

# Qualified Leads are the Holy Grail for Small Manufacturing Sales Teams

## pURL's are Aiding Them in Their Quest

**Y**our sales team probably spends a lot of time and company money generating qualified leads, but how many of those result in sales? In reality, there's a big difference between "qualified" and "sales ready." According to The Direct Marketing Association, (DMA) it takes 7-13 touches—defined as any method of contact between the prospective customer and the product—to deliver a qualified lead. Marketing Departments must step up to the plate and take on the responsibility of changing warm leads into qualified leads and qualified leads into "sales ready" leads. This is a major change for most marketing departments, and will require it to justify the resources required to make multiple "touches" with leads over e-mail, social media, and the telephone. It also means that marketing must become rigorous about tracking the metrics. For small manufacturing businesses

who may lack the resources to run an all-encompassing ad campaign the revenue generated from targeted sales is a lifeline, and the difference between a lead that pays off and one that goes up in smoke can be the difference between success and failure.

Lead nurturing is the process Business-to-Business marketers (or B2B marketers as they are commonly known) use to build relationships with their prospects, even when they're not yet ready to buy, in order to win their business when they are ready to make a purchase. Unlike consumer marketing, B2B marketing doesn't rely on emotional triggers like a product's status or popularity to make a sale. Instead B2B buyers are focused on price and potential to gain profit or build value, so marketers lean heavily on relationships fostered between them and potential buyers as a means to push their product. This is especially true in the small manufacturing world where the job of a marketer is to give their prospects the information they need to make a buying decision, keep their brand front-and-center during this period, and be there when they're finally ready to commit.

Today, relying solely on a sales staff to weed through prospects for new business can be a costly endeavor. Many marketing companies are increasingly focused on strengthening personal ties with potential clients via social media and marketing automation practices. "There's a conversion happening between traditional marketers and IT," says Dr. Heather Weller, a professor at Marist College's Department of Marketing. The goal isn't simply to gather data anymore, but to nurture leads, create dialog, and build strong relationships. "Nobody has money for focus groups" Weller observes. Instead, she says companies today try a variety of new marketing tools that are in their budget for "content marketing." Content marketing



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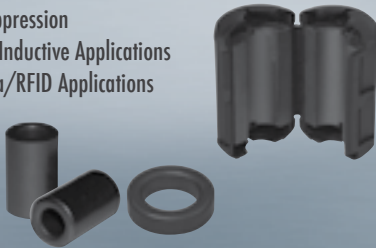
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is focused on creating and distributing eye-catching, relevant, and consistent content to attract and hold the interest of a specifically defined audience. Today companies should “leverage social media”

Weller says, in order to keep in touch with their leads and maintain their interest. The better a marketer knows their lead, the more effectively and efficiently they can market to them.

“There’s an art to it,” says Frank Campagna of ColorPage Marketing and Publishing. Campagna lists seven things he says are essential to making a successful sale.

- 01 BE CREATIVE
- 02 MAKE THE MESSAGE PERSONAL
- 03 MAKE THE MESSAGE RELEVANT
- 04 USE MORE THAN ONE CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION
- 05 USE THEIR NAME IN A WAY THAT CAPTURES THEIR ATTENTION
- 06 FOLLOW UP PROMPTLY AND CONTINUE LEADING THE CONVERSATION
- 07 ASK INTELLIGENT QUESTIONS THAT THE PROSPECT FINDS MEANINGFUL

Although that all may sound intuitive, the secret is in the execution of those points which is not only tricky, but generally requires a team with marketing experience and access to marketing automation tools. Taking this into account, Campagna’s company is investing significant time and resources in a proven direct response technology using pURLs, or personalized URLs.

Clicking on a pURL takes the recipient to their own personalized landing page or microsite. Because each web page is unique to the recipient, marketers are able to connect with the potential buyer on a one to one basis and track the level of interest of each target individually while consumers have a place to learn about an offer online that’s specifically tailored to answering their questions. “pURLs serve as the most effective way to add personalization, track a consumer’s behavior and connect with them on an online channel.” Campagna explains, “Traditionally after your company sends a direct mail piece, your marketing team has no way of knowing if the prospective buyer actually received the piece or has further interest but is simply not ready to buy at that time. Adding pURLs in direct marketing pieces and emails gives your company the benefit of who exactly has or has not visited their pURL page as well as gathering important response information.” Marketing and sales teams will receive email alerts when a prospect visits their pURL landing page or completes an online form (along with the data provided for it). Marketers can easily export the activity, and any data gleaned, to a direct mail campaign, or Excel in order to use it in following leads and generating subsequent targeted campaigns. “Using pURLs in direct mail and email is a direct response marketing best practice,” Campagna enthuses, “as they are the best way to nurture leads, increase response

rates, and drive sales ready leads in a measurable way.”

New tech driven B2B tools like pURLs will only gain more importance as social media continues to displace traditional methods of communication. A winning smile and a strong handshake are still important but they just aren’t going to be enough in a world where purchases are made online and two people can have a conversation without saying a word. Direct marketing programs that include pURLs give consumers what they want—a place to go online to learn more about an offer—and it gives marketers what they want—information about their customers. Tools like this promise greater efficiency and communication if used properly by professionals. They represent the future of B2B marketing and lead nurturing

