emedia

An emedia guide to:

External Lead Generation

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What's inside?

What 'external lead generation' is and why you should consider it
The secrets to running a successful lead generation campaign
How to create the right content for lead generation
Evidence - the research that shows we're not talking nonsense
The emedia approach

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External Lead Generation



When it comes to generating new business, many companies are not using enough channels; reaching far enough out of their silos; or saying something worth hearing.

Every marketer today understands the importance of multi-channel marketing and will utilise multiple tactics to get their products seen. This generates noise. So much noise that your key messages can be frozen-out in the cadence.

Lead generation is unquestionably one of the key tasks that marketers are charged with, but buying data for campaigns; reaching your pool of existing contacts; or trusting budgets to traditional advertisers and events seems to increasingly follow the law of diminishing returns.

To satisfy lead generation and conversion targets, external lead generation is becoming an increasingly utilised tactic. But what exactly is it and why should all marketers be considering it?

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External lead generation - an introduction

To put it simply: ‘external lead generation’ is when a marketer entrusts some of their budget and content to a specialist 3rd-party lead generation company to generate sales leads on their behalf.

They will do this by utilising one or a number of channels, but the space is predominantly dominated by firms that employ telemarketing, SEO/PPC and email mechanisms.

Not all leads are created equal
An external lead generation provider can employ different techniques to produce qualified sales prospects for you that will have a higher likelihood to buy your product (such as to BANT level: Budget, Authority, Need & Timeframe) or those with an interest in your service area that you can then qualify, score and nurture.

You need to be aware of this before deciding on a company to outsource some or all of your lead generation responsibilities to, as different channels and providers could provide you with very different results.

‘I do this all myself/I know my customer best/why are you so great?’
There are some good reasons as to why you should consider external lead generation:

- Experts at generating leads - their experience means they’ll get the best out of your assets from the widest possible audience
- Scale - they have a large reach and teams dedicated to your campaign, so they can quickly generate high volumes of leads from large audiences
- Outsourcing - it’s one less thing to worry about; saving time, effort and internal headcount within both marketing and sales teams
- Higher response rates - sophisticated workflow and technology means that lead providers can get a response from contacts dormant in your CRM system
- Test new products - when launching a new product or trying a new customer segment, use to better assess viability and profitability + you can keep sales focussed on getting a response from areas you know will generate revenue
- Save time on qualification - they can qualify leads for you, saving you time on follow-up, scoring and CRM admin
- Guaranteed return - some offer ‘Cost-per-Lead’ programmes, guaranteeing the number of leads they’ll generate for you
- Clean data - a good lead generation provider will have highly cleansed and up-to-date data, reaching areas you may miss
- International - some companies enable you to run a multinational campaign with one point of contact, with all the economies of scale that come with it
- Supplementary services - experienced providers offer a range of additional services, such as content creation, providing you with high-quality resources.



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Get the fundamentals right

People often ask if external lead generation is any good and the answer is: ‘it can be’ - but of course we’d say that!

What you after, guvn’r?
One of the secrets to success is that you need to be clear about whom you’re trying to reach, what you want from them and how much you need to know about them.



For example, if you want to generate a more qualified lead that slots in further down your sales funnel, this will cost you more (due to wastage and the time required to qualify them) and be scarcer.

On the other hand, you might want to generate prospects that will enter the very top of your funnel for your own lead nurturing or sales programmes - these can be generated quickly and in abundance, but they’ll have a higher propensity not to convert.

Without good collateral, it’s all uphill
For any lead generation campaign to be successful, let alone one being run by a 3rd party, you must be able to show a prospect why they need your product or service.

Too many marketers try and promote a ‘what’ message in campaigns, such as a run-down of their product’s features. People don’t respond to this - especially in the B2B world - and your campaign will flounder, no matter how it’s promoted.

Prospects need to know:

- Why they’ve got a problem
- Why your product solves it
- Why it’s better than your competitors’ solutions.

The best way to do this is with original, insightful, well-presented collateral which is of value to your audience. Things such as: non-salesy, original infographics; whitepapers; short ‘top-tip’ guides; market surveys; and webinars that demonstrate your cutting-edge brilliance.

Without it, you might as well invest your marketing budget on the 14:20 at Chepstow, because it’s more likely that you’ll see a return.

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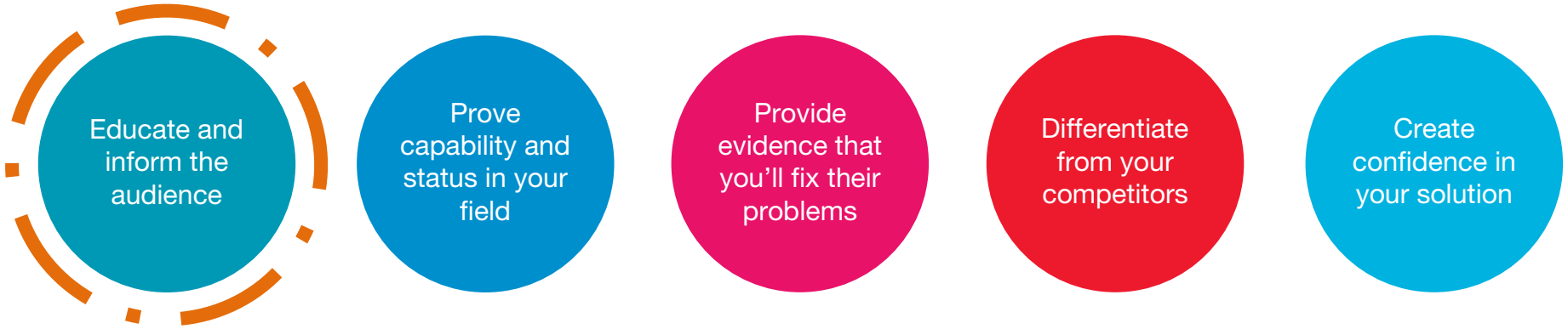
Finding the right message + asset

Everyone has original insights or techniques that they can share. If you haven't, what exactly is it that your company does?!

Therefore a good piece of collateral (for anything) = one that uses your insights as the basis for the content + displays them (well) in an asset that's suited to meeting your goals.

There are many different combinations of content and assets, and the right blend for lead generation won't necessarily be the right combination for nurturing, conversion or retention collateral.

Content
There are 5 main types of content within B2B marketing:



For lead generation, the best way to engage a new prospect is to use pieces that fulfil the first function of content: 'Educate and inform the audience'.

You can, of course, seek to create content that fulfils 2 or more of these functions, but the risk with this is that when you try to do too much, your key messages are lost or you will fail to engage with prospects sufficiently to engender a response.

Asset
Regardless of which model you use to map your sales cycle, it's important that, when generating leads, the types of assets you use to display your content match your goals for your campaign.

Content that seeks to 'Educate and inform the audience' is best displayed in collateral that functions in the 'Realisation' and 'Awareness' stages of your buying cycle. Assets that work best in these stages are typically lower-commitment, such as: infographics, market guides and 'How-to/Top-tip' pieces.

Longer whitepapers or webinars can be effective in generating leads, too. However these assets generally require a higher-commitment from the prospect, so are often better suited to campaigns where you're looking to generate more qualified leads, such as to BANT level.

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The empirical proof

We commissioned an independent survey in Q3 2012 which examined 200 UK-based B2B marketers' sentiments towards lead generation and, more specifically, the content that they use for it.



Click here to download a free copy

emedia - B2B Lead Generation & Content Marketing Survey 2012

The survey found that, whilst lead generation is of great importance to B2B marketers, few have a separate strategy and budget for creating the content that's going to drive it + marketers seem to be focussing on producing assets/content that's good for conversion, rather than the lead generation that they want. Some key findings:

- Lead generation is of great importance to the majority: 45% gave lead generation the highest possible importance rating
- Email was ranked the most effective lead generation channel (64%), with external advertising second (56%)
- Lead generation was ranked as the main objective for content produced (48%)
- Budget (30%) and lead quality (25%) were said to be the main challenges to lead generation programmes in the coming year
- Just over a third (36%) use external content providers to produce content. Where this occurs, an average of 39% of content is created externally with an average budget spend of £31,000p.a.
- 29% of respondents say that the use of external lead generation providers is essential to their plans, with a further 28% ranking it as moderately important. Only 27% say that it's not important at all.

It's not just our survey that has highlighted these trends…

IDM, ABBA and Circle Research - The B2B Barometer 2012

- Email was ranked the most effective lead generation channel for targeting new customers (42%). 31% named telemarketing
- 60% of those surveyed named lead generation as one of their top three priorities
- Generating content was cited as the single biggest challenge faced in lead generation (24%).

B2B Marketing - Lead Generation & Nurturing Benchmarking Report 2012

- The highest priorities for respondents are increasing the quality and quantity of leads generated (53% and 50%, respectively)
- Almost 70% of survey participants expect to increase investment in lead generation activities in the next 12 months
- 42% of respondents identified email as the number one channel for generating new leads from new prospects
- 79% don't score leads.

MarketingProfs and the Content Marketing Institute - B2B Content Marketing: 2012 Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends

- 9 out of 10 B2B marketers are using content marketing to grow their businesses
- 60% of respondents indicate that they plan to increase their content marketing budgets over the next 12 months.

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emedia's approach (simplified)

Still with us? Good! We thought it might be useful if we explained (simplistically) how emedia typically generate leads for our clients to get an idea of how the process might work.



We work with you to identify your audience and need - putting together a bespoke lead generation campaign utilising our range of services that will best fulfil them with your content (or the content that we create for you).

Email Bulletins









After tuning your message, your content is sent via our permission-based email bulletins to your target market. They click to download your asset.

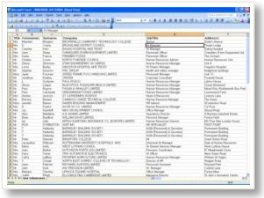
(Optional) Redirected to customised form to answer your selected, multiple-choice qualifying questions. Submits.

Redirected to a form already populated with their (the respondent's) details to check before submitting.

The reader is informed that your asset is being emailed to them and they're redirected to a chosen url.

Lead Enrichment & Telemarketing
(optional service enhancement)

We will select from our permission-based subscribers (who are already familiar with us and our bulletins), those that meet your company size, sector or job function qualifying criteria.



We'll call them, discovering if they've any interest in receiving your content/asset and to ask any additional qualifying questions.

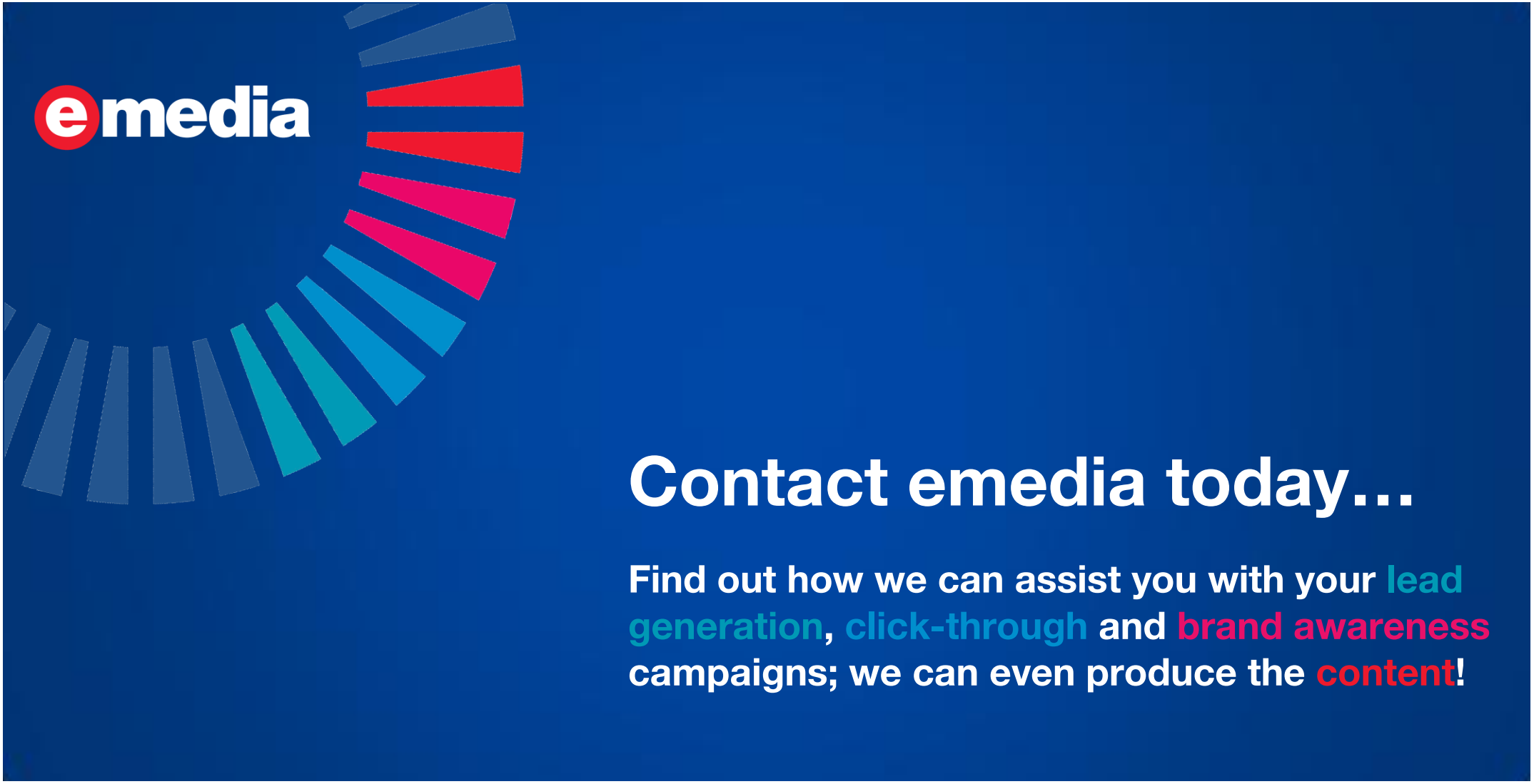


We send them your collateral.



Prospects that have downloaded your collateral are recorded. We verify that their contact details are correct before supplying you with them (via spread sheets or fed directly into your CRM system) for follow-up. If you are receiving qualified leads, we will only send to you those that meet your qualifying criteria + their responses.

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