30 LEAD GENERATION TIPS & IDEAS
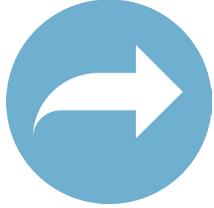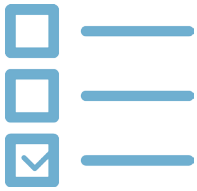
ACCELITY MARKETING + HubSpot

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INTRODUCTION

Generating leads—both high in quantity and quality—is a marketer's most important objective. A successful lead generation engine is what keeps the funnel full of sales prospects while you sleep. Surprisingly, only 1 in 10 marketers feel their lead generation campaigns are effective. What gives?

There are a lot of moving parts in any lead generation campaign and often times it's difficult to know which parts need fine tuning. In this guide, we will expose the top 30 techniques marketers should utilize to increase leads and revenue.

So what goes into a best-in-class lead generation engine? First, let's take a look into the mechanics of high performing lead generation campaigns.

From a tactical perspective, a marketer needs four crucial elements to make inbound lead generation happen. These include:

OFFER	CALL-TO-ACTION	LANDING PAGE	FORM
An offer is a piece of content that is perceived high in value. Offers include ebooks, whitepapers, free consultations, coupons and product demonstrations.	A call-to-action (CTA) is either text, an image or a button that links directly to a landing page so people can find and download your offer.	A landing page, unlike normal website pages, is a specialized page that contains information about one particular offer, and a form to download that offer.	You can't capture leads without forms. Forms will collect contact information from a visitor in exchange for an offer.

The tips in this ebook will cover each of these elements so that each component is fully optimized to help you generate the most leads for your business.

CHAPTER ONE
CREATING IRRESISTIBLE OFFERS

"Yes." It's one of the most powerful words in the human language. If you think about all the things we do as marketers, our goal is ultimately to get people to say "yes" to our offers.

When an offer is exclusive, scarce or in high demand, it becomes more desirable. Whether the offer is a whitepaper, free trial, membership, sales promotion or download, these irresistible elements can overcome a potential lead's doubt or concerns.

These elements work because they trigger a physiological reaction that makes an offer more valuable. People need to perceive the value of the offer as greater than what you're asking for in return. The higher the perception of value, the more irresistible the offer. Here's how to create irresistible offers:

#1 USE THE ELEMENT OF SCARCITY

If you look at the principle of supply and demand, you'll notice that when supply is limited, demand goes up. Scarcity has a psychological influence on us, making us want something even more if there isn't enough to go around. Scarcity works because it creates a fear of shortage, and thus a sense of urgency.

LIMITED TIME OFFERS

Limited time offers are among the most popular in the scarcity category. Just think about your average car dealership. Practically every commercial that airs shows off a limited time deal. "Get 0% financing before it's gone!"

LIMITED QUANTITY OFFERS

When there is a limited quantity of something, it suddenly becomes more unique or exclusive. In some studies, limited quantity or supply offers have outperformed limited-time offers. Why? It's hard to tell when an offer of limited quantity will suddenly become unavailable, while a time-based offer has a known end time. Limited quantity offers are great for not only getting people to say "yes" to your offer, but to avoid procrastination completely.

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LIMITED TIME AND LIMITED QUANTITY

Groupon is the perfect example of using both tactics together. All Groupon deals end within a certain time frame, and they limit the amount of people who can buy a Groupon. That's a powerful combination. The site also packages these scarcity tactics with discounting, which is another great value-add, especially for ecommerce businesses.

Another good example of limited time and quantity scarcity is on Black Friday and Cyber Monday. Shoppers know that deals will only go on for a specific amount of time, and quantity, especially for big ticket items, is in short supply.

#2 THE BANDWAGON EFFECT

Humans naturally copy one another, usually without realizing it—we like to be a part of groups and social communities. When we notice our social circle is doing one thing, we tend to follow closely behind. One great way to make an offer more valuable is to show that other people are participating in that offer.

PROOF IN NUMBERS

A great way to indicate how awesome your offer is to mention the number of people who have purchased, downloaded, signed up or donated.

#3 LEVERAGE NEWSJACKING

When something is buzz-worthy, it creates high demand. In situations like this, you can align offers with what's trending. Companies will often leverage newsjacking for this type of technique and it works very well for offers, too. Newsjacking is the process of injecting your brand into the day's news, creating a twist that grabs eyes when they are open widest.

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As an example, at a time when there was a lot of talk about Pinterest, Hubspot capitalized on this craze by creating the first Pinterest ebook for business owners and marketers called "How to Use Pinterest for Business." It quickly became one of HubSpot's most successful ebooks in part because it was the first and only ebook about Pinterest available, and learning how to use Pinterest for marketing was in high demand. This made the offer more unique and thus more irresistible—talk about the power of leveraging both timing and popularity!

#4 FOCUS ON CREATING AN AMAZING TITLE

The title of your offer sets the tone for the ebook. If you have a terrible title, even if it's on an amazing offer, no one will download it. Similar to an email subject line, if you want people to read what you have to say, you have to make sure you create a strong title.

People judge good books by their covers. Whether you're creating content such as a whitepaper, ebook, presentation or blog post, put effort into creating an amazing title. You'll thank yourself later when people actually download it!

Do you write a lot of ebooks? So do we! Here are some quick tips for titling an ebook.

#5 CREATE OFFERS FOR DIFFERENT BUYING STAGES

A lot of websites have a "Contact Us" offer. It is important that your prospects talk to sales, but not before they're ready. As you know, buyers are more likely to do their own research before even engaging with a sales rep. Every prospect is at a different stage of exploration. Some may need more education than others. That's why it's better and more versatile to develop different offers at different buying stages.

Someone at the top of the buying cycle may be more interested in an informational piece like a guide or ebook, whereas someone more committed at

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the bottom of the cycle might be more interested in a free trial or demo. There's no need to pick and choose; just create offers for each phase, and include a primary and secondary call-to-action to these offers on various pages throughout your site.

#6 AVOID CORPORATE GOBBLEDYGOOK

Creating a professional image for your brand is necessary, but you still want to avoid the dreaded corporate gobbledygook.

Gobbledygook are jargon terms and phrases that have been over-used and abused, rendering them meaningless (you'll find them mostly in the high-tech industry, but everyone is an offender at some point). These words are meant to add emphasis, but instead make your eyes roll.

Avoid these words when describing your offers:

- Next Generation
- Flexible
- Robust
- Scalable
- Cutting edge
- Ground breaking
- Best of breed
- Mission critical
- Easy to use

#7 USE HIGH-VALUE OFFER FORMATS

Not all offers are created equal. Some offer formats perform better than others when it comes to converting leads. Consider what's more valuable, a whitepaper or an ebook?

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Below are the type of offers, in order of high to low performance, that generate the most amount of leads.

- Ebooks or Guides
- Templates or Presentations
- Research & Reports
- Whitepapers
- Kits (multiple offers packaged together)
- Live Webinars
- On-demand Videos
- Blog Web Page (including offers in the navigation or sidebar)
- Blog posts (if there is a CTA in the post)
- Middle-of-the-funnel offers: Demo Requests, Contact Sales, RFP, etc. (more sales-ready offers)

You may think this is accurate, or you may disagree. Everyone is different, so test different types of offers with your audience to determine what works for you. While ebooks generally score higher, you may find that reports, videos or other formats do better on your list.

CHAPTER TWO
CALLS-TO-ACTION THAT ROCK

Calls-to-action (CTA) are important because they are what will drive people to your offers. If your CTAs aren't effective at capturing people's attention and persuading them to the click, then it makes the offer useless.

CTAs can be used on product pages (non-landing pages), in display ads, email, social media, direct mail and pretty much anywhere else that you can market your offer.

Not all CTAs are created equal. In a world where every brand is fighting for consumer attention, it's vital that prospects choose your offer over your competitors. In this chapter, we'll uncover tips to creating CTAs that rock.

#8 PLACE YOUR CTA WHERE THE EYE CAN SEE

Calls-to-action do best "above the fold"—the space of your web page that is viewable to the user without having to scroll down. According to heat map analysis, anything "below the fold" will only be viewed by 50% of people who visit your page. Doubling impressions on your CTAs can significantly increase your lead count, so keep all call-to-actions above the fold!

#9 CLARITY TRUMPS PERSUASION

Often times, marketers will put more focus on being clever than clear. It's essential that you are crystal clear about what offer is in your CTA. Be specific. If you're giving away a free guide, say "Download our FREE guide to X." If you're hosting a free webinar, say "Register for our FREE webinar on X." X should clearly convey
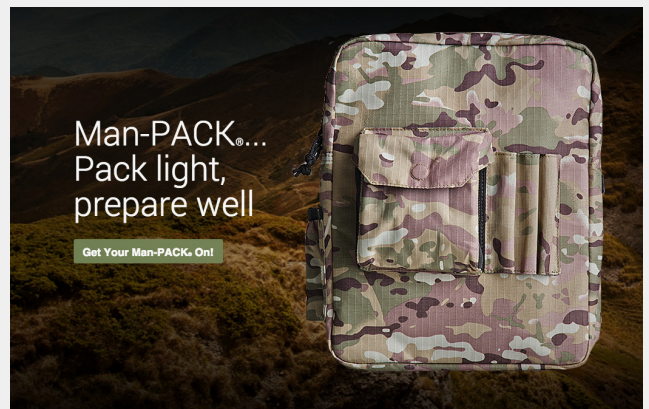
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CALLS-TO-ACTION THAT ROCK

a compelling benefit of receiving the offer. This is much more effective than "Download Now" or "Get a Free Article." These simply aren't specific enough and the clicks that they receive may not generate into leads at all because these CTA's are misleading.

#10 USE CONTRAST TO MAKE CTAS STAND OUT

A call-to-action is meant to stand out, so if your CTA blends in too much with your site design, no one will notice it. You want as many eyeballs to land on that call-to-action as possible, so use contrasting colors to make the CTA stand out, and more importantly, use design to make it clear that it is a clickable call-to-action.

For example, Man-PACK has a cool website, with a clear call-to-action on the homepage that is above the fold. However, the CTA coloring matches the primary green color on the site, and might stand out more in a different color.

Man-PACK®...
Pack light,
prepare well

Get Your Man-PACK® On!

#11 LINK YOUR CTA TO A DEDICATED LANDING PAGE

This tip might seem minor, but it's incredible how often businesses miss this opportunity. Calls-to-action are meant to send visitors to a dedicated landing page where they receive a specific offer. Do not use CTAs to drive people to your homepage. Even if your CTA is about your brand or product (and perhaps not an offer like a download), still send them to a targeted landing page that is relevant to what they are looking for. If you have the opportunity to use a CTA, send them to a page that will convert them into a lead.

As an example (and shameless plug) CTAs that are on our blogs link directly to the landing page of the offer they talk about. You can see for yourself.

CHAPTER TWO
CALLS-TO-ACTION THAT ROCK

#12 PROMOTE OFFERS ON PRODUCT PAGES

Calls-to-action shouldn't be one size fits all. If your company offers various products or services, you may want to consider creating a different offer for each of them. Then you can place CTAs linking to each offer on the website pages that are most relevant to that offer.

#13 THANK YOU PAGES ARE GREAT CTA REAL ESTATE

Even if someone completes a form on your website (converting them to a lead), don't stop there. Increasing engagement should also be a top priority for marketers so that prospects turn into loyal fans.

Once someone reaches a "thank you page," the page that a visitor arrives on after submitting a form, use that space as an opportunity to promote more offers and content. For example, if a visitor is on an email marketing company's website and downloads a guide on email marketing, the company should provide the lead with information on another offer on their thank you page, like receiving a demo of their email marketing platform.

CHAPTER THREE
LANDING PAGES THAT CONVERT

Landing pages are one of the most important elements of lead generation. According to MarketingSherpa's research, landing pages are effective for 94% of B2B and B2C companies. Using landing pages enables marketers to direct website visitors to targeted pages and turn those visits into leads at a much higher rate.

Landing pages are great because they direct your visitors to one particular offer without the distractions of everything else on your website. Visitors are on a landing page for one purpose, and one purpose only: to complete the lead capture form.

#14 ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE LANDING PAGE

Landing pages, sometimes called a "Lead Capture Page," are used to convert visitors into leads by completing a transaction or by collecting contact information from them. Landing pages consist of:

- A headline and (optional) subline
- A brief description of the offer
- At least one supporting image
- (Optional) supporting elements such as testimonials or supporting badges
- And most importantly, a form to capture information

To see an example of a landing page with these elements, click here.

#15 REMOVE THE MAIN NAVIGATION

Once a visitor arrives on a landing page, it should be your goal to keep them there. If there are links on the page to move about your website, it will distract the visitor and decrease the chance of them converting on the page.

One of the best ways to increase your landing page conversion rates is to simply remove the main navigation from the page. That's it!

CHAPTER THREE
LANDING PAGES THAT CONVERT THAT CONVERT

#16 MATCH THE HEADLINE OF THE LANDING PAGE TO THE CORRESPONDING CTA

Consistency is key here—keep your messaging consistent on both your CTA and the headline of the landing page. If people click on a link for a free offer and then find out there's a catch on the landing page, you'll instantly lose their trust and lose that potential lead. Similarly, if the headline reads differently than the CTA, it might lead to confusion, and the visitor might wonder if the CTA is linked to the wrong page.

Here's an example of how to match headlines and CTAs:
You have a CTA at the end of a blog that reads "Get a free social media guide." When the visitor clicks on that CTA, they are taken to a landing page with a headline that says "Download your free social media guide now" , while the page clearly describes the social media guide, and confirms that it is free with no strings attached.

#17 LESS IS MORE

I'm sure you're aware of the rule "keep it simple, stupid." The same applies to landing pages. A cluttered page means a distracted visitor. Be brief and to the point; the actual offer is where you will give more information. In addition to your headline, include a brief paragraph explaining what the offer is, followed by a few bullet points outlining the benefits of the offer.

#18 EMPHASIZE THE BENEFITS OF THE OFFER

Make it clear in your brief paragraph and/or bullet points what the benefits of the offer are. It's more than just listing what's in the offer; it takes a bit of spin. Instead of "Includes specifications of product XYZ," say something like "Find out how XYZ can increase productivity by 50%." In other words, convey the value of your offer clearly and effectively.

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LANDING PAGES THAT CONVERT

#19 ENCOURAGE SOCIAL SHARING

On your landing page, don't forget to include buttons that allow prospects to share your content and offers. Include multiple social media channels as well as email, since people have different sharing preferences. When your offer is shared more, more people land on your page, and therefore more people fill out your form and you will have more leads!

#20 MORE LANDING PAGES EQUAL MORE LEADS

According to a recent marketing benchmarks report, companies see a 55% increase in leads by increasing landing pages from 10 to 15. This means that the more content, offers and landing pages you create, the more opportunities you will have to generate more leads for your business.

Here's a tip: Don't feel like you need to make 15 pages in a week. Don't sacrifice the quality of your content just so you can get pages up, but do review content (especially blogs) you've already written and see if you can repurpose what you have and expedite the process.

CHAPTER FOUR
OPTIMIZED FORMS

Forms are the most important part to a landing page. Without them, there is no way to "convert" a visitor into a lead. Forms come in handy when it's time for people to sign-up, subscribe to your site or download an offer.

The following tips will show you how to build great landing page forms.

#21 THE RIGHT FORM LENGTH

You might be wondering how much or how little information you should require with a form. There is no magic answer when it comes to how many fields your form should contain, but the best balance would be to only collect the information that you absolutely need.

The fewer fields you have in a form, the more likely you will receive more conversions. This is due to the fact that each new field you add to a form creates friction (more work for the visitor) and fewer conversions. A longer form looks like more work and sometimes it will be avoided all together. But on the other hand, the more fields you require, the better quality those leads might be. The best way to determine what works best is to test it for yourself.

Best Practice: Evaluate the value and benefit of the offer. If you believe the offer is high in value and think visitors will also perceive high value, you should be able to add more form fields. The reverse is true as well, less value means less form fields (or maybe no form at all).

#22 TO SUBMIT OR NOT TO SUBMIT

That is the question most of your visitors are asking themselves. One of the best ways to increase form conversion rates is to simply NOT use default word on your button: "SUBMIT."

JOIN OUR NEWSLETTER

If you think about it, no one wants to "submit" to anything. Instead, turn the statement into a benefit that relates to what they are getting in return.

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OPTIMIZED FORMS

For example, if the form is to download a brochure kit, the submit button could say, "Get Your Brochure Kit." Other examples include "Download whitepaper," "Get your free ebook" or "Join our Newsletter."

Another helpful tip, make the button big, bold and colorful. This is another time when the "Keep It Simple Stupid Principle" comes into play. Make sure the button actually looks like a button (usually beveled and appears "clickable").

#23 REDUCE ANXIETY WITH PROOF-ELEMENTS

People are more resistant to give up their information these days, especially because of the increase in spam. There are a few different elements you can add to the form or landing page to help reduce a visitor's anxiety to complete your form:

- Add a privacy message (or link to your privacy policy) that indicates their email will not be shared or sold.
- If your form requires sensitive information, include security seals, a BBB rating or certifications so that visitors know their information is safe and secure.
- Adding testimonials or customer logos is another great way to indicate social proof. For example, if your offer was for a Free Trial, you may want to include a few customer testimonials about your product or service.

#24 MAKE THE FORM APPEAR SHORTER

There will be times where people won't fill out a form just because it "looks" long and time-consuming. If your form requires a lot of fields, try making the form look shorter by adjusting the styling.

For example, reduce the spacing in between fields or align the titles to the left of each field instead of above it so that the form appears shorter. You might also try placing form fields side by side. For example, First and last name can be next to each other and not above and below each other. If the form covers less space on the page, it may seem as if you're asking for less.

CHAPTER FIVE
MULTI-CHANNEL LEAD GENERATION

Your website isn't a silo. Marketers must utilize many other channels in order to maximize their lead generation efforts. A channel might be a retail store, a website, a social media platform, an email or a text message. The objective is to make it easy for buyers to research, evaluate and purchase products in any way that is most appropriate for them. It's all about having the right marketing mix.

In this last chapter, we will cover a few channels that help businesses generate the most amount of leads.

#25 BLOGGING BRINGS IN THE LEADS

According to HubSpot's recent Benchmarks report, companies that blog 6-8 times per month double their lead volume. This proves that blogging is a highly effective channel for generating leads.

In every blog post, include hyperlinks to landing pages within the copy of the post, as well as a prominent CTA.

HERE'S A TIP! When including a hyperlink in the copy or text of a post, link text that you'd like to rank for. This could be a linked keyword phrase or a common question your prospects or customers may have (or both). This will help with SEO, so long as the anchor text you are linking is relevant to the linked content as well.

#26 EMAIL MARKETING

Many businesses may think that email marketing should only be used when communicating with existing prospects and customers, but that's not true. Email can be an awesome way to generate new leads. Here are some ways you can use email to generate new prospects:

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MULTI-CHANNEL LEAD GENERATION

- Focus on an opt-in strategy. If you're buying email lists and spamming your prospects, no one will want to share your email with others and your unsubscribe rates will go through the roof. The first step to email lead generation is making sure you have happy subscribers that enjoy receiving emails from you.
- Send people valuable offers. Whether it's downloads, discounts or educational content, people will more likely share your emails with their friends or colleagues if they are really interesting or include valuable offers.
- Give people the ability to share your emails and content. Don't forget to add a "Forward to a Friend" link or social media sharing buttons within each email so people are encouraged to pass it on.

#27 SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media isn't just for watching funny videos or telling your followers what you ate for breakfast. Social media is an emerging channel that many businesses are taking advantage of, and it's presence and relevance will only continue to grow as time goes on. Here are some great tips for generating leads on social networks.

- Build a loyal following. Building relationships with potential customers is an essential first step. Social media connections are really about people-to-people, not always company-to-individual. Get to know your audience online, communicate and share information. In order to generate leads, you have to be more than a company, you need to have human interaction with others. As we say at Accelity, people do business with people, so be personal to be relatable.
- Remember, social media is a dialogue. Companies that only use social media to blast out messages about themselves aren't using social channels effectively. They're just screaming into the wilderness. The goal should always be to interact with others and be helpful. When you share content on social media, don't always post something that relates to your company. Share links to other interesting things you've found online. People will be very thankful you are noticing their work, too!

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- Influence connections for content sharing. Publishing and sharing content that directs traffic to targeted landing pages is the single most effective way to increase lead generation through social media. Share your new content offers by posting links to landing pages, and in addition, share blog posts, discounts and other great resources.

#28 ORGANIC SEARCH

While promoting your offers in many channels is crucial if you're looking for leads, it's also equally important to make it easy for people to find your landing pages through search engines. To do this, you need to apply search engine optimization (SEO) best practices to your landing pages. Consider the following:

- Pick a primary keyword for each landing page and focus on optimizing that page for that word. If you oversaturate a page with too many keywords, the page will lose its importance and authority because search engines won't have a clear idea of what the page is about.

HERE'S A TIP! Know the keyword you want to rank for before creating the page. This will help you stay cognizant of the keyword and the intention of the page as you create copy.

- Place your primary keywords in your headline and sub-headline. These areas of content have greater weight to search engines.
- Include the keywords in the body content but don't use them out of context. Make sure they are relevant with the rest of your content.
- Include keywords in the filename of images (e.g. mykeyword.jpg) or use them in the ALT tag.
- Include the keywords in the page URL.

CHAPTER FIVE
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#29 USE LINKS AND CTAS WITHIN OFFERS

Your offers themselves are great channels for lead generation. For example, in this ebook we have included links to other content offers. As people share this ebook, they may discover other resources that we offer by the links within the content.

HERE'S A TIP! You should try and include one internal link (a link that takes a reader from the current offer or content you've created to another offer or content from your business) in any blog you post.

#30 A/B TESTING

While this isn't a channel, it is a great way to increase leads across all channels and strategies. A/B testing can be used in calls-to-action, landing pages, email marketing, advertising and more. According to HubSpot research, A/B testing your landing pages and other assets can help you generate up to 40% more leads for your business. When done correctly, A/B testing can provide a huge competitive advantage for your company.

Examples of different items to A/B test include:

- The color of a read more/download/submit button.
- Using sentence case vs. capitalizing the first letter of each word vs. using all caps.
- Changing copy from a statement to a question.

Tt

There are endless possibilities when it comes to A/B testing, but when you A/B test, make sure to **change only one element** of the page, email or content so that you can clearly see what single element is most effective. Changing more than one piece will give you inconclusive data.

CONCLUSION

Generating leads online has the power to transform your marketing strategy. Using great offers, calls-to-action, landing pages and forms—while promoting them in multi-channel environments—can reduce your cost-per-lead while delivering higher quality prospects to your sales team.

This guide contains many best practices for every aspect of lead generation to boost your conversion rates, but these tactics are only beginning. Continue to tweak and test each step of your inbound lead generation process in an effort to improve lead quality and increase revenue.

Now take your marketing plan to the next level and watch those inbound leads roll in.

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