

5 Mistakes You Need to Avoid When Marketing IT Solutions

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1. Letting Potential Leads Slip Away

Too many IT company managers think their offering is so unique that people will be clamoring for their products, services or solutions. As long as they have a “Contact Us” page on their website, they’ll be able to capture leads.

Not so. You need to have an easy way to capture leads on your website.

IT managers need a reason to part with their contact information. You have to earn it by providing something of value...like an e-book, white paper or webinar. Creating an attention-getting landing page that focuses 100% on the content offering. Make it easy to sign up for and download.

2. Not Qualifying Leads

Not qualifying leads is the source of the age-old divide between sales and marketing. When the sales team doesn’t consider the marketing leads to be qualified, they will not follow up on them. When that happens, the marketers end up frustrated with the sales people for frittering away hard-earned leads. The sales team is equally upset because they feel the marketing team is wasting their time with leads that are not ready to buy.

It’s essential for marketing and sales to concur on the characteristics of a qualified lead. Such an agreement is the foundation for sales and marketing alignment. Once you know the characteristics of a sales-qualified lead, your inside sales team or telemarketing team can call, qualify and pass only the leads that meet the agreed criteria.

3. Not Warming Up Leads

When you sort through your leads, you’ll end up with a fraction that are initially sales qualified. While some of the unqualified leads will never transform into qualified leads, others have potential. They will buy in the future. When they do, you want to ensure they choose your company, not the competition.

To increase the odds that they will come your way when they are ready, keep these leads warm. Nurturing with emails works well. The occasional phone call is an effective touch. Both tactics enable you to build relationships and trust over time. Do it right and you’ll boost your results. According to Marketo, “companies that excel at lead nurturing generate 50% more sales ready leads

at a 33% lower cost.”

4. Not Making the Most of Events

Technology events are costly. As a result, marketing and sales people have a tendency to focus on the sizzle and not the steak — a booth that outshines the competition, glossy brochures, a party with free-flowing refreshments and mouth-watering hors d’oeuvres.

But it’s sometimes the less glamorous details that make the difference between an event that pays off and one that simply consumes the budget. If you want targeted IT decision makers at your event, send out invitations. Follow up by phone to make sure they received (or have seen) the invitation. Even if you don’t reach the individual, a voice mail can help. If you reach them, set up an appointment for a face-to-face meeting with one of your salespeople at the event.

Your job is not over when the event shuts down. There’s still work to do. Many marketing leaders simply divide the leads they generated among their sales people and move on. Here’s the problem. Salespeople, for the most part, don’t follow up because many of the leads are not qualified. They throw the proverbial baby out with the bathwater. Before distributing the leads to sales, call them to qualify them. Do it quickly. Thirty-five to 50% of the sales go to the vendor that responds first.

5. Forgetting that Leads Are Human Beings

It’s easy in this age of marketing automation to think of leads as a number. But when it comes to business-to-business tech marketing, it’s really about human-to-human marketing. Each lead is a human being with their own concerns and interests. They want to do business with other human beings, not faceless companies.

The company that develops a human relationship is often the one that seals the deal. Also, by continuing to build that relationship with the customer, you’re more likely to retain them.

Open the lines of communication. Call your leads and ask questions to find out the problems they are facing and how you can best help them. Make sure your

conversations are direct, open and relevant to the individual. When you talk with a prospect about what matters to them, they will remember you. Also, you'll learn information you can use to help make the sale — not only the problems a company or individual faces, but also their objections and competitive offerings that they may be considering.

Make sure you have an easy way to capture leads, you nurture and qualify them, make the most of your events, and, above all, treat your prospects like human beings. If you take this advice, you'll likely be ahead of your competition. If you don't have the resources to do this in-house, work with an experienced B2B telemarketing company with professional business development specialists who are ready to help you.

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