speak2leads™
Connect and Convert.

A SIX-STEP, NO-FLUFF GUIDE TO BOOSTING SALES

www.speak2leads.com

This white paper delves deeper into Speak2Leads' core belief: that if you don't speak to a lead when it's "sales-ready", you'll never get another chance. In other words, strike while the iron is hot!

Thanks to the next-generation marketing automation software and lead response management tools developed by Speak2Leads, connecting with the right lead at the right time has never been easier.

The following tips and tactics should be considered when responding to new sales-ready leads, as well as nurtured leads that heat up over time to eventually become sales-ready.

1 WEB FORMS

Avoid providing a contact option on your response page, i.e. "Click here and we'll call you now", or "What's the best time to reach you?" -- Our research shows that this approach results in 40% less contacts.

INSTEAD, BE UPFRONT AND REQUIRE THE PROSPECT'S PRIMARY PHONE NUMBER, WHICH IN MOST CASES IS HIS/HER MOBILE NUMBER.

2 RESPONSE AND FOLLOW-UP

When a prospect makes an inquiry, call them back immediately. Prospects have the attention span of a hummingbird, and a few seconds can make all the difference.

On your "call to action" button, use a verb that indicates what happens when they push it. Hint: Don't use anything phone-related, i.e. "Call me now!"

Don't get caught up in a game of cat and mouse. If a prospect is interested, they'll provide a valid phone number, and they'll answer your call -- if not on the first attempt, then certainly by the sixth. On the off chance that you don't connect within six attempts, just put them on your "nurturing" list.

A prospect who doesn't provide a valid or working phone number is a prospect who isn't ready for a sales conversation. Put them on your nurturing list and check in with them periodically.

Don't call too frequently -- there's a fine line between "persistence" and "annoying". Don't call more than six times; anything more is counterproductive.

Here's an example of an optimum call schedule

It's a good idea to send an email between call attempts, but don't try to manipulate the prospect into feeling obligated or guilty for not answering your calls. In other words, avoid emails like this:

> *"Hi Bob, I've left you several voice mails and sent several emails, but I haven't heard back from you. Please get in touch with me at your earliest convenience so we can discuss this opportunity."*

This approach makes it seem like the client owes you something, i.e. "I've made all this effort to get in touch and now you're obligated to respond." People are busy; don't take it personally. Best to start a relationship off by dipping your toe in the water instead of diving right in.

Don't use phrases such as "follow-up", "checking in", "touching base" or "circling back". These types of sales-y terms turn prospects off. Instead, take a more educational approach. Be informative. Be their advocate. Help make them a more informed buyer. Here's an example of an effective approach:

> *"Hi Steve, I realize our product/service isn't the perfect fit for everyone -- and sometimes the timing isn't right. However, I thought you would appreciate this brief case study related to your industry. It shows how effective our product/service can be. If I can be of any help, please let me know."*

3 NURTURING PROGRAMS: WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

According to MarketingSherpa, marketing departments with a lead nurturing campaign reported a 45% higher ROI than marketing departments that did not utilize a lead nurturing track. **MarketingSherpa also reports that of the marketers using lead nurturing campaigns:**

57% *said* emailed newsletters are the most effective channel for lead-nurturing

35% *said* white papers performed well

35% *said* leadership articles are useful

30% *believe* that webinars are advantageous

73% OF ALL B2B LEADS ARE NOT SALES-READY.
This means that marketing departments needs to engage with these leads in some fashion in order to move them down the buying funnel. This also means it's possible for leads to "go cold" somewhere between entering the funnel and becoming sales-ready.

Bear in mind that:

- 95% of all marketing automation platforms are built on the nurturing concept.
- Email is the most common method for nurturing leads.
- Make sure your email is concise and informative. If the email is too long, the prospect will delete it before reading the first sentence. Better to give them bite-sized nuggets of actionable information.
- Long form white papers have a benefit, but not within a nurturing program. A 20-page white paper you spent $10K to produce has zero value to a prospect with three minutes of free time. Try breaking your white paper into a collection of smaller pieces and deliver them individually.

Take advantage of marketing automation platforms like Infusionsoft and their ability to determine when a lead is sales-ready based on the lead's engagement with your website videos, webinars, etc. When you integrate with Speak2Leads, your sales team will automatically receive a call when the lead's temperature gets hot enough. S2L will prompt them to 'press 2' to call the lead. Timing is everything.

4 VOICEMAIL

A recent survey by eVoice, a provider of virtual phone services, found that only 33% of people listen to voicemail from business contacts – and only 18% listen to voicemails from numbers they don't recognize. Frankly speaking, voicemail isn't what it used to be. Fewer and fewer people check their messages, especially if the number is unrecognized or outside their area code.

If you absolutely must leave a voicemail, limit it to 15 seconds or less. Your brevity will be appreciated. Also, make your voicemail count by considering these tips:

Remember your objective: to get a return call.

Mimic the pace and tone of the prospect's greeting. Speak fast if they speak fast. Speak slowly if they speak slowly. Have a smile on your face and be genuine -- even though you're not face-to-face, it definitely matters. Leave the "morning zoo DJ voice" behind and be natural.

You only have 15 seconds, so make every word count. Avoid "umms", "uhhs", and sales jargon ("following up", "checking in", etc.)

Add some mystery. Have a call to action. Tell them what you'd like them to do. Don't say "please call me back at your earliest convenience". Instead, be firm and authoritative, as if a call-back is a given. Use phrases like "You can reach me at..." and "I can be reached at..."

Say your number slowly and clearly, and then repeat it. End your call by restating your number and saying thank you. If you over-embellish with phrases like "have a nice day", "I look forward to talking with you soon", etc., you'll distract them while they're writing your number/message down.

WHEN AND HOW OFTEN TO LEAVE A VOICEMAIL:

A recent study by Velocify determined that the highest % of connections and conversions resulted from no more than two brief voicemails on the second and fourth calls, assuming you're following the optimum call strategy of six calls over 15 days.

5 TEXTING

Texting is a ubiquitous form of communication nowadays, and it's definitely effective when trying to secure new clients. **IN FACT, ONCE INITIAL CONTACT HAS BEEN MADE, CONVERSION RATES RISE 150% IF A TEXT IS EMPLOYED AS AN "IN-BETWEEN" COMMUNICATION** (i.e. exploring logistics, confirming objectives). However, tread cautiously when texting a prospect before establishing a connection, as this can hurt conversion/contact rates.

Some marketers think sending a text to let the prospect know you're calling increases connection rates – but do an A/B test before you commit to this strategy.

6 LEAD DISTRIBUTION

Bear in mind that the company "owns" the lead --- not the salesperson that your CRM assigned it to. In fact, it's a great idea to stop having your CRM assign leads, since this is an outdated practice. With today's technology, you can assign your leads to a house account or a "generic owner". In other words, don't officially assign a lead to a sales rep until phone contact with the prospect has been established. This way, you can commit all of your sales resources to reaching every lead at the optimum frequency and intervals. **(THIS IS WHERE WE COME IN.)**

So, you're saying I should only assign a lead to a rep after contact is made?

EXACTLY. This is the most efficient way to manage your sales process. Timing and persistence trumps everything else. The "old way" only existed because there wasn't a better (read: automated) way. In days of yore, the sales rep was assigned the lead in advance and became the custodian, meaning that the effort put into contacting the lead was determined by how occupied the rep was with other priorities, and whether they felt like making sales calls on a particular day.

In sum, whether it's 1914 or 2014, the rule is the same -- when it comes to a complex sale or considered purchase, you must speak to a lead in order to close a deal. So why not use the most efficient, effective approach?

SPEAK2LEADS IS HERE TO HELP. IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS/COMMENTS ON THIS COLORFUL WHITE PAPER, DON'T HESITATE TO GET IN TOUCH.

78% OF LEADS THAT CONVERT WILL DO SO WITH THE FIRST COMPANY TO CALL THEM BACK

93% OF ALL CONVERTED LEADS ARE CONTACTED WITHIN SIX ATTEMPTS

33% OF ALL LEADS RECEIVE AN EMAIL, BUT NO PHONE CALL

80% OF ALL LEADS RECEIVED TOO FEW CALLS

APPROXIMATELY **35%** OF LEADS ARE REACHED ON THE FIRST CALL

AND UP TO **72%** ARE REACHED ON THE SECOND CALL,

BUT. **48%** OF LEADS NEVER GET A SECOND CALL.

A PHONE CALL TO A NEW PROSPECT WITHIN A **60 SECS**

IMPROVES CONVERSION RATES BY **391%**

YET, ONLY **1%** OF ALL LEADS GET CALLED IN THE FIRST 60 SECONDS.

40% OF ALL LEADS HAVE TO WAIT MORE THAN A WEEK TO RECEIVE A PHONE CALL OR EMAIL

12% OF ALL LEADS RECEIVE NO FOLLOW-UP OF ANY KIND

SOURCES: MIT Lead Response Management Study, Leads 360 Data Study, Speak2Leads Data Study

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