

The Seven Deadly Sins of Sales Leads

A series of papers by Tom Judge



The Dreaded – Qualified Sales Lead Deficit Syndrome

About the series: The Seven Deadly Sins of Sales Leads

This series of short papers is authored by Tom Judge, Instructor in B2B Sales Lead Management and Optimization at the University of California-Santa Cruz Extension program in marketing, and VP of Strategy and Business Development at Direct Marketing Partners.

As a researcher, instructor and twenty-year practitioner in B2B sales lead programs, Tom Judge has counseled a large number of organizations in diagnosing, analyzing and implementing best practices. In doing so, the writer has observed a number of recurring incorrect assumptions and mistakes along the way. This series of papers will encapsulate seven of those sins along with some humor. The goal of publishing these papers is to share information, which can help others gain clarity and reduce learning curves in their quest to optimize their sales lead programs and boost their careers.

Additional information is available in the B2B sales lead management and optimization course at www.ucsc-extension.edu or on line at www.directmarketingpartners.com.

Sin: The Dreaded Qualified Sales Lead Deficit Syndrome

This scenario often comes to light when B2B selling firms are attempting to improve their sales and marketing process. Enhancements in sales training and marketing collateral are basic examples of some of the many possible tactics. However, even after such noble efforts, these firms very often continue to struggle with achieving corporate sales revenue objectives. In this scenario, evidence shows that the majority of sales reps often continue to struggle to hit quota.

An anemic revenue stream is a serious problem. Rest assured that senior management soon steps in and demands in-depth answers. Often the marketing-through-sales process is then analyzed. Under this scenario, it is determined that the company's sales process is not properly aligned with the marketing sales lead development process.

One of the most glaring issues uncovered in this process is that the sales force and marketing department are often using two different definitions of a "qualified sales lead". They usually agree that qualified sales leads are a necessity of life, however, they are living in two different ecosystems on the definition. Once the two groups come together in one "marketing-through-sales" view, they can develop a common definition and "qualified sales lead spec". The bar is now raised.

Then, the marketing team returns back to their current day-to-day sales lead funnel building programs. Life is grand and back to normal. All is well, right? Wrong, typically at a point in time later, marketing management observes that under the new qualified lead spec the lead conversion volumes are lower than before! Managers rub their chins and they then project the new qualified sales lead production volumes forward. Then, yikes, a major shortfall of these newly defined "qualified sales leads" is discovered! Reality phrases like "we will not achieve our new sales lead goals at this rate" are spoken. Fears of a reduced revenue stream emerge as well. Wham, there it is, the qualified sales lead deficit has struck again to the dismay of many a business executive on the way up.

What to do

This is a critical point that most companies must face and overcome. How the executives manage this problem will be key to survival. Here is what to do to avoid this sin.

First, be quick to recognize a qualified sales lead deficit. They actually happen more often than most executives think. Treat the “qualified sales lead” metric as a key performance index.

Second, anticipate this issue in advance. As senior management works on refinements in the sales process and raise the bar on lead specs, be sure to immediately rerun the numbers on the entire marketing demand generation and qualified sales lead requirements. Not recalibrating the entire marketing-through-sales funnel is a common sales lead failure point.

Note, if you need a sales lead requirement calculator tool, they are available from several sources. For example, Direct Marketing Partners provides these reverse sales funnel engineering resources to their customers and prospects. www.directmarketingpartners.com

Next, address your funding immediately. Be proactive in your budgeting whenever any sales lead funnel requirements or specs are revised. This rule goes for quantity as well as for quality. Do not assume that there is no budget impact. Most executives will attest that going back to the well for funding later is an up hill battle. Even if you will not receive additional budget, be sure to put in a marker to request funding along with your insight and cautions about what can happen when there is a lead deficit.

And finally, have a contingency plan ready to unveil should a deficit happen. Know which sales lead generation campaigns; qualification processes and vendors can be tapped into for fast and scalable qualified sales lead pipeline building.

In summary, a qualified sales lead deficit is a major sin in the marketing-through-sales ecosystem. A serious problem that will derail even the most seasoned sales organizations. However, the qualified sales lead deficit syndrome can be avoided with the above proactive stance.

About Direct Marketing Partners

Direct Marketing Partners, Sacramento, California, is a B2B strategic marketing consulting, direct marketing and tele-services provider.

DMP provides go-to-market resources including campaign planning, platforms, management, and the execution of integrated B2B direct marketing & telemarketing touch campaigns with complete results tracking and campaign ROI analytics.

DMP provides the marketing automation platform and call center software tools at no addition cost as part of its service provider offering.

Who uses DMP resources?

Firms with complex B2B selling processes harness the DMP resources and systems. These firms use DMP to generate demand and qualified sales lead pipelines, which accelerate their marketing-through-sales cycles with optimal forward sales progression rates and conversions to revenue.

Direct Marketing Partners
2045 Hallmark, Suite 5 Sacramento CA 95825
www.directmarketingpartners.com
1-800-909-2626