

AN INTRODUCTION TO LEAD GENERATION.



A beginner's guide
to converting
website visitors
into inbound leads
for your business.

CONTENTS.

- 04 Introduction
- 05 Defining a Lead
- 09 Qualifying a Lead
- 14 The Mechanics of Lead Generation
- 21 Worksheet: Starting Your First Lead Gen Campaign
- 24 Conclusion



INTRODUCTION:

Is Your Marketing Ruining Dinner?

We've all been through it. The moment you're about to dig into the best darn pile of spaghetti and meatballs you've ever seen. Just as you twist your fork in the pasta, spear a mouth-watering meatball, and go in for the first savory bite ... the phone rings. "May I speak to Aaahnooom Hahsahn?" says the telemarketer on the other end. "This is an important message regarding your oven preferences."

This frustrating interruption is exactly why this ebook will introduce you to inbound lead generation — a solution that can save your business or organization from being that annoying, disruptive cold caller who is ruining spaghetti nights for pasta lovers around the world.

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01

DEFINING A
LEAD.

What is a lead?

Let's start with the basics. **A lead is a person who has in some way, shape, or form indicated interest in your company's product or service.**

This means that instead of getting a random cold call from someone who purchased your contact information, you'd hear from a business or organization with which you've already opened communication. For example, perhaps you took an online survey to learn more about how to take care of your car. If you got an email from the auto company that hosted the survey on their website about how they could help you take care of your car, it'd be far less intrusive and irrelevant than if they'd just called you out of the blue with no knowledge of whether you even care about car maintenance ... right?

And from a business perspective, the information the auto company collected about you from your survey responses would help them personalize that opening communication to meet the existing needs of the potential client.

So really, lead generation is a win-win situation. It benefits the customer and the marketer.

Why do you need lead generation?

Whenever someone outside the marketing world asks me what I do, I can't simply say, "I create content for lead generation." It'd be totally lost on them, and I'd get some really confused looks.

So instead I say, "I work on finding unique ways to attract people to my business. I want to provide them with enough goodies to get them naturally interested in my company so they eventually warm up to the brand enough to want to hear from us!"

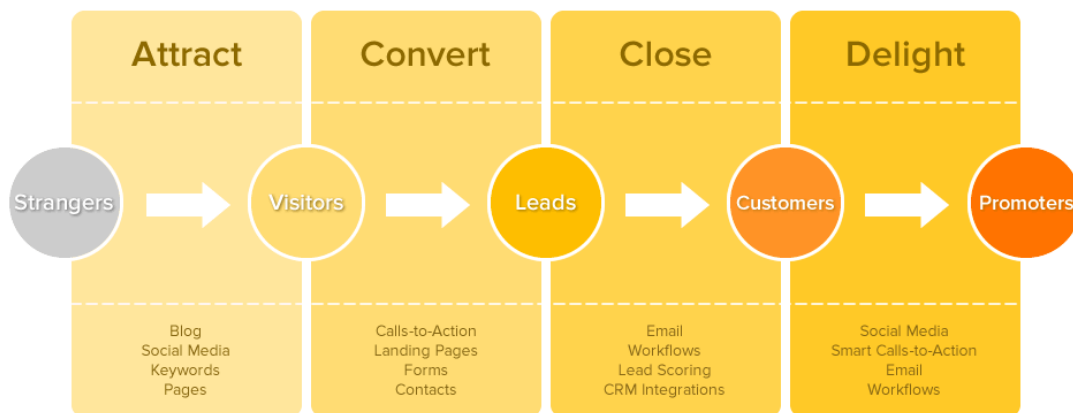
That usually resonates better, and that's exactly what lead generation is. It's a way of warming up potential customers to your business and getting them on the path to eventually buying. By showing an organic interest in your business, they are starting the relationship (instead of the business starting the relationship with a cold call), making it easier and more natural for them to want to buy from you somewhere down the line.

Data from [Hinge Research Institute](#) also shows that firms generating 60% of their leads online are *2X more profitable* than those generating less than 20% of their leads online.

Within the larger inbound marketing methodology, lead generation falls in the second stage. This methodology makes one concept clear: Consumers have all the power. Lead generation calls for an end to interruption marketing, and it occurs after you've attracted an audience and are ready to actually convert those visitors into leads for your sales team.

We call this modern marketing. As you can see in the diagram below, generating leads is a fundamental step in an individual's journey to becoming a delighted customer of your business.

You'll see an example of this flow in the Mechanics of Lead Generation chapter.



This graphic represents a brief overview of the inbound marketing methodology. Get the details at [hubspot.com/inbound-marketing](https://www.hubspot.com/inbound-marketing).

02

QUALIFYING A
LEAD.

How do you qualify someone as a lead?

As you now know, 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 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 for the job, a shopper sharing contact information in exchange for a coupon, or a person filling out a form to download an educational piece of content.

These are just a few of the many ways in which you could qualify someone as a lead. Each of these examples also highlights the fact that the amount of information you can collect to qualify someone as a lead, as well as the that person's level of interest in your company, can vary.

Let's assess each scenario:

- **Job Application:** Any individual filling out an application form is willing to share a lot of personal information because he/she wants to be considered for the position. Filling out that application shows their true interest in the job, therefore qualifying the person as a lead for the company's recruiting team.

- **Coupon:** Unlike the job application, you probably know very little about someone who has stumbled upon one of your online coupons. But if they find the coupon valuable enough, they may be willing to provide their name and email address in exchange for it. Although it's not a lot of information, it's enough for a business to know that someone has interest in their company.
- **Content:** While the download of a coupon shows an individual has a direct interest in your product or service, content (like an educational ebook or webinar) does not. Therefore, in order to truly understand the nature of the person's interest in your business, you'll probably need to collect more information — you'll need enough information for a sales rep to actually understand whether the person is interested in your 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 in order to gauge whether someone has a true, valid interest in your product or service, but knowing how much information is enough information will vary depending on your business.



Ektron is a HubSpot customer. You can learn more about their inbound marketing in this [customer case study](#).

Let's look at [Ektron](#) for example. They use educational webinars for lead generation, collecting seven pieces of information from prospective leads.


Ektron Mobile Maturity Model for Higher Education

Is Your Current Mobile Strategy Making the Grade?

Over **21.6 million** students are looking to attend postsecondary education in the United States, nearly **61%** of those prospective students has a smartphone and because of this fact higher education institutions have an integral, and immediate need for a mobile strategy for their websites.

Having a great **mobile experience** starts with an understanding of your visitors and what they are trying to accomplish. With that knowledge, it becomes easy to design a first rate mobile experience and create and target content that matches visitors goals, ultimately boosting engagement.

Download the **Ektron Maturity Model for Higher Education** and learn how targeted relevant content will help you to deliver an engaging, high impact, mobile experience for students, prospective students, alumni, and faculty, no matter how they access the website.



Mobile Maturity Model for Higher Education

First Name * **1**

Last Name * **2**

Email * **3**

Company Name * **4**

Job Title * **5**

Phone Number **6**

Project Timeframe

Are you looking to select a new CMS? **7**

Please select a timeframe:

[Register Today](#)

As you can see, Ektron asks for:

- 1 First Name:** Basic information needed for communication with the to-be lead.
- 2 Last Name:** Basic information needed for communication with the to-be lead.
- 3 Email:** The email address will allow your business to communicate with the to-be lead through your email marketing campaigns.

- ④ **Company Name:** This will give you the ability to research what the business does and how the lead might benefit from your product or service (mainly for B2B).
- ⑤ **Job Title:** Understanding an individual's role in the business will help you understand how to communicate with them. Every brand stakeholder will have a different take and perspective on your offering (mainly for B2B).
- ⑥ **Phone Number:** A phone number will be used for your sales team to actually reach out to the lead and open conversations with him/her.
- ⑦ **Project Timeframe:** Ektron ends with a specific question that will benefit their assessment of how to speak with the lead (used for [lead scoring](#)).

That being said, it's important to realize that asking more questions like the one Ektron tacks on to the end of their form helps you generate more qualified leads. [You can learn more about qualified leads in this blog post](#). For the purposes of this ebook, we'll stick to the basics of lead generation.

03

THE
MECHANICS
OF LEAD
GENERATION.

Now that you understand how lead generation fits into the whole **inbound marketing methodology**, let's review the four components of the lead generation process.



- 1 A **visitor** has discovered your business through one of your marketing channels, whether that's your website, blog, or social media page. On either of these channels, you'll need to have a customized **call-to-action** (CTA). A CTA is an image, button, or message that calls visitors to take some sort of action. When it comes to lead generation, this action is to navigate to a ...

- 2 ... **landing page**. A landing page is a web page a visitor lands on for a distinct purpose. While a landing page can be used for various reasons, one of its most frequent uses is to capture leads through ...

- 3 ... a **form**. Forms are hosted on landing pages. They consist of a series of fields that collect information in exchange for an **offer**. 4 An offer is the content or something of value that's being offered on the landing page. The offer must have enough value to a visitor to merit providing their personal information in exchange for it. In the example above, **Impact Branding is providing a free webinar**.



After clicking the final submit button on the form, the visitor has successfully become a **lead** for your business or organization.

To review these key terms, you have four main mechanics for lead generation:

- **Landing Page:** A web page a visitor lands on for a distinct purpose. While a landing page can be used for various reasons, one of its most frequent uses is to capture leads through ...
- **Forms:** Hosted on landing pages, they consist of a series of fields that collect information in exchange for an ...
- **Offer:** The content or something of value that's being "offered" on the landing page. The offer must have enough value to a visitor to merit providing their personal information in exchange for access to it. You can learn how to create marketing offers [in our blog post here](#).
- **Call-to-Action (CTA):** An image, button, or message that calls website visitors to take some sort of action. When it comes to lead generation, this action is (you guessed it!) to fill out the form on the landing page and redeem the offer. See how everything fits together?

Once you put all these elements together, you can use your various promotional channels to link and drive traffic to the landing page so you can start generating leads — as shown on the previous page.


Now that you understand how lead generation works, you must be thinking, where can I promote my landing pages and CTAs in order to gather leads? We'll cover seven basic places to start next.

7 Places to Promote Your Marketing Offers for Lead Gen

1. On Website Pages

Link to your landing pages on various pages of your website through CTAs. Try to align the offer you link to with the goals of that page.

For example, a visitor to your website's product pages might indicate someone who is further along in the sales cycle and closer to buying, so place CTAs like free trials, product demos, or free consultations that speak to the interests of a visitor who is closer to a purchasing decision. You'll notice that [Brightfire](#)'s About Us page has a CTA for a free inbound marketing assessment. Visitors to this page are interested in learning more about the actual company, therefore a CTA for a free assessment aligns with the buyer's stage in the information seeking process.



The screenshot shows the 'About' page of Brightfire, 'THE INBOUND MARKETING COMPANY'. The page features a blue header with the company name and a navigation menu. A large blue banner with the word 'About' and a group of people icon is at the top. Below this, a sidebar lists links: Vision, Management Team, Hubspot, Careers, and Contact. The main content area has the title 'About' and a video player showing a man speaking. To the right of the video is a call-to-action box that says 'Free inbound marketing assessment' with a 'DOWNLOAD PAPER' button. An orange arrow points from the text 'Website Page CTA' to this button.

BRIGHTFIRE
THE INBOUND MARKETING COMPANY

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About

Vision
Management Team
Hubspot
Careers
Contact

About

Find out more about Brightfire

HubSpot Europe

Free inbound marketing assessment

[DOWNLOAD PAPER](#)

Technology companies need marketing to be more than just sales support. They need demand generation that turns into revenue. That's why we are

2. On Your Blog

Just about every blog post you publish should have an opportunity to include a CTA. Again, try to align the content of the offer with the content of the blog post as best as you can in order to increase clickthroughs.

The CTA below is added to the end of [Element Three's blog post](#).

You can also link to other marketing offers within a blog post if the content of the offer is relevant to the post.

..... 5 Steps to Defining,
Creating & Sharing Your Brand


HAVE YOU LOST YOUR BRAND?

.....

With so many marketers sending out messages, both online and offline, it's more difficult than ever to be noticed and heard by the customers you want to reach. Here are 5 things you need to know to get your brand back on track.

Download the *free*

WHITE PAPER ➔



Blog CTA



3. In an Email Signature

This will be particularly effective for your business's sales team.

Encourage them to add a brief text-based call-to-action at the end of their email signature to help nurture prospects with whom they're communicating using more offers of free content in exchange for more information.

4. On Social Media

Sharing links to your offers' landing pages is the main way you can use social media for lead generation. Use the space that the specific social network allows to describe the value that fans and followers will get out of the offer. Try to vary the timing of when you share certain offers so people who follow you on multiple social sites aren't hit with the same promotion on each site. The example below shows [Memphis Invest](#) sharing their webinars on their Facebook page.



A screenshot of a Facebook post from the page 'Memphis Invest'. The post is dated December 5, 2012, and includes a small profile picture of a group of people. The text of the post reads: 'Join us for a Webinar on the plans for Memphis Invest, Dallas Invest and a special guest to answer questions on using a SDIRA. You can register below...'. Below the text is a blue hyperlink: 'https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/470825922'. At the bottom of the post is a rectangular banner. The left side of the banner features the 'MemphisInvest.com' logo, which includes a stylized house icon and the tagline 'A Family-Owned Company'. The right side of the banner has a light blue background with the text: 'GoToWebinar : Webinars Made Easy. Award-Winning Web Casting & Online Seminar Hosting Software', the website 'www2.gotomeeting.com', and the phrase 'Webinars, Web events & Web'.

Memphis Invest shared a link.
December 5, 2012

Join us for a Webinar on the plans for Memphis Invest, Dallas Invest and a special guest to answer questions on using a SDIRA. You can register below...

<https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/470825922>

 **GoToWebinar : Webinars Made Easy. Award-Winning Web Casting & Online Seminar Hosting Software**
www2.gotomeeting.com
Webinars, Web events & Web

Facebook
Page CTA



5. Within Press Releases

If your business uses news releases as a way to promote information about your business, don't overlook the opportunity they provide for lead generation. Just as you'd use anchor text (text that is visible and clickable in a hyperlink) in a blog post to point to a landing page, do the same in your news releases.

Bonus: *You'll likely reap some SEO benefits from this practice, as well!*

6. In PPC Campaigns

If you're using pay-per-click (PPC) as a way to complement your organic SEO efforts, think of your PPC ads as simply CTAs for your offers.

Follow best practices for creating calls-to-action, and you'll enjoy better clickthrough rates and more leads from your PPC campaigns as well.

[Our data shows](#) that B2B companies are allocating 8% of their budget to PPC, and getting 6% of their leads from that source.

These are merely six popular and effective plays to try in your lead generation campaigns. As highlighted throughout this ebook, it starts by creating a remarkable marketing offer and ends with a great promotion plan for distributing that offer on your digital channels.

04

**WORKSHEET:
STARTING
YOUR FIRST
LEAD GEN
CAMPAIGN.**

How to Start Your First Lead Generation Campaign

Now that you've learned the rudiments of lead generation, you must be thinking ...

"How do I start my first lead generation campaign?"

"How am I going to find time to build these marketing offers?"

"Where do I even begin with all these best practices?"

We get it. We've been through it. And we want to help you get started.

On the next page, you'll find a lead generation worksheet. This worksheet will walk you through building your first lead gen campaign. The most important idea to keep in mind is that you truly only need *one offer* on *one landing page* to start generating leads. As your experience grows and your time allows, you can create more offers and advance your lead generation strategy.

Hopefully this ebook and the worksheet on the following page will prove useful as you embark on the path of truth and justice, the path of lead generation.

Good luck!



LEAD GENERATION WORKSHEET

1 CREATE AN OFFER

Whether this is a coupon, an ebook, or a webinar, you only need one offer to start generating leads. We'll share ways you can reuse this one offer in later steps. We even have a free ebook template you can use to help you get started; [click here to grab it](#).

2 BUILD LANDING PAGE & FORM

Build a [dedicated landing page](#) (sometimes referred to as a microsite) for your completed offer. Be sure to include a form on the landing page that visitors will need to complete in exchange for the featured offer.

3 BUILD THANK YOU PAGE OR EMAIL

Provide a way for your leads to receive the offer they filled out the form for by redirecting them to a thank you page where the offer is hosted or by sending a confirmation email with the offer.

4 PROMOTE WITH CHANNEL CTAS

Now that your offer is created and ready for download from your landing page, start promoting the landing page URL on your various promotional channels.

SOCIAL TIP

Share your offer multiple times on your social channels by extracting different parts of it each time. For example, if you have 10 tips in the offer, share one tip a day.

BLOG TIP

Write multiple blog posts that include a theme or idea related to your offer. Every time you publish a post, you can add a CTA to your same offer in each published post.

PPC TIP

Experiment with different targeting options on your PPC campaigns in order to use your offer in multiple ways. This will help you generate more leads while learning what works best.

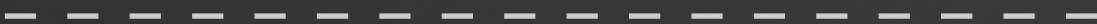
CONCLUSION:

Don't Ruin Dinner. Let Your Marketing Add Value.

Now let's recreate our scenario from the introduction, this time with lead generation in mind.

You're sitting at your desk when you suddenly receive a call (yes, lovable inbound marketing means calling people at decent hours, not dinner time). The voice on the other end says, "Hi Anum, I work for Ovens R Us and saw you downloaded our free whitepaper on choosing the right oven for your home. I just wanted to reach out to see if there were any unanswered questions that I could help fill the gap on?"

There we go. I, the lead, started the relationship. Now someone wants to take what I started and provide me with further value and information? That I can do. And that is the desired result of lead generation. Hopefully the resulting oven leads to even greater pasta intake, too.



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