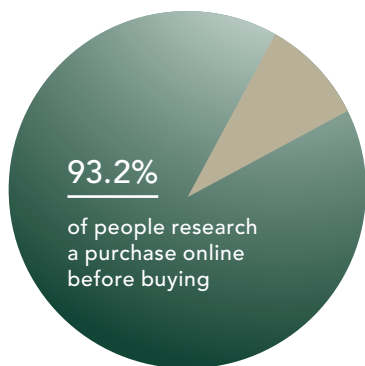


WHITE PAPER

Increasing Qualified Buyer Interaction With Your Products And Services.

Are your web capabilities effectively generating demand for you?



With more and more businesses beginning their search for products and services online, it is imperative for B2B marketers to focus their online strategies to attract and retain the attention of prospective buyers.

Today, the whole concept of “Demand Generation” (or Demand Gen for short) has become a hot topic among marketers, especially in business-to-business sales and marketing. New approaches to Demand Generation are getting attention because the traditional rules about buyer-seller relationships don’t apply anymore.

Technology Changes Everything.

First, it’s important to clarify that the basic motivating factors behind a purchase decision are essentially the same. A customer or prospect with a particular need will still assess and compare issues of quality, price, feasibility, ROI, service, brand, etc., when choosing a product or a vendor.

The difference in today’s marketplace comes from the many new ways that customers are able to gather information, especially online. A potential buyer can now simply access web-based search engines to learn about any product category. These search results can take the prospect to a virtually endless library of online demos, white papers, technical specs, performance data, price sheets, case studies and much more, including current customer testimonials.

The Internet has created virtual sales representatives. Brochures, trade shows, seminars, promotional items and even personal handshakes often don’t fit into the equation of today’s marketing tools. Prospects are making their own rules on how the selling relationship works. In fact, a study has shown that 93.2% of B2B decision-makers said they research a purchase online before buying.¹

Putting Demand Gen To Work.

Demand Generation covers many functions and components. Although it’s generally considered part of a company’s marketing program, an integrated Demand Gen process often involves sales, IT and other divisions such as research or accounting.

Demand Generation is the result of structured, targeted marketing efforts developed to incrementally increase awareness and interest in a company’s products or services.

¹The Role of Search in Business-to-Business Buying Decisions, Enquiro Research, 06/05



By using various site development techniques and content enhancements, SEO helps assure that your company name will appear sooner and more prominently when prospective buyers search online for what you offer.

In basic terms, Demand Generation is the result of structured, targeted marketing efforts developed to incrementally increase awareness and interest in a company's products or services. Unlike consumer goods, commodities or "impulse" purchases, the Demand Gen process lends itself to business-to-business marketing. It typically involves a longer sales cycle as well as a high degree of specific educational content.

A successful Demand Gen process will connect you to customers and viable prospects who are actively seeking what you offer. Those buyers have begun their online search with a certain need in mind or a specific problem to solve, but they can't buy from you if they don't know who you are. This step is often referred to as building awareness.

Make Your Company Easy To Find.

The good news is that customers are out there and want to buy. Many of them are looking for you, but some may not realize it yet. So how can you facilitate their search?

Again, keep in mind that the buyer initiates and directs the process. Suppose someone goes online hoping to find a solution to a clearly defined problem. In that case, he or she would most likely go to a search engine and type in the description of the problem, not the name of a company or product.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is the process of driving more qualified prospects to your website.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is the process of driving more qualified prospects to your website. Studies have shown that companies which land in the top 10 rankings or first-page listings of a customer's search can generate an additional sixfold increase in traffic to their sites.² The correlating impact on sales is also impressive: within the first month of being listed among the top 10 matching sites, companies averaged a 42% increase in sales.²

Search engines like Google® or Yahoo® rank websites on results pages based on the relevance to the words entered by the person doing the searching. In addition to the actual content on your website, the degree of matching relevance is determined by off-page inbound links to your site. Sometimes optimizing a search function is as easy as adding more keywords and phrases. Look to website-development professionals who can explain the best practices involved in an SEO program.

Many companies are now successfully employing SEO with astonishing results. In another recent study, the findings showed a 39% increase in the number of marketers who reported using SEO as one of their three top tools for lead generation.³

²B to B Magazine

³DemandGen Report "Demand Generation Benchmark Survey," 2009

Traditional Sales Cycle Activity

Sales Cycle Using Demand Gen Tactics

1. Prospecting	1. Pre-appointment Planning
2. Research	2. Proposal
3. Pre-call Planning	3. Negotiation
4. Appointment	4. Closing
5. Building Rapport	
6. Needs Assessment	
7. Proposal	
8. Trial	
9. Negotiation	
10. Closing	
11. Customer Service	
12. Referral	

Traditional sales cycles place the responsibility of selling activities squarely on the sales team. Effective Demand Gen programs allow the prospecting and qualification process to be shared with marketing, and automated, so that sales reps can focus their time where they are most effective: closing sales.

How Can Your Products or Services Solve Your Customers' Problems?

As soon as your website has made a network connection, you need to make an emotional one, fast. Your landing page must immediately capture customers' interest, be clearly relevant and show prospective buyers that you understand their concerns and priorities.

Especially in a business-to-business scenario, you gain a tremendous advantage right away if a website visitor can see that you speak his or her language. Make sure you convey a user-focused tone, because that visitor is looking for solutions and answers. Prospects don't care about your company or product except as a means to achieving their own goals. If someone doesn't instantly perceive that you might be able to help, you get clicked off fast and they're on to the next site.

Even the best websites can't have an effect on everybody. Industry observers note that the majority of visitors to any site leave within 10–15 seconds, and many viewers who stay longer will still exit without being persuaded to learn more or download information. You have a very small window of opportunity to capture a prospect.

Never forget that the visitors get to call the shots; it's your challenge to hold their interest and convince them that your product/service is a good fit and a worthwhile decision.

Once They're Caught, Make Sure They're Taught.

Let's assume your website has managed to gain a visitor's interest and he or she is ready to believe you could be a good partner. Now you have to draw that prospect in further, so what happens next?

Remember, that person encountered you along the way to solving a problem or finding answers to specific challenges—so make it obvious that you can provide those solutions. Successful online marketers understand the need to have good educational content readily available, whether it's reprinted documents, proprietary research, instructional videos, links to related resources or some other beneficial material. You want your visitors to feel like they've discovered a wealth of helpful, user-focused information that exists to make their jobs easier.

When you establish the impression of being a valuable educational resource, you can rise from potential-vendor status to a role of capable, trusted partner. It also helps assure that prospective buyers will come back to your site again and again, which can dramatically shorten and solidify the sales cycle.

¹The Role of Search in Business-to-Business Buying Decisions, Enquiro Research, 06/05

Let us know how we can contact you:

*Name

*E-mail

*Address

*City

*State

*Zip

*Phone

*Comments

Requesting too much information from a prospective customer early in the relationship can turn people off from sharing any information at all.

Let us know how we can contact you:

*Name

*E-mail

Experts suggest you start by requesting only the most basic facts such as name and email address. Users will be more willing to give up a limited amount of information, and you will still have valuable information for your database.

Personalizing The Relationship.

When visitors to your website are impressed and intrigued by the quality of what you provide, you're much more likely to gain their confidence—ultimately to the point that they start sharing information with you.

Two important and related aspects of successful Demand Generation are interaction and personalization; you want to find out as much as possible about that individual who may become your customer. In many ways, that's the traditional basis of a buyer-seller relationship, but now you're doing it electronically or by other means rather than face-to-face.

Today, that process involves contextual marketing. As its name indicates, contextual marketing evaluates prospective buyers in the unique behavioral context of their mindsets, rather than just as demographic profiles. Therefore, the key to contextual communications is to "get inside the heads" of target prospects by interacting with offers and messages that trigger a personal, emotional reaction.

Making qualified customers want to respond to you will establish a two-way relationship and enable you to segment future communications to appeal more directly to those individuals' personal preferences. When you learn what their exact needs, challenges and interests are, you can customize messages, product offerings, promotions, etc.

Getting to know customers online can be challenging, though. First, you have to give them a good reason for telling you who they are. Offering a legitimate, practical reward—such as the chance to download or receive useful educational tools—is often incentive enough. On the other hand, if you ask for too much personal information at first, the visitor may be intimidated or put off, or simply not want to take the time to fill out a lengthy form.

Experts suggest you start by requesting only the most basic facts such as name and email address, so you can at least enter those individuals into your database. After that, you'll be able to track their visits to your site and adjust follow-up strategies. Once the initial contact is established, you'll want to stay in touch with potential buyers, wherever they may be in their purchase cycle. You can contact these prospects and interact frequently using e-blasts, personal e-mail, direct mail and outbound telemarketing. With each "touch point," you can strategically develop the relationship until the prospect makes a purchase, and then long after they have become a customer.

Tracking Online Activity.

Monitoring visitors' online behavior can help you track lead sources, even down to individual search terms. A big advantage of tracking visitors to your site is that you can discover contextual marketing data to direct future prospects to certain relevant pages based on keywords, rather than sending visitors to your home page first. You can then optimally reconfigure your site's pages based on popular terms and time spent on different topics. All effective websites should be updated regularly to keep information current and to avoid looking stale. Using visitors' behavior as a guide can streamline those efforts.

When you generate future interaction with prospects, either initiated by them or by you, use those subsequent contact experiences to request more information such as the person's company, title and areas of responsibility. Again, be careful not to rush it. This sequential, information-gathering process can be looked at as an ongoing conversation or dialogue with your prospect. Gradually, you'll build up more and better personalized information, as well as greater mutual trust, all to help you meet customers' needs most accurately and effectively.



Social media is becoming increasingly important to the B2B marketing mix. Find out which social media sites get trafficked by your customers and prospects and develop a strategy to reach them through those tools.

Demand Gen Through Social Networking.

Successfully building awareness and generating demand can involve many vehicles. Getting customers to find you means going where they're looking, and today, that includes Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Digg and whatever the next innovation may be. To be sure your company has a presence in those media venues, consider blog postings, podcasts, industry discussion sites, etc. It's a great way to make your sales prospecting look more human, too. After all, people still want to buy from people, even if they're doing it digitally online.

Various companies offer services to help businesses maximize social networking opportunities. You'll find the most success with a firm that specializes in implementing and expanding the quality and number of your specific business-to-business customer interactions.



Organizations utilizing best practice Demand Gen tactics have reported large increases in key business growth indicators.

The Sooner You Get Started, The Better.

The Demand Gen concept is proven to work and clearly necessary in today's marketing climate. A recent study noted that B2B marketers using Demand Generation tactics reported⁴:

- 18% higher revenue
- 9.3% higher sales quota achievement
- 7% higher win rates
- 100% increase in deal size

However, it doesn't happen by itself, and there's no one-size-fits-all solution. A successful Demand Gen program needs to be geared specifically to a company's objectives and capabilities, using a multi-channel approach to find and engage the best potential buyers. The process also takes patience. As with any traditional sales methods, you have to filter through the marginal prospects to identify the best ones. But with Demand Gen, the difference is that you get more and better prospects sooner, when they're most ready to buy!

To put your own Demand Generation program into action, partner with an experienced organization willing to get immersed in your business to understand all of your unique challenges, opportunities, market segments, etc., and fully grasp exactly what you need. Only then can your Demand Gen program effectively target and drive new sales and profits.

To learn more, please contact:

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⁴Rubicon Marketing Group, 2008
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