



Super-charging packaging sales

Lead-generation survival guide

How to expand your sales pipeline in a down economy
through Web-based lead-generation campaigns

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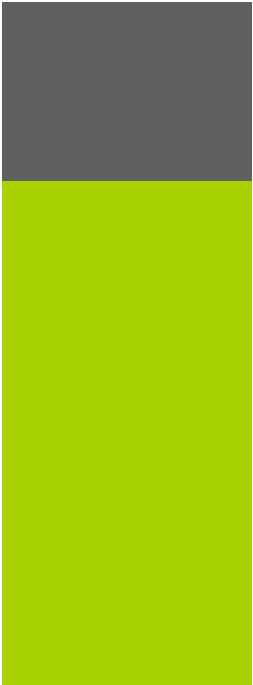


Table of Contents

- When the sales pipeline empties 3**
- New media, new goals, new sales leads 3**
- Soft leads versus hard leads 5**
- The bait: White papers, videos and sample offers .. 6**
- Scoping out lead-management platforms..... 7**
- Selecting media partners for lead-generation 9**
- What about telephone solicitation services?..... 10**
- The true cost of ignoring lead generation 10**

Where is your next lead coming from?

With the biggest economic downturn since the Great Depression looming ahead, suppliers must look at every possible method to get more leads into their sales pipelines.

When the sales pipeline empties

Legions of packaging salespeople and the suppliers they work for have made a good living for years through word of mouth and referral business without ever spending a nickel on advertising or lead generation campaigns. However, the times are changing dramatically. Consider that in 2008, the U.S. economy shed 2 million jobs. Analysts predict another 3 million could be lost in 2009 and the first part of 2010.

When you consider the fact that buying cycles for packaging machinery and materials can be 6 to 12 months long, the emptying of a supplier's sales pipeline is a slow-motion ticking time bomb that could literally destroy the supplier.

Reason: Once the sales pipeline is empty, it is often too late to fill it back up in this economic climate. Such suppliers are at tremendous risk for survival, let alone growth.

The time to get more sales leads into the pipeline is now, before the pipeline shows signs of emptying out.

Compounding the problem is that packaging buyers and influencers are trickier than ever to reach. Often they DON'T want to talk to a salesperson until they've conducted their research. They won't take calls. They won't answer emails. And by the time the supplier's sales staff reaches them, it may be too late. They may have already formed opinions – right or wrong – that may lock a given supplier out of getting the potential business.

When and where do these buyers do their research? How can they be reached and influenced earlier in their buying cycle? Certainly they read trade publications, attend trade shows, and look up supplier Web sites on the Web. But in today's hyper-competitive landscape, with so many suppliers occupying each packaging niche (with more competition coming from overseas every day), how does a supplier stand out?

Every day, thousands of buyers are on the Web. If you can't get them to come to your Web site, *it's time to go to where the buyers are.*

New media, new goals, new sales leads

Consider this: In the research phase, prospective buyers DO want to learn about your technology, the value you can add, the thought leadership your company brings to the marketplace. But at the same time, prospective buyers DON'T want to talk to your sales person yet. They don't want to be *sold*. And with so much noise in the

marketplace about other suppliers, their products, and their capabilities, it can be tough to break through the clutter.

Suppliers who can find a way to **identify and influence buyers during their early stages of research** can work those buyers throughout their research cycle, winning the battle for mindshare earlier than competitors, and significantly boosting the number of leads in suppliers' sales pipelines.

The first step is to **identify** such buyers while they are still in early-stage research. Fortunately for packaging suppliers, new techniques have emerged to identify those who are in research mode in a non-intrusive manner.

Certain third-party packaging Web sites such as Healthcare-packaging.com are teeming with packagers who are conducting early-stage research. These Web sites, and in some cases, eNewsletters, allow suppliers to place three types of actionable content for packaging buyers to see:

- white papers
- videos
- sample offers

Buyers who access such supplier-specific content must provide their full contact information, which is then automatically passed on to the supplier in the form of a lead. See an example on the next page.

Registration Date: 12/10/2008 10:29 PM	
Program Name	Progenia PW Gold 2008
Classification	PW.com
Email Address	John.Smith@perdue.com
First Name	John
Last Name	Smith
Job Title	Industrial Engineer
Company	Perdue Farms Inc
Street Address	100 Quality St
City	Bridgewater
State	VA
Country	United States of America
Zip/Postal Code	228121618
Industry	Meat/Poultry/Seafood
Job category	Production
Company size	500 - 999
Ad2	White paper: Save on the cost of the label
ReaderID	957292
Source detail	PW.com Video

Sample lead generated from a supplier video, white paper or sample offer.

The privacy policy of any third-party site should clearly state that such an exchange of contact information is taking place. The better sites, such as Healthcare-packaging.com, will disclose this at the bottom of every Web page and e-newsletter, and make it clear that suppliers may use this information to contact the buyer.

Soft leads versus hard leads

So consider the contact information captured in this manner. A buyer is researching on a third-party Web site or eNewsletter and watches a supplier's video or downloads a supplier's white paper. Is that a sales lead? Yes. Is it sales-ready? Not yet. It must be nurtured as part of the supplier's sales/marketing nurturing effort before it becomes sales-ready.

Two terms gaining currency are “hard lead” and “soft lead”. A hard lead is someone who is fairly advanced in the buying cycle and is ready to deal with a salesperson. A soft lead is someone who has downloaded a white paper or watched a video.

The math is alluring to any sales or business development manager. The more hard leads generated, the more quotes written, the more sales closed. It's a numbers game.

So the question is, how can suppliers produce more hard leads?

Answer: By starting with more soft leads, and nurturing them into hard leads over time. By gaining influence with *more* prospective buyers *sooner* in the buying process—when they are just starting out their research by downloading white papers, watching videos, requesting samples—suppliers have a greater chance of influencing such prospects, rather than encountering them late in the buying cycle when judgments and predispositions have already hardened.

Leveraging lead-generation programs on third-party Web sites or eNewsletters can fill the sales pipeline with soft leads, which can be nurtured into hard leads, and then turned into sales.

The bait: White papers, videos and sample offers

Think of lead generation as an exercise in fishing. To catch the most fish, suppliers need to use the correct kind of “bait”. In the packaging market, the forms of “bait” that work best for lead generation are **white papers**, **videos** and **sample offers**.

However, other forms of bait can work well too, such as handbooks, seminars, strategy briefs, trend watches, etc. ***Any type of high-value information that a buyer would be willing to register for will be effective for lead generation.*** What *won't* work? Press releases, brochures, traditional marketing collateral. The Web is awash in product information like this, and is not worth registering for, in the eyes of prospects.

Buyers will not switch to another supplier simply because of features and benefits. They have to be experiencing some sort of pain or issue first. Then they seek a *solution* to that issue—not features and benefits. The vast majority of traditional

marketing collateral completely ignores this, and jumps right to features and benefits, without addressing the underlying issues that the prospects are experiencing.

The white paper is the supplier's chance to directly address the issue being experienced by the prospect, not jump right into the features and benefits of the product being sold. A connection must be formed in the prospect's mind between the issue they are experiencing and the supplier's product. The white paper is uniquely positioned to serve as that crucial connective tissue. Of course, the supplier's product can be positioned throughout that white paper as the solution to that issue! Most suppliers tend to get too close to their own products to make the mental leap to the issue being experienced by customers. ***Yet the more prospects see their pain or issues in the headlines and theme of the supplier's white paper, they more likely they are to download it and generate a soft lead for the supplier's sales pipeline.***

Here are some examples of making the leap from PRODUCT to ISSUE:

Supplier's PRODUCT	ISSUES experienced by prospects	White paper topic that connects PRODUCT with the ISSUES
2D Datamatrix code printer capable of printing ePedigree data	1) Pharmaceutical packagers need to comply with new California track-and-trace law. 2) Want to mitigate anti-counterfeiting	Pharmaceutical ePedigree Compliance: Evaluating 2D Datamatrix Technology
Special in-bag packaging films for meat	Meat packers want to sell lower-value cuts to shoppers who ordinarily wouldn't buy them	National Meat Case Study reveals growing change in the retail meat case. Case ready, vacuum packaging is on the rise in America's meat cases but there's still plenty of opportunity for growth such as roasts and other value cuts that might be unfamiliar to shoppers. Read how in-bag meat packaging can help decrease out of stocks and product shrink.
High-speed pouching machinery	1) Labor costs from manual packing lines can be costly. 2) Floorspace constraints limiting future expansion. 3) Low line speeds at capacity can prevent the taking on of new business.	Justifying high-speed pouching machinery. How a British food processor justified installing one high-speed pouching system to replace five low-speed lines. Reduced packaging labor costs by 60-65%, significantly lowered floor space requirements, improved product quality, and, ultimately, positioned the company to take on new business.

Suppliers who are able to step back from their products and master the issues that matter to their prospects are able to generate a significantly higher number of soft leads—soft leads that can be nurtured into hard leads, which can be converted into sales.

White papers and videos also perform exceptionally well for lead-generation. Look for Web sites who can take videos in a variety of formats. Very often the same videos that are currently on a supplier's Web site can be posted onto a third-party packaging

Web site and get much higher traffic and of course, generate full-contact lead information.

For materials suppliers, sample offers can often be very effective to generate full-contact lead information.

Scoping out lead-management platforms

When choosing a third-party Web site or eNewsletter on which to run a white paper or video, be sure to choose one with the proper lead-management tools to help get the most out of the leads that are generated. A robust lead-management platform should, at the minimum, offer these capabilities for the packaging supplier:

1. **Automatic dissemination to the supplier.** Leads should be disseminated automatically to the supplier by email at least once a week. This way, the leads come directly to the supplier, without the supplier having to log in to retrieve them. Suppliers should also have the ability to choose whether leads are sent daily or in real time as opposed to weekly.
2. **Allow the supplier to retrieve leads on demand.** Just because leads are sent automatically to the supplier shouldn't prevent the supplier from logging into the lead management platform to review and download fresh leads upon demand. Really, any lead management platform should allow BOTH ways of accessing leads.
3. **Automated lead scoring and routing.** Suppliers should be able to set up routing rules that automatically forward leads to different people within the sales organization (or outside distributors) based on geographic, product or demographic datapoints. For example, a supplier should be able to designate Canadian leads to go to the supplier's Canadian distributor—automatically.

Notification Email Settings:

Don't Send "A" record
 Send "A" records in Real Time
 Send "A" records in Nightly Batch
 Send "A" records in Weekly Batch (report run on Monday)

FROM LINE:

SUBJECT LINE:

Routing Rules:

Routing Rule	Destination Email
Company CONTAINS General Mills OR Frito Lay OR Frito-Lay OR Johnson & Johnson OR McNeil OR Pfizer OR Procter OR Procter & Gamble OR P&R OR Wyeth	kirsten.rowitz@bauc.com
Company CONTAINS Pepsi OR Kraft OR Miller Brewing OR Colgate-Palmolive OR Mars USA OR Masterfoods USA OR Nestle OR Sara Lee OR Wrigley OR Unilever	William.sutton@part.com
Industry EQUALS Pharmaceutical/Medical Products OR Pharmaceutical OR Medical Devices/Diagnostic Instrument OR Nutraceutical-Vitamin,Dietary Supplement	William.sutt@part.com
Country EQUALS Mexico OR Puerto Rico	William.sutt@part.com
Country EQUALS Canada	john.artin@part.com
State EQUALS CT OR MA OR ME OR NH OR NY OR RI OR VT	john.artin@part.com
State EQUALS AL OR CO OR KS OR LA OR MO OR MS OR NM OR OK OR TX	bill.alexander@part.com
State EQUALS AZ OR CA OR ID OR MT OR NV OR OR OR UT OR WA OR WY OR AR	bill.alexander@part.com
State EQUALS IA OR MN OR ND OR SD OR WI OR NE	dennis.sowada@part.com
State EQUALS IL OR IN OR MI	walter.utts@part.com

Automated routing rules can disseminate leads directly to sales people.

he Southeast should be able to be sent to the Southeast sales rep. Similarly, suppliers should be able to route leads based on product clicked. For example, those prospects who watched a video of Product A should be able to be routed to Product Manager A. Those who watched Product B should be able to be sent to Product Manager B, etc.

4. **Competitive and internal filtering.** Modern lead management tools allow suppliers to load in the names of competitors, and have those names automatically filtered out of the leads that are delivered. A similar capability should permit automatic filtering of clicks from the supplier's own employees.
5. **Campaign-specific analytics.** Look for tools that offer simple, easy-to-use ad-hoc reporting systems to help spot trends among the leads collected. Reports should show lead-gen campaign results by industry, company size, and job title.



campaigns should look for third-party Web sites and eNewsletters that use AccelaWorks™.

Selecting media partners for lead-generation

There are plenty of third-party media Web sites and eNewsletters that make all sort of claims on traffic, opens and clicks. But for Web-based lead generation, total traffic, opens, and clicks are much less important than such media platforms would have suppliers believe. What is more important is that the *right* audience is attracted, and that media sites have the lead-generation tools in place to capture that audience.

There are two final things to look for when selecting a media partner for a lead-generation campaign:

1. **Copywriting by experienced writers.** Suppliers who are new to running online lead-generation campaigns should be able to rely on third-party Web sites and eNewsletters who have experience running such campaigns to do all the copy writing, eliminating the need to hire marketing agencies or public relations firms.
2. **Automated campaign monitoring.** Most packaging suppliers are inexperienced at media management. At the same time, the better media organizations have evolved to offer highly consultative, hands-on management. Suppliers should look for sites that offer to monitor the performance of their campaigns each month, and alert the supplier in the event lead production should drop below a certain acceptable threshold.

What about telephone solicitation services?

There are some lead-generation services that solicit packaging sales leads by telephone. There are several problems with such leads. First, they are not exclusive to the supplier. Such services give these leads to ALL the packaging suppliers who subscribe to the lead generation service. Second, the leads that these services turn up are not, by definition, engaged in the supplier's value proposition. No thought leadership has occurred on the part of the supplier in the prospect's mind. The supplier is reduced to just another salesperson calling.

Most importantly, the supplier has no control of where the prospect is in the buying cycle. If the prospect is too early in the buying cycle, he or she will fail to respond to any telephone calls from the supplier's salespeople, because the prospect is still in early research mode and will not want to take such calls. If the prospect is too late in the buying cycle, the supplier will have already lost the chance to influence the thinking of the prospect.

The best way to execute lead generation is organically, targeting the prospect on THEIR terms—when they are in research mode and not likely to take a supplier's phone call—and not on the supplier's.

The true cost of ignoring lead generation

No packaging supplier can afford to take risks with sales and marketing in today's dire economic climate. For machinery companies, competition for capital equipment projects will only heat up. Suppliers must pull out all the stops to source leads from any credible avenue, and then deploy a true lead nurturing campaign to turn those soft leads into hard leads.

2009 and 2010 will be the years that weed out the weak suppliers from the strong ones. Those who will survive will be those suppliers who are willing to take any step necessary to preserve and grow their businesses, even if it means trying new things, or discarding old beliefs.

The good news is that today's crop of online lead-gen platforms is better than ever, and provides a definitive return on what is a surprisingly affordable investment. Suppliers who have already invested in such lead-generation platforms are seeing

the impact on their sales and marketing, assuring robust livelihood not only during the economic downturn, but for years to come.

For more information on running lead-gen campaigns of the sort described in this white paper, please contact:

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