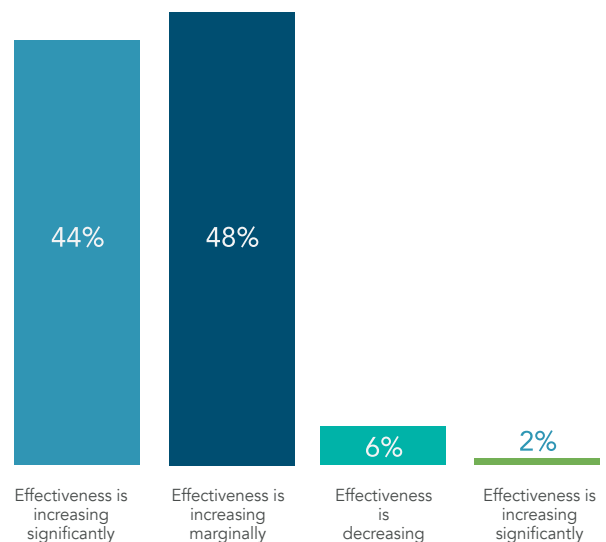
Leverage Predictive Targeting to Model Your Ideal Customer

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

Predictive targeting will ensure that your marketers can focus their efforts on key personas, and reduce the amount of resources spent tracking and soliciting disinterested parties. It can also pull from broader data sets to help you locate leads that may not be ready to act now, but 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. In fact, 92% of decision-makers report that their lead-generation effectiveness is increasing.

To what extent is lead generation effectiveness changing?



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Don't Be a Social Wallflower

In order 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 funny memes and pictures of cats wearing glasses may get clicks, it's not going to get you the leads you need to meet your goals and objectives.

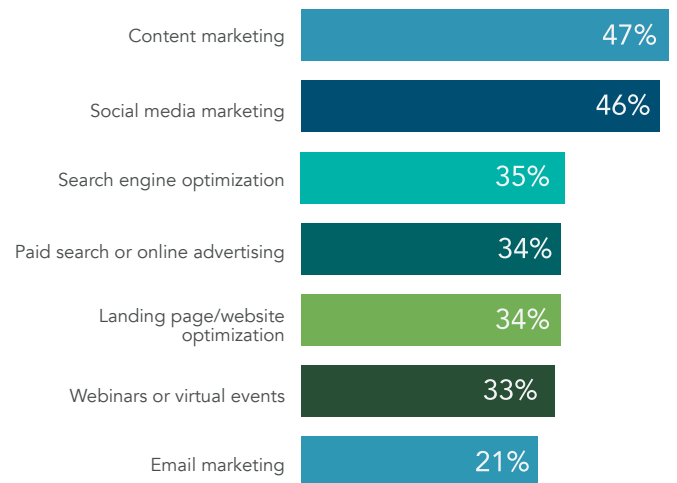
Conduct social listening exercises and ask sales what types of questions your customers are asking to determine the content that you should be creating and promoting. And be sure to get sales involved from a social sharing perspective. Provide them with your latest content and insight into current campaigns so they can share across their social networks — which happen to be some of the most valuable.



QUICK TIP

Looking for social media tips and tricks? Check out our Data-Inspired Guide to Social Media [here](#).

What are the most difficult online tactics to execute for lead generation?



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Help Your Leads Help You

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 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 for more popular terms.



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 pertain 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 on your site. 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 a penalization from search engine bots. Cross-traffic takes time. Be patient and thoughtful with your strategy and execution.

Let's Get Digital, Digital

In today's digital age, the simplest 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 understanding the traffic they see each day. Fortunately, it's 2017 and there are tools that can help.

Identifying your visitors in real-time empowers you to create a better experience for them through personalized messaging and helpful content. You will also be 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 those visitors into qualified leads for your sales team.



QUICK TIP

D&B Web Visitor ID pulls rich business data associated with cookies and IP addresses hitting your website, providing a deeper profile of your digital traffic. Learn more [here](#).

Stop Wasting Time on Email

Take a deep breath. 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. In fact, for every dollar marketers spend on email, organizations see a \$44 – or 4,400% – ROI.¹ But asking your marketers to tackle the project manually is like asking them to find a needle in a haystack.

From list management to scheduling and targeting, email marketing automation can make life easier – and

can increase your ROI. 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 the right individual but at the wrong stage of their journey.

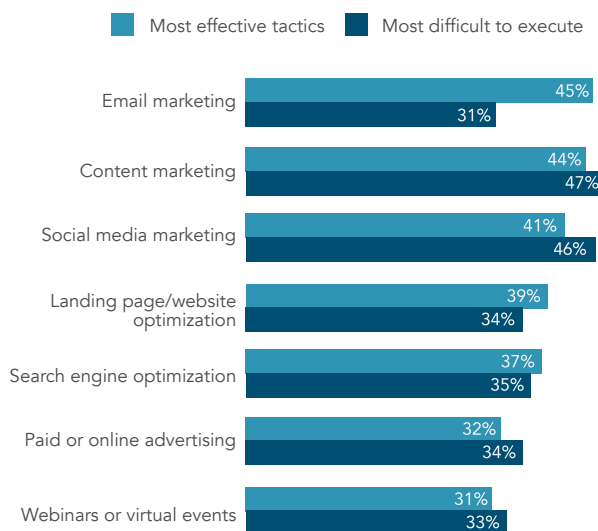
Not only will email marketing automation software free up your team's time, but you can tailor your efforts to connect with the right audience, track campaign progress, and improve future initiatives.



QUICK TIP

We can help! Dun & Bradstreet offers solutions that seamlessly connect your marketing automation platform (i.e. Eloqua and Marketo) to a continuous source of cleansed and enriched data, resulting in better segmentation, higher conversion rates, and faster growth for your business. Learn more [here](#).

What are the most effective tactics and what do you find most difficult to execute?



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Be Selective When It Comes to Virtual Events

Let's be honest; when was the last time you sat through a webinar or attended a virtual event? Chances are, it's not a frequent occurrence. So, when you do have an audience's attention, it's likely that they are genuinely interested in your brand and the solutions you 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.

Don't host webinars for the sake of drawing attention or chest thumping. Plan your digital events appropriately around new product launches or releases, new research, relevant content pillars, or special offers.

Showing you respect their time, and have something beneficial to share, can help you gain your audience's trust, and ultimately, their business.



Conclusion

No matter what marketing role you play within your organization, it's important to have a deep understanding of today's marketing landscape, and how data impacts your lead generation objectives.

Marketers are being asked to go beyond generating traffic and engagement. Scoring leads and delivering detailed, quality data to your sales team early on in the selling process is a must. The more a seller can personalize their conversations with a prospect, the easier (and faster) it will be to help the customer and generate revenue for your business.

Source:

1. Campaign Monitor. "The 2016 Annual Email Marketing Report." Campaign Monitor, 2016. Web





About Dun & Bradstreet

Dun & Bradstreet (NYSE: DNB) grows the most valuable relationships in business. By uncovering truth and meaning from data, we connect customers with the prospects, suppliers, clients and partners that matter most, and have since 1841. Nearly ninety percent of the Fortune 500, and companies of every size around the world, rely on our data, insights and analytics. We help marketers develop and manage their B2B data. Our multi-faceted data quality processes — backed by the world's largest commercial database and seamless integration into your marketing systems — enables you to identify the best opportunities, build stronger relationships and accelerate growth for your company. For more about Dun & Bradstreet, visit [DNB.com](https://www.dnb.com).