



5 Roadblocks To Effective Lead Generation

(with a bonus 6th roadblock included!)

Lead generation is not complicated.

1. Select a group of potential customers
2. Find them and encourage them to buy your product/service
3. Even better, they find you and you encourage them to buy your product

But if lead generation is so easy, why is it that most companies we talk with say that finding new customers is a persistent source of frustration?

Roadblock #1: Lead Generation Mindset

More than any other activity lead generation requires both good technical execution and the right attitude to be effective. You are trying to interest people who don't know you and most will not give you the time of day which means rejection. Rejection is hard to take and it is humbling which does not put us in the best mindset for success and without the right mindset you are getting in the way of your own success.



What is the right mindset for lead generation?

We find that most lead generation conversations focus on technical aspects such as knowing your target audience and creating offers. But that is only half of the story. You also need to commit to working through a process and you have to be prepared for frustration.

Lead generation requires creativity and imagination which will be subjectively criticized by your prospects. Some of your best stuff will not work. At times it will feel like you are just throwing money away.

When developing a new lead generation system be ready to be discouraged and frustrated. Lead generation is hard work but once you get a working system it becomes much easier to improve it. Follow a process to minimize the work.

Demand 2 things from your lead generation

But first let's make sure that we are in agreement on the two things that lead generation must accomplish to be successful?

1. It must get attention
2. It must take advantage of that attention—make and offer



Your Best Next Step: Lead Generation Roadblocks

Attention getting is one of the most important tasks your lead generation tactics must accomplish. If you can't get someone's attention it does not matter how good your offer is...**no one will hear it.** And that applies to any media: direct mail, telemarketing, advertising, email.

Roadblock #2: Don't Wing It. Build Proven Marketing Principles

To be effective at stealing attention you don't use sales principles, operations principles and certainly not accounting principles. This is the province of marketing. Specifically this is where you merge what you know about your prospect, blend it with psychology, proven marketing principles, and willingness to test and follow the data.

Your intuition and gut feel are not enough. Just because you think it is good or because it is clever does not matter if it is not effective.

If you run a tax preparation business and standing out on the corner in a Statue of Liberty costume gets attention you do it...at

least until you come up with a better way.

Grabbing attention is THE place to be creative. You want out of the box thinking, be dramatic, maybe even crazy. **You need to do what it takes to get your prospects attention or nothing will happen.** (Again we are assuming that you have an offer that is valuable to your prospect)

Don't Start From Scratch

I am going to let you in on a secret....sex sells. Okay not much of a secret and really not useful for most of us, but do you know that even people with a lot of clothes on sell? And that faces are even better at attracting attention? People notice people; that's why people-watching is so common. Here's the point, based on marketing principles consider using photos of people in your marketing.

Personalization

We are all interested in ourselves and we pay attention to those who pay attention to us. But your prospects are more demanding than that. They want you to pay attention to them and they want you to be interesting also.

The good news is that you don't need to be off-scale interesting or entertaining you just need to be human. You have a personality that's good enough to be interesting.

People do not want to deal with a soul-less organization.

People buy from people.



Liberty Tax Service is:*

- The fastest growing tax preparation company
- One of the top three companies

The moral—Wear the stupid costume

*Source libertytax.com

Hey bald guy want more hair?

Personalized message

Hey bald guy want more hair, I know I did.

Personalized message with personality



Tests have shown that personalizing your lead generation on both sides of the conversation and your response rates will go up.

What do these examples have to do with mindset?

The point is that you will be more successful if you use what has been shown to be effective. A technically correct campaign can still fail if it is not built on solid marketing principles.

What to do?

- If you are not familiar with marketing principles work with someone who does

Roadblock #3: Marketing Activities Not Playing Well Together

Like all marketing activities, effective lead generation is becoming much more integrated. Prospects want more contact with your company before they surrender contact information (becoming a lead) to you. For example, “call us” is being replaced with “visit our web site” as a first call to action. Whether you are using email, direct mail or you are on the speakers’ circuit you will be much more successful when you connect all of your activities together in a process.

More than ever effective customer acquisition requires that all of your marketing activities work together. Trying something to see what sticks ignores the new reality of how buyers interact with companies. Your web site, direct mail, emails and webinars all need to work together to convert a prospect into a lead. (We are defining a lead as someone who has responded to your marketing.)

For example, emailing prospects from a purchased list to your web site’s home page will not be as effective as sending them to a specific page on your web site tied to the email message. Even better is sending them to a landing page specifically for their segment.

In fact, uncoordinated marketing activities are usually a symptom that your lead generating offer and your prospect profile are not detailed enough.

What to do:

Marketing is a process. Lead generation is the first of several steps that prospects go through in their path to becoming your customers. Know how all of your lead generation activities work together.

Roadblock #4: Losing Focus And Chasing The Shiny Object

Internet marketing certainly has a lot of benefits but the rapidly changing pace of social media in particular, makes it easy to jump from one hot activity to the next. As users flood to each new social site, the temptation can be irresistible to jump on with millions of others flocking to a site. The result is that your marketing effort is diluted, unfocused and does not produce the results you need.

Jumping from activity to activity is not limited to internet. It is just as easy to jump from direct mail to email marketing for example.



But some companies can quickly take advantage of new social sites and marketing technology—which ones?

Companies that already have a successful lead generation model are much more likely to be able to quickly evaluate and adapt to new marketing opportunities. **Modifying a successful approach is much easier than trying to build one from scratch.**

For example, if you have been successful in generating leads through direct mail, you know how to develop a targeted list and make an offer that is motivating to that list. With this foundation developing an email campaign is easier than starting from scratch: covert your headline to a subject line (not necessarily easy) and develop a list much like you did for direct mail.

What to do?

- Commit to getting one lead generation process working.
- Take time to evaluate your options so that you can learn from your efforts. (See how to narrow the choices appropriate for you)
- Before you launch a marketing activity, be clear about the results you expect it to produce. Write down how many leads you expect this activity to create.
- After you complete the activity compare the results to what you were expecting. Evaluate what worked, what didn't and what was surprising.
- Before you decide to try a new activity consider if it is worthwhile to improve the last one. And if you decide to choose a new activity, have an opinion on why it will be better than the last one.

Roadblock #5: Not Focusing On Results

Marketing, when done well, always takes into account the numbers. If you are not testing the effectiveness of your marketing, you are wasting money or if you prefer the positive; you have opportunity to get more customers for less money.

A trial and error approach is not likely to produce an optimum result.

Without specific measures in place it is easy to drift off track. Perhaps you are creative, intuitive and act from the gut when it comes to marketing. Without measurements, creativity and intuition can become a distraction to actually getting the desired results.

It is easy to get off track and create marketing pieces that you think are great but have no effect on your prospects. (We have. Some of our most creative ideas have been total flops.) You are too biased to objectively evaluate your ideas. You know everything about your company and your product; your prospects know little about you and your product. They don't think like you do. Let the numbers tell you when you have it right.

For lead generation there are only three numbers that matter.

1. Many people did you reach with your marketing
2. How many people engaged with your marketing: read it, listened to it: watched it



3. How many people did what you wanted them to do: took action

You need to evaluate all three.

Some examples:

If you speak to 1,000 people at an industry event but if half of them are not listening they won't hear your really great offer. The problem then is not your offer but that your presentation was not interesting.

Or if you are convinced you have the right email list but your open rate is lower than it should be, your headline needs work.

If you believe you have the right headline and the right list but your open rate is lower than it should be you may need to try other media (direct mail) to increase your targets familiarity with you. (Email open rates go up dramatically when the sender is known.)

What to do:

There are three ways to bring objectivity into your process:

1. Let the numbers speak for themselves. Be willing to let go of your favorite ideas if they are not delivering the results you need.
2. Bring others into the process who do not share your bias
3. Test your ideas. Compare one headline to another, change subject lines, frequency. Try a different list source. Make changes, predict the outcome, measure and compare the results with your prediction.

Roadblock #6: Allowing The Low Hanging Fruit To Bias Your View Of Lead Generation

If your company has relied on referrals and repeat sales for growth congratulations, you are doing a lot of things right. But your success has set you up for some very real challenges as you try to increase your growth rate beyond referrals.

1. Creating happy customers means that you have operation systems that customer's value.
2. Generating leads requires that you are interesting to people who do not know you.

These two outcomes are the result of very different processes.

Marketing to prospects who do not know you is very different than marketing to prospects that come to you based on a recommendation from someone they trust.

It is more difficult and it costs more.

A referred prospect starts from a position of trust and understanding. For non-referred prospects your marketing materials need to create that trust.



Your Best Next Step: Lead Generation Roadblocks

A lead that comes to you from a referral is well into their buying process. They have determined that they are interested in what you do and maybe have made the decision to buy.

Because of the referral, they are already leaning toward liking you.

On the other hand, prospects who don't know you are leaning away from you. We are all so oversold that our automatic response to an unsolicited offer is to back away.

Okay so it is difficult and costs more, but what does that have to do with mindset?

Lead generation is humbling. Response rates are typically less than 2%; where in the past, you may have closed 25% of your leads. It will be harder to get meetings with people and they will require more information than referred prospects.

It feels like failure and it is humbling, if you are not prepared for it.

What to do:

- Understand that you will have to work harder and it will cost more money to generate leads beyond word of mouth
- Expect that much of your marketing material will need to be revised or rewritten. You will need to provide prospects with reasons why they should listen to you e.g. prove your claims

About Your Best Next Step

Your best next step is a system designed to start where you are and help you understand and execute "your best next step" to market, grow, and run your business. We have worked with hundreds of small and mid-sized businesses and you can utilize us to help provide the expertise that can meld your goals, with your current activity, to lay out your best possible next steps.

That leaves you free to run your business, and the peace of mind to know you are focusing on the right steps to move forward.

Contact us for a free 30 minute demo of our system – focused on a business issue of your choice!

<http://www.yourbestnextstep.com/contact-us>