March 2017

Improve your B2B Lead Qualification

Making sure that a lead qualifies for a marketing approach is a very important part of the sales process.

Here are 5 ways to improve how you qualify your leads and, therefore, reduce the time spent contacting unsuitable ones.

1. Do your homework first.

It is obvious from a lot of contacts that the caller knows nothing but the company name. Make sure you check their suitability, by at least reading their website. The more you can demonstrate your knowledge of the company, the more likely you'll be able to get them to positively answer questions that show they qualify for your product or service.

2. Profile possible contacts so you don't waste your energy on unlikely prospects.

The first level profile is often the company's industry code (SIC or NAICS) and size. These are often called the "sweet spots" for marketing, but this may not separate the best prospects from the others. The most likely will be found through further research. This is especially important if you have a large number of initial contacts.

3. Follow up possible leads promptly.

There is no doubt that a quick follow up to an initial inquiry is most likely to generate an order or sale. However, if you do it instantly, it might give the impression that you are desperate., and it doesn't give you the time to do your research into the company first. If possible, acknowledge the contact by email and indicate when and by who they will be called.

4. Be patient; don't expect to qualify all contacts during your first call.

If you use a series of qualifying questions e.g. Budget, Authority, Need and Timing, you may find that your contact can't answer all of them. This doesn't necessarily mean the company doesn't qualify as a good contact. Be prepared to ring back (possibly several times), having given your contact time to get the answers to your questions.

5. Re-market to old leads.

At best only 10% of qualifying leads convert to sales. One major reason for this is a company postponing making a decision. Make sure that you have a system for re-visiting these leads. Research has shown that these "old" qualified leads will generally outperform newly generated ones. However, be sure to check that the individual you originally spoke to is still in their position or find out who has replaced them. In B2B, interest in a product or service is almost always institutional and not personal.