

# Lead Generation

## 'Shotgun' And 'Rifle' Approaches To Marketing Both Require The Proper Contact Person

by Ronald E. Lang

Choosing your target market(s) might be easy, but how do you zero in on the "optimal" client for your organization. Some organizations will treat their marketing efforts with a "spray and pray" approach, blanketing their territory and hoping for the best. Other organizations hope that "word-of-mouth" will be good enough, and still others believe that just purchasing a list of names should get them over the top. If those methods are the only ones you are using and you consider those best methods, perhaps it's time to believe that buffaloes do not have wings.

Some organizations out there have been very successful at leveraging relationships with clients, the organizations (associations) they belong to and basic advertising on an infrequent basis. If you're an organization that wants 10-20 percent annual top-line growth or more, you need greater reach and a narrower scope of who you want as your customers.

There are combinations of effective marketing methods in the marketplace today. The basic combination of the "shotgun" and a "rifle shot" approach is the most effective. This means that if you take a "shot-

gun approach" you are just trying to blanket a territory with a mass messaging process and hoping for the best results. This is a variation of "spray and pray." The "rifle shot" approach is very targeted. Some marketers like to use the term "surgical strike" as a military phrase to hit the target with precision and with an end result of "shock and awe."

If we could all perform "rifle shots" with consistent success, this article would be unnecessary. Many times a "shotgun approach" can be effective if the messaging is focused to a wide audience, although you might be trying to hit prospective customers that have no need for your products and services. The "rifle shot" approach can be very effective, but sometimes it is very time-consuming to develop the database, perform the necessary preliminary work and the due diligence follow-up.

By combining these two approaches and properly modifying the messaging over time with a minimum monthly contact to your prospects (and customers), you will find that your lead generation is in full swing.

Do not expect a high-level of immediate (short-term) success. Prop-

er marketing messaging takes time. Stick to your plan and let it run a minimum of one year. Monitor success on a rolling three-month basis. During this time, analyze the companies that are responding and the potential opportunities they have for your organization. Also review the companies that don't have any interest at all. Give those companies a call to find out why.

Some of the reasons may be the wrong messaging on your materials if they were the right company. Perhaps some of the other reasons are more obvious: they were the wrong person to receive the materials, the company never needed the products and services to begin with, it went out-of-business, merged or sold off. If the companies that responded have worthwhile potential, do some more database mining and call all the other companies that are similar to those. Go to other outside database list sources and plug in their profiles (via SIC or NAICS) to see if you have all those similar companies in your territory. If not, buy them and begin the lead generation process to those companies.

This is a great example of why your database is so valuable. Without

valid data and knowing the correct contact person to work with, both "shotgun" and "rifle shot" approaches will not be as effective as intended.

Let's increase the business development level of your organization by reviewing a more effective lead generation tool, the phone call. This is the most tedious, but ultimately the

**The phone call is the most tedious and most effective tool.**

most effective. If necessary, outsource some of the bulk calling to effectively reach your market. With the right script, approach and, most importantly, tenacity, your lead generation program will be vaulted to another level. This is also another form of lead generation that takes time. You should also give this a year of monitoring, analyzing it on a rolling three-month basis. Sometimes a combination of outsourcing lead generation and internal call campaign can double results. Create incentives with your internal team to generate new prospects. As much as existing customers are a great source of new income, the reality is you will not grow consistently at a 10-20 percent growth rate annually if you never add new customers to your base.

It has been proven that a consistent commitment to business development, but more specifically to a lead generation plan will ultimately result in greater top-line sales. Determining how to use lead generation for bottom-line results is another conversation, by first starting with customers that are the most profitable and why they are should prepare you for your target market and lead generation program.

Ronald E. Lang (rlang@majestictechnology.com) is president of Majestic Consulting Group, developers of AVLogix sales and customer service automation software.

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