

Rethinking Your Lead Generation Process



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Article Summary

Lead generation has undergone significant and profound changes in recent years. The rise of the Self-Directed-Buyer fundamentally changes the way a company attracts, wins, and retains customers. Traditional lead generation processes are designed from a company's need-to-sell perspective. These processes do not typically align well with specific challenges to overcome revealed by considering a customer's purchase decision journey stage first.

This article discusses steps you should take to reconsider your Lead Generation and Qualification processes and offers a better way to align your content and messaging strategies with this new Self-Directed-Buyer.

Your Next Customer

We have all met these individuals - they are the next potential customer for your products and services, *but* ...

- They have never heard of you,
- They don't think they have a problem - until they do,
- They don't understand or are not aware of your company or its value proposition and how you can solve their challenges, and
- They're not waiting for you to call.

Nevertheless, they represent your next potential customer and it's your continual mission to win them over before they discover a potentially more compelling and relevant solution from your competition.

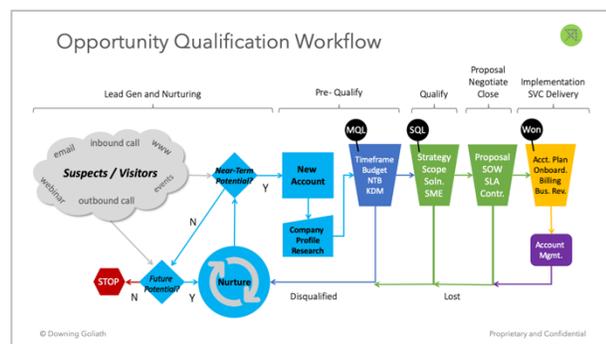
Developing a pipeline of new prospective customers (*aka lead generation*) is the function of attracting, closing, and retaining new customers. However, traditional lead generation has undergone substantial changes in recent years. In particular, the abundance of information readily available online has given rise to the "Self-Directed Buyer" and the emergence of new ways to develop and qualify potential leads before passing them to sales.

Instead of *finding* new customers, marketers must now focus on *being found*, and learn how to establish, grow, and nurture enduring relationships. Compelling, relevant content made available to your prospects at the proper moment along their purchase decision journey simplifies their decision-making and has the greatest potential to position you as a trustworthy advisor.

Having a content management strategy in place and executed consistently will help you organize and be ready to deliver relevant complex information about you and your company's capabilities so that when your prospects do find you they understand how you will help solve difficult challenges they face - they need to believe you have the best solutions when they need them, regardless of where in their purchase journey they first discover you.

Rethinking Opportunity Funnels

A typical sales development workflow process outlines common pathways opportunities follow from suspect, to first contact, to qualified opportunity, to proposal, to close, to repeat purchase customer. These processes are the way most CRM solutions are designed to work, but are more often than not designed from a company's need-to-sell.

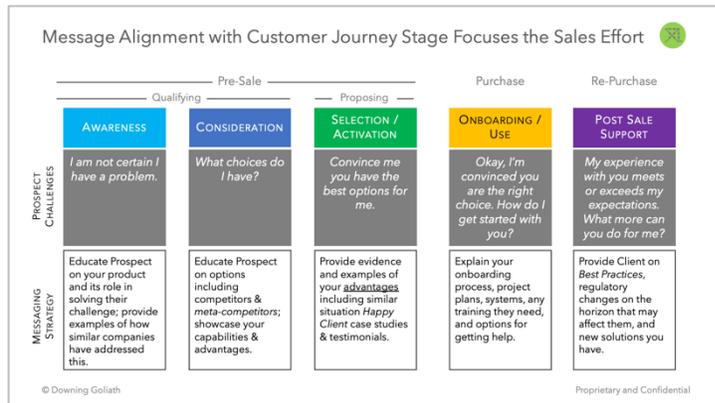


It is important for companies to have an efficient opportunity qualification process up and running, however, "opportunity funnels. But, because of these traditional funnels' need-to-sell orientation, tend to look at customer engagement from a sales person's Need-to-Sell, and thus overlook important influence moments in the customer purchase decision journey. These are missed opportunities to provide compelling relevant information convincing prospects you

have the perfect solution to their problem (remember that in some cases this is the problem that they might not even know they have).

Aligning Your Messaging Strategy with Customer Journey Stages

A typical Customer Purchase Journey starts with an individual recognizing that they have a



problem to solve, a pain point to correct, or an unmet need or desire to take care of. This is when the Self-Directed-Buyer begins to seek information on solutions and is where your content and messaging strategies will have the greatest opportunity to align with a customer's journey and influence the purchase decision outcomes in your favor.

Keep in mind however, that the Self-Directed-Buyer may already have thoughts on how to solve their problem and may even have a short list of who might be the "best problem solver" based on previous experiences, or research they've done. It will be up to you to overcome any objections to you they might have, and to convey - in a non-threatening way - the strengths and advantages your company promises to deliver vs the competition.

Obviously, the best time to begin educating prospects is well in advance of an urgent need by taking an educational nurturing approach helping to position and establish you as a knowledgeable, reliable, trustworthy,¹ and capable solver of problems.

¹The perception of *Reliability* and *Trustworthiness* can come only from direct experience working with you - over time. It is not something marketing can credibly promote. Current "Happy Customer" testimonials and references can persuade many skeptical prospects to put their uncertainties aside at least to hear you out. Happy Customer's come from positive engagement experiences established customers have with you; which is why it's so important to nurture and educate established customers well after you've won them over.

Regardless of where your prospective customers begin engaging with you, your mission remains the same - to provide compelling and convincing evidence that you are the best fit for them without coming across as arrogant or pushy.

(Note: the big assumption here is that you actually are the best fit. If you're simply trying to force fit them into your solution based on your Need-to-Sell you will come across as arrogant and pushy.)

Downing Goliath can provide you lots of examples of how compelling client-centered content, made available to the Self-Directed-Buyer at the right time produces better results. It doesn't take many incremental sales to justify the modest investment in this type of marketing activity.

Having a solid, well-designed, semi-automated content management system in place to drive Opportunity

Development and Customer Engagement improves retention, minimizes acquisition and sales conversion cycles, improves win/lost performance, and allows your sales staff do what they were hired to do - *sell*...



Contact us today to learn how we can help you implement these principles within your organization; getting everyone in your organization thinking differently about their role in the new opportunity development world of the Self-Directed-Buyer.

About Downing Goliath

Downing Goliath is a *marketing and sales process strategy* consulting practice formed to help enterprises [*large and small*] think beyond traditional ways of engaging with your customers.

We consider every customer touch point and help you understand how effectively your company intersects with your customers' purchase decision-making journey ...

... and how to make those encounters mutually beneficial.