



The B2B Lead Generation Guide

How to generate a steady and consistent flow of qualified sales leads for B2B products and services, using digital marketing and marketing automation strategies



About The Author



Will Swayne is the Founder and Head of Strategy of *Marketing Results*, a digital marketing agency that specialises in lead generation for marketers of business products and services, including consulting, coaching, professional services, HR and recruitment, business software, equipment, transport and logistics, plus other big-ticket B2B products and services.

Will got his start in marketing in 1999, when he landed a job with fast-growing Japanese direct marketing firm *JIMOS Corporation*, as they went from \$0 to \$100 million in revenue in 5 years.

Will has directly consulted to hundreds of companies over the last 15 years and is passionate about generating **bottom line results** through digital marketing and marketing automation.

When he's not strategising online marketing funnels, he enjoys hiking, travelling, watching HBO dramas and spending time with his young family.

Who This Guide Is For

This Guide is aimed at the owners, directors and marketing managers of companies that sell business services (and products) – or in fact anyone with a vested interest in attracting customers and clients in a B2B setting, including

Accountants	Consultants	Business coaches
Engineers	Equipment suppliers	HR specialists
IT specialists	Lawyers	Recruiters
Software vendors	Transport and logistics	And more!

The business services sector is a major force in the Australian economy and represents one quarter of Australia's output and one-fifth of total employment.

But where there is money, there is also competition. And competition for time, attention and wallets of customers in B2B settings is intense.

You might say that the **ability to create customers** is the critical competency that either **constrains** or **powers** the growth of your company or firm.

This Guide shares some of the most important things we've learnt about creating customers when selling B2B over the last 11+ years.

Everything you'll read below is based on **experience, testing** and **results** working in the industry and seeing what works.

Now let's explore some of the challenges faced by B2B marketers today, before looking at potential solutions...

The Top 5 Challenges Faced By Marketers Of B2B Products and Services

Most of the challenges faced by marketers of B2B products and services are by-products of the fact that in this sector we're likely to see some or all of the following features:

- high transaction size
- high customer lifetime value
- high profit
- large potential market size
- high probability of client retention once you're embedded

These features promote **competition for customers**, which is at the root of most of the marketing challenges you're facing.

Specifically, here are 5 problems that are relatively common among B2B marketers:

Challenge #1: *Qualified* lead generation

It may seem redundant to list "lead generation" as a challenge in a report all about how to generate leads.

But what I mean by this is that most B2B salespeople *are actually pretty good at **selling***. What they lack is enough qualified buyers to sell to.

Here's a question I often ask potential clients:

If I get 10 qualified buyers and sit them down in front of you for a meeting, how many would you convert into a client on average?

In the B2B space, depending on what's being sold, most people answer between 5 and 8!

So **selling** usually isn't the problem. The problem is a lack of qualified prospects to **sell to**.

Challenge #2: Effectively differentiating your offering

Another problem is that more often than not, the buyer is steadily bombarded by salespeople and marketing messages.

Their buying shields tend to be up, and they've "heard it all before".

So they filter out your marketing message, and as a result, they fail to understand how you're different and what that means to them.

And what makes this even worse is that many B2B solutions are somewhat complex.

The difference between microchip A and microchip B, or legal strategy A or legal strategy B, or management consulting method A and management consulting method B, is not likely to be distilled into a sentence or two.

So unless you get the time and attention of key decision makers in order to explain how you're different, you're unlikely to get much marketing traction.

(Or maybe, you're not really different in the first place. This is a big red flag. Our experience shows that **meaningful differentiation is THE cornerstone of profitable marketing campaigns, online or offline – and I go into how to achieve that on page 10 of this Guide)**

Challenge #3: Long sales cycle and buyer inertia

Taking into account a number of factors – the high degree of competition, high transaction value, potentially multiple decision-makers, and the political cost to managers of making a bad decision – it's no surprise that buyers can take their time to make a decision in the B2B space.

There's a continuum here:

An IT security firm specialising in forensic analysis of data security breaches may find their sales cycle is almost zero days. The customer wants you there "yesterday".

But a company selling new production line equipment or a manufacturer may have to wait months or years to get a decision - and there's no guarantee it will be a positive one.

Where there is high cost or complexity there is always going to be longer sales cycle. However, there is a lot you can do to influence and compress your sales cycle.

Here's an article that addresses this topic in much greater depth:

<https://www.marketingresults.com.au/blog/shorten-your-sales-cycle>

Challenge #4: Decision-making complexity

The larger, more expensive and more sophisticated your solution, the more decision makers and bureaucracy tend to get involved and the more approval hoops you need to jump through before you get your purchase order.

If you're dealing direct with the business owner of an SME, then this complexity is typically much reduced - either the head honcho rubber-stamps your proposal directly, or they may confer with a key person or spouse prior to signing off.

As your target company size increases you're more likely to be dealing with more stakeholders.

And if what you sell is complex, you may need to get buy-in from multiple departments or functions.

Generally, once 3 or more decision makers get involved, there are more ways your sale can be delayed or derailed - so you need specific marketing and selling strategies to deal with that.

Challenge #5: The high cost of attention

Again, because many B2B selling situations are extremely competitive and lucrative, advertisers are prepared to pay handsomely to attract the attention of economic buyers.

This drives up the cost of media and promotional opportunities.

A good barometer of this is *Cost Per Click (CPC)* in *Google AdWords*, where advertisers pay for clicks according to a type of auction system.

I've chosen one B2B category for illustrative purposes - management consulting.

Keyword (by relevance)		Avg. monthly searches ?	Competition ?	Suggested bid ?
management consulting	📈	1,000	High	\$10.13
business consultants	📈	170	High	\$11.12
marketing consultants	📈	90	High	\$18.39
management consultants	📈	140	High	\$10.84

..and for the purpose of this exercise, let's take these estimates at face value.

\$18.39 per click (i.e. per visit) is a lot of money to pay, *unless* you have a marketing process that converts at a high enough rate.

And it's not just *Google AdWords*. Trade shows, trade magazines and print media also charge high rates - because marketers will pay them in order to connect with these traditionally difficult-to-reach buyers.

The "free" side of Google offers no respite either. If the value of a visit is high, companies will pour resources into content marketing and Search Engine Optimisation in order to drive increased visibility, rankings and visits.

It's an arms race. And your "cost per eyeball" ends up rising as a result.

So how do most B2B firms market their businesses (and the pros and cons of each method)?

Briefly, here are the main methods firms use to market themselves, with the typical results of each one.

(These methods are a summary of our conversations with a large number of B2B company owners and marketing managers:)

1. Partner/network referrals (e.g. referrals from allied professionals)

Don't get me wrong, referrals from partners or people in your professional network are *great*. They typically position you as an expert and result in very high close rates.

The drawback is that partners typically refer when **they** want to refer... not when you need clients.

So this is a great method, but non-scalable.

2. Client Referrals

The same pros and cons apply to customer referrals.

An endorsement from an existing client is a fantastic door opener in most cases.

So again, generate all the customer referrals you can, but if you find you still have a growth deficit, active growth strategies will be required.

3. Networking

Aahh... the fine art of networking. Some people excel at it and enjoy it. Others do not.

If networking is your thing, great! Keep it up. However, if you're one of those people who cringes when they hear the word "networking", my observation is that it's never going to work really well for you.

Networking training can help, but typically won't transform you into a networking superstar.

4. Speaking and Events

Speaking and events can be **very** effective methods of positioning you or your firm as a "thought leader".

The challenge is always how to fill the room. If someone else does it for you, then nine-tenths of the battle is won.

Sometimes, sponsoring a trade show will also get you a spot as a speaker. This gives you an opening, but the rest is up to you to ensure your talk is interesting and engage to delegates.

5. Trade Shows

A well-attended industry trade show can be a great venue to gain increased exposure.

In my experience, a lot of marketers shake a lot of hands and exchange a lot of business cards at trade shows, but may not necessarily come away with much new business.

Typically, the weak link is capturing prospect interest with relevant offers and in following up with prospects in a timely manner.

6. Telemarketing

Appointment-setting via telemarketing is another method that is both a blessing and a curse.

It can be a blessing because it **can** work... and when it does, you can scale very easily by just going broader in terms of geography and by adding people on the phones.

But it's a curse because I've seen more than a few companies get very addicted to and over-reliant on telemarketing leads.

And what tends to happen is that the cost of appointments goes up and up incrementally to the point where it's no longer profitable – by which time you have a sales pipeline built around a flow of inbound appointments.

In some B2B settings (e.g. recruitment), some of the star salespeople are effectively just very good at breaking down doors on the phone.

This allows them to get in front of more buyers, which in turn nets them more sales.

They may not necessarily be better salespeople than lesser performers - but they are much better lead generators.

7. Online marketing

Then there's online marketing.

Online marketing has some extremely attractive features:

- **It's highly measurable and accountable**, which means if you do it right, you can scale what's working and cut what isn't working quickly.
- **It's on the right side of the trend** in that more and more customers and potential investors are doing extensive research online prior to making any sort of purchase decision (see next section).
- **And online is more of a level playing field** than most other media. There's no reason why small or niche players can't do very well if they take the right approach, even against much bigger and deeper-pocketed competitors.

That being said, you still face the problem of **intense competition** and an ever-increasing array of complexity around tools and tactics in the digital marketing space.

I've spoken to many firm principles and executives who have an extensive presence online... and I've also spoken with more than a few owners or executives of B2B firms who have "put their toe in the water" a few times with online marketing and have got burnt... or who are ticking along at a relatively low level, without feeling like they've really cracked the online code.

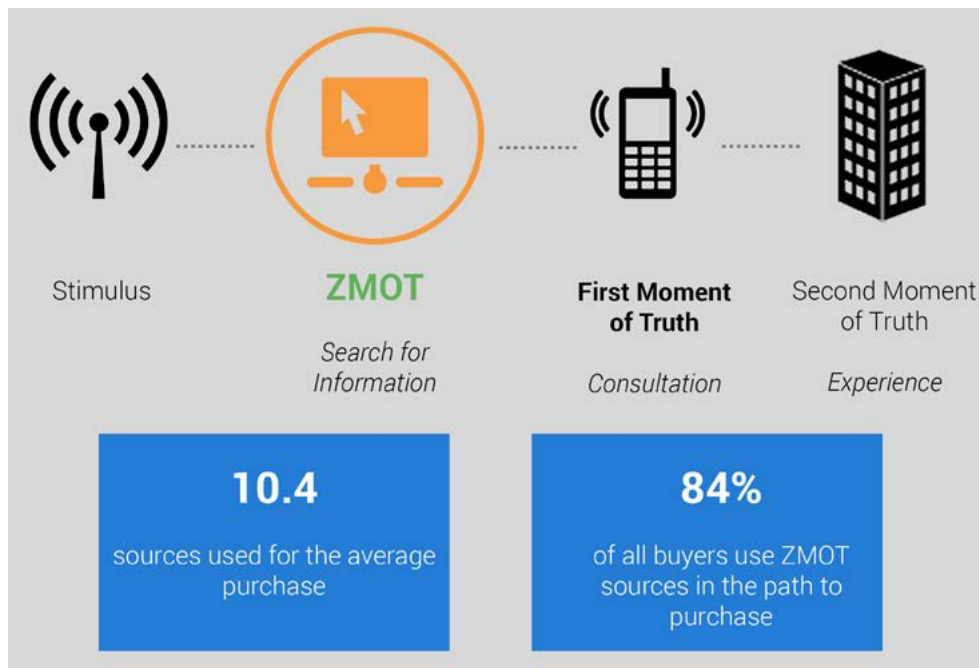
We'll devote most of the rest of this report to successfully navigating the online space to drive leads sales opportunities in the B2B sector.

And the reason for our focus on online is because of the rise of the "Zero Moment of Truth", and what that means to the future of your business growth...

The “Zero Moment of Truth”: why growth-oriented B2B companies *must* master the online landscape

The Zero Moment of Truth or ZMOT is a term coined by Google to describe the new reality of how consumers buy.

The “Zero Moment” occurs when buyers have a need, intent or question they want answered online. It’s at this moment, before the buyer has even left their office or thought about solutions, that B2B marketers have the opportunity to start the selling process and move the prospect toward making a buying decision



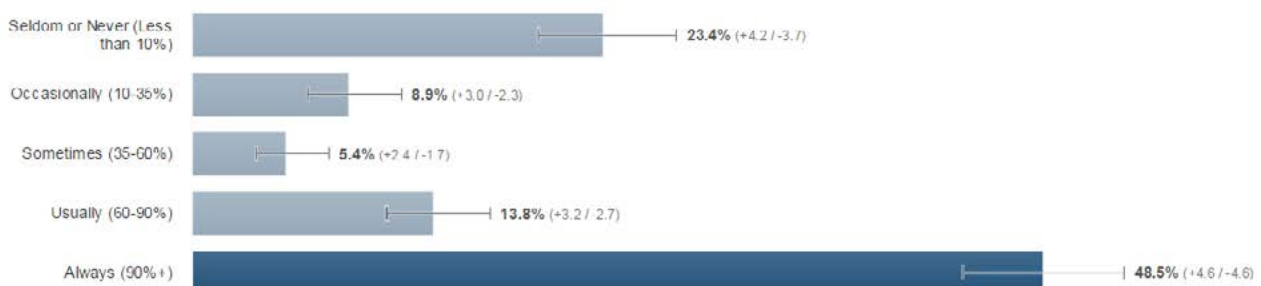
We conducted our own independent research on this.

While it’s not specific to B2B purchasing behaviour in particular, I believe it is instructive.

We asked 500 survey respondents between the ages of 25 and 54 the following question:

“When you buy anything worth at least \$500, how often do you conduct pre-purchase research online?”

And here are the results:



That's right: almost half of the surveyed individuals **always** conduct pre-purchase research online for high-value items. And the trend is building.

How many of **your** prospects are researching potential solutions online before they buy? A lot, I bet.

If you accept that there are many potential customers searching online **right now** for what you offer, then the next question becomes...

What are the characteristics of super-successful online marketing campaigns in the B2B sector?

Put simply, the most successful online marketing programs are ones that are able to overcome the marketing challenges we explored on page 4.

In short, they achieve the following goals:

- They draw the prospect out and get him or her looking for YOU, not the other way around
- They establish you as a thought leader
- They effectively differentiate your offering
- They distill complex messages and make them simple
- They are designed to compress long sales cycles and drive faster decision making

Business uber-guru Peter Drucker said:

"The purpose of marketing is to make selling unnecessary".

And that's what an effective web strategy does – it harnesses the power of marketing to drive highly qualified leads that make brute-force selling unnecessary.

OK, you now know WHAT you need to achieve. Now let's look at exactly HOW to achieve it using the strategies and methods we've developed over the last 11+ years...

PILLAR 1: Define and articulate a killer Unique Value Proposition

It's almost become a cliché – "you need a unique point of difference".

The truth is even worse. You need MORE than just a unique point of difference.

Now a Unique Value Proposition (or UVP) is just the "price of entry".

Meaning, if you **DON'T** have one, or it's unclear to your target market, *you're toast*.

Because the purpose of a UVP is to tilt the playing field in your favour, so you can spend less time, money and energy breaking down doors and more time actually selling to economic buyers.

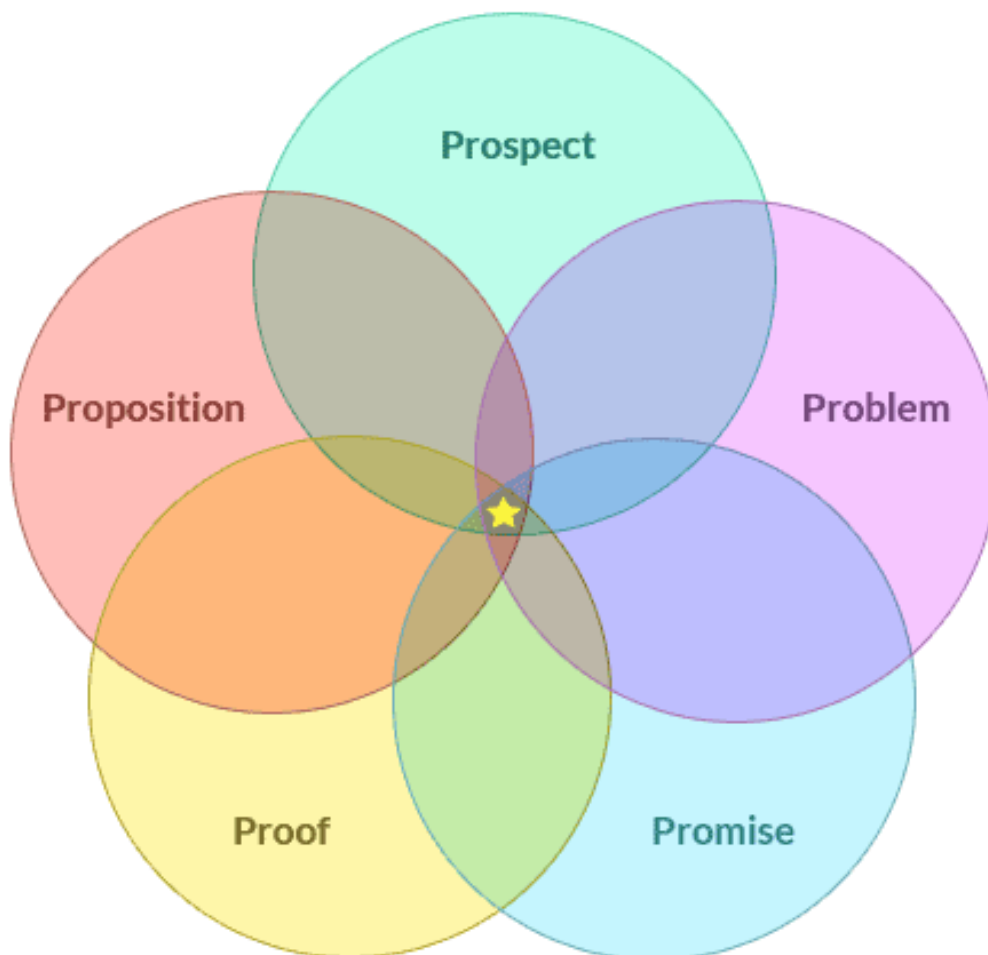
Everyone knows you need a UVP. Many purport to have one. But relatively few UVPs are actually **effective**. By effective, I mean that demonstrably and measurably:

- get attention
- cut through the clutter
- attract ideal customers
- repel customers you *don't* want
- drive lower cost per opportunity, etc.

Marketing Results has a whole methodology for developing Unique Value Propositions that work, so I won't reprint it here.

To read more about this, you'll find a very comprehensive, free article here:

<https://www.marketingresults.com.au/conversion-kaleidoscope/>



Types of UVPs that work in B2B

It would be “speaking out of school” to divulge too much about specifically what has worked for specific clients, but I will tell you what **kinds** of UVPs tend to work in the B2B sector.

1. Focusing on a specific type of target customer

e.g. industry category, target company size, problem definition.

2. Focusing on expertise in a specific product category

e.g. mining equipment, web security, commercial disputes resolution, EPR software

Generally, if you're NOT focused around either of these two concepts, then you run the risk of approaching the market with a proposition that is too broad to cut through with any force.

If you take one thing out of this Guide, make it this. You need a compelling UVP to “anchor” your marketing around a defined space in which you can win!

It's better to have 80% of 1% of the market than 0.0001% of 100% of the market!

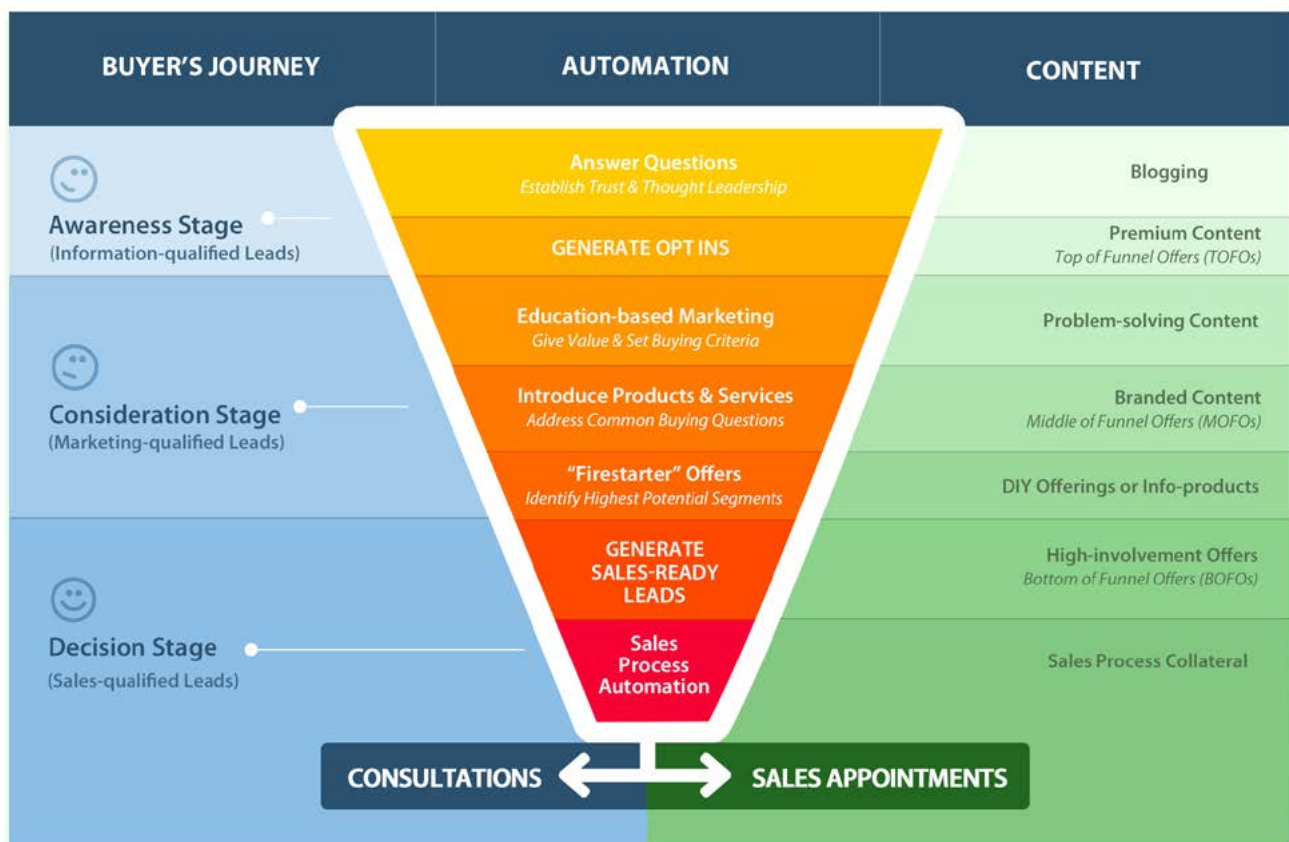
PILLAR 2: A marketing funnel capable of converting a raw visitor into a qualified, ready-to-buy prospect

A strong UVP is the marketing “ballast” that will form the core of your marketing message.

The next pillar of your successful online marketing system is an **effective marketing funnel** for converting raw visitors into qualified, ready-to-buy prospects.

We’ve developed a special methodology for designing marketing funnels called the *Sales Lead Machine Blueprint*.

Here’s what it looks like:



Again, in this article I'd prefer to focus on what specific elements of the *Sales Lead Machine Blueprint* are particularly effective for marketers of B2B products and services – but to get a grounding in the overall methodology, I've put together a free 16 minute video, which you can access here:

<https://www.marketingresults.com.au/client-attraction>

Sales funnel elements that work in B2B

(****** Recommendation: this section may make more sense after you've watched the video above, especially if you're not familiar with multi-step conversion processes ******)

We've already talked about B2B products and services being competitive and harder to differentiate than some other categories.

So what definitely WON'T work, is if you create a website with a bullet point list of the features and benefits of the different products and services you provide, plus an "enquire now" form.

There just aren't enough reasons to respond.

So the alternative is to put together an education-based marketing approach using the *Sales Lead Machine Blueprint*.

This usually has a lot of moving parts, but the main three phases are:

Phase #1: Offer A Quick Educational Resource

This is known as a Top of Funnel Offer (TOFO).

Typically you would offer a resource that the user can gain access to by entering their email address.

For example:

- A Special Report or White Paper
- A booklet of Use Cases or Case Studies
- A Video

The purpose of this resource is to build trust and educate the prospect on the value of your solution.

This is one of the ways you get the prospect to understand your value so they can make a faster buying decision.

Phase #2: A Deep Educational Resource

This is called a Middle of Funnel Offer (MOFO).

The purpose is to deepen your conversation with the prospect, while still not "spooking" them with a direct 1-on-1 sales consultation.

And a typical approach here would be to offer a webinar or more in-depth printed materials where you explore concepts in more depth.

Again, the purpose is to build trust and answer common questions in the marketing stage. Remember what Drucker said: *"The purpose of marketing is to make selling unnecessary"*.

You can use what's called an "Evergreen Webinar" strategy to replay the same webinar every week (or as often as you like) in order to ensure prospects can access this information exactly when the timing is right for them.

The thinking is that anyone who will set aside 60 minutes to watch a webinar about your opportunity is already relatively qualified to buy.

Phase #3: A 1-on-1 Meeting or Demo Offer

This is called a Bottom of Funnel Offer (BOFO).

And this is where you propose to the prospect a 1-on-1 Meeting or Demo (or similar).

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss their situation and whether or not your strategy or property is right for them, and if so, how it would work.

Again, the value of Phases 1 and 2 is that they set you up for a great conversation in Phase 3.

If you try to get prospects straight to Phase 3, you'll typically be met with resistance (though not always. If urgency is very high on the part of the prospect e.g. for IT security services following a data breach, then you might go straight to this stage).

To recap: Pillar 1 is a Iron-clad Unique Value Proposition. Pillar 2 is a tight marketing funnel. Now you're ready for Pillar 3...

Pillar 3: Effective traffic generation campaigns

At the risk of labouring the point – profitable, sustainable and scalable traffic generation is only possible for B2B if you get the first two pillars right!

If you're lax on the first 2 pillars, then as sure as night follows day, traffic will be unsustainable and unprofitable.

So let's assume you've locked in the first two pillars. Now let's cut to the chase and talk about what traffic methods tend to work the best in B2B:

First, let's talk about what tends NOT to work:

The "friends and fans" side of social media (as opposed to the advertising side) tends NOT to work as a customer acquisition vehicle.

I'm sure there are exceptions, but that's our experience.

The methods below can potentially drive a steady stream of new sales opportunities.

It's nigh on impossible to do that with *Twitter*, *Instagram* and *Facebook* pages.

Now we have that out of the way, **let's talk about what DOES work.**

Traffic Method #1: Google AdWords

No doubt about it. Google *AdWords* works for business services

Google AdWords isn't cheap, but it can be **cost-effective**.

And there's no doubt that it has the potential to unearth new sales opportunities.

If you're interested in learning more about specific optimisation approaches with Google *AdWords*, then subscribe to my free video series here:

<https://www.marketingresults.com.au/client-attraction>

In the third video in the series, I discuss traffic generation strategies in depth.

Traffic Method #2: Organic Google Traffic

While **AdWords** is great, there's no doubt Google has the power to drive high volumes of targeted visitors via their organic listings.

An effective approach to organic Google traffic generation (formerly known under the catch-all of "SEO") is the publication of regular, high-quality content.

Consistent publication and promotion establishes you as a thought leader and attracts prospects to seek out your problem-solving expertise, instead of you having to convince prospects to listen to what you have to say.

Rather than going too deep into specific strategies in this paper, my free traffic video unpacks a high-level strategy for achieving lasting success on Google with content marketing:

<https://www.marketingresults.com.au/client-attraction>

Just remember not to refer to organic Google traffic as "free" Google traffic – it's anything *but* free!

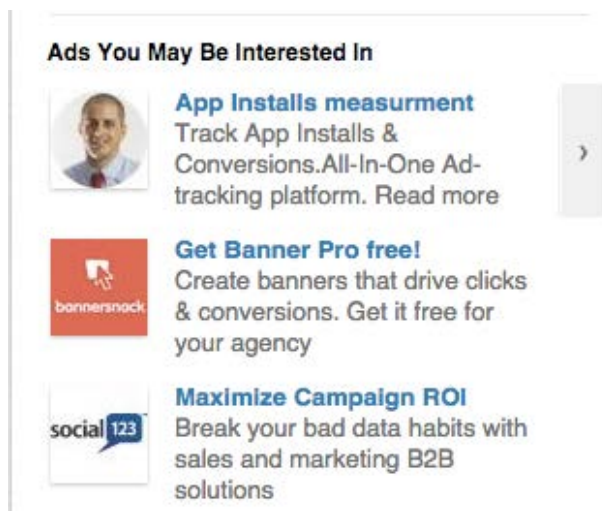
Achieving solid rankings, especially in a competitive industry such as this one, requires an investment of either time or money.

It's not free, but it can be cost-effective.




Traffic Method #3: LinkedIn Pay Per Click

For B2B marketers, LinkedIn has the advantage of being a business-centric social network.

LinkedIn Pay Per Click (PPC) advertising allows you to target ads by industry, role type, company size, geography and a number of other data points of relevance to B2B marketers.



Ads You May Be Interested In

- 
App Installs measurement
 Track App Installs & Conversions. All-In-One Ad-tracking platform. [Read more](#)
- 
Get Banner Pro free!
 Create banners that drive clicks & conversions. Get it free for your agency
- 
Maximize Campaign ROI
 Break your bad data habits with sales and marketing B2B solutions

Typically, you want your add to lead to a Top of Funnel Offer (TOFO) - for example a name capture - as opposed to a hard, "enquire now" type offer.

In addition to the PPC side of LinkedIn, outreach campaigns to your LinkedIn connections, and use of a LinkedIn Premium account to contact people who are not your connections, can also be fruitful forms of lead generation.

Implementation approaches

In this Guide, we've explored the online marketing landscape around B2B products and services.

And I've shared with you some of the key learnings from the last 11+ years generating leads in this space.

I've shown you what's worked for us and I invite you to test these concepts for yourself.

The next question to consider is, how do you **implement** these strategies?

And there are 4 broad approaches:

Option 1: Do nothing

Option one is to **do nothing**.

And I'll be honest with you – while I firmly believe I've outlined some practical suggestions in this report, they do require commitment and investment to execute.

So if you're ticking along nicely and don't desire to grow substantially, it's probably better to do nothing than to skirt round the edges.

Option 2: Do it yourself

Option two is to **do it yourself**.

In **some** industries I'd say, "if you're a little low on funds but have plenty of time on your hands and have the interest, then sure, give it a go".

But B2B isn't one of those industries.

B2B marketing - especially online - has a high degree of complexity attached.

So unless you want a wholesale career change from B2B to digital marketing, my recommendation is to steer clear of this one.

Option 3: Hire Internally

Option 3 is to **hire internally**. This will free up your time, although internal people need to be found, on-boarded, trained and managed.

With internal hiring, the sticking point is that the strategies covered in this Guide encompass a broad range of skill sets and disciplines: marketing strategy, in-depth data analysis, copywriting, conversion-oriented design, technical integration, conversion optimisation and so on.

And it's pretty much impossible for any one human being to be exceptional at all these skill sets.

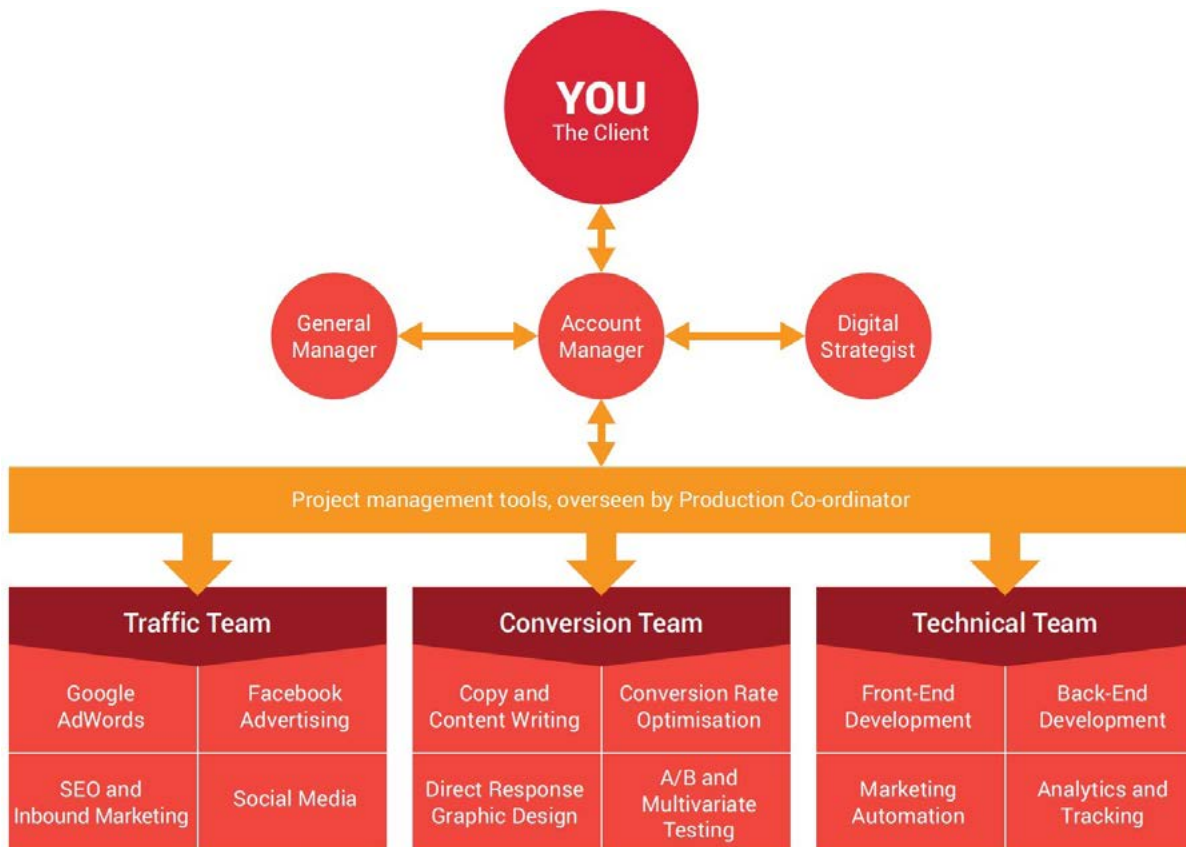
So doing it in-house may involve employing not one but several specialists, which can start to get expensive.... if you can find them in the first place.

Nevertheless, if you have sufficient resources, this is certainly an option.

Option 4: Hire an agency

Option four is to hire an agency such as *Marketing Results* to take care of these strategies for you.

Every agency model is different, but in the case of *Marketing Results*, we give you access to an “Expert Team” of up to 12 individual specialists working on your traffic, conversion and automation Campaigns... often for much less than the cost of hiring one full-time resource in house.



And as a result, you generate a steady stream of inbound leads to power your business growth.

All the critical components of your digital marketing are taken care of, your time is freed up to work “on” the business and not “in” the business, and what you know *should* be getting done, actually gets done.

This option won't be right for everyone, nor do we accept a new client unless we really feel there is a genuine fit with what we do and that we can add value.

What's the next step?

If you're curious to explore further, then the next step is to set up a time to conduct a complimentary *Online Marketing Strategy Session*, normally via phone in the first instance.

During that initial chat, we'll evaluate your current online marketing strategy and work with you collaboratively to create an *immediate* plan to increase your leads and sales online.

If you enjoy the conversation and get value from it, we can discuss working together.

On the other hand, if what we come up with doesn't align with what you need, or for any reason we feel we're not the best team to assist in your situation, then there's no harm done – at least we explored the possibilities.

To take the next step, call us on 1300 RESULTS (1300 737 858) within Australia or +61 7 3161 1541 internationally.

Or, complete the Strategy Session application form at:

<https://www.marketingresults.com.au/ss>

And whatever you do, I hope you'll apply some of the strategies in this Guide to further your business and drive more leads and sales with lower marketing costs.

Here's to YOUR success,

Will Swayne



Head of Strategy
Marketing Results

<https://www.marketingresults.com.au>

P.S. If you haven't already, go ahead and sign up to receive our Free Video Series: *How To Build An Automated Marketing System That Delivers Qualified Sales Leads To Your Doorstep*.

This series covers in more detail the "how to" of effective traffic generation, conversion, and marketing automation.

Here's the link to sign up, free:

<https://www.marketingresults.com.au/client-attraction>