How to Effectively Manage Inbound Leads

Lift
ENABLEMENT

www.liftenablement.com
info@liftenablement.com

Table of Contents

Effectively Managing Inbound Leads

How to Handle Inbound Leads

One of the great promises of inbound marketing is the ability to produce higher volumes of leads. While the promise of more leads is a powerful one, inbound leads cannot be managed in the same way you manage your other traditional leads.

Because inbound leads attract prospects at all levels of the marketing funnel, traditional approaches that worked for your outbound efforts.

The two most common mistakes made in managing inbound leads are:

- Moving to the "sell" too quickly. Successful inbound sales requires that you transform your mindset from "always be closing," to "always be helping."
- Treating every lead as though it is a fully qualified lead.

Successful inbound sales and marketing requires that you develop a system that ensures you are working with the *right* leads at the *right* time in the *right* way. Your lead management approach must align with where your prospect is in their journey.

This guidebook introduces the very system we use at Lift Enablement for our company, as well as for our clients. We'll share with you the workflow we follow, how we qualify leads, a sample service level agreement and the scripts we use for following up with leads.

The guidebook is designed to get you started. Feel free to adjust it to make it work for your approach. And, please let us know how you're using it and how it's helping.

Definitions & Explanations:

Lead Triage: The process of assessing the quality of a lead. We use lead triage to classify each lead as it comes in and to assign specific actions and protocols for managing the lead. Lead triage is an alternative to lead scoring.

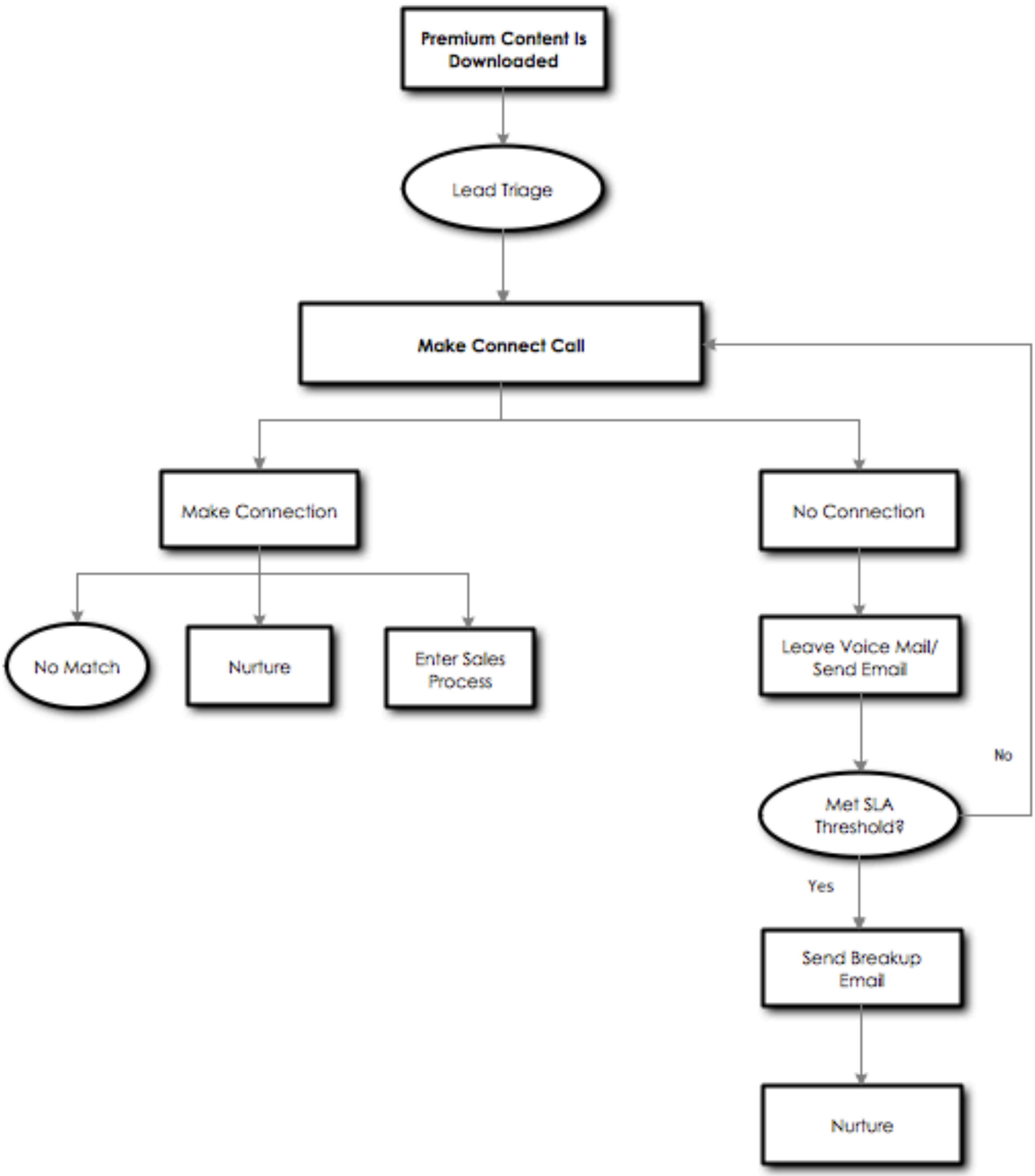
Connect Call: The approach you take on your first call to an inbound lead is crucial to success. If you come across as a "salesperson" you'll most likely lose the opportunity. The Connect Call is a structure (introduced to us by HubSpot) for managing the first call with an inbound lead.

Service Level Agreement (SLA): This is the agreement between marketing and sales that defines how a lead will be classified, and, based upon that classification, how the lead will be managed.

Company Classification: An important rule when qualifying a lead is to always qualify the company, not the contact. The company classification is the qualification rating for each company in your lead pipeline. Additionally, as your lead generation results grow, you'll find that leads progress through a pipeline very similar to a sales opportunity. The company classification applies through the process and should drive specific actions in your SLA.

Contact Classification: Classifies the role the individual has in your sales process.

The Inbound Lead Management Process



Lead Triage

Company Classification	Description
Opt Out	For companies/contacts you do not want to receive anything (competitors and the like).
NQ-0	Not qualified for any number of reasons.
L-1	Lead for nurturing - no contact. Primary reason for this is a lack of information about the prospect.
L-2	Low rated lead. Basic information provided, no other knowledge.
L-3	Moderate rated lead. Basic information provided, initial review indicates a probable fit.
L-4	High rated lead. Basic information provided, initial review indicates there is a probable fit and contact information fits primary persona.
MQL-5	Prospect represents a fit, confirmed proper person.
MQL-6	Prospect represents a fit, confirmed proper person and a direct connection has commenced.
MQL-7	Prospect is a fit, in active conversation with primary personas.
SQL-8	Prospect fits, key personas identified and open to a diagnostic or solutions conversation.
Closed - Match	Lead entered sales person pipeline.
Closed - No Match	Lead did not enter sales person pipeline.

Contact Classification	Description
1	Wrong Contact
2	Connect Level (Contact is not a "right contact" but they can connect us to a 3/4/5.
3	Champion/Influencer
4	Secondary Persona
5	Primary Persona

Service Level Agreement:

Lead Management:

Classification	Call Time	Calls/Emails	Breakup	Timeframe
L-4	24 hrs.	6	1	90 Days
L-3	24 hrs.	3	1	60 Days
L-2	72 hrs.	1	1	30 Days

Follow Up Emails (Upon Download of Premium Content in Accordance with SLA)

EMAIL #1

Subject Line: In reference to my voice mail message today

Hi [first name], per my message today -

You recently [registered/downloaded] the [offer]. You also mentioned your [answer to form qualitative question] is [answer to question]. I've taken a few moment and [visited your site/researched your company] and have suggestions on how [impact challenge].

When do you have a few minutes to connect?

EMAIL #2

Subject Line: [First Name], [Prospect Company] is

Hi [insert first name],

You recently visited [your website here] and downloaded [offer].

In the last email I sent you, I shared that I had some ideas to address you [challenge/pain point]. Today I'd like to share some additional resources we have to support companies looking to [insert goal/objective].

[Insert links to other landing pages/resources you have]

Additionally, I do have a couple of suggestions on how to improve that.

Do you want to discuss? Let me know either way!

EMAIL #3

Subject Line: [First name], here's how [prospect company] stacks up

Hello again [first name],

You recently visited [your company's website] and downloaded [offer].

In my last email I sent you, I talked about [ideas to address pain point.] For comparison, I'd like to show you a company like yours who are doing these things very well.

As you can see, [insert company name] is [insert impact].

Do you want to set up some time to talk through some opportunities you have for improvement so you're not falling behind competitors? When would be a good time to connect?

EMAIL #4

Subject Line: [First name], some suggestions for your [your solution]...

Hi [first name],

You've recently visited [your company's website here] and downloaded some of our resources. As a follow up, I've [customized research points here.]

There are tremendous opportunities for improvement here.

In my previous emails I talked about tips I have for improving your [prospect pain point] as well as your positioning in comparison to your competitors.

Are you still interested in hearing these? When's a good time to connect?

The Breakup

Subject Line: [First name], One Last Try

Hi [first name],

You've recently visited [your company's website] and downloaded some of our resources.

Based on everything we've seen, there are tremendous opportunities for improvement as well as some low hanging fruit.

However, since you haven't responded to my communications, I'm assuming you don't want my help. I wish you and [insert prospect company name here] the best.

Let me know if there's any way I can help in the future.

The Connect Call

The connect call is a Segment A call. The call is your opportunity to make that first impression on your prospect -- the first time that you're catching someone live on the phone. A connect call is about getting to know your prospect. We use a connect call in order to begin understanding whom we're talking to, what she cares about, and whether we have anything in common that we can get value out of discussing. We ask questions to find out what she's working on, how that fits in with her company's greater business goals, what's tough about her day, whether that's something we can help with, and whether she even wants anyone's help in the first place.

The goal of a connect with any person is to strike up a good conversation, get to know what makes them tick, and walk away knowing whether you want to continue that conversation at a later point in time. The goal of a sales connect call is exactly the same, with an added emphasis on determining whether there's any way you can help a prospect with a need that her business has prioritized addressing.

The connect call is NOT an opportunity for an elevator pitch. Remember, this takes discipline, because many times the prospect will insist that you provide one. If the prospect asks you for a high-level sale, give them a high-level overview instead. Resist the urge to talk about your product for 20 minutes straight. Practice conveying what you do in 2 sentences or less; then learn how to pivot back into your intended playbook.

Secondly, this is NOT an opportunity to budget-qualify someone as quickly as possible. There are no shortcuts in a strong and thorough sales process, so we encourage you to over-invest in the front end of the sales process here. The last thing you want to do is pass on a potentially qualified opportunity because you're trying to cut to the chase too quickly. How would you feel if you met someone at a party and they asked you what your salary is within the first few minutes of conversation? Keep that in mind, and don't jump the gun.

Upon the download of a content premium offer:

1. **Salutation & Address Resistance:**

Keep your introductions short and sweet

When you're calling someone who's not expecting your call, her natural reaction is to feel guarded. She is assuming you're calling with an agenda, and will often be eager to get off the phone. Addressing resistance allows us to earn permission to continue the conversation despite this initial reaction. Try the strategy of 'going negative' on a prospect from the very outset of the phone call by saying something like "sounds like I caught you at a bad time." Nine times out of 10, they'll swoop in to save you and insist that now is actually an okay time. At that point, you've earned yourself permission to continue the conversation.

Hello, this is _______ from _______. Did I catch you at a bad time?

2. Leverage Past Prospect Activity:

Use the prospect's recent actions as a conversation starting point. By referencing something the prospect has done, you are creating relevancy and are showing her that you've done your research and reminding her that she was, indeed, looking for help with something your company created content around.

I noticed that you downloaded our [what was downloaded/accessed] What were you looking for help with when you stumbled across that [descriptor]?

3. Build Rapport:

Be a human first, and a salesperson second. Your prospect's day may be extremely monotonous, and your phone call should be an opportunity to liven it up. Spend some time building rapport by bonding about anything you can find in common (and do your very best to find some unexpected commonality that's more creative than today's weather). If you have your prospect's website open, look at what city they're located in. Have you traveled there recently? Did you go to any fun restaurants while in town? Did you notice anything particularly charming about the architecture? Did your prospect grow up there or relocate for work? Have some fun getting to know the stranger on the other end of the phone. The more you can establish some sort of commonality, the easier it will lower the prospect's guard and ask some probing questions down the road.

4. Gather Context

Now that you've built some rapport with the person on the other end of the line, take the opportunity to naturally segue into some questions about their business and their job role.

The more context you have, the better you can paint a picture of the world your prospect is operating in. Who do they like doing business with? Can you help get them in front of businesses like that? You need to be able to visualize as much of their business context as possible in order to choose which positioning statements have the best chance of resonating with them -- and in order to keep the rest of our conversation as relevant as possible to their priorities.

I was looking at your website and noticed that your company is very similar to some of our very best customers. What's your role there? I was curious:

Ask conversation-opening questions:

- *What does [company] do to address and eliminate Orange Peel?*
- *How is [company] adjusting to increasing demands and shorter runs?*
- *What steps has [company] taken to continue to enhance quality and capacity while reducing costs?*

5. Introduce Positioning Statement(s)

The purpose of a positioning statement is to make your prospect say, "That's me. How did you know?"

Positioning statements help you show your prospects that you understand their pain points. You're showing them that you've been around the block and that you've seen similar companies go through similar struggles. The implication is that you've found a way to help them through that struggle. This should pique a prospect's interest and convince them that they could learn from you.

> *"A lot of time, when I talk to companies like yours, they're really good at ________, but they struggle to ________ for the following reasons: _____, _____, or _____."*

Positioning statements are not one-size-fits all, and it's all too possible that the one you tried out doesn't resonate with the prospect. Have a list of three to four different positioning statements on hand, and use them as a chance to do two things: 1) show active listening by paraphrasing their current situation as they described it, and 2) determine whether they can relate to scenarios you've helped similar companies address. Use tie-down questions at the end of a positioning statement to determine whether you've successfully identified a pain point worth digging into.

> *"Can you relate to that? How so?" Now it's time for the prospect to do some more of the talking.*

6. Dig Deeper Into Pain Points

While positioning statements may lead the prospect to certain conclusions, short, open-ended follow-up questions allow prospects to continue the conversation and articulate their struggles in their own words. The shorter the question, the more freedom you provide your prospect for putting things in her own words. Here are some good ones:

- *How so?*
- *Tell me more…*
- *Which part of that statement resonated with you?*
- *Is that a big problem?*

- *Do you have a plan to fix this?*
- *Do you think that'll work?*

7. Validate Desire for Help:

Use a soft tie-down to make sure that you're not about to spin your wheels providing unsolicited advice in follow-up calls or meetings. You will be using different forms of tie-downs throughout the sales process to confirm that whatever you're about to help the prospect with is a top priority to invest time and money into, and this is your first shot at getting this affirmation.

If you're feeling particularly bold, you can even ask the prospect what's held him or her back from getting any help up until now. This will begin to help answer the critical question: "Why now?"

> *This sounds like something that we've helped a lot of similar companies overcome. If that's something we could give you some guidance about, would you be open to receiving and implementing our help?*

8. Suggest Concrete Next Steps

Be specific here. Set expectations properly. If you operate on a monthly sales cycle, encourage the prospect to take a follow-up call that same week. If you're going to set up a GoToMeeting for your next phone call but don't intend to demo your product, make sure the prospect knows what you do plan to cover during the next call and why that will ultimately be valuable for him.

> *I hope this conversation was valuable to you. Do you want to schedule some time on Thursday of this week to dig a little deeper into what you're hoping to achieve within this facet of your business? That can give us a better opportunity to mutually assess if and how we might be able to help.*

See what you did there? You reminded the prospect that this conversation was about him, not about you. You set expectations about what you'll cover during the next call. And even more importantly, you pointed out that sales is a two-way street, and that both parties should be mutually assessing one another to determine if it's a good fit.

Let’s Talk About Your Marketing & Lead Generation

Studies show that when sales and marketing efforts are highly aligned, organization achieve an average of 32% revenue growth; and a decrease of 7% when they’re not (source: Aberdeen Group). But what does that mean? How can you tell if your efforts are aligned, and, more importantly, how do you develop the roadmap to ensure they are aligned today…and in the future?

If your sales and marketing efforts aren’t producing predictable, sustainable and scalable sales growth then we need to talk. Our free sales and marketing assessment will provide you:

- An analysis of your current marketing, lead management and sales situation to identify areas in need of improvement
- An in-depth look to figure out which lead generation tactics will work best for you
- An analysis of your sales structure to identify the best way to maximize growth opportunities
- An analysis of your website
- A written report providing the roadmap to make your growth predictable, sustainable and scalable

liftenablement.com/letstalk

Website Resources

Subscribe to The Demand Creator Blog: http://blog.liftenablement.com

Subscribe to Our Weekly Roundup: www.liftenablement.com/tips

The Growth Barriers Diagnostic: http://growth.liftenablement.com/growthbarrieresdiagnostic ***The Lift Enablement Channel:*** www.liftenablement.com/imagine-channel

485 Ritchie Highway
Suite 201
Severna Park, MD 21146

410-544-7878

www.liftenablement.com