

"Ideas
With
Accountability"

White Paper



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Turning Leads Into Sales

24 "Best Practices" for Today's Results-Driven Marketers

Public Relations
Advertising
Internet Marketing
Graphic Design
Direct Marketing



The last five years have seen a greater emphasis on measuring the impact of marketing communications programs – advertising, direct marketing, PR, email marketing, shows, etc. Part of that is due to the rise of the Internet, and the greater measurability Internet programs provide. Part is due to the integration of computer programs that track all aspects of the sales funnel, from campaign tracking to lead qualification to post-sale customer relationship management (CRM) activities.

Regardless of the reason, companies are focusing more on lead generation, and measuring the impact of those programs. No longer is it enough to schedule an ad campaign or PR blitz and wait for the old-style “bingo” leads to roll in before being handed off for sales department follow-up. Today, effective programs must provide all three components of successful lead management:

- lead generation.
- lead qualification and handling.
- long-term brand building.

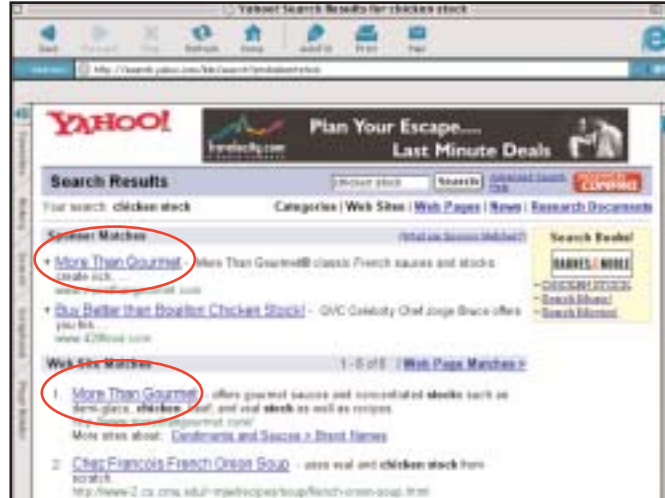
This White Paper discusses 24 of the most successful examples of lead generation we’ve seen. You can fill your sales pipelines for the next year with about two new ideas each month that are time tested and proven to work. They combine the “best practices” of several organizations, and provide many examples that apply to technology and industrial marketers.

Online Lead Generation

There are several ways to generate more traffic to your website, as well as increasing the number of quotes and orders from visitors once they’ve visited your site. Here are 10 of the most effective tools to use:

1. **Search engine optimization.** Search engines look for your site based on several factors, most having to do with the programming of title pages, “meta tags” and “alt tags” coding that is embedded in your site. Search engines send out “spiders” that seek out the phrases contained in these coding blocks. By following their rules and taking advantage of certain tricks, you can ensure that your site appears at the top of the list when someone is searching for your name or product category.

Several clients have hired us to improve their rankings through these links. After we put these new codes in place for one client, their site traffic increased 67%.



2. Sponsored Links. A new game in Internet search engines involves paying for being listed at the top of Yahoo!, Alta Vista and the Internet's other most popular search engines. By outbidding your competitors who are seeking the same top-of-the-list position, it's possible to appear among the top 3 listings when someone's searching on the Internet for your product category.

Try this test: Visit www.yahoo.com, and search on a term relevant to your company or industry. It's very likely you'll see your competitors at the very top of the thousands of listings returned. They've paid for those spots, and you can, too.

What's most exciting about this technique is how tremendously inexpensive it is to be successful here. Once you are listed at the top, you only pay a few pennies, usually under 25 cents, each time someone clicks on your listing. So, for just pennies, you are driving qualified prospects to your site, the least expensive lead generation program available today.

One of our clients is very aggressive about these Sponsored Link programs, and routinely generates 20,000 site visits each month, an unheard of amount for a company with less than \$10 million in sales.

Another client has been using the Sponsored Ad program on google.com to great effect, sending prospects to its site for less than \$3/click, a third of traditional online advertising costs.

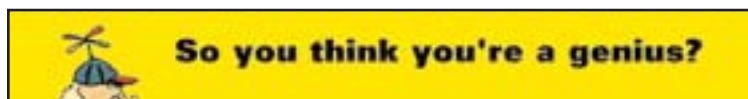


3. **Banners.** Banner ads have been much-maligned during the past year, and they certainly have lost their punch. Click-through rates on a banner, or the number of times someone visited a site after clicking on a banner message, have declined from 2-4% in their heyday to now average around .5%.

However, we still have found success in banner advertising, particularly when you compare it to other programs on a cost/lead basis. Our banners typically focus not on general, product messages or new product announcements, since those have been proven to generate the very lowest levels of response. Instead, our banners focus only on one of three themes:

- receive a catalog
- register to attend a web seminar
- play a game or enter a contest

Any one of these three techniques have generated banner response rates for our clients between 2 and 6%, many times the industry average .5% response rate for banners. And, on a cost/lead basis, our banner programs typically are purchased at between 2-5 cents/impression, and produce leads at the rate of \$8-10/click. While they're not what marketers hoped for at the dawn of the Internet age, they're still very effective numbers when compared to traditional direct mail, at \$40 a lead, or long-term advertising programs at \$100/lead.





4. Pre-show emails. Trade shows are among the most expensive lead generation technique companies use today. However, there's no substitute for being able to make 30 presentations to qualified prospects all in a single day. To do that requires coordination between sales and marketing staffs, and it also requires aggressive pre-show promotion. While pre-show mailing programs still are effective, many clients now use pre-show email programs to internal lists and purchased email lists (from pre-registration sources, magazine opt-in email lists, etc.) to drive traffic to their sites.



5. Newsletter ads. While it's possible to generate leads via email and banner programs, many magazines are creating new avenues to reach prospects, such as email newsletters. These newsletters are often highly targeted and can be inexpensive. At times, you can negotiate to receive email newsletter ads at no cost, as part of a print advertising buy in the magazine itself.

6. Everybody Loves...Dilbert. As an agency that markets frequently to engineers, we've developed a feel for what engineers like, and what generates a response. So, we know that Dilbert has achieved folklore status among engineers and is therefore a reliable tactic to use for generating a response. One client took advantage of this by offering a Dilbert calendar to everyone who responded to an email sent to a purchased email mailing list. The tactic proved so popular that it generated a 5% response rate – in the first hour! Final





tallies showed an 8% response rate. Most important, the program called for personally hand delivering the calendars to qualified prospects, generating valued face-time rather than merely dropping the calendar in the mail.

While text-based emails are simpler to write and distribute, response rates to the higher impact color, html-based email that looks and acts like a web page are 10 times the level of a sample text-based email.

7. **Email Newsletters.** More and more companies are moving away from print newsletters to begin sending information to customers and prospects via email newsletters. These tools not only are less expensive than pieces that require printing and mailing, but they tend to generate a greater response. For a recent email distributed for one client, one out of four people who opened the email newsletter clicked through back to the clients site to read more about the product mentioned in the newsletter. Another newsletter created to encourage prospects to create "RFPs" on the clients web site, via a sweepstakes offer, generated 2270 sweepstakes entries, for a 3.2% entry rate, along with more than 1200 RFPs.



8. **FastQuote Buttons.** Once you've been successful in driving prospects to the site, lead generation doesn't begin unless the prospect provides you with contact information. By peppering the site with FastQuote buttons for one client, we were successful in generating 4:1 return on investment, or producing \$4 in sales for every \$1 invested in site programming and promotion. While the companys Internet site generated 8% of all leads, Internet leads were so highly qualified that it generated 39% of the companys total quote volume!



9. Send to a Friend feature. Many sites have this type of feature, which encourages people to share information on your site with colleagues and, hopefully, other prospects. However, merely allowing someone to forward the page to a new contact, without acquiring that contacts email address, is an opportunity lost. By coding the Send to a Friend feature to collect both the visitors email address AND the “friends,” you’re able to build your email list of contacts for future promotional offers and emails.



10. Webcasts and Web seminars. More and more technical audiences are tuning in to webcasts or webinars, online seminars broadcast over the web. They're effective lead generators that allow you to present to hundreds of prospects all at once, as well as preserve the presentation for archiving on your web site for prospects to see whenever they want, any time in the future. One client uses webcasts several times a year, because they have proven so effective in generating exposure at a lower cost than traditional city-by-city seminars, in which engineers fly around to various cities to present to local audiences drummed up by sales reps. In this case, the \$100/attendee cost for “live” presentations in each city was cut to just \$13/attendee for a web seminar.



Public Relations Lead Generation

Our agency has specialized in engineer-to-engineer PR since we were founded in 1992. Its a particularly effective tool that carries all the lead generation impact, along with the additional credibility associated with a good PR campaign. Beyond the "basics" of a strong, ongoing PR program, here are six "fresh" ideas that are proven lead generators.

1. **Aggressive Monitoring of Editorial Calendars.** All magazines publish editorial calendars, or a schedule of topics they plan to cover during the next 12 months. Many of those topics provide an opportunity for your products to be include in these "round-up" articles. Our agency has developed a system where we monitor and manage the calendars in order to increase coverage for our clients' products. In one case, we benchmarked the coverage we received in 9 of the leading journals tracked by our client, and we received more coverage in 8 of the 9 publications than competitive companies, many several times our clients size. Most important, the increase in coverage was directly linked by the client to a 30% increase in web site visitors.

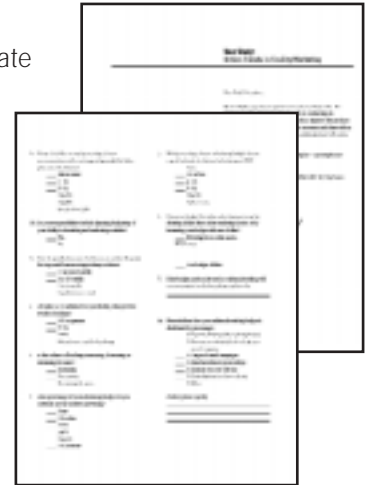
2. **Published Handbooks.** Sometimes it pays to say you "wrote the book." We wrote a 250-page handbook for a client that was part of their effort to establish credibility and a position as industry leaders. The handbook was an instant success, with 4000 copies requested in the first 3 months. Another 1000 were reprinted for a university in England to use as part of its classroom curriculum, and a Russian company was translating it for distribution in that part of the world.

3. **Co-Sponsored Promotions.** It pays to establish close working relationships with editors of trade magazines. In one case, we co-developed a poster for a client that contained engineering tips for their customers. By printing the poster with the magazines logo on it as well as our clients, we were able to create a sales collateral tool that was promoted by both organizations. In addition to giving the poster out at shows, it was also "stitched" in to the magazine as a free give-away to readers. The poster contained a handbook offer and generated 400 immediate phone call requests for



the handbook, the highest response rate to any promotion the company had ever done.

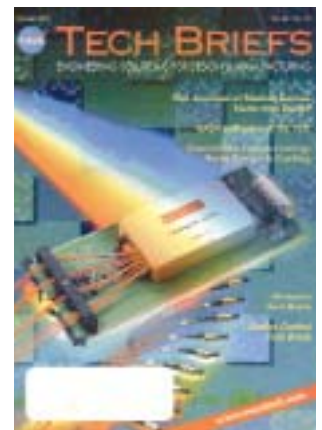
- 4. **Industry Surveys.** Surveys and studies generate news and tremendous coverage for clients. People like to read about trends and statistics, and magazine editors like to cover those types of programs. Our agency routinely creates news-generating surveys for clients, sometimes even co-sponsoring the projects with magazines to ensure prominent coverage.



- 5. **Face-to-Face Press Tours and Phone Tours.** There's no substitute for building personal relationships with editors, since its human nature for editors to provide better coverage to companies they know well and believe in. By routinely scheduling visits to editors in their offices as a tool for keeping in touch or launching new products, we're able to generate more in-depth coverage for clients that leads to product features and highlights, rather than routine "back-of-the-book" PR coverage. In one instance, our personal demos led to an editor calling a clients most recent introduction "ingenious." In another, it helped secure positioning of the company's web site as the #1 web site in the industry.



- 6. **Cover Pictures.** A good picture IS worth 1000 words, especially when it appears on the cover of one of your industrys trade magazines. By upgrading product photography beyond the mundane to something more colorful and creative, you encourage magazine editors to feature your products prominently in magazines, even so far as putting them on the cover of their upcoming issues.



Direct Marketing

With sophisticated list-sort and customer qualification programs, its never been easier to create targeted messages that can be aimed at just the right audience. With the industry average of mass-produced direct mail continuing to pay for itself with even 1-2% returns, targeted direct marketing can often outperform that by several times. Here are 8 of our "best practices" direct marketing programs that demonstrated their lead generation impact:

1. **Tiered Programs Save Money.** Not all prospects are rated equally. For those high-potential prospects, it makes sense to spend more money to reach them with impact, while minimizing the money you're spending to reach the B and C names on your mail list. For one client, we created a Tiered direct mail program that sent dimensional mailings to a subset of pre-qualified names on the list that represented the clients best potential. The mailing consisted of literature and a gift, in this a mini-flashlight that tied in to the clients core benefit. The rest of the mailing list received the same literature without the dimensional, so no additional literature printing or art costs were necessary. The mailing was so successful that it produced new members for the companys web site at a cost of just \$8/member, far below the typical \$100 cost common to the web industry.



2. **Mailings that Rattle.** The right message sent to the right audience with the right offer always combines to work, even in this age of the Internet. One client created an offer to win one of its products, and created a high-impact bright red mailing tube. Included in the tube was a simple red pen (the companys logo and brand identity were red) that the recipient used to fill out his or her contest registration card. The company posted a phenomenal 32% response rate.
3. **See It All Online.** Offering a White Paper and software demo online has become a staple for technology companies. One client created a low-cost mail campaign with a basic, well-crafted business letter that directed recipients to the companys site for information about its new technology. The numbers were impressive: page views increased on the site 43%; brochure downloads jumped 51%; demo downloads were up 25%; and



the White Paper download surged 67%. Most important, the “Send to a Friend” button usage increased 60%.

4. **Mail Then Call.** The basic one-two punch formula for direct marketing worked especially well for a contract manufacturing client looking for new quote opportunities. An oversized, four-color postcard was distributed to a prequalified list of 500 prospects at a time. After the first mailing, the agency handled tele-marketing follow-up to each recipient, labeling each contact as someone with no future prospects, a prospect for down the road, or a prospect with an immediate need. The campaign generated a 12% overall response rate, far higher than mail-only programs, with 6% converting to “hot” lead status.



5. **Finding Hidden Leads in Magazine Databases.** One manufacturer worked closely with its key trade journal to uncover companies their sales force had yet to discover. The company had 3500 “plant locations” as customers in its database, yet the magazine identified a total of 10,000 buyers and specifiers of its product category. Clearly, the difference represented untapped potential. The company secured the total list of 10,000, conducted a merge-purge of its internal list to delete current customers, and conducted an introductory mailing asking these “new” prospects if they’d like a sales presentation. With a 16% response rate, the mailing was an unqualified success in uncovering new opportunities.

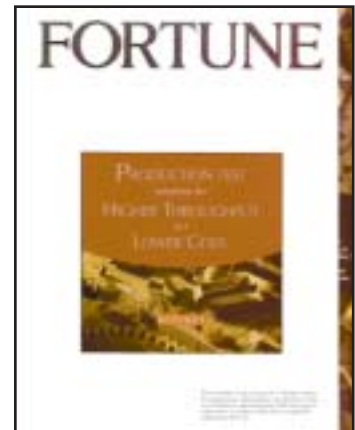
6. **Colorful Mailings.** One client struggled to make a name for itself among utility electrical engineers. In a somewhat stodgy industry, little money had been spent marketing to this group of key specifiers in the past, presenting an opportunity for our client. By developing a four-color, oversized print newsletter, and mailing it consistently to the target group over an entire year, our client boosted its name awareness from 11% before the campaign to a remarkable 62% after just one year.





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7. **Fortune Wrap-Around.** Riding on the coattails of the Fortune Magazine brand name, one client sought to jump start its name recognition among hard-to-reach buyers at large corporations by purchasing 1000 gift subscriptions to Fortune Magazine. The subscriptions come as part of the publishers "wrap-around" program, which also allows for a company four-page brochure to be wrapped around the issue, putting the company's logo and ad message on the cover of Fortune magazine. This appears four times a year in a very popular, high-impact program. Follow-up surveys indicated that more than 90% of the program's recipients, all pre-qualified, recognized the client's name and felt positively toward the company.



8. **See-Me-To-Win.** In a great example of guerilla-marketing-meets-sports-marketing, one client created a color flyer distributed to a small group of large-company prospects it was having trouble trying to penetrate. By offering two tickets to a Browns football game to those agreeing to a sales presentation, they were able to generate 90 qualified sales calls within two weeks of the mailer's distribution.

Each of these programs uses proven techniques in a well-crafted, well-executed campaign that tied back to measurable results and sales activity. For us, the fun of building the campaigns was matched only by the satisfaction of seeing client pipelines fill with activities, and salespeople asking us to be sure the campaigns continued.

Goldstein Group Communications, a technology b-to-b agency, brings an unusual combination of corporate communications management and engineer-level writing capability to its national client roster. With deep experience in electronics and industrial markets, the agency is able to draw on its skills to articulate with impact and clarity the technical advantages its clients bring to their customers. Unlike other agencies, staff members for the most part have built their careers on the corporate side of the desk, rather than as agency executives, a perspective that results in a higher level of accountability and measurability in the agency's programs.