

MASTERING ORGANIC B2B LEAD GENERATION: STRATEGIES, TECHNIQUES, AND BEST PRACTICES



Synopsis:

- **Key elements and strategies for lead generation and how to apply them to your use case**
- **How to implement targeted lead generation relevant to your niche**
- **How to create your sales funnel and progress leads toward conversion with best practices**

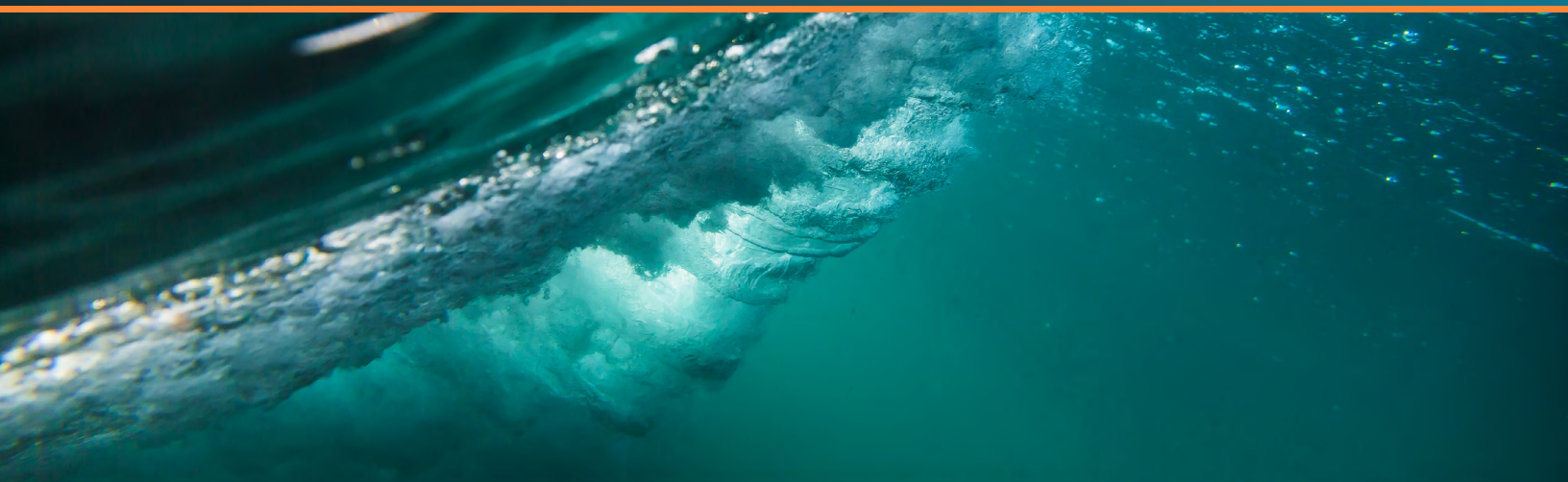


WHAT IS B2B LEAD GENERATION AND ITS VALUE?

B2B lead generation is the process of identifying ideal prospects for your product and services, connecting with them, and converting them to clients. A robust lead generation engine is essential for scaling and sustaining growth at all companies. For example, it is vital for startups looking for potential clients and large enterprises that use it for sustaining growth.

However, the real challenge is not finding B2B leads; but rather ensuring accurate lead qualification and increasing conversions. B2B leads typically have a longer sales cycle, making the B2B lead generation a marathon, not a sprint.

This article will help you develop and maintain the processes that will allow you to tackle B2B lead generation more effectively and efficiently.



3 key elements of effective B2B lead generation



The first three steps of quality lead generation include identifying and segmenting your target market, creating a detailed Ideal Client Profile (ICP), and setting clear objectives for your lead generation campaign. Determining these factors will ultimately facilitate campaigns and result in a higher Return On Investment (ROI).



1. Identify your target market

Defining your target audience is essential to ensure positive outcomes and avoid wasting resources. The process can be broken down into the following steps:

- Define the pain point(s) your product or service solves
- Identify the decision-makers and influencers you want to reach
- Analyze your existing client base

Start by identifying the problems that your product or service resolves—not only will this stand as a guide for your messaging, but also for the industries you will focus on.

For example, in the case of a SaaS company offering marketing analytics and data automation software, the core of their messaging is that their solutions provide quick access to data analysis to allow for better-informed decision-making. The SaaS company would be able to target a much wider range of industries due to the nature of its product.

Next, look for companies within your segment that would fit your product or service well and identify key target stakeholders. Ideally, this should include both members of the buying committee with more decision-making power, as well as influencers who can impact the process.

For example, the same SaaS company would look to connect with decision makers, such as CMOs, as well as influencers, like mid-level marketing executives, to engage the majority of the buying committee at target accounts.

Finally, leverage your existing client base to help identify or refine your ICP, along with industry segments and key messaging you can use while defining your target market for these new lead generation campaigns.



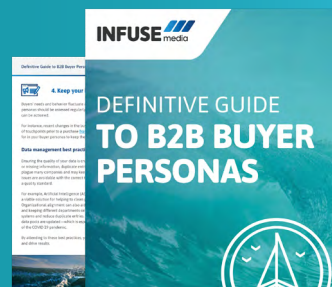
2. Developing buyer personas for B2B lead generation

A buyer persona is a semi-fictional and detailed representation of your ideal client that must be created based on data and research. Buyer personas can also be used internally to align your workflow to prospect and client needs, making them an essential element of B2B lead generation.

Here are four points to consider when creating your B2B buyer persona:

- **Their role in the buying process:** Are they decision-makers or influencers?
- **Pain points and challenges:** What are the pain points they are looking to resolve? Utilize research for this point to enhance accuracy.
- **Company and personal goals:** What are their personal and professional goals? In the case of the latter, this may be growth, increasing efficiency, and/or reducing costs.
- **Organizational priorities:** Is resolving the problem a high priority for the company? Focusing on accounts with a greater urgency will accelerate the buying process.

[Create B2B Buyer Personas with the 4-step playbook in our Definitive Guide](#) →





3. Setting clear goals and objectives

Another critical part of building your B2B lead generation engine is setting actionable goals that align teams on well-defined business objectives. S.M.A.R.T goals are one option as a model to guide your B2B lead generation campaigns.

Setting S.M.A.R.T. Goals

SMART goals are defined as Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. **See their definitions and lead generation examples below:**

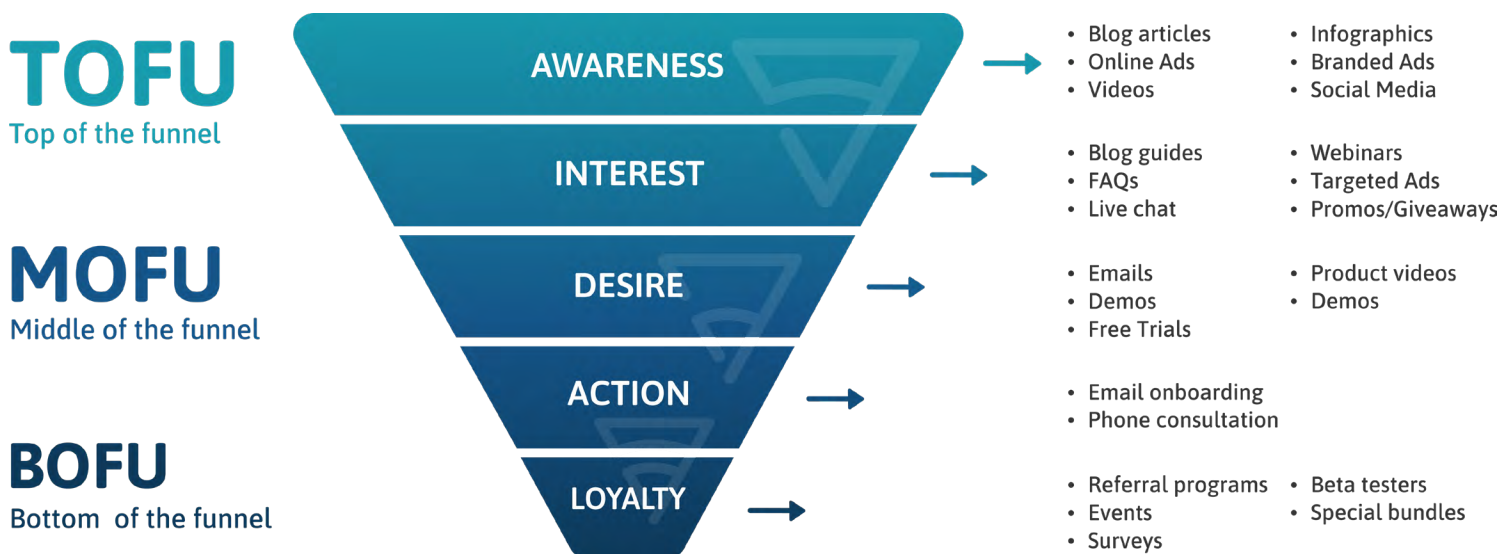
- **Specific goals:** The goals should be specific to what you want to achieve.
 - **Example:** Increase lead generation by 45% from the previous quarter.
- **Measurable goals:** Ensure that goals are quantifiable to indicate performance and areas for improvement.
 - **Example:** On top of a 45% increase of leads generated, campaigns should produce leads that are a 90% match for buyer personas and ICPs.
- **Achievable goals:** The goals need to be realistic and achievable by your team in order to support performance and, ultimately, team morale.
 - **Example:** Focusing on lead quantity is more feasible than including conversions in the metrics for a lead generation campaign.
- **Relevant goals:** Goals must be aligned with larger business goals to be relevant to the required business outcomes.
 - **Example:** The 45% increase in leads generated ties into an overarching company goal to grow its client base.
- **Time-bound goals:** The lead generation goals must be time-bound and not open-ended.
 - **Example:** This campaign will only last for a quarter, allowing for data insights from its performance to be used to inform future campaigns.



Creating a B2B sales funnel



A B2B sales funnel represents the sequential stages a lead goes through to complete a sales cycle. The primary goal is to identify, qualify, and convert business prospects, while the secondary goal is to increase ROI. The funnel narrows as prospective buyers progress toward conversion because of lead attrition at each stage.



The top of funnel (TOFU) stage:

Build awareness, brand authority, and trust

The content at the top of the funnel should focus on creating awareness of your brand and its products and services. This is also the stage where content being shared should highlight the problems that your product or service will resolve while establishing your brand's authority as a trusted solution provider and a subject matter expert.

Organizations use this stage to collect contact details by using strategies such as lead magnets that offer free downloads of valuable and potentially gated content in exchange for said details.



The middle of funnel (MOFU) stage:

Facilitate consideration by highlighting your Unique Selling Point (USP)

By the time the lead reaches the middle of the funnel, they are aware of your brand and its products and services and are actively comparing solutions from a group of selected brands.

Your focus should be to secure competitive positioning by establishing your brand as the best fit to prospects' needs when they are evaluating options. This is the right time to connect and inform the lead with a customized outreach such as email campaigns that highlight the USPs of your solutions and how it aligns with their needs. Use this stage to distribute whitepapers and other long-form content that will help reinforce your brand authority.



The bottom of funnel (BOFU) stage:

Drive conversions with social proof, demos, and offers

Not all leads that reach the BOFU stage are ready to make a purchase decision yet. As a result, sending them for outreach from SDRs could result in churn. Instead, focus on continuing the nurturing process by providing social proof, free demos, and special offers.

Ensure that your sales team is in regular touch with both the influencers and decision-makers of the prospective account. Take feedback from the influencers to ensure that your solution meets the prospects' technical needs, and reinforce key purchase triggers in your messaging with the decision maker, including pricing, ROI, and your unique value and expertise.

[Read the MOFU to BOFU Guide to accelerate conversions and drive leads to a purchase decision](#) →



B2B lead generation strategies



Below are four B2B lead generation strategies that consistently yield a high ROI:



1. Email marketing

Email marketing is a tried and tested B2B lead generation strategy that yields an average [ROI of \\$36](#) on every marketing dollar spent over the long term.

B2B marketing emails perform best when they focus on providing information that helps resolve problems and highlights how your product or service is a potential solution. Before launching your B2B email campaigns, you must build a library of educational content to leverage like whitepapers, trend reports, webinar recordings, and how-to guides.

Every B2B email campaign should meet three goals:

- Who are you targeting?
- What is the campaign objective?
- What is the intended message?

[Build an email marketing strategy that yields results with our definitive guide](#) →





2. B2B content marketing

B2B content marketing is the strategy of creating and distributing relevant content to capture the attention of prospective businesses and facilitate conversions. Building a content library should be a continuous effort that spans various formats, including whitepapers, blog posts, case studies, templates, videos, podcasts, and webinars. The greater the range of content, the greater its utility to be leveraged on channels aligned with prospect preferences.

Content should also focus on addressing the prospect's needs and providing solutions that resolve their pain points. Content that educates prospects about problems and trends while offering expert advice (tailored to the stages of the buyer's journey) helps establish your brand's credibility and expertise.

Another benefit of content marketing is that content has a long life span and can be repurposed or updated without a significant investment, lending content marketing a high ROI.

Some other benefits of B2B content marketing include:

- Capturing the attention of relevant prospects
- Creating brand awareness and educating on the value of your solutions
- Building trust with the prospective clients
- Gaining a competitive edge over the competition

B2B content marketing aims to attract and convert prospects organically. It focuses on providing value to drive business outcomes.



Below are some B2B content marketing best practices to ensure performance:

Conduct audience research

According to Semrush's [State of Content Marketing 2023 report](#), business owners and marketers ranked audience research as the number one success factor in content marketing. Audience research helps you understand your target audience at a granular level, thereby enabling you to create relevant content and distribute it efficiently.

Tools such as [Google Analytics](#) are invaluable for gathering user-attribute information on your audience, including demographic, sociographic, and behavioral data on your audience. Use this data to craft your ICP and develop relevant content.

Perform a content audit

A content audit focuses on improving the quality of content you have already produced that is being leveraged by sales teams. An effective audit also evaluates search engine optimization (SEO) and any possible updates necessary to increase the accuracy of content in line with changes in the business environment. Audits also benefit from data insights, such as measuring organic traffic and engagement with your web pages. This can be pulled from free tools like [Google Analytics](#).

Repurpose content

Repurposing content is the process of taking existing content and reformatting it for a different platform. For instance, a four-page blog post can be condensed into an engaging LinkedIn post, and a ten-minute video can be turned into an Instagram reel or a YouTube short. This helps maximize the returns on your content creation investment and improves the chances of capturing your audience's attention, as well as meeting different format and channel preferences.

Build your B2B content marketing strategy as a long-term plan anchored by the **following three questions for content creation:**

- Who is the audience?
- What are the content goals?
- Where, when, and how will you distribute your content?

Determining this ahead of time will ensure that content is developed and repurposed with other long-term strategies in mind, giving it a higher likelihood of earning stakeholder buy-in.



3. SEO in lead generation

Search engine optimization (SEO) complements your lead generation strategy by driving higher volumes of organic traffic to your website and ranking your website higher on search engine result pages (SERPs), thereby giving your brand greater visibility.

Below are four SEO strategies you can implement to support B2B lead generation:

1. Perform keyword research

The central element of an SEO strategy is to increase the reach of your content via organic search by including relevant keywords. This process starts with keyword research and can be facilitated with tools such as SEMrush, Google Keyword Planner, and Ahrefs. When building your keyword library, include long-tail keywords that define the search intent of your target buyers.

For instance, a company selling project management software would optimize its website content for long-tail keywords like “agile project management software.”

2. Add keywords to on-page content

Content can either be optimized with keywords or created around specific keywords identified in the research. In either case, be sure to organize your on-page content into sections with headings that include keywords (the title, metadata, and H2 and H3 headers). Use analytics tools to measure the bounce rates from your web pages, Google Analytics is a good option here too. Pages with a bounce rate of over 60% need to be addressed first.

3. Perform a website audit

Use a site audit tool like [Screaming Frog](#) or [BuzzSumo](#) to crawl and audit your website to identify issues like broken links (404 errors), titles and meta descriptions longer than the prescribed length, and duplicate content. This will prevent search engine bots from finding these issues and impacting your search rankings when they crawl your website.

4. Create a backlink strategy

Backlinks are links between two websites or web pages and are one of the primary ranking markers for Google. Search engines consider backlinks a credibility vote for your website and web pages. However, these inbound links must be relevant to the content on the webpage and from a website with a high domain authority to generate a positive SEO impact.

Implementing an SEO strategy to help your lead generation campaign ensures that your content marketing efforts stand a higher chance of success in an oversaturated market.



4. Networking for B2B lead generation

Building a business network is an excellent strategy for meeting potential clients, strategic partners and keeping up with current industry trends and opportunities. Below are two simple strategies you can implement to build your professional network.

1. Attend industry events and conferences

Start by joining professional associations within your industry. Attend conferences and seminars organized by these associations to meet other professionals in your field, learn about the latest trends and technologies, and build relationships with potential clients or strategic partners. Trade shows and networking events are another great platform for meeting potential clients, partners, and suppliers.

Regularly attend events that are most relevant to your target market to build your visibility and, in the case of giving presentations, leverage events as a live channel for delivering thought leadership. Recordings from events can also be reused in content marketing initiatives.

2. Build strategic partnerships

According to a [Frost & Sullivan survey](#), CEOs across industries mentioned strategic partnerships as their primary growth strategy. These partnerships are collaborations between companies in the same industry that offer complimentary products and services. For example, a SaaS company focused on PPC lead generation can partner with a company focused on organic lead generation. As a result, both companies can run co-marketing campaigns and share the leads that are generated.

Strategic partnerships expand the reach and improve competitive positioning, achieving more together than by working independently.

[Read SVP of Demand Generation Andrew Sambrook's 6-step checklist to forging high-value brand partnerships](#) →



Lead qualification



According to Hubspot, [79% of the leads](#) you generate will not convert. However, what this stark statistic truly highlights, is the need for strategies such as lead qualification and lead nurturing.

The lead qualification process enables you to:

- Focus your resources on nurturing leads with buying intent that are likely to convert
- Identify and prioritize high-value deals
- Improve the lead conversion rate for higher revenue

Lead qualification and scoring are two strategies you should implement so that your sales team can focus on nurturing and converting leads more likely to purchase your products or services.





Lead qualification criteria

At a macro level, leads are first qualified as marketing-qualified leads (MQL) and then sales-qualified leads (SQL) as they progress through the sales cycle. Marketing-qualified leads are prospects who have interacted with your marketing efforts and have demonstrated interest. This behavior could include multiple visits to specific pages on your website, downloading whitepapers, or using lead magnets. Marketing teams identify these behavioral patterns and qualify leads as MQLs, passing them on to the sales team for lead nurturing and, finally, conversion.

A sales-qualified lead is a prospect deemed as ready to talk to your sales team. Not all MQLs will reach the SQL stage, and it falls on the sales teams to further vet the MQLs based on criteria like buyer intent, engagement, and prospect profiling.



Lead scoring and qualification tools

[Lead scoring](#) moves the prospect from an MQL to a SQL by assigning a numerical value between 1-100 on the prospect's likelihood of converting. The scoring is based on the behavioral pattern of your prospects.

Positive behavior like downloading content, subscribing to newsletters, and frequent interaction with your website yields a positive score. **Negative behavior** such as unsubscribing from your newsletter or deleting their payment information leads to a negative score.

Each action is given its own weight based on how much it influences lead score, enabling marketing and sales teams to track the progress of each qualified lead in real time and prioritize leads with higher buyer intent.

Some Client Relationship Management (CRM) platforms come with lead scoring and qualification features, tools like Keap, JumpLead, and Blitz, for example.

This software uses two basic lead-scoring techniques: predictive lead scoring and rule-based lead scoring. Predictive lead scoring works on pre-defined rules for scoring, while rule-based scoring allows you to customize the parameters for scoring the prospect's behavior.



Lead nurturing and conversion



Lead nurturing engages qualified leads, encouraging them to progress down the sales funnel towards conversion. It is an effective way to build strong relationships with prospects through regular outreach focused on providing value. Lead nurturing can also be beneficial for fielding feedback to gain insights on specific pain points and content needs.

Some benefits of lead nurturing include:

- Focused efforts on leads with higher purchase intent
- Improved brand image and experience from the regular sharing of high-value content
- Increased credibility and trust in your brand
- Stronger relationships with leads
- Successful lead nurturing has the potential to increase lead value and encourage brand evangelism

Some best practices for lead nurturing include:

- Build lead nurturing strategies with a clear understanding of pain points and a library of relevant content
- Outreach should be personalized with communication that is consistent, transparent and reliable
- [Omnichannel or multichannel outreach](#) enables you to nurture leads across their preferred channels. Guide outreach strategies with demographic, psychographic, and firmographic data, as well as behavior patterns.





Automating lead nurturing

Lead nurturing automation allows you to automate routine nurturing tasks like sending drip email campaigns and segmenting and qualifying your leads. This enables your sales team time to focus on providing personalized outreach and nurturing a greater number of qualified leads, thereby increasing the number of conversions.

Some nurturing tasks that can be automated include:

- **Drip campaigns:** A series of emails sent to a prospect over a set period of time. Each email builds on the content previously shared to encourage prospects to convert.
- **Lead nurturing workflows:** Automate the actioning of tasks based on specific behavioral triggers. For instance, a new subscription to your email could trigger a workflow that sends a welcome message and relevant educational content.

Automating the routine tasks of lead nurturing helps improve your conversion rates and allows your sales teams more time to craft personalized messaging, resulting in a positive brand experience.



Creating informative thought leadership content



Thought leadership is the sharing of specialized expertise and deep insights through content. Thought leaders are at the forefront of educating and influencing their audiences to drive conversions and contribute to building strong brand authority and image.

The goal of thought leadership is to inform or educate, making it prime content for lead nurturing. Thought leadership content can be realized in a variety of content formats depending on the marketing channel being leveraged for distribution and the audience the content is designed for.

Producing thought leadership content is an effective strategy for fueling lead nurturing campaigns and supplying sales teams with enablement materials to build trust and move leads towards conversion.

[Explore the fundamentals of creating and leveraging high-performance content with our guide](#) →



Key takeaways



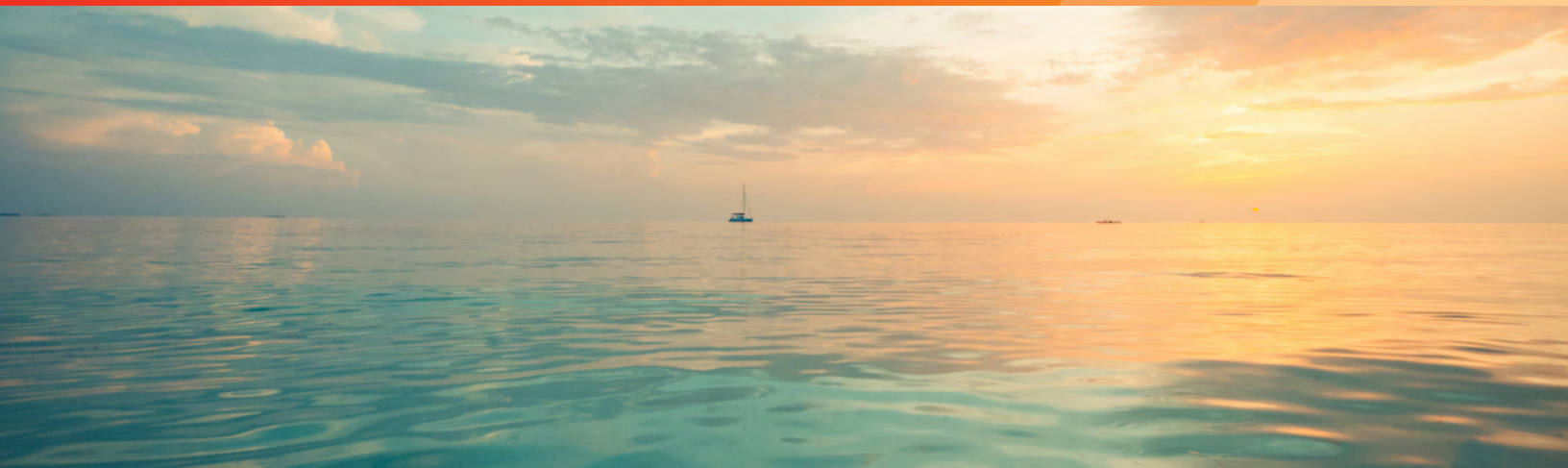
Lead generation does not begin and end with generating leads—it is a journey that starts with identifying leads, qualifying and nurturing them, to finally drive conversions and brand loyalty.

Lead generation is an ongoing activity that, with the right strategies in place, can establish a sustainable and predictable revenue pipeline.

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FAQs



- 1. How long does it take to generate B2B leads using these strategies?**

By applying these strategies, you should start generating qualified leads in a couple of months; however, the revenue impact will take time since the B2B sales cycle can stretch from 4-6 months or even longer.
- 2. What are the key challenges in B2B lead generation?**

The top challenges in lead generation include data accuracy, generating enough qualified leads, as well as obstacles related to lead nurturing, conversions, and client retention. If you use a lead generation company, you must also consider your available budget for these activities.
- 3. How can I measure the success of my B2B lead generation campaigns?**

You can track the performance of your lead generation campaigns by tracking metrics like ROI, lead conversion percentage, and the average acquisition cost of conversions.
- 4. Are there any budget-friendly lead-generation strategies for small businesses?**

Low-cost strategies include content and social media marketing, SEO, and email marketing, as well as network and referral marketing.





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