



Flagship
Marketing

Guide to Inbound Lead Generation



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I'm sure it's happened to you

We've all been through it. You know, the moment you're about to have that really important conversation at work or at home that you've been trying to set up for days.

Just as you begin to set out your thoughts... the phone rings. *"Hi, is that Ian Dalton?"* enthuses the telemarketer on the other end. *"I have a really important message about your oven preferences."*

This frustrating interruption is exactly why we are real believers in inbound marketing, and inbound lead generation in particular.

What is inbound lead generation? It's a solution that can save your organisation from being that annoying, disruptive cold caller or pop-up advertiser who creates unwanted experiences for prospects and clients alike.



Let's start with our definition of a lead, (which may not be the same as others') and then we'll cover what online lead generation is.

We'll explain why you need lead generation, how you qualify someone as a lead, how you generate leads, and why inbound lead generation is much more effective than simply buying leads.



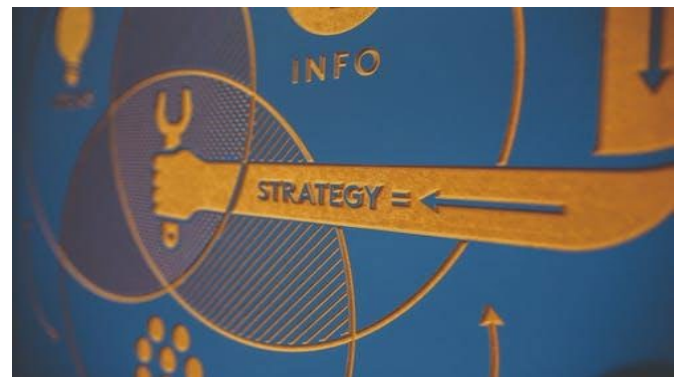
What is Lead Generation?

What is a Lead?

We define a lead **as a person who has indicated interest in your company's product or service in some way, shape, or form**. That's a little bit different from a person or company that we would *like* to express an interest in our company, or even someone whose details we have acquired and are about to call.

As a lead, you'd hear from a business or organisation with which **you've already opened communication** instead of receiving a cold call from someone who has purchased your contact information.

For example, maybe you took an online survey to learn more about how to take care of your car. If you got an email from the car company that hosted the survey on their website about how they could help you take care of your car, it would be less intrusive and more relevant than if they'd just called you out of the blue with no knowledge of whether you even care about car maintenance.



And from a business perspective, the information the car company collected about you from your survey responses helps them personalise that opening communication to address your problems. In other words, **it makes their communication with you relevant and helpful**.

Data privacy is strictly governed in Europe and elsewhere, so when you give a firm your information, you also have to give them permission to contact you – another nudge in the direction relevant communications.



What is Lead Generation?

Lead generation is the process of attracting and converting strangers and prospects into someone who has indicated interest in your company's product or service. Some examples of *lead generators* are job application forms, blog posts, coupons, live events, and online content.



Whenever someone outside the marketing world asks me what I do, I don't say, "I create content for lead generation."

Instead I say, "I work on finding unique ways to attract people to my business. I want to offer them enough "goodies"; enough helpful and interesting information to get them naturally interested in my company so they eventually warm up to the brand enough to want to hear from us!"

That usually resonates better, and that's exactly what lead generation is.

Inbound Lead Generation: a way of warming up potential customers to your business and getting them on the path to eventually buying, by being helpful and relevant.

And inbound...?

Coping with a power shift

In the past, salespeople held a good deal of the power in the buyer/seller relationship. Unless you were a professional buyer (I know!) it was difficult to research information, competitor pricing and talk to other users. **In the past, if a buyer wanted to know about a product, she had to go to the seller for information.**

Now it's easy. Prospects have the ability to research a solution to their needs long before they talk to a buyer, and the place where they do their research is **online**.

Inbound marketing

Inbound marketing is the process of attracting customers to a company's products and services through content that helps them as they seek a solution to their needs



That content has to be discoverable when it's needed. So techniques like search engine optimisation are employed to ensure the information can be found when someone is searching for an answer, and the content is placed on social media channels where people might be looking.

Some now see inbound as wider than marketing – encompassing sales and service too. From a marketing point of view, the key is that when a customer gets in touch, they are already seeking what you are offering.

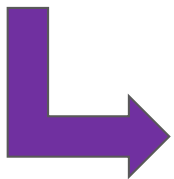
The internet has created a new paradigm – a shift in the balance of power between buyer and seller.



How to Generate Leads

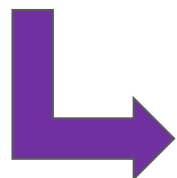
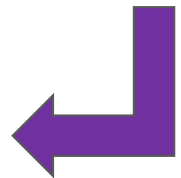
Now that we understand how lead generation fits into the whole inbound marketing methodology, let's walk through the steps of the lead generation process.

First, a visitor discovers your business through one of your marketing channels, such as your website, blog, or social media page.



That visitor then clicks on your **call-to-action (CTA)** — an image, button, or message that invites website visitors to take some sort of action.

The CTA takes your visitor to a **landing page**, which is a web page that is designed to capture lead information in exchange for an offer.



An **offer** is the content or something of value that's being "offered" on the landing page, like an ebook, a course, or a template. The offer must have enough value to a visitor to merit providing their personal information in exchange for access to it.

The **form** on your landing page consists of a series of fields (like in our example above) that collect information in exchange for the offer. Forms are typically hosted on landing pages, although they can technically be embedded anywhere on your site. Once a visitor fills this out — voila! — you have a new lead! (That is, as long as you're following lead-capture form best practices.)

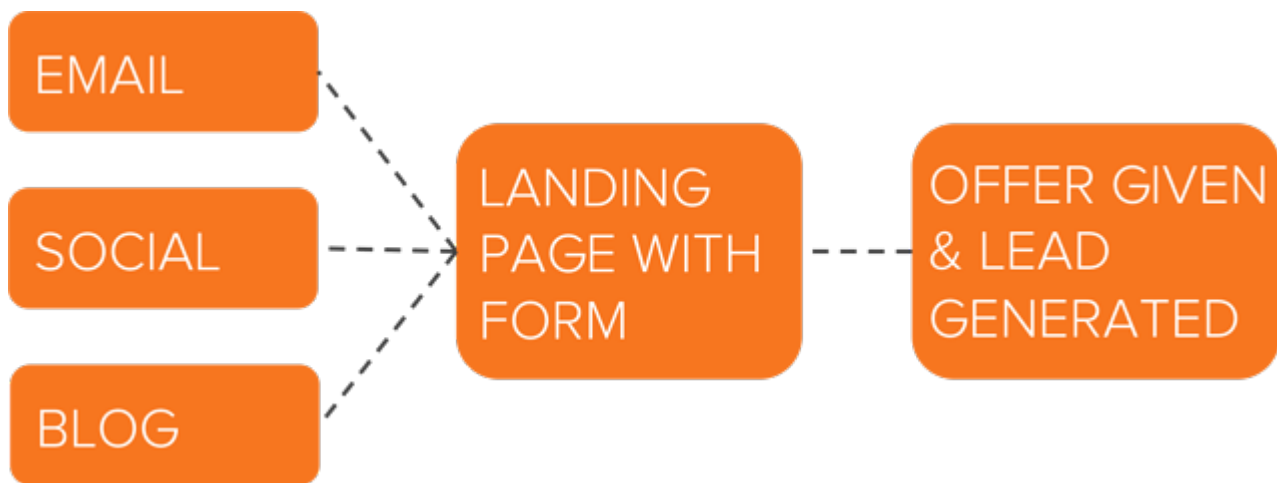


Lead Generation Marketing

Once you put all these elements together, you can use your promotional channels to bring traffic to your landing page to start generating leads.

But what channels should you use to promote your landing page? Let's talk about the front-end of lead generation — lead gen marketing.

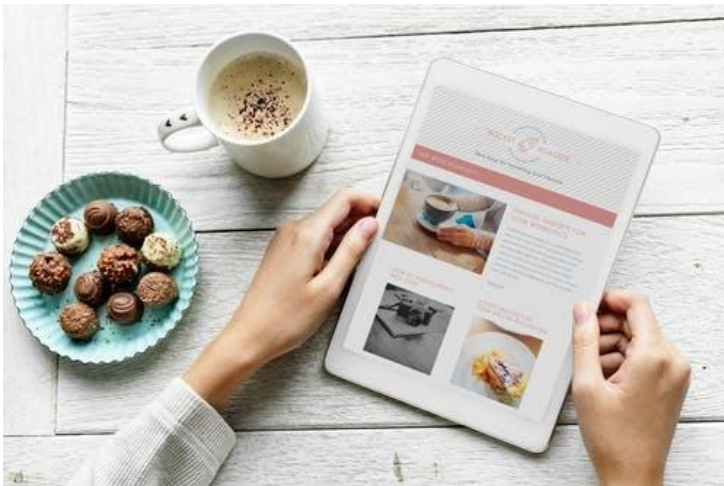
If you're a visual learner, this chart shows the flow from promotional marketing channels to a generated lead.



There are more channels you can use to get visitors to become leads. In the following pages, we explain what channel to use when, and how to use them.

Content

Content is a way to guide users to a landing page. Typically, you create content to offer visitors useful, free information. You can include CTAs anywhere in your content — inline, bottom-of-post, in the hero, or even on the side panel. The more delighted a visitor is with your content, the more likely they are to click your CTA and move onto your landing page.



Email

Email is a great place to reach the people who already know your brand and product or service. It's much easier to ask them to take an action since they've previously subscribed to your list. Emails tend to be a bit cluttered, so use CTAs that have a compelling copy.

Adverts

Hold on!! How can ads be inbound? Aren't they the intrusive badly-timed communications we all love to hate?

Good point, but ads can be inbound if they appear at the right time, in response to a specific search, and it provides a direct solution to that search query. The trick is to buy them in the right places.

Nothing untargeted or intrusive, just smart, well-timed ***answers to problems that the searcher is looking to have resolved.***



Blog

The great thing about using your blog posts to promote an offer is that you can tailor the entire piece to the end goal. So, if your offer is an instructional video on setting up Google Search Console, then you can write a blog post about how to select your marketing metrics ... which would make your CTA highly relevant and easy to click.



Social Media

Social media platforms make it easy to guide your followers to take action, from the swipe up option on Instagram stories to Facebook bio links to bitly URLs on Twitter. You can also promote your offerings on your social posts and include a CTA in your caption.

Product Trials

You can break down a lot of barriers to a sale by offering trials of your product or service. Once a prospect is using your product, you can entice them with added offers or resources to encourage them to buy. Include your branding in your free versions too.



Why Not Just Buy Leads?

Marketers and salespeople alike want to fill their *sales funnel* — and they want to fill it quickly. Enter: The temptation to buy leads.

Buying leads, as opposed to organically generating them, is much easier and takes far less time and effort, despite being more expensive. You might be paying for advertising anyway ... so, why not just buy leads?

We know this, right?

- Leads you've purchased don't actually know you.
- Typically, they've "opted in" at some other site and didn't actually opt in to receiving anything from your company.
- The messages you send are therefore unwanted messages, and sending unwanted messages is intrusive.
- If the prospect has never been to your website and indicated an interest in your, products or services, then you're interrupting them. Plain and simple.
- If they've never opted in to receive messages from you, then there's a high chance they could flag your message as spam, which isn't good for business.
- And by using purchased lists, you may be contravening Data Privacy laws which is definitely not a good idea!



It's **always** better to generate leads organically than to buy them.

How to Qualify Leads

As we covered in the first section, a lead is a person who has indicated interest in your company's product or service. Now, let's talk about the ways in which someone can actually show that interest.

Essentially, a sales lead is generated through information collection.

That information collection could come as the result of a job seeker showing interest in a position by completing an application, a shopper sharing contact information in exchange for a coupon, or a person filling out a form to download an educational piece of content.



How to Qualify a Lead

Gauging a Lead's Level of Interest

Below are three scenarios in which we would qualify someone as a lead. The information offered and collected is different in each case, and this sets a limit on what we can know about the contact's real level of interest in us. Although this maybe obvious on paper – in the heat of battle the temptation is always to ascribe more value to a lead than is justified by the information collected.

Job Application: An individual who fills out an application form is usually willing to share a lot of personal information because he/she wants to be considered for a position. Filling out that application shows their true interest in the job..



Coupon: Unlike the job application, we know very little about someone who has stumbled upon one of our online coupons. But if they find the coupon valuable enough, they may be willing to give us their name and email address in exchange for it. It's a lot less information, but it's enough say that someone has interest in our company.

Content: While the download of a coupon shows an individual has a direct interest in a product or service, content (like an educational ebook or webinar) doesn't. So to truly understand the nature of the person's interest in your business, we'll probably need to collect more information to decide whether the person is interested in our product or service **and whether they're a good fit.**



These three general examples highlight how lead generation differs from company to company, and from person to person. You'll need to collect enough information to gauge whether someone has a true, valid interest in your product or service — how much information is enough information will vary depending on your business.

Look at Episerver, for example.

They use web content reports for lead generation, collecting six pieces of information from prospective leads.

At least 5 of these can be used by every business

The screenshot shows a form titled "Gartner Magic Quadrant for Web Content Management". The form is divided into two main sections. The left section contains text about the report, including a quote from Episerver and a list of what the report includes. The right section is titled "Download your complimentary report" and contains a form with fields for Full name, Email, Company, Role, Country, and State. A "Download report now" button is at the bottom right.

Gartner Magic Quadrant for Web Content Management

Get instant access to the 2015 Gartner Magic Quadrant for Web Content Management and an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses for each vendor in the WCM sphere. The evaluation is based on completeness of vision and ability to execute.

Episerver, a leading provider of digital marketing and e-Commerce solutions, has been positioned as Leader in the Gartner Magic Quadrant for Web Content Management (WCM) report.

Here's what the report includes:

- An overview of the web content management market.
- Assessments of strengths and weaknesses for each vendor in the Magic Quadrant.
- The position of each vendor in the quadrant based on ability to execute and completeness of vision.

Download your complimentary report

Full name

Email

Company

Role

Country

State

[Download report now](#)

Episerver content collection explained:

- **Full Name:** Needed to personalise your communication with each lead.
- **Email:** A unique identifier and how you will contact your lead.
- **Company:** Helps industry and company research. Helps show how they might benefit from your product or service
- **Role:** Helps you understand how to communicate (mainly B2B).
- **Country:** Helps segment your contact by region and time zone, and to qualify the lead on your service.
- **State:** Doesn't apply everywhere, but can be useful in many contexts

Lead Scoring

Lead scoring is a way to qualify leads quantitatively. Leads are assigned a numerical value (or score) to determine where they fall on the scale from “interested” to “ready for a sale”.

Does it matter if the criteria used are subjective? Not really. In fact it's helpful to personalise the criteria to fit your own business. BUT **they must be uniform across your marketing and sales departments** so that everyone is working on the same scale.



A lead's score can be based on actions they've taken, information they've shared, their level of engagement with your brand, or other criteria that your sales team determines. For instance, you may score someone higher if they regularly engage with you on social media or if their demographic information matches your target audience.

Borrowing from the examples above, you might give a lead a higher score if they used one of your coupons — an action that would signify this person is interested in your product.

The higher a lead's score, the closer they are to becoming a sales-qualified lead (SQL), which is only a step away from becoming a customer. The score and criteria is something you may need to tweak along the way until you find the formula that works, but once you do, you'll transform your lead generation into customer generation.

Lead Generation Benchmarks

So ... you're getting web traffic and generating leads. But how are you doing compared to other companies in your industry? How many leads should you really be generating?

It's tough to figure out if your lead generation strategy is working if you aren't looking at industry data. Industry leader and Flagship partner, HubSpot, worked with Qualtrics to survey more than 900 marketers from different industries in North America and Europe to create a demand generation report with data on website visitors, leads, opportunities, customers, and revenue.

Did you know that 74% of companies that weren't exceeding revenue goals didn't know their visitor, marketing qualified lead (MQL) or sales opportunity numbers? How about that? Over 70% of companies not achieving their revenue goals generate fewer than 100 leads per month, and only 5% of these companies generate more than 2,500 leads per month?

There's a real competitive advantage to be had for firms that know their business well.

Over the next few pages we look at some more trends that you may be able to take advantage of.





Cost per lead by industry

Media and Publishing in the USA shows the lowest cost per lead at USD 11 (€9.75*, GBP 8.50) to USD 25 (€22.21, GBP 19.18). Software, information technology and services, marketing agencies, and financial services companies all report the highest average cost per lead at USD 51 (€45.30, GBP 39.12) to USD 100 (€88.82, GBP 76.70).

COST PER LEAD BENCHMARKS: BY INDUSTRY

Industry	Cost Per Lead
Media & Publishing	\$11 - \$25
Education	\$26 - \$50
Healthcare & Medical	\$26 - \$50
Consulting	\$26 - \$50
Industrial & Manufacturing	\$26 - \$50
Travel & Tourism	\$26 - \$50
Consumer Products	\$26 - \$50
Software	\$51 - \$100
Information Tech & Services	\$51 - \$100
Marketing Agencies	\$51 - \$100
Financial Services	\$51 - \$100

The cost per lead varies by industry, with Media and Publishing reporting the lowest cost per lead at \$11-\$25. Software, Information Tech & Services, Marketing Agencies, and Financial Services companies all reporting the highest average cost per lead at \$51 - \$100.

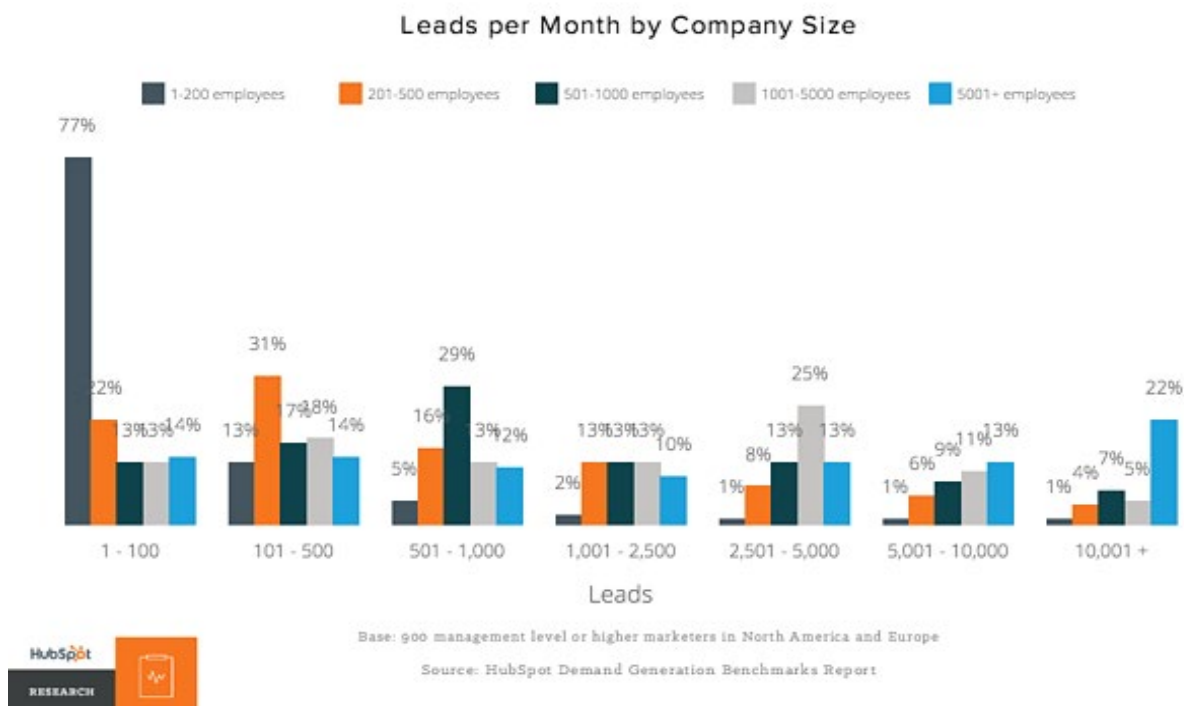
Leads Generated per month, by annual revenue

Unsurprisingly, the more revenue a company has, the more leads they generate: 82% of companies with \$250,000 or less in annual revenue report generate less than 100 leads per month, whereas only 8% of companies with \$1 billion in annual revenue report less than 100 leads per month.



Leads per month

HubSpot found that 58% of companies generated 500 leads per month or fewer, and 71% generated 1,000 or fewer. But as we saw previously, the companies having the most success are also the ones generating the most leads. Here's how the data broke down by company size:

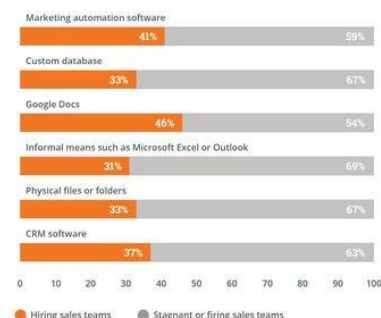


Lead Generation Software

HubSpot found that the most successful teams use a formal system to organise and store leads: 46% use Google Docs, 41% use marketing automation software, and 37% use CRM software. (Hint for HubSpot customers: Google Drive integrates with both HubSpot Marketing Hub and HubSpot CRM.)

WHAT SYSTEM DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION USE TO STORE LEADS?

Unsuccessful teams are more likely to rely on informal means than their successful counterparts





Lead Generation Strategies

Online lead generation encompasses a wide range of tactics, campaigns, and strategies depending on the platform on which you wish to capture leads. We talked about lead capture best practices once you have a visitor on your site ... but how can you get them there in the first place?

Let's dive into lead generation strategies for a few popular platforms.

Facebook Lead Generation

Facebook has been a method for lead generation since its start. Originally, companies could use outbound links in their posts and information in their bios to attract strangers to their websites.

When Facebook Ads was launched in 2007, and its algorithm began to favour accounts that used paid advertising, there was a major shift in how businesses used the platform to capture leads.

Facebook created Lead Ads for this purpose. Facebook also has a feature that lets you put a simple call-to-action button at the top of your Facebook Page, helping you send Facebook followers directly to your website.



Lead Generation Strategies

Twitter Lead Generation

Twitter has Twitter Lead Gen Cards, which let you generate leads directly within a tweet without having to leave the site.

A user's name, email address, and Twitter username are automatically pulled into the card, and all they have to do is click "Submit" to become a lead.

(Hint for HubSpot users: You can connect Twitter Lead Gen Cards to your HubSpot Forms)

LinkedIn Lead Generation

LinkedIn has been increasing its stake in the advertising space since its early days. When it comes to lead generation, LinkedIn created Lead Gen Forms, which auto-populate with a user's profile data when they click a CTA, making it easy to capture information.





Tips for Lead Generation

PPC Lead Generation

When we say pay-per-click (PPC), we're referring to ads on search engine result pages (SERPs). Google gets 3.5 billion searches a day, making it prime real estate for any ad campaign, especially lead generation.

The effectiveness of your PPC campaign relies heavily on a seamless user flow, as well as your budget, target keywords, and a few other factors.

Tips for Lead Generation Campaigns

In any given lead generation campaign, there can be a lot of moving parts. It can be difficult to tell which parts of your campaign are working and which need some fine-tuning.

What exactly goes into a best-in-class lead generation engine? Here are a few tips when building lead gen campaigns.

Use the right lead generation tools

As you saw in the HubSpot data, the most successful marketing teams use a formal system to organise and store their leads. That's where lead generation tools and lead generation software come into play.

How much do you know about the people visiting your website? Do you know their names or their email addresses? How about which pages they visited, how they're navigating around, and what they do before and after filling out a lead conversion form?

If you don't know the answers to these questions, the chances are you're having a hard time connecting with the people who are visiting your site. These are questions you should be able to answer — and you can with the right lead generation tools.

Use the right lead generation tools

There are a few different tools and templates out there that'll help you create different lead gen assets to use on your site. Here are a few of Flagship Marketing's favourites:

- [CTA Templates](#): 50+ free, customisable call-to-action (CTA) templates in PowerPoint that you can use to create clickable CTA buttons to use on your blog, landing pages, and elsewhere on your site.
- [Lead Generation Software Tools](#): This free tool from HubSpot includes lead capture and contact insights features, which will scrape any pre-existing forms you have on your website and add those contacts to your existing contact database. It also lets you create pop-ups, hello bars, or slide-ins — called "lead flows" — that'll help you turn website visitors into leads immediately.
- [Visitor Tracking](#): Hotjar has a heatmap tool — a virtual tool which creates a color-coded representation of how a user navigates your site — that helps you understand what users want, care about, and do on your site. It records visitors and tells you where they spend the most time on your site. You can use it to gather information on your lead generation forms, feedback forms and surveys, and more.

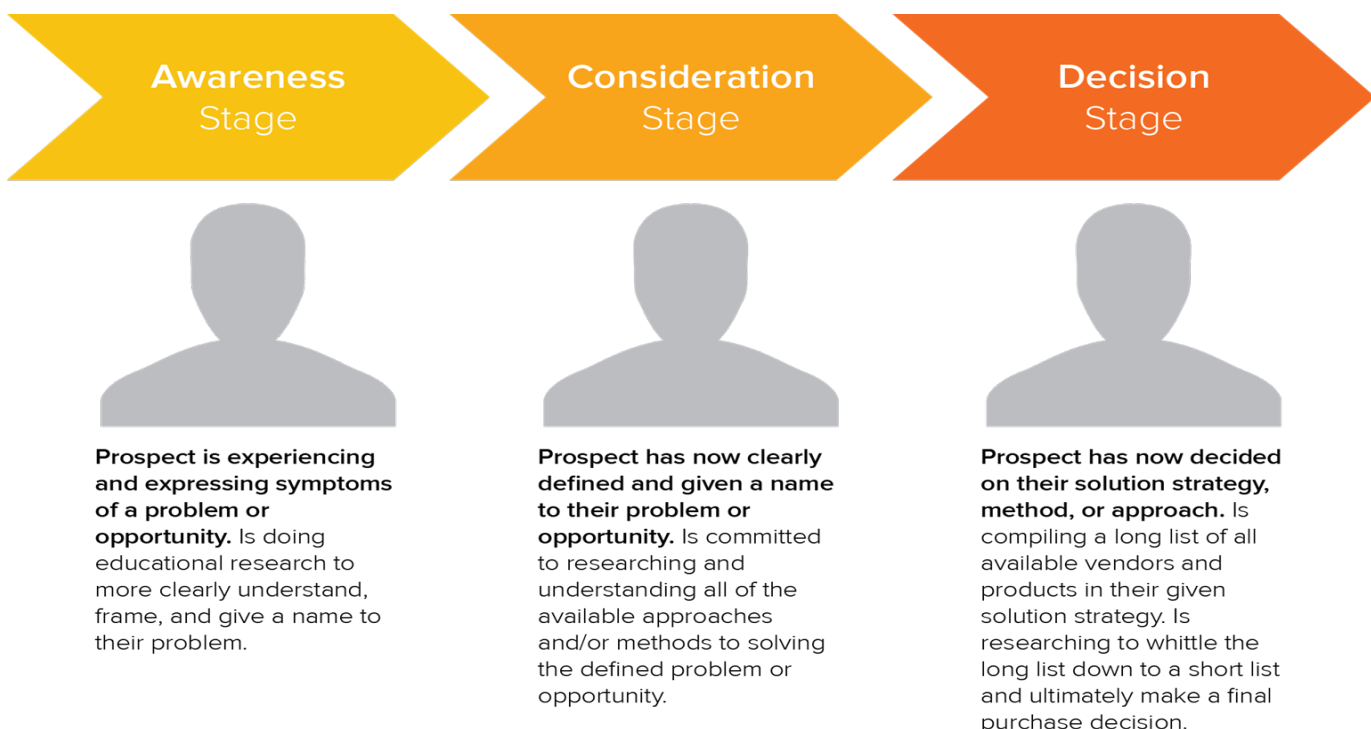
Create amazing offers for all stages

Not all your site visitors are ready to talk to your sales team or see a demo of your product. Someone at the beginning of the buyer's journey might be interested in an informational piece like an ebook or a guide, whereas someone who's more familiar with your company and near the bottom of the journey might be more interested in a free trial or demo.

Make sure you're creating offers for each phase and offering CTAs for these offers throughout your site.

Yes, it takes time to create valuable content that teaches and nurtures your leads down the funnel, but if you don't offer anything for visitors who aren't ready to buy, then they may never come back to your website. From checklists to templates to free tools, [here are 23 ideas for lead generation content](#) to get you started.

If you want to take personalisation a step further — which will help boost your conversion rate — try using smart CTAs. Smart CTAs detect where a person is in the buyer's journey, whether they're a new visitor, a lead, or a customer, and display CTAs accordingly. Personalised CTAs convert a whopping 42% more visitors than basic calls-to-action.



Keep your messaging consistent and deliver on your promise

The highest-converting lead gen campaigns are the ones that deliver on what they promise and create a seamless transition from ad copy and design to the deliverable itself. Make sure that you're presenting a consistent message throughout the process and providing value to everyone that engages with your lead capture.

The aspects of your lead gen campaign should mirror everything else on your website, on your blog, and within the product that you will eventually try to sell. If not, you'll have a difficult time getting your lead to the next lifecycle stage. Your campaign should be about more than just obtaining an email address — it should be about developing a new customer.

Link your CTA to a dedicated landing page

This may seem obvious to you, but you'd be surprised how many marketers don't create dedicated landing pages for their offers. CTAs are meant to send visitors to a landing page where they can receive a specific offer.

Don't use CTAs to drive people to your homepage, for instance, or you'll give them the opportunity to slip away before they leave their details. Even if your CTA is about your brand or product (and perhaps not an offer like a download), you should still be sending them to a targeted landing page that's relevant to what they are looking for and includes an opt-in form. If you have the opportunity to use a CTA, send them to a page that will convert them into a lead.

Get your sales team involved

Remember what we said when we talked about lead scoring? Well, it isn't doable without your sales team's input. How will you know what qualifies a lead for sales without knowing if your defined SQLs are sold?

Your marketing and sales teams need to be aligned on the definitions and the process of moving a lead from MQL to SQL to opportunity before you even begin to capture leads.

Also, be open to evolving your relationship with sales and how leads are guided along your funnel. Your definitions will likely need to be refined over time; just make sure to keep everyone involved up-to-date.

Use social media strategically

While marketers typically think of social media as best for top-of-the-funnel marketing, it can still be a helpful and low-cost source for lead generation as shared in the lead gen strategies above. The key is using social media strategically for lead generation.

Start by adding links directly to the landing pages of high-performing offers within your Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and other social media posts. Tell visitors that you're sending them to a landing page. That way, you're setting expectations.

About Us

At Flagship we provide a range of inbound marketing services to help generate qualified leads for financial scale-ups. We do it because we believe in the need to make the financial industry fairer and more inclusive through fresh-thinking, socially-motivated companies. We partner with firms who have been in business for a few years, have raised their funding and built their products. They have overcome the dangerous first hurdles and now want to scale their business and take it to the next level.

Does this sound like you?

If yes, that's great!

Contact us [here](#), for a free marketing audit and let's start building the future