

How to

Generate Leads

Using Content Marketing



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Introduction

Welcome to Prize Content's guide to generating leads using content marketing.

You've made a great call in picking up this guide and having a read. Looks nice too, doesn't it?

A lot of companies don't understand the huge value of content marketing. If they do, they often struggle to use it to generate leads. This might be a familiar feeling for you.

This guide will help you in both of those areas.

If you've got great expertise and stories to share in your business, you shouldn't keep all that goodness to yourselves!

Tell it to your audience and everyone benefits.

So, read on to discover the ways you can grow your business through content marketing, and make some changes today.



Create Leads and Influence Conversions

Using content marketing as a powerful lead generation tool.

It goes without saying that the underlying objective of any company is to generate sales. But, before you can make a sale, you need to generate leads. That's what makes a sound **lead generation strategy** so important.

There are plenty of methods, approaches, and techniques when it comes to lead generation strategy, and what works for one business doesn't necessarily work for another. Yet, there's one common factor that underpins them all: a well-considered **content marketing strategy**.

That's because, no matter your business model, content is the only sure way to connect with your target audience. When it comes to being found online, content truly is king.

A Proven Lead Generator

They say the proof of the pudding is in the eating. Well, in the case of content marketing, the proof of the lead generation potential is in the statistics!

For example:

- Companies who post content

consistently are known to generate 67% more leads than companies who do not (Hubspot, 2010).

- Businesses who prioritise their blogging efforts are 13 times more likely to see a positive return on investment (Hubspot, 2019).
- Content marketing gets three times more leads than paid search advertising (Content Marketing Institute, 2017).

You read that last point correctly: when executed well, content marketing significantly outperforms paid advertising in producing leads for your business.

Make Yourself Visible

It's clear that content marketing is a powerful tool in your business's lead generation kit. But, you might be left wondering: "What good is effective content marketing if I can't be found online in the first place?"

The answer is simple: content marketing doesn't just reach customers who have already found your website or social media

channels. Rather, it is by far the most successful means of making your business visible to **new prospects**. If you find yourself asking how to get found on Google, Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram, the answer is always the same: a consistent, high-quality content strategy.

That's because the content-surfacing algorithms used by such platforms aim to connect their users with high-value content. As a result, you need a content marketing plan that considers the best way of delivering real value to your audience.

If you can develop a content marketing plan that meets your customers' need for value, you are well on your way to establishing their trust and influencing them to try your product, subscribe to your service, or complete whatever inciting action is vital to your business model.

How to Plan Content that Generates Leads

So, how can you start producing high-quality, valuable content that gets your business found online and establishes trust with your audience?

Inbound marketing — marketing designed to draw prospects in, rather than pushing outwardly via promoted channels — is fast becoming the most fruitful method of generating sales leads without cold calling or other, more aggressive sales tactics.

The first step in a successful content marketing plan is to understand your audience. This is an absolute necessity, and should be done before any content is created.

That's because you need to understand where your potential customers are in order to target the channels they visit most. Further, you need to know as much as possible about your prospects to ensure the content you produce is centred on their needs — and therefore primed to provide them with the most value. Remember, offering value to potential customers is the only real way to build their trust and influence their decision-making journey.

Once you've researched your audience, you can begin to plan a schedule of regular content releases that address their needs and provide real value.

This is where your company's expertise comes into play. Your content should help customers solve their problems and provide them with valuable insight. Before long, you'll become their go-to resource, having established your company as an authority in its field. That's what will ultimately give your prospects the confidence they need to buy into your products and services.

Next: Building Trust with Your Leads and Customers

Build Trust with Your Leads and Customers

Every successful relationship is built on a foundation of trust, and it's no different for the relationship between your company and its customers.

That fact is what makes **managing customer relationships** such an important factor in the success of your business. Companies rise and fall through the support of their customers — and, by 2020, those who work to **build trust with their customers** will generate 20% more online profit than those who do not (Gartner, 2018).

Make That Gut Feeling a Good Feeling

The reason companies succeed when they build trust with their customers is linked to how consumers behave when making purchasing decisions.

The truth is that how consumers feel about your brand has a far greater influence on their purchasing decision than, for example, information about your product, or the details of your service.

To understand this better, you need to think of your brand as a representation of your product or

service. If your brand represents features and attributes but leaves feelings to one side, there can be no emotional link to influence a consumer's preference and actions.

In such a scenario, it doesn't matter if your solution is better than the competition from a detailed perspective. If it fails to create an emotional connection with consumers, your brand will be overlooked.

That's why your brand needs a personality. Research has shown that consumers perceive the same type of personality traits within brands as they do with other people. And, just like people, they are attracted to certain traits more than others, so you need to make sure your brand's personality is communicated in the right way for your target audience.

Building Customer Trust with Content

Nurturing customer relations in this way is not an overnight process. There's no single campaign you can launch to demonstrate the reliability of your company. Instead, you've got

to build that trust with your audience one post at a time. That means the best time to start is right now.

Show You Understand Your Customer

The first step in earning the trust of your customers is to demonstrate that you know them well.

Start by building the identity of your customer. By undertaking extensive market research, you'll find out more about your customers' needs, wants, desires, and frustrations. Then, you can produce content that addresses their concerns and appeals to their interests directly.

When your content marketing plan is built with this information in mind, you'll put yourself in a better position to meet customers' expectations and influence their decision-making journeys.

Demonstrate Competence

Use your content as a platform to demonstrate the skill and expertise of your company. Sharing insights and helping your audience to solve their problems, even before they're ready to call themselves your customer, goes a long way in establishing their trust.

Be Transparent

Communicating honestly and transparently with your audience is

essential in building a relationship with them. Don't be afraid to "overshare" when it comes to insights about how your company operates, and don't hesitate to give potential customers something of value early in their journey. The more you tell, the less they'll be left unsure about, helping to build their confidence in you.

Showcase Your Authenticity

Consumers have more choice and more information available to them than ever before. That means they can be picky about the companies they choose to engage with. Your content needs to speak authentically in order to resonate with customers and inspire them to choose you over anyone else.

Prove You Are Reliable

Saying you are reliable is one thing; being reliable is another thing entirely. Yet, showing consumers you are dependable can often be as simple as doing what you said you were going to do. Sticking to a consistent content schedule, such as promising and delivering a weekly blog post, is one way to regularly achieve this. After all, it only takes one missed update to undermine the value of your word.

Next: How Content Influences Brand Perception

How Content Influences Brand Perception

It's often said that perception is reality. When it comes to your company's brand identity, that advice is truer today than ever before.

The modern consumer is well-informed and has many choices when it comes to the products and services they use. As a result, they can be highly selective about the kinds of customer experiences they want to participate in.

That means your company needs to do everything it can to convince consumers the experience you offer is the right one for them.

Emotions Influence Consumer Behaviour

As previously mentioned, **consumers are greatly influenced by their feelings and emotions** when it comes to choosing which businesses they engage with.

In short, how your brand is perceived, and the relationship consumers have with your business, is one of the biggest factors in your success.

The impact emotion has on a buyer's

decision-making journey is so strong that it easily overwhelms other, more rational factors, such as product information or the details of your service.

What that means is you need to give your customers a reason to care about your company. The necessity of establishing an emotional link between consumers and your brand is what makes content marketing such an important part of your company's ability to generate sales leads.

Using Content to Influence Brand Perception

The consumer perception of your company's brand is comprised of many things. One factor is the visual identity of your brand — in other words, how key messages and feelings are communicated on a visual level.

Just as important, however, are the things your company says and the way it says them.

The most successful businesses

recognise that how their messages are communicated is fundamental to designing an experience that customers are keen to take part in. Remember, it's that journey which creates an emotional link between your company and consumers — the essence of your brand's identity.

Align Your Brand with Consumers

It's difficult for consumers to connect with your company's brand if they feel like you don't have a sound understanding of their problems.

When backed by comprehensive market research, content is the most effective way of showing that you understand your customer's wants and needs. By regularly releasing content that helps consumers solve their problems and provides them with valuable insights, you can start to build the trust needed to influence their decision-making process.

Offer Something of Value — Right Away

In order to form an effective relationship with consumers, you need to provide something of value before you ask for anything in return.

Content marketing that draws upon the expertise of your company is an excellent way to provide consumers with something of value as soon as they discover you.

Sharing insights and helping consumers solve their problems through valuable content will ensure your relationship starts off on the right foot.

The benefit of this approach is that customers will begin to see you as an industry authority and a go-to resource for solving their problems. This is the kind of top-of-mind awareness that will have customers choosing you over the competition when making a purchase decision.

Give Existing Customers Confidence

Content marketing doesn't just influence the perception of new customers. Rather, content can also address your existing customers, reassuring them that they made the right choice and ensuring that they remain loyal customers well into the future.

Customer service expectations in 2019 are higher than they have ever been, and consumers have a great deal of choice. That's why your company needs to use every available opportunity to demonstrate exactly why consumers should pick you over somebody else. ■

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P PRIZE CONTENT

“Who *is* Prize Content? And should I have written ‘*are*’ in that last sentence?”

Prize Content is a group of writers, marketing strategists, and design creatives, who use their experience and knowledge to help businesses grow through effective content marketing.

We deliver bespoke content strategies backed by expert professional services such as content writing, graphic design, and digital services. Using our very own proprietary CMS platform, we integrate with your company’s comms channels to make commissioning and publishing content across multiple channels seamless.

We’re also gamers, musicians, techies, sports fans and more, spanning an age range of over 20 years. Oh, and we all love coffee.

So, if you want to find out how Prize Content could help your business grow through content marketing (or just can’t stop thinking about the ‘is/are’ question at the top of this page), pick your favourite communication method on the back page and get in touch.



Thanks for Reading!

We hope you found this guide useful.

If you did, tweet us a shout-out **@Prize_Content!**

Prize Content helps businesses just like yours to achieve growth through first-class content that develops your brand and tells the world your story.

Visit us at www.prizecontent.com to find out more.



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