3 Steps to Converting More Inbound Leads

Salesvue

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"IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME."

- FIELD OF DREAMS, 1989

INTRODUCTION

In inbound marketing, it takes more than building content to get leads to come (convert). While developing valuable content is the foundation of successful inbound lead management, it's just the first step. You may build great content, and prospects may, in fact, come to your site, but getting them to engage and ultimately purchase from you is the real kicker. What you need is for ideal prospects to engage with your content in such a way that they move from a marketing lead to a sales lead ... and then an opportunity. This involves coordination, responsiveness, and a little bit of nuance.

Designing and implementing a highly effective inbound lead management strategy is a necessity in both B2B and B2C businesses. Let's face it, most people don't buy on their first visit to a website. It takes them time to be educated, comparison shop, find budget and get consensus before they ultimately purchase. It's during this process that your inbound lead management plan is working to draw them in so your sales team can work their magic.

In this eBook, you will:

- Understand exactly why defining a strategy for lead management is table stakes for honing the vitality of your sales and marketing teams.
- Dig into the best practices for designing an effective strategy and using a sales engagement platform to implement it.
- Learn how one business used Salesvue to operationalize their aggressive inbound lead management approach.

Let's get started.

STEP 1
CONSIDER THE PROSPECT'S JOURNEY

If only every first-time shopper were a buyer...

Because the buying journey takes time, and because buyers are more informed and discerning than ever, vendors must have a plan for cultivating and nurturing prospects that is informed and strategic. Without a plan, buyers are left on their own to shop around and buy from whomever they want (i.e. your competitors). Highly effective lead management strategies take control of the buyer experience and gently guide them to you.

Consider a business without a plan for cultivating inbound leads:

Prospect A visits your website and reads some of your amazing content. She completes a form and downloads an e-book. The marketing team is alerted to the download, but isn't clear on how to follow up with the prospect. They don't know answers to important questions that dictate how best to engage with her:

**?** Why did she download that particular piece?

? What do we know (or can infer) about her?

? What email should she receive next?

**?** What content is most relevant to her?

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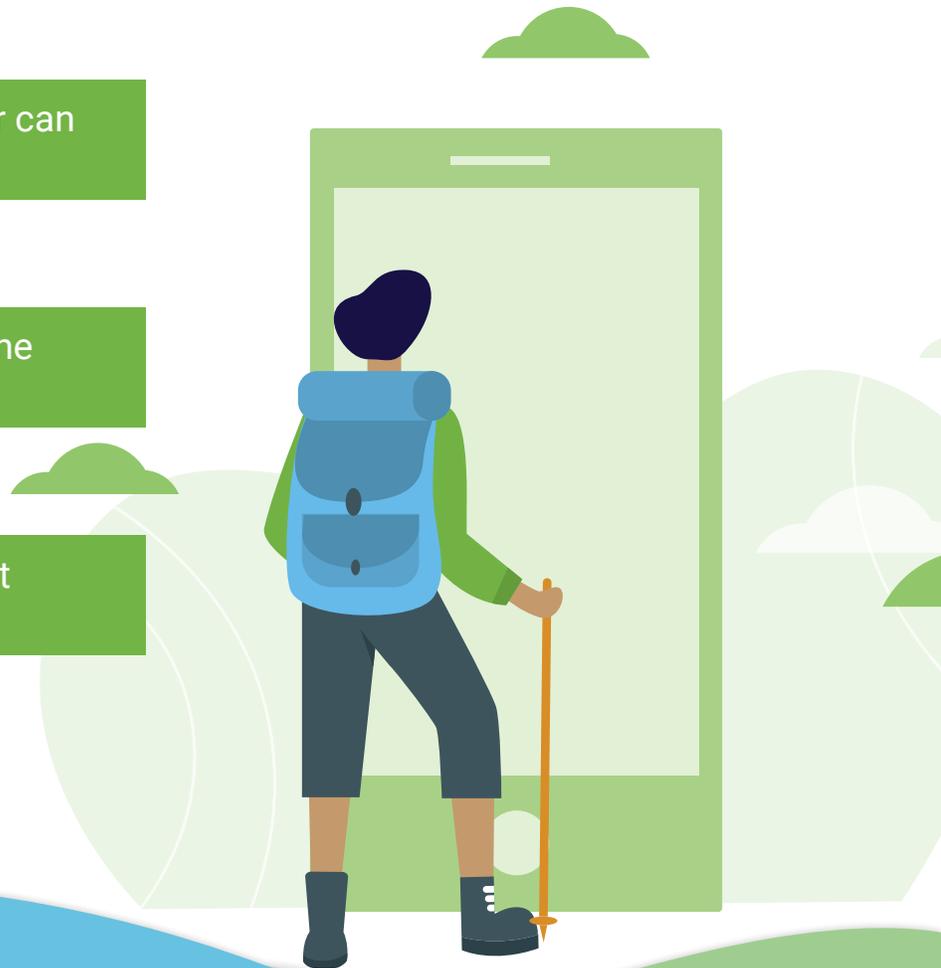
Even if an automated email is sent to this prospect, a planless approach can easily result in her slipping through the cracks and more unanswered questions for your marketing and sales teams:

- What happens if she doesn't re-engage?
- When and how will she hear from us again? What does she need from us?
- Who will the email come from?
- Should someone call her? Who?
- How do we find out more about her? How will that information be shared? and with whom?
- What's the best way to turn her interest into a viable opportunity?

These are among the many questions that are addressed in an effective inbound lead management plan. Having answers to these questions and a system in place that facilitates the plan results in:

- Better, more relevant experiences for your future customer.
- More collaboration, symbiosis, and effectiveness between your marketing and sales teams.
- Real data that informs and improves processes.
- (Ultimately) More conversions and closed deals!
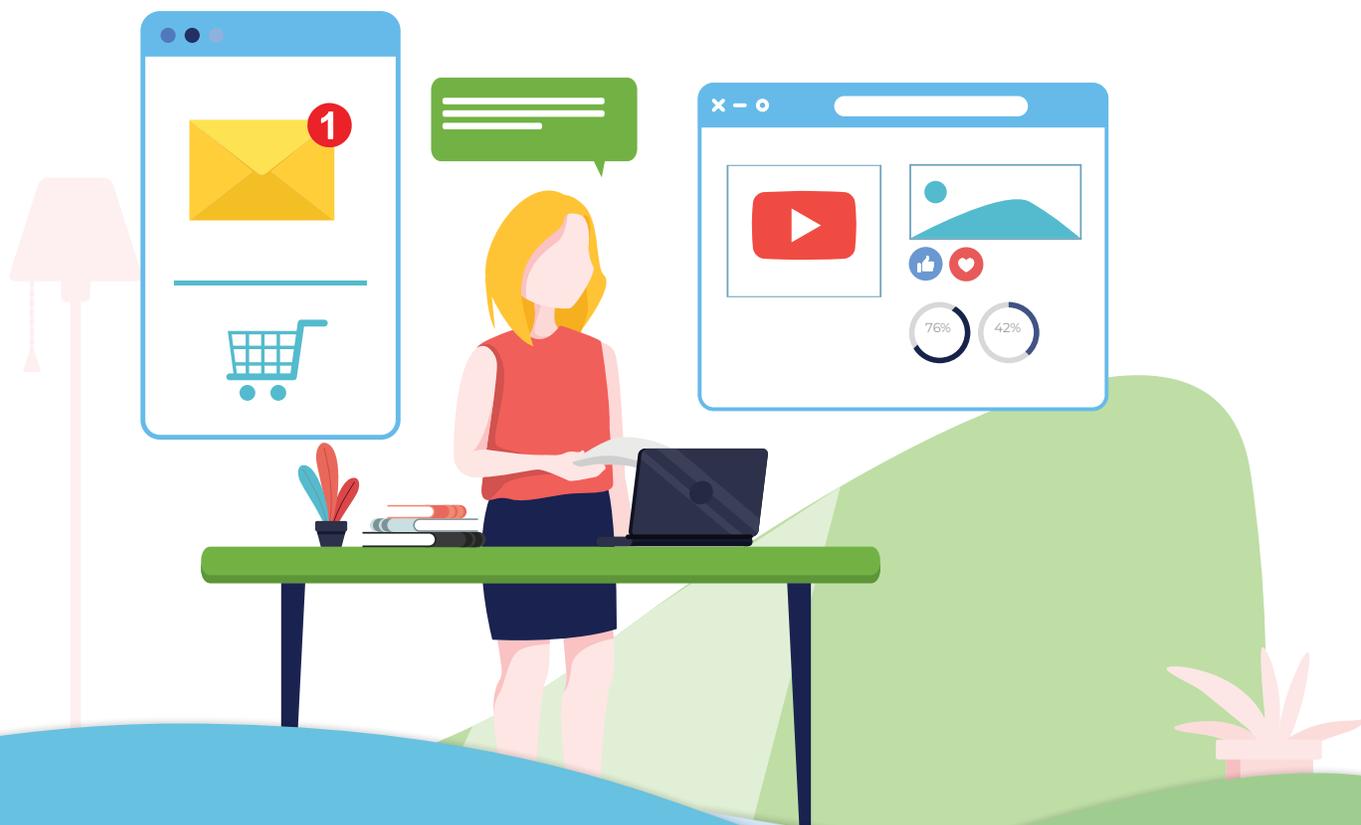
STEP 2

BUILD AN EFFECTIVE INBOUND STRATEGY

"Content is king."

- BILL GATES, 1996

While Bill Gates coined the phrase, "Content is king", it's now become ubiquitous in its influence on marketing strategy, and justifiably so. The more informed consumers are, the more they are influenced by relevant and high-quality content. This is why any marketing strategy begins (and ends) with content. However, content alone is not enough. You must set expectations for how you will qualify and quantify leads. Here are some keys to building an effective inbound strategy:

1. START WITH COMPELLING CONTENT

Whether you are testing waters with innovative ideas or trying to become an authority on an existing approach to a business problem, your inbound lead management strategy begins with content that prospects will be interested in. This will not only propel them forward in their interest in your organization, but also position you as an organization who understands their industry and business needs. eBooks, white papers, blog posts, webinars, infographics, videos, social media posts, case studies, and hosted demos are all forms of content that prospects can access as a gateway to investing in your solution.

2. PLAN WHAT LEAD INFORMATION YOU WANT TO CAPTURE.

CONTENT

NAME

EMAIL

TITLE

DOWNLOAD
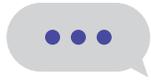
The goal in producing and publishing inbound content is to get your target audience to give you some information in exchange for access to the content so you can begin cultivating them as leads. You want access to your content to be easy, so don't overload them with a long form to fill out. At the same time, include questions that will help you qualify them. You may ask when they are looking to purchase so you know where they are in the buying cycle. Or, you may ask their industry or job title to make sure you target them appropriately with future communications.

3. DETERMINE WHAT CONSTITUTES A QUALIFIED MARKETING LEAD.

Decide how you will handle leads resulting from downloaded content. When is the lead considered qualified? You need clearly defined plans on how to treat each lead in order to accurately benchmark your success. There should be few to no instances of sales saying that marketing is sending unqualified leads.

4. START AN OUTBOUND EMAIL CAMPAIGN TO COLLECT DATA.

The goal with this campaign is to collect delivery statistics and metrics about how the prospects interact with the messaging (opens, clicks, forwards, etc.) and, more importantly, how many (and which ones) go to the website to take advantage of the content.

STEP 3
BUILD AN EFFECTIVE FOLLOW-UP CADENCE

Cadences for inbound lead management vary from business to business. However, there are certain key steps to take for building a winning strategy that is consistent and repeatable across your organization. Here are some keys to an effective cadence:

1. **Build a cadenced campaign.** Studies show that the faster the response at this point, the more likely the lead is to move forward in the sales cycle. An initial call is the most effective outreach, followed by additional content that helps clarify and sell the value proposition. If an initial, personal contact is not made (e.g. you get their voicemail), don't give up. Persistence is often rewarded. Cadence can be tricky at this stage. If you reach out too frequently, you run the risk of driving them away. If you are too infrequent in your approach, you give room to other vendors to jump in and steal mindshare … and opportunity. Content delivered during this phase has to fill out the story, be educational, and continue to drive the value proposition. Each outreach should place another piece in the puzzle, so to speak.

2. **Be responsive.** Once your prospect has agreed to engage in a formal sales process (thus becoming a Sales Qualified Lead), your cadence and content must be responsive to the needs of the prospect. This involves targeted questioning and active listening to understand what the prospect needs next to move forward in the purchase decision.

3. **Use a sales engagement tool to operationalize your strategy.** In many cases, marketing uses one tool, and sales uses another. This makes the flow of a lead management strategy clunky and can contribute to dropped balls and poor communication. It can also be difficult to garner end-to-end analytics to understand what works and what doesn't. A sales engagement tool must support both ad-hoc and prescribed cadence and content delivery, as both approaches are part of most strategies. And, finally, the tool should allow you to compare the analytics of a variety of strategies so you can effectively determine what works and what does not.

4. **Evaluate the performance of the follow up plan, adjust and optimize.** Use the data provided by your sales engagement tool (the messaging of the emails, the person calling/emailing, the content itself, etc.) and the analytics on conversions to make informed decisions about how to improve future campaigns (or even make changes to an existing campaign if you notice something that's especially effective or ineffective).

A CASE IN POINT

Consider the success of a B2B SaaS organization that designed and adopted a highly effective inbound lead management strategy and operationalized it using Salesvue. Here's what they did and the results they gleaned:

- In an effort to explicitly differentiate themselves from their competitors, the SaaS company designed an aggressive and targeted inbound lead generation plan that used emails, calls, voicemails, LinkedIn touches, and video from a variety of people on their team to deliver a variety of content (G2 Crowd comparisons, webinars, eBooks, and opportunities to meet the CSM they'd be working with). Because the plan incorporated various contact methods and content, and included a Sales Development Rep (SDR), an Account Executive (AE) and a Customer Success Manager (CSM), they relied upon Salesvue to operationalize their campaigns.

- Using their existing prospect database, the marketing team crafted emails, voicemail scripts, video scripts, and LinkedIn messaging that enticed prospects to go to the site, contact them, or request a demo to learn more. Messaging was very value-focused and persona-based.

- Once a recipient went to the website, they were prompted to complete a form to access the first piece of content, a comprehensive competitive analysis of their software and their main competitors. (Note: they also had the option to immediately request a demo at any time.) The form asked for the prospect's name, organization, title, email, phone number, and timeframe for purchase. These attributes were all part of the lead scoring that determined how a prospect would progress through the campaign.

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- Before pushing out any emails or content, the team worked collaboratively to develop a lead score that they believed would accurately reflect the value of the leads generated from this campaign. The score aggregated the activities and attributes of the lead. For example, a VP of Customer Success with potential buying authority who completed a form on the website received a score of 50, which automatically triggered a call from the AE. On the other hand, a CSM (who would be more of a user) who downloaded the book received a score of 25. This would trigger another email with additional content.

- Using Salesvue, they created automated triggers (rules) to move new or existing contacts who filled out forms into the appropriate follow-up plan. Based upon the data from the form, the proper team member would automatically have that contact in queue to conduct the next contact.

- The cadence for this campaign was like a decision tree. It kicked off with an original email, but depending upon how the specific recipient responded, a different internal task would be conducted by a specific team member. In this case, the task may be from sales, marketing, or Customer Success. And, the contact may be personal (a phone call), or automated (another email). The team relied heavily upon Salesvue to operationalize the full cadence for their entire team.

  - ○ The telephony feature made it easy for calls to be made, logged and reviewed by supervisors.

  - ○ All scripts/talking points were easily accessible for each team member.

  - ○ Lead scoring and automated triggers made the campaign flow efficiently.

  - ○ Because Salesvue is the only sales engagement software that is native to Salesforce, leads that became opportunities were seamlessly and securely transferred into Salesforce.

RESULTS

The results of this aggressive lead management campaign were immediate and palpable.

- Everyone on the sales and marketing team knew their role in the campaign and when they had a task to complete.

- Everything they needed to perform their tasks was in Salesvue, which decreased off-task time.

- The SDR was significantly more efficient in calling than she had been in the past (up to 60 calls/day vs. approximately 35 in the past).

- The AEs knew more about the prospect when making a call because they had form data as well as knowledge about what content appealed to the prospect. This allowed the AEs to be more specific in their initial contact.

- Marketing and Sales finger-pointing (blame for missed opportunities) dissipated because they were all involved in the development and implementation of the plan.

- Sales leadership was able to analyze the efficacy of the plan and tweak language and lead-scoring attributes mid-campaign.

- Conversion rates increased over past campaigns that were not as defined and were not managed using Salesvue.

CONCLUSION

Coordinated, content-driven, and responsive campaigns are the keys to attracting and converting highly qualified inbound leads. Without these, any cadence you create will not result in as many quality leads, and could exacerbate tensions between sales and marketing as they blame one another for missed opportunities. If you would like to see how Salesvue can help with your inbound lead conversions, **request a demo today.**