

You Want Leads? You Want to Sell? GET ON THE PHONE!

Don't Be Distracted by Over-Hyped Automated Marketing Practices

We get it. Selling is intimidating. And we've all experienced "fear of the phone." But don't fool yourself into thinking you can "automate-away" the human element of a B2B lead generation and sales program. Because you're probably missing out on a big percentage of opportunities if you rely exclusively on "auto-piloted" lead generation practices. Make sure you're still chasing business on the phone.

HubSpot? Salesforce? Unbounce? - They're All Selling Complexity... To A Fault.

Let's be clear. HubSpot, Unbounce, and Salesforce (as examples) all offer some excellent training and tutorials in how to enhance your front-end auto-marketing and digital lead generation initiatives. But in many instances, the layered practices they are "selling" are over-done and unnecessary, and allow some sales teams to think they can dodge an all-essential phone call. When looking at automating any lead generation and sales program, always ask yourself:

- Do I really need this level of complexity?
- Am I actually getting meaningful feedback from my target market?
- Am I making strategic sales decisions based on actual "voiced" feedback from a profiled prospect?
- Or am I simply inferring things by "click rates," "open rates," and visitation statistics?
- What critical, qualitative piece of market information am I missing that the "stats" don't capture?
- Most important of all, is my "drip campaign" actually pissing off my target prospects?

When Do "Drips" Become Water Torture?

And When Does Your "Sales Team" Devolve Into Glorified "Order-Takers?"

The only way you're going to truly know the answer to these questions is by getting on the phone. Generating leads and closing deals the "old-fashioned" way. With a real, live, human conversation. Let's take a look at the results of some micro-campaigns we executed for two different clients.

TWO CASE STUDIES:

MICRO-CAMPAIGN #1: CONSTRUCTION / FABRICATION SERVICES

We were contracted to execute a simple two-step lead generation program for a service provider in the construction industry. We released an email to a sample of "suspect leads" that fit a specific profile. We then followed up on those emails via phone within 72 hours. The results were as follows:

METRIC	RESULT
Total Emails Released (Everyone was Called Afterwards)	135
Emails "Opened"	44
No. of "Opened" Leads that Expressed Interest / Requested More Info after Call	10
... as a Percentage of Total "Opens"	22.5%
Emails "Unopened"	91
No. of "Unopened" Leads that Expressed Interest / Required More Info after Call	17
... as a Percentage of Total "Unopens"	18.5%

SUMMARY STATS - Of 135 total emails, 27 prospects expressed interest, requested info, or otherwise gave permission to sustain a relationship after the phone call was made. That's approximately 20%.

More significantly, roughly 1-in-5 (+/-) calls led to a target's permission to follow-up regardless of email "open rates." In fact, our client increased their "interested lead" count by 170% when they followed up on the "Unopened" emails with a phone call.

We know unopened emails get lost in SPAM, get overlooked next to higher priority emails, get trashed before the prospect fully sees the value of the message, etc. But it doesn't matter. The most important part of the emailing effort is to use it as the "opener" for a conversation on the phone, whether the email was actually opened or not.

MICRO-CAMPAIGN #2: CORPORATE FOOD CATERING SERVICES

In this second instance, we employed the same approach for a catering provider. We emailed and then called "suspect leads" that fit two specific profiles – Corporate Clients / Event Planners. The results were as follows:

CORPORATE

METRIC	Result
Preliminary Target Contacts – Email Campaign	84
Opens (Unique)	33 (42%)
Initial Bookings (Tasting and/or Truck)	6 (7%)
Follow-Up Call Targets	77
New / Additional Contacts	22
Requests to Re-Send Email	30
Additional Bookings (Tasting and/or Truck)	3 (3.5%)
TOTAL BOOKINGS	9 (10.5%)

EVENT PLANNERS

METRIC	Result
Preliminary Target Contacts – Email Campaign	44
Opens (Unique)	24 (58.5%)
Initial Bookings (Appointment)	3 (7%)
Follow-Up Call Targets	39
New / Additional Contacts	6
Requests to Re-Send Email	11
Additional Bookings (Appointment)	5
TOTAL BOOKINGS	8 (18%)

Phone calls increased the number of Bookings for a "free tasting" by 50% among corporate targets. We also secured 22 additional decision-maker contacts in the process. Meanwhile, our call-effort for the Event Planners more than DOUBLED the number of appointments to discuss partnership opportunities.

CLOSING OBSERVATION – Large-Scale Enterprise vs. Start-Up/SME's

If you're on your way to being a bona-fide, large-scale, multi-market enterprise with a decentralized sales team representing multiple product offerings, then absolutely, there will be a need to leverage the scalable advantages of some more complex automated marketing and CRM tools. **BUT** – if you are either an:

- 1) Early-Stage B2B or SaaS company of any kind, OR
- 2) Small-to-Medium-Sized firm with a fairly straightforward value proposition...

... then you will most certainly benefit from heeding the advice herein. Think twice before you over-automate. **DO NOT** under estimate the importance of a phone call, a human dialogue, and a real person-to-person relationship.

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