Whitepaper

demandDrive
Customized Demand Generation

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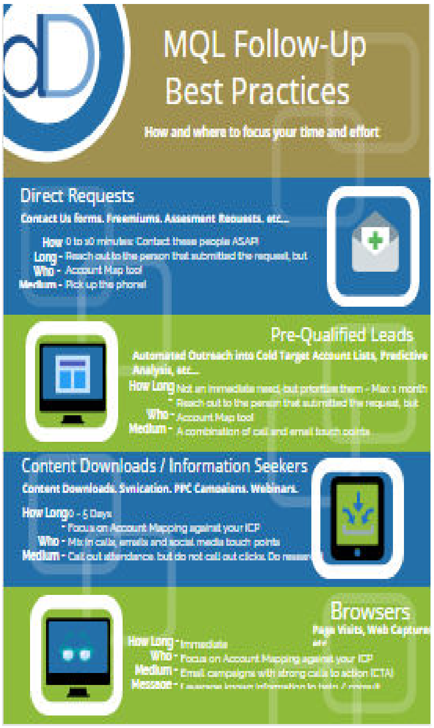
MQL Follow-Up Best Practices:

How and Where to Focus your Time and Effort

Not All Inbound Leads are Created Equal

Not every MQL looks the same - they come in different forms based on prospect engagement.. Our Sales Development teams generally break up all MQLs into four different categories:



MQL Followup Infographic

1. Direct Requests - **"Contact Us" forms, Freemiums, Assessment Requests, etc...**
These are prospects that raise their hands and asked to be contacted. Based on the information they've been fed by marketing and the research they've done online, they believe that your product/service could be a fit for their future plans. It's up to your SDRs to determine if that's true or not!

2. Pre-Qualified Leads - **Leads generated by automated outreach into Cold Target Account Lists, Predictive Analysis, etc...**
These are accounts that meet your desired criteria for a customer, and have engaged in a way that indicates they would be a fit. They match (at a high-level) your Ideal Customer Profile, and would theoretically be a great customer. It's up to your SDR team to further qualify.

3. Content Downloads / Information Seekers- **Whitepaper/Brochure downloads, Content Syndication, PPC Campaigns, Webinars, Tradeshows, etc...**
These are prospects who are in their information gathering stage. These prospects are in the process of compiling information on all the products / services they can find. Sometimes there's an active initiative, sometimes they're kicking tires - and it's up to your SDRs to help them as much as possible.

4. Browsers - **Page Visits, Web Captures, etc...**
The most passive form of MQL, these are prospects that happened upon your website or content and failed to engage at a high enough level. They could have no interest in learning more, but it's up to your SDRs to see if that's the case!

How Much Should SDRs Value Inbound Leads?

Short answer: **A lot**. Inbound Leads and MQL's are great opportunities for SDRs to quickly qualify an account by either immediately flipping them to the sales team or nurturing them along for the future, allowing them to build up their pipeline.

Inbound leads can be grouped into (generally) 4 categories, and they all answer a specific set of questions: How long should you wait? Who should you contact? What medium should you use? What do you say? What's the next step? We'll ID each form of MQL, show you how to prioritize the follow-up, and how to effectively and efficiently connect with the account.

1) Direct Requests
The most rare and sought after MQL, Direct Requests are the most valuable inbound lead you can expect to see. Because of this, the immediacy of contacting these leads is of the highest importance. The attached infographic shows that we recommend contacting them within 10 minutes of their submission. Why do we suggest that you reach out so quickly? These are prospects that have done their research and are looking to fill a need within their company, and you can bet that you're not the only company they've contacted. Statistics show that 35-50% of sales go to the prospect that makes the first contact - so the faster the better!

You can also see that we recommend picking up the phone and calling the submitter of the request directly. Too often we see organizations rely on email for this situation, and that message gets lost in a sea of companies reaching out. Remember - you're not the only product/service the prospect is looking at! By giving them a call you'll increase your chance of connecting with the prospect before anyone else, and it allows you to consult with them on their needs. Even though they submitted a Direct Request you might not the be the best product or service, and by talking through pain points and needs that will become apparent. Ultimately you'll come to an agreement and either book an SQL meeting or disqualify the prospect from contention.

What Other Types of MQL's Exist?

***2)** Pre-Qualified
These MQL's are a little different because they'll either come in batches (like a list of pre-qualified leads) or staggered over time (like predictive leads). External factors have qualified this prospect. to a certain standard (your ICP). The key here is that you know a lot about them, and they fit the typical profile that your current customers do. These are the least "inbound-like" leads, but they provide the most value in terms of conversion rates. Based on this they should almost be treated as target accounts for your SDRs to reach out to.

We recommend that the priority here is to leverage the known information you have to engage the prospect. External factors have indicated that they would be an ideal buyer, so it's up to your SDR team to reach out with a combination of phone and email touches to further qualify. Account mapping is key to making sure you have a full picture of the organization. This process could take some time, and we recommend that you don't sit on these leads too long. Due to the potential value of these leads. you should be starting your outreach ASAP. Ideally, your SDRs will be through the accounts within a month.

The highlighted part of the funnel on the right shows the location of your MQL's - no matter what category we place them in, each one of the mentioned Inbound Leads will fall into the red-zone.

3) Content Downloads / Information Seekers
A more traditional indicator of interest is a download of content, a webinar or tradeshow attendee, information provided by a PPC campaign, or some kind of syndicated download. All of these prospects are firmly in the information gathering phase and could be looking for a product/service like yours. These prospects haven't finalized if and who they're going to evaluate, and are keeping options open. It's up to your SDRs to further qualify them and gain as much account information as possible - this will help your team either book an SQL meeting or nurture them along for future potential.

Attention spans aren't the longest among those who download content or attend events - more often than not they attend, gather the necessary materials (recordings, slideshows, brochures) and file them away into a "potential vendor" folder. By catching these prospects early on in their information gathering phase and consulting them on your product/service, more often than not your name is at the top of that vendor list. This is why we recommend reaching out 0-5 days post event. Do your research as well! More often than not the decision maker isn't going to be the one downloading content or attending webinars/tradeshows, so you have to account map to make sure that you're talking with the right people immediately.

47% of B2B buyers consume 3-5 pieces of content prior to engaging with a salesperson.

The top 3 paid advertising spots get 46% of the clicks on the page.

93% of the B2B buying processes begin with an online search

51% of B2B buyers rely more on content to research and make B2B purchasing decisions than they did a year ago...so those captured MQLs are further along in the purchase process than ever before!

Did you know?

81% of trade show attendees have buying authority... so 4 out of every 5 MQLs you capture will be with decision makers! Letting that list remain dormant is bad for business.

4) Browsers
The most passive MQL, Browsers are usually generated by Web Capture Technology and often don't take an action when they visit your site or content. Because of this, they're the lowest level of priority when it comes to your SDRs reaching out. It's still important to reach in a timely manner, but it can be done in a much more limited capacity.

Due to the low level of priority of these MQL's we recommend that instead of picking up the phone the SDR creates an email campaign with strong CTA's (calls to action) as their primary method of outreach. Additionally, it's not pertinent that you reach out to the individual generated by the web capture - account mapping will be your best friend when reaching out to these organizations. Treat them almost as an outbound account, as the information you have is limited. It's important to leverage what you know based on the account mapping you've done to consult and inform the prospect, much like you would in an outbound scenario.

*How About This "Pre-Qualified Lead?"

The dD Pre-Qual Program is designed to provide organizations with alternative or additional MQL sources. These pre-qualified leads are valuable because these accounts more closely match up with your ICP and have taken some action to indicate interest.. They've been qualified due to some external factors, and therefore display a fit for your product / service.

They key to making a program like this one work is having a highly developed ICP. If you're running an outbound program or have SDRs calling inbound leads (you should!), those conversation notes are key. Additionally, if you take a look at your Win/Loss analysis you'll be able to put together what your top customers look like. Creating a feedback loop between those conversation notes and your Win/Loss analysis will make sure that you're finding IDEAL prospects, not just potential prospects.

Once you have a fleshed out ICP (the foundation of your pre-qualified program) it's time to start scraping. Going after specific industries, titles, regions, and other qualifying factors will help start a campaign. Setting the qualification standards beforehand will make sure that you're getting the desired information at the end.

- **List ID & Web Scraping -** Having such a large universe of prospects can be daunting. By leveraging a partnership network and web scraping technology you can ehance the data to ensure its accuracy. All bad data is thrown out, leaving you with a (still large) list of potential accounts to target.

- **Surveys -** Executing email campaigns with high-level qualification questions (in survey form) , you can prompt potential customers to self-select themselves as a target industry/account/contact. It's essentially a binary yes-no system that enables you to cull down a large universe of accounts into a more manageable target list for your outbound team.

- **Tele-Qualification -** Once you have that list of survey respondents, additional tele-qualification is used to fill in some of the gaps that might be present. It also further verifies the accuracy of the respondents and allows you to gain a deeper understanding of the internal workings of these accounts.

In the end, you're getting batches of leads that contain all necessary (and accurate) contact info **as well as** the pre-determined qualification criteria. Giving a list like that to your SDRs will allow them to focus on further qualifying leads and converting opportunities.

If you have interest in exploring a pre-qual program with demandDrive, check out the "contact us" section below!

Resources

- CEIR: The Spend Decision: Analyzing How Exhibits Fit Into The Overall Marketing Budget
- DemandGen Report – 2016 Content Preferences Survey
- Powertraffic PPC Trends and Statistics
- Pinpoint Market Research and Anderson Jones PR

Contact us today!

Let's discuss how we can help drive predictable revenue and sustainable growth.

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