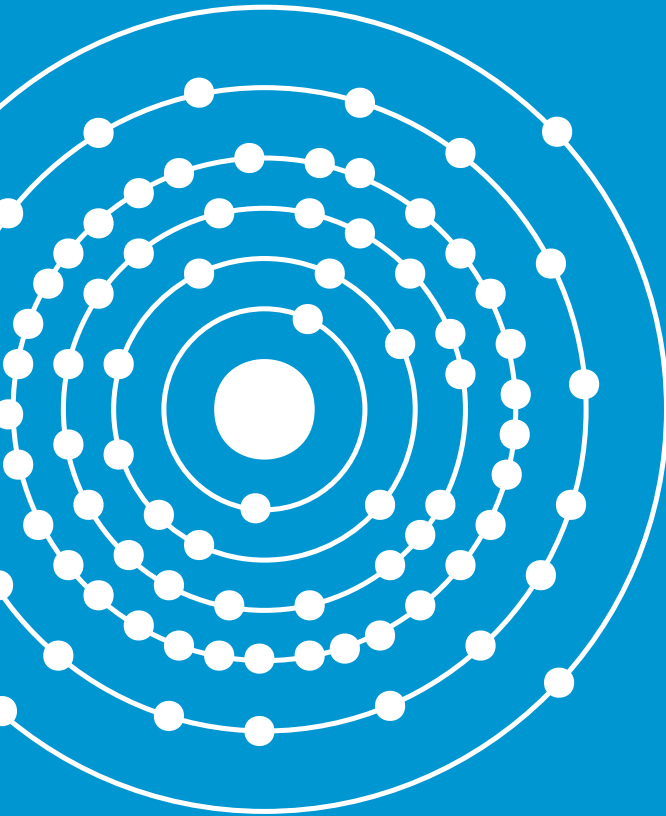


10 STRATEGIES TO KICK-START B2B LEAD GENERATION

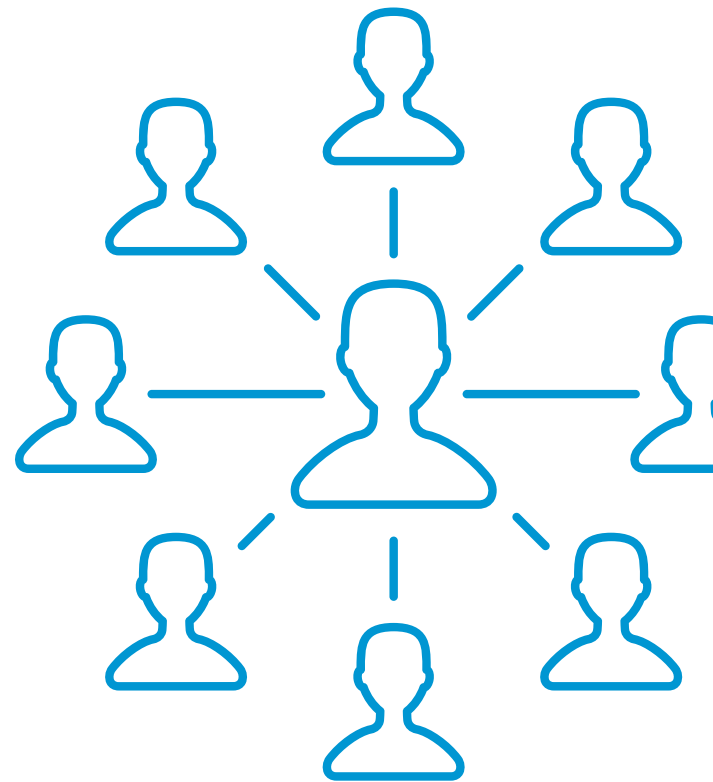


Quality leads are integral for any B2B sales pro. Today, there are a vast array of strategies you can employ for lead generation, but it can sometimes be difficult to work out which are worth the investment and which are a waste of time. We've compiled this white paper to give you ten surefire strategies that will kick-start your B2B lead generation and give you a healthy pipeline to increase your sales.

1. NETWORKING EVENTS

Networking events are B2B lead generation gold mines. And we're talking real-life, in person networking - not the social media variety. Today, there's still no better way to elicit high-quality B2B leads than attending an industry event. Just be sure to be strategic:

- Work the room. Sure you can say hi to your industry friends, but be sure to make the round of the room at least once and say hi to new people.
- Listen rather than sell. People will avoid you if you start pitching. Rather, spend the time asking questions, being friendly and finding a connection.
- Have a list. Do a little research beforehand to get an idea of who will be attending. That way you can make sure you can get in front of the right people on the night.
- Personalized follow-up. If you manage to score the all-important business card or LinkedIn connection make sure to send a personalized follow up the next day. *Under no circumstances should you add a lead from an event to your email list.* Not only is this rude and they have they not given their consent as per **CASL**, but you already have a personal connection! Sending them an automated email is like taking ten steps backward.



“Networking events are
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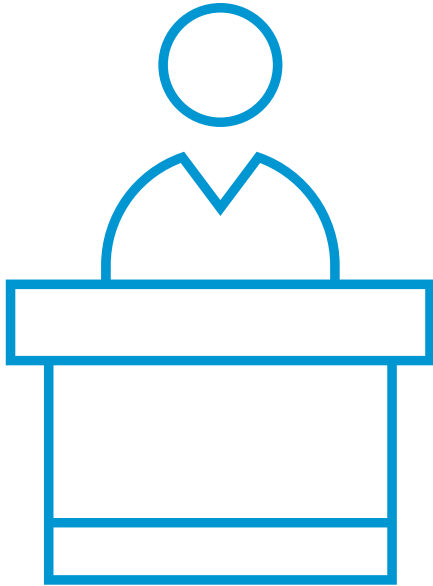
“Use LinkedIn Sales Navigator for their advanced prospecting features.”

2. LINKEDIN

LinkedIn is the biggest **social selling** channel because it offers the biggest returns for inside B2B salespeople. B2B Lead generation through LinkedIn can be achieved through a number of **network-specific strategies** which are focused around positioning yourself as a trusted industry expert who can add value and help solve business problems. To do this:

- Optimize your profile - include a professional headshot, add keywords, and create a compelling headline and summary. Leads will be more likely to connect with you if it seems that doing so will add value.
- Join relevant groups and make insightful, non-salesy posts to catch the attention of potential leads. You’ll also be able to send an InMail to a prospect who is in the same group as you.
- Use **LinkedIn Sales Navigator** for their advanced prospecting features. You’ll have access to advanced search and will receive key insights on your accounts and leads, including job changes that will help you keep your posts and messages relevant.
- Post relevant content regularly or publish your own blogs/articles on **Pulse**, LinkedIn’s easy to use content sharing platform.



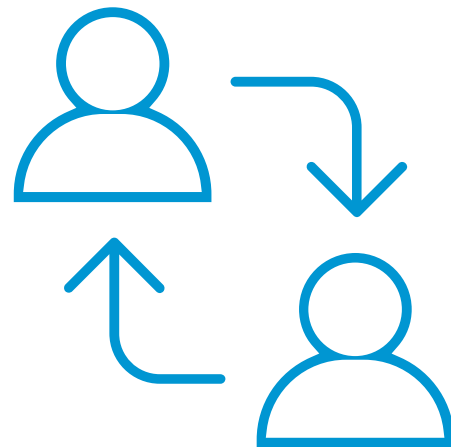


3. SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

One of the best ways to establish yourself as an industry expert is by taking as many opportunities as you can to talk at conferences, trade shows and panels. Plus, it's not just that you'll be establishing your authority, it comes down to simple math: if you attend an event with 200 participants, you might be able to network and talk to 10-20 people. However, as a speaker, you have the opportunity to reach all 200, convince and convert.

4. REFERRALS AND TESTIMONIALS

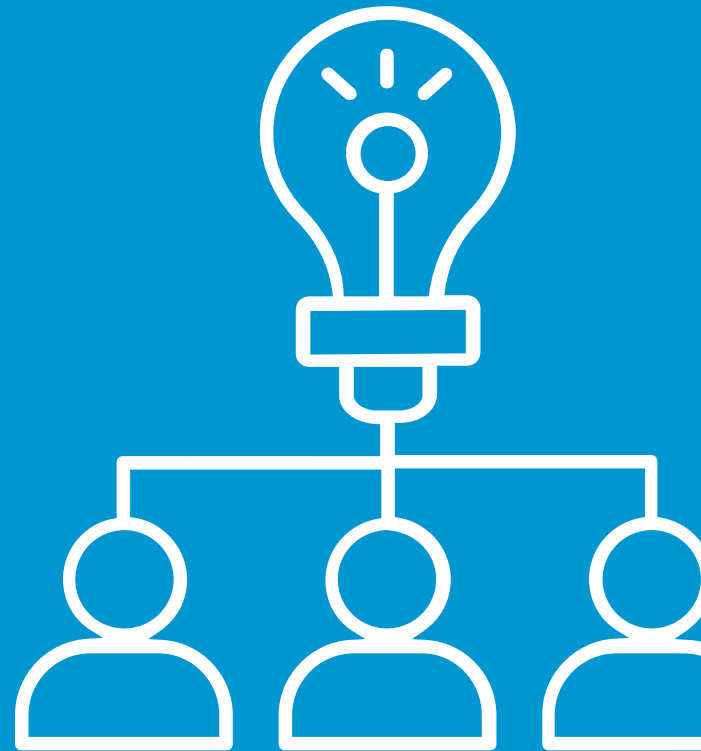
While your marketing team might be focused on social media, email, content and SEO based strategies for B2B lead generation, good old-fashioned referrals are still a highly effective strategy. Even better, a study by Heinz marketing revealed that those companies who employ a formalized referral program enjoy **significantly higher sales and lower acquisition** costs than those that don't. And it makes sense; we know that people are more **four times more likely to buy when referred by a friend** and that **84% of B2B decision makers** start the buying process with a referral. Your happy customers are your best ambassadors so use them. Even if you don't have a formalized referral program, make it part of your strategy to ask your clients and customers for testimonials and referrals. While they may not always have a friend who's in the market, having their seal of approval on your LinkedIn page or in your next presentation is a fantastic selling point.



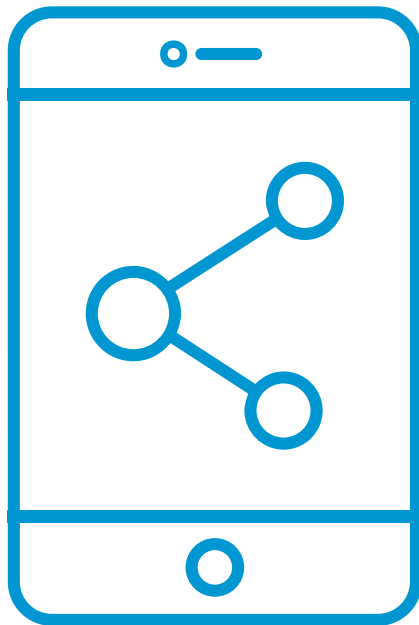
5. COLLABORATE WITH MARKETING AND KNOW YOUR BUYER PERSONAS

Your marketing team should have created clearly defined **target buyer personas** - characters who represent the different types of people who buy your product or service. While this is important for marketing and their B2B lead generation efforts, it's highly important for sales too. These personas **give you the intel you need about your buyer's interests** and what will appeal to them when you're making that cold call or posting that article on social media.

If you don't have a marketing team, you can create buyer personas yourself by considering the characteristics that your customers share - try out the **free tools from Xtensio** to get you started. Collaborating with marketing is an important strategy for successful B2B lead generation; you need to engage in active conversations with them. If the leads they are generating aren't converting into deals, you need to let them know so you can work together to figure out why.



“Collaborating with marketing is an important strategy for successful B2B lead generation”



6. SHARE RELEVANT CONTENT ON SOCIAL PLATFORMS

Knowing your buyer personas will help you with **social selling**. To generate leads through social, you need to be sharing relevant content that your leads want to engage with. Share your own content, or that from a third party, which will be of interest, even if it doesn't directly relate to your product. The goal is that by sharing interesting content or advice, leads will come to trust you as an authority in the field. If you or your marketing team are creating industry-specific content such as videos, podcasts, blog posts or whitepapers, you can consider making some of this content gated for lead generation. Just ensure that if you are creating a form that needs to be completed before the content can be accessed that you keep it simple. Long, complicated forms will drive your leads away.

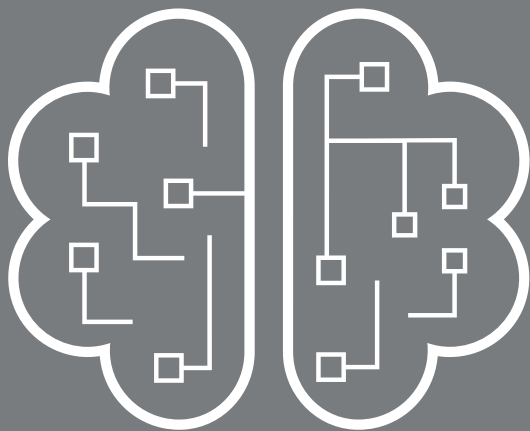
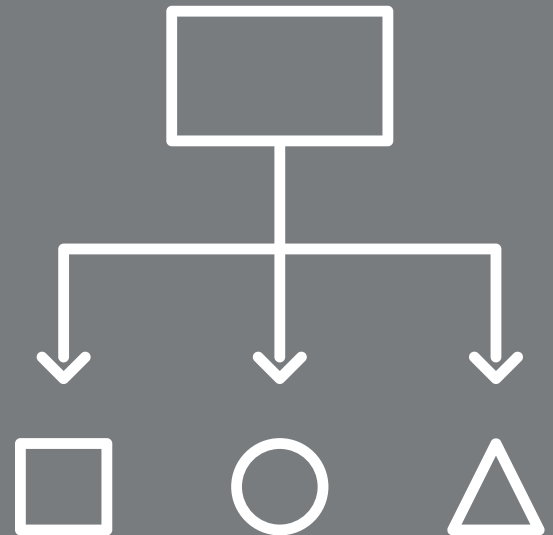
7. HOST ONLINE EVENTS AND WEBINARS

Depending on the industry/product/service you are selling, webinars may be a great way to generate leads. Be warned though, hosting a webinar is not about giving a product demo but sharing expertise and insights on a common industry issue, problem or opportunity. Lead generation comes through the sign-ups to participate but also, in a similar fashion to speaking at an event, it gives you the opportunity to have your voice heard by a large number of potential customers and earn their trust.



8. DATA-BASED STRATEGIES

Your website is one of the best tools at your company's disposal to generate leads. **94% of B2B buyers now conduct their own online research** before making a purchase, so it's important that your website has been optimized for search engines and employs a range of lead generation strategies for visitors. For example, offering a demo or trial version of your service or a drip email based incentive in exchange for their contact information. As a sales pro, you might also want to try guest blogging on industry-relevant sites to build your personal online brand and drive traffic back to your website.



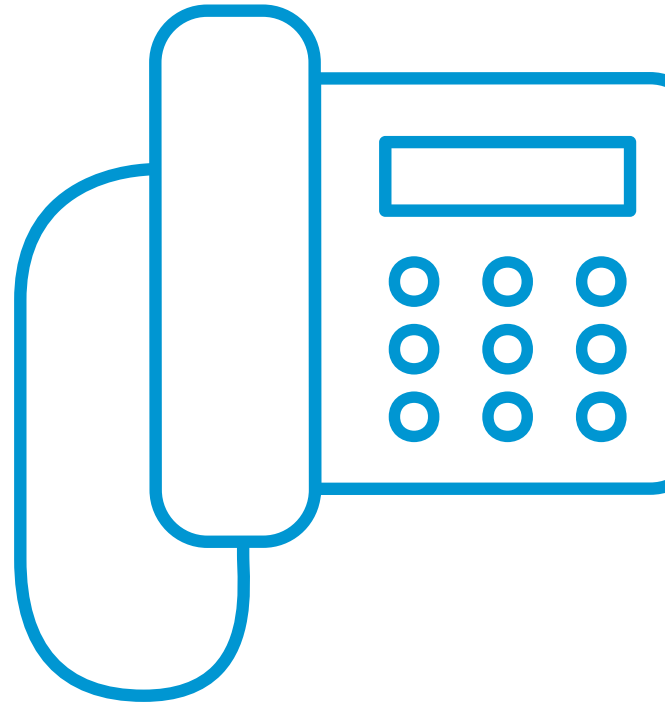
9. MAKE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Artificial Intelligence or AI, is **shaking up B2B sales** in many ways. There are lots of AI tools now on the market for B2B lead generation. For example, **Conversica** is an AI tool that delivers qualified leads. The platform automates email conversations with your lists to engage, nurture and qualify leads for sales, saving you time which you can focus elsewhere. Another tool, Demandbase's **DemandGraph**, uses AI to analyse the digital footprint of businesses across the web and lets you know which key decision makers in which companies are looking for the solutions that you offer.

One last tool, **Growbots**, can automate lead generation. Their AI algorithms match your customer personas against 200m of their contacts to generate a tailored contact list for your company. They promise a less than 10% bounce rate on emails and **say their services are CASL compliant.**

10. CALLING

You'll often hear that "Cold calling is dead," but the simple truth is it's still one of the most widely used lead generation techniques out there. Yes, it's time-consuming (it takes **18 calls to connect with a prospect**), but B2B sales pros who call systematically and on a regular basis continue to find success. Ideally, you'll have used social selling or referrals to have warmed your calls up ahead of time. But whatever the case, the key is confidence and warmth. Don't be embarrassed or in a rush; you're on the line to help solve their business problem, so go into the call with that mindset. Speak clearly and take your time; pause to let them consider what you're saying and don't rush in with a pitch. Once you've got them on the line, take the time to ask them questions about their business problem and use collaborative words like "we" and "us" to build a sense that you can work together to overcome the problem.



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