Tomorrow People
Digital Marketing Agency

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Marketing Director's Guide:

How to enable the sales team with hot leads

Marketing Director's Guide: How to Enable the Sales Team with Hot Leads

The B2B sales cycle has undergone a complete change and recent statistics from MarketingSherpa have revealed that the length of the B2B sales cycle process is shrinking as prospects engage later after doing their own research. With the move online, marketing has an even more important role to play in capturing those prospects' attention as they do their research in order to generate, nurture and deliver more sales ready leads.

This means taking a new approach to how leads are managed, scored and measured and to the steps taken to move prospects along the sales funnel.

1. Going micro

Today's marketers have to provide significant amounts of content in order to pull prospects in and keep them engaged. **While content such as case studies, white papers and blogs on your company website have a big part to play in this, developing a 'micro content' strategy is also key.**

Micro content is the comments that you post on social media and on other people's blogs and while responding to posts in LinkedIn groups and other forums can seem like it doesn't need a strategy, it definitely does. With a strategic approach, micro content can help drive inbound marketing leads into your sales funnel that you can then score and nurture until they are sales ready.

Watch this video to find out how you can create a micro content marketing plan without any content.

It's not just about written content either, as **today's web-savvy audiences expect interactivity, images and videos.** So your overall content strategy has to include everything from the look and feel of your site(s) and tone of voice. Getting your content and micro content strategy right can drive engagement levels and position you as a thought leader in your field so that when people want what you sell, your company will be the first that comes to mind.

This webinar - What the Hidden Sales Cycle Means for Content Marketing - can help you to identify what you need to do to make sure you can deliver what's needed at each stage.

To easily keep track of what's going on where in the social media space, a new idea that came out at the B2B Summit 2012 was the Listening Dashboard. This is a customer intelligence gathering strategy that consists of collecting and combining small pieces of information to produce a larger and more insightful picture of a given topic, brand or prospect. **The data gathered through a Listening Dashboard can inform your micro content strategy so that you can ensure you're delivering what people are interested in.**

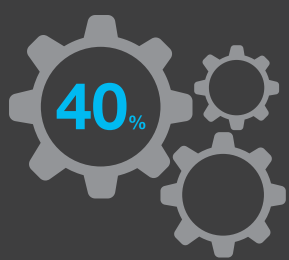
Follow the steps in this article to set one up and make the most of the information available to you.

2. Measure everything

OK, everything may be a slight overstatement; but the marketing automation solutions available today mean that the data available can give much deeper insights into buyer behaviour. By establishing a lead scoring process based on the digital behaviour your prospects exhibit you can ensure that the qualification process is robust enough to improve the quality of the leads that you deliver to the sales team.

Research conducted by the TAS Group has shown that rushing through qualification and needs analysis creates problems later in the sales cycle. Not taking the time to qualify that the prospect is likely to buy, that you have a good chance of winning the business and that the opportunity is worth winning means that a lot of effort gets wasted on opportunities that should never have reached an advanced stage in the pipeline in the first place.

Research by Aberdeen Group has shown that best-in-class businesses using marketing automation to score and nurture leads have 40% of the sales pipeline coming directly for marketing generated leads.

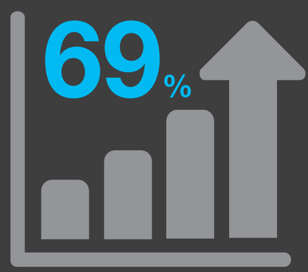


Combining the functionality of marketing automation with these **B2B Lead Management – 6 Best Practices will see the number of leads accepted by the sales team improve significantly.**

3. Work together

One of the biggest problems businesses face in taking advantage of the opportunities that the digital world brings is that their sales and marketing teams don't work together.

Research by the Aberdeen Group has shown that in the best performing organisations, sales and marketing are closely aligned and meet 69% more frequently than in other companies, resulting in 31.6% year-on-year annual growth, compared to the industry average 18.2% growth.

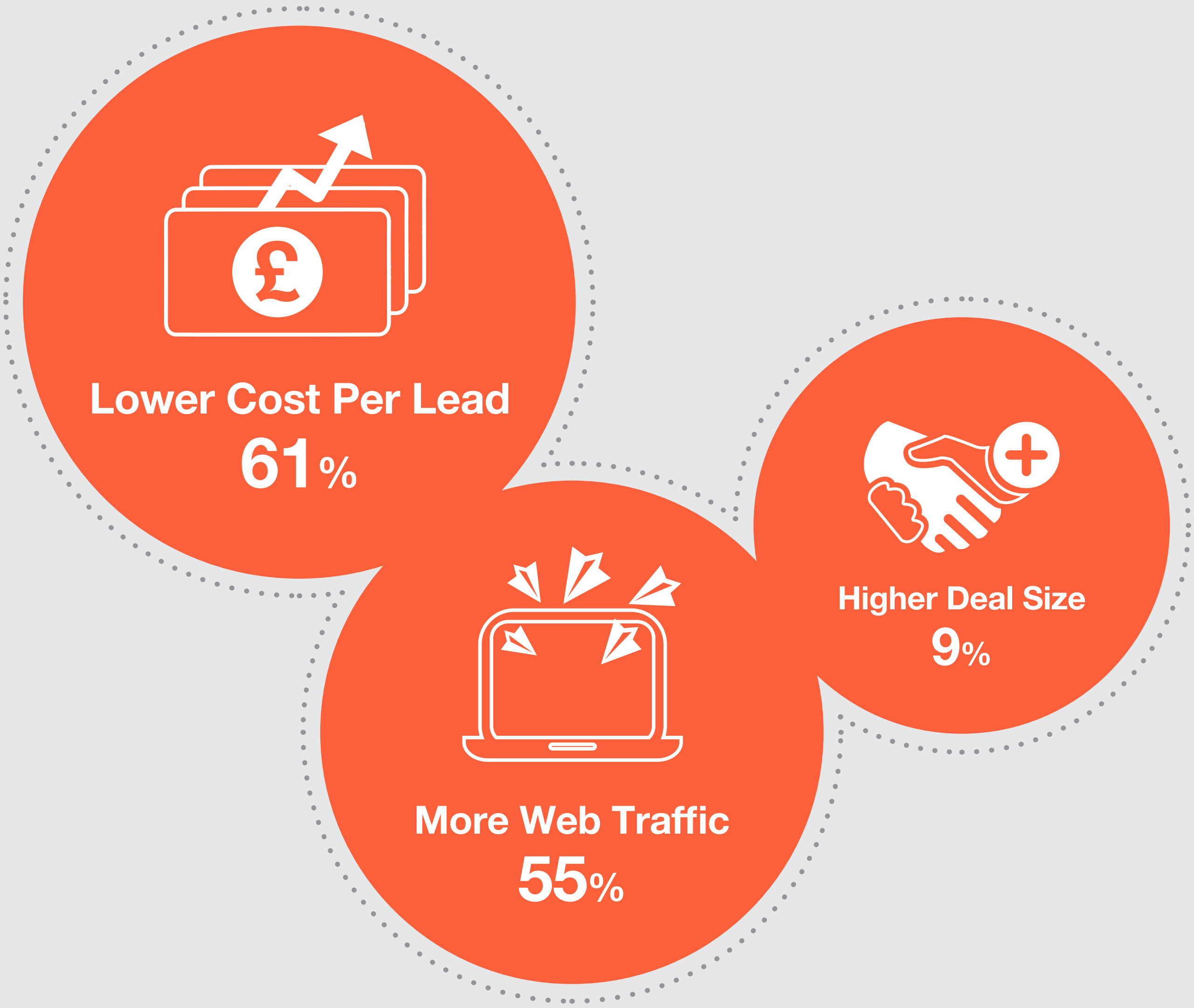


The latest version of the **SiriusDecisions Demand Waterfall**, which was released in summer 2012, shows how the two teams should be brought together to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the lead management process instead of wasting time, money and resources working independently to achieve the same goals. **To be successful throughout the waterfall both sales and marketing need to recognise their specific accountabilities and understand how they are related. Some of the questions that need to be asked throughout the process are:**

By combining closer sales and marketing alignment with marketing automation solutions, inbound marketing and well-defined content strategies to manage and nurture leads, businesses have been shown to generate 50% more sales ready leads at 33% lower cost.

(Source: Forrester Research)

To ensure your business doesn't get left behind in the digital revolution and can increase the amount of sales ready leads generated, invest in inbound marketing with Tomorrow People, which has been proven to deliver:



To find out more, download our eGuide Building a lean, mean, sales and marketing organisation **now!**

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