

Lead Generation Playbook

FINDING, ACQUIRING, AND MOVING LEADS THROUGH
YOUR ENTIRE MARKETING AND SALES FUNNEL





About CMG

We are a team of bright, innovative and talented veteran marketers dedicated to big ideas, fresh insights, and measurable results. Our unique blend of technical, creative, business, and project management expertise enable us to build programs that deliver tangible results for our clients.

We pride ourselves on taking challenging marketing issues and turning them into opportunities for our clients, on pointing brands in the right direction, and on getting our customers noticed both online and off.

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Introduction

Sales and Marketing Alignment – Why Do We Encounter Roadblocks?

Finding, acquiring, and moving leads through your funnel is a team collaboration effort between sales and marketing. Funnel strategy begins with understanding what your ideal customer looks like and how your products and services solve their pain points. Once you know this, it becomes easy to determine the types of content and information they would find valuable, educational, and convincing. Each stage of the funnel must be optimized to push your ideal customer through to a conversation with your sales team.

This playbook will outline potential roadblocks along the customer acquisition journey and offer tried-and-true strategies to overcome barriers at each stage of the sales funnel.

Roadblock #1: You're Not Getting Enough Visitors and Converting Enough Leads.

Roadblock #2: You're Creating Enough Leads, But They're Not Progressing Down Your Funnel.

Roadblock #3: Your Leads Are Moving Down the Funnel, But Your Sales Team Isn't Closing Deals.

You're Not Getting Enough Visitors and Converting Enough Leads.

Every business aims to fill the top of its sales funnel with qualified leads.

If your company is struggling to drive qualified traffic to your website and content or converting leads once they get there, you have a top of funnel (TOFU) issue.

To solve top of funnel issues, you need to provide content that educates, entertains, and attracts your buyer personas to your site and generates initial awareness of your brand. Each top of funnel content piece needs to point to a relevant offer – that speaks to your persona and converts them into a marketing qualified lead (MQL).

TOP OF FUNNEL: STRATEGIES FOR ACQUIRING MORE LEADS

“COMPANIES THAT HAVE MASTERED TOP OF THE FUNNEL STRATEGIES HAVE MORE SALES REPS MAKING QUOTA.”

Sales needs a steady stream of new leads to achieve their goals and quotas. Top of funnel conversion opportunities such as downloadable content, webinars, and blog posts immediately widen the lead pool for sales.

Content is key at this stage; it's what will attract your persona to your site. Rather than writing about trending topics, become a valuable resource for them by offering content that digs into the challenges and pain points they may be experiencing.

The best top of funnel marketing strategies help to bring relevant B2B leads – who could be a good business fit, not just website traffic. When marketing puts in place a process to continually cultivate top of funnel leads, new sales opportunities are created for sales.

If your answer is No, you have a top of funnel issue.

- Are you creating enough top of funnel content?
- Is your brand receiving enough referral traffic from social shares or inbound links?
- Are your CTAs relevant to the content that attracted a visitor in the first place?
- Is your blog providing enough content for each of your personas?

MOST EFFECTIVE TOP OF FUNNEL MARKETING STRATEGIES

1. **SEO** – Publish content and optimize around keywords that address your personas challenges and pain points; they are searching to alleviate a pain, not for marketing jargon or tactics.
2. **TOFU Content Marketing** – Create and “gate” content such as eBooks, guides, and whitepapers behind a lead capture form. This sets you up as both a thought leader and the solution to their challenges.
3. **Paid Advertising** – Invest in display, search, or video ads on paid platforms, such as Google AdWords, social media, and trade publications, to reach new leads, build brand awareness, and scale quickly.
4. **Blogging** – Create weekly blog posts that help educate website visitors and encourage them to learn more about your company and products/services. You can also reach out to guest bloggers to leverage their expertise and your credibility.
5. **Social Media** – Publish to relevant social media sites and forums and using company-specific plus trending industry hashtags to widen your reach.

Roadblock #1: You're Not Getting Enough Visitors and Converting Enough Leads.

Roadblock #2: You're Creating Enough Leads, But They're Not Progressing Down Your Funnel.

Roadblock #3: Your Leads Are Moving Down the Funnel, But Your Sales Team Isn't Closing Deals.

You're Creating Enough Leads, But They're Not Progressing Down Your Funnel.

When you have no difficulty attracting visitors with your content and making the first conversion, but you haven't pointed your leads to a next step, the middle of funnel (MOFU) needs to be refined and optimized.

And while your ideal buyers are finding you with ease and showing initial interest, they're not moving smoothly down the funnel into a conversation with your sales team. To solve this issue, you need to focus on your overall nurture strategy and MQL lead scoring criteria to ensure there is a smooth conversion path and timely hand-off to sales for each lead.

MIDDLE OF FUNNEL: STRATEGIES FOR CONVERTING MQLS TO SQLS

Once your target audience is aware that your company can solve their pain points, they move into the "evaluation" stage. This is where the majority of their research happens – today's consumers hate being "sold to" by brands so education is the name of the game.

The goal of middle of funnel marketing is to build your authority and drive buyers to your website for more research and discovery. The middle of the funnel is where most of your marketing dollars should be spent. Different buyers take different paths along their journey, so it is important to offer multiple touchpoints and options for research and discovery.

Self-identifying MQLs will begin to pour in when you have all of your touchpoints in place. Now, you have to set the right lead scoring criteria to move them down the funnel. If leads are being evaluated with too many conditions, bottlenecks can form and prevent qualified leads from reaching sales in a timely fashion. On the other hand, if your scoring is weak or non-existent, you could be letting too many leads into SQL status before they are ready for handoff to sales.

MOST EFFECTIVE MIDDLE OF FUNNEL MARKETING STRATEGIES

1. **SEO** – 93% of buyers begin their research via a search engine; optimize all of your content for web and mobile SEO.
2. **MOFU Content Marketing** – Think about every question your buyer might ask and answer them in the form of blogs, guides, research papers, ebooks, whitepapers, and features on your website.
3. **Video Marketing** – Create a series of short 30-seconds video about your company and how-tos that answer the pain points of your buyer persona.
4. **Paid Advertising** – Your buyer turns to Google when they want to know more about something; promote your content through paid search networks.
5. **MOFU Email Marketing** – Use email to deliver research and discovery pieces directly into the inbox of your target buyer. Email is effective – it boasts a 4400% ROI.

If your answer is No, you have a middle funnel issue.

- **Are you speaking to your buyer personas' pain points?**
- **Is your form strategy following best practices?**
- **Are you relying on a single conversion point?**
- **Is your MQL lead scoring criteria too tight?**

EXPERTISE
IN LEAD
NURTURING
RESULTS IN A
50% INCREASE
IN SALES-READY
LEADS, ALONG
WITH A 33%
DECREASE IN
ITS COST.
– HubSpot

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Your Leads Are Moving Down the Funnel, But Your Sales Team Isn't Closing Deals.

When your sales are stuck, you have a bottom funnel (BOFU) issue.

The top and middle of your funnel is fully optimized, but your leads are still hesitating to commit to your company. To solve this problem, marketing needs to work directly with sales to understand where they could better support them with additional points of social proof, new pieces of content, and other sales enablement tools to improve your leads' sales experiences.

BOTTOM OF FUNNEL: STRATEGIES FOR CLOSING THE DEAL

The final stage of the funnel is the "action" stage; this is where the buyer converts from an SQL into a customer. What you need at the bottom of the funnel is content that prompts your persona into action but when leads are not closing, it's time to evaluate all of your conversion points.

Check your form strategy to ensure you're collecting the right information to empower robust conversations with leads. Review your marketing automation platform to ensure lead information and conversation history are being stored accurately. Re-evaluate your buyer personas to determine if you marketing to the right audience.

IF YOU WAIT 30 MINUTES, YOUR LEAD IS
21X LESS LIKELY TO TURN INTO A SALE.

– InfusionSoft

If your answer is No, you have a bottom funnel issue.

- Do you have social proof, such as case studies, testimonials, reviews, and work portfolios?
- Are there gaps in your content that could answer common questions or be better resources for your sales team to provide?
- Is your sales team being notified about when to follow up with leads?
- Are all of your representatives able to accurately and easily speak to your personas' challenges, listen to their pain points, and easily explain a personalized solution?

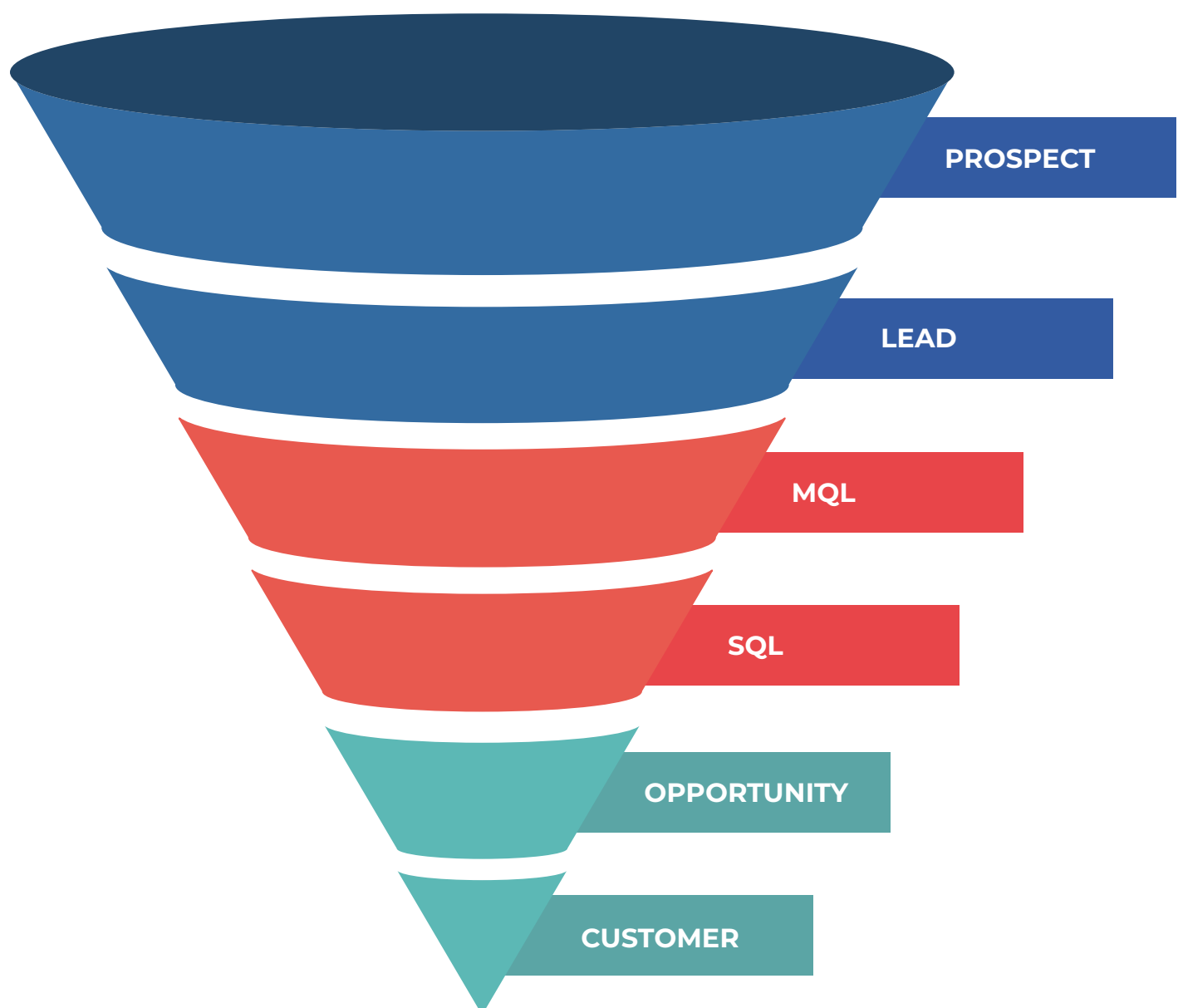
MOST EFFECTIVE BOTTOM OF FUNNEL MARKETING AND SALES STRATEGIES

1. **Social Media** – Address the concerns of your leads by demonstrating that you can provide real, tangible benefits to your leads – from someone other than you. Leverage testimonials, results-driven case studies, industry awards, and media coverage.
2. **Strategic Offers** – Offer free trials, deals, and discounts to overcome price objections. Sometimes these customer-specific offers are just what is needed to push them to buy.
3. **BOFU Content Marketing** – Develop niche content that is not educating but answering very specific question. Utilize help desk articles, FAQs, case studies, blogs that deal with specific issues and offer step-by-step advice, and sales slicks (it's okay to sell at this point!)
4. **SEO** – Implement a snippet strategy with very specific keywords and that are FAQ minded.
5. **Quick Follow-up** – Bottom of funnel leads are ready to buy, they don't want to wait. Use live chat, automated email, and email support to resolve issues quickly, answer questions immediately, and complete the transaction.

Final Thoughts on Your Healthy Sales Funnel

How can you tell if you have a healthy sales funnel? Look at its shape. The sales funnel is called a funnel for a reason – the top is wide and full of new visitors interacting with your site and content, the middle gets a little thinner as MQLs begin to self-identify, and the bottom is narrow and reserved for leads about to convert.

When your funnel looks out of shape, you are able to quickly see where things are out of kilter. The sales funnel is a quick visual dashboard to see if you are on the right track with your sales and marketing alignments.



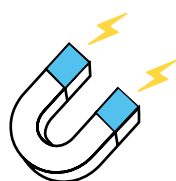
From identity development, to simple marcom strategies, to the creation and implementation of complete marketing plans, we'll help you execute the strategies that will build brand awareness, increase visibility, manage leads, acquire customers, and sell products.

We use multiple marketing tools in innovative ways to help you achieve real, measurable marketing success.



Brand Awareness

Strong brand awareness acts like a magnet pulling potential customers to your website and social assets and on the path to purchase. We leverage multi-channel brand awareness strategies to move your buyer down your sales funnel.



Inbound Marketing

Combining proven campaign plans with the details of your business, we design inbound marketing initiatives that work with your ongoing strategies and programs. We track all campaigns to your most important goals and key performance metrics.



Content Marketing

Content is the fuel for your inbound program. From on-site conversion points to long-term nurture campaigns, every content type we product for you will enhance your lead generation, boost credibility, bolster brand awareness, and contribute to your lead conversion and bottom line.



Sales-Ready Website

We will transform your website from a standard digital brochure into a powerful lead-generation machine. Your website will attract the right visitors, generate qualified leads, and grow your business one conversion at a time.



SEO & SEM

Creating compelling content is only half of the battle; keeping your site on page one is the goal. We apply the most current strategies and monthly support to achieve continued site awareness, gain higher search rankings and improve your site optimization.



Social Media Amplification

Social media acts like a megaphone, digitally amplifying your reach and provoking engagement. We will create and post creative content that educates, entertains, and increases customer awareness and strengthens bonds with existing customers.



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