Gartner for Marketers

Gartner

DEMAND GENERATION AND SALES-ENABLEMENT PRIMER FOR 2018

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SUMMARY

Gartner's 2018 demand generation and sales enablement research shows marketing leaders in B2B environments how to build and grow long-term lead management programs. It covers topics such as demand generation strategies and tactics, and a bottom-line, revenue-producing relationship with sales.

Scope

Gartner's demand generation and sales-enablement research includes the techniques and processes required to work more effectively with sales leaders when generating, managing and converting leads.

The 2018 agenda covers:

- Following best practices for managing leads, from generating demand to performance metrics.

- Developing and driving adoption of insight and tools to qualify leads, score leads and nurture them while partnering with sales.

- Growing and evolving a successful account-based marketing strategy including solid performance metrics to prove how marketers are moving the needle in closing deals and growing business.
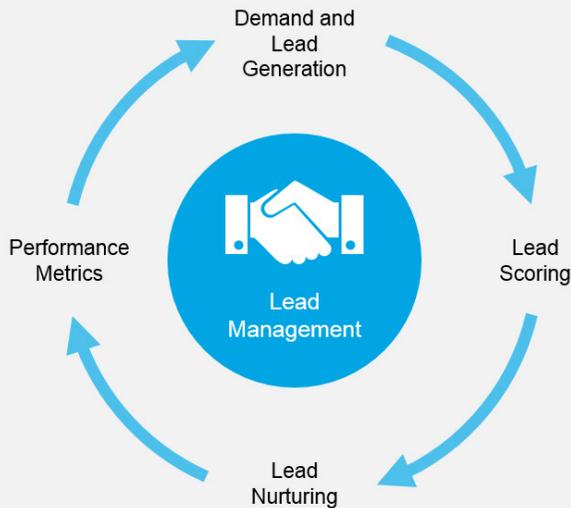
Start by gaining an understanding of how a typical persona, person or buying group moves through a buying journey.

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ANALYSIS

Figure 1. Demand Generation and Sales Enablement Overview

Source: Gartner (January 2018)

The best approach for improving lead management capabilities begins with the customer. Marketing leaders can start by gaining an understanding of how a typical persona, person or buying group moves through a buying journey. Use customer understanding to align with sales around what constitutes a qualified lead, what information sales needs to advance those leads and where those leads are in the buying process, then continue to support sales all the way through to deal conversion. The ability to align with sales executives as they consider how processes and technologies affect the customer will make or break your lead management initiative.

Align with sales executives as they consider how processes and technologies affect the customer.

Top Challenges and How Gartner Can Help

The demand generation and sales enablement research agenda is designed to help marketing leaders in B2B environments improve their lead management processes. Business model, customer base and product offering are prominent characteristics that shape your strategies. We'll show you how to benchmark your brand's approach to multichannel marketing based on your specific business context. Use this research to improve the sales-marketing relationship, as well as develop and grow strategic account-based marketing programs. The agenda will help you answer the following questions:

How can I improve the lead management process?

A lack of mutual understanding and cooperation around lead management operations hampers many sales and marketing teams' abilities to act on hot leads and nurture potential business. Marketers' first step should be, in partnership with sales, to define the characteristics of a good lead, with a focus on improving the quality and quantity of leads that marketing captures.

From there, marketers should apply a segmentation strategy to leads. This will enable you to identify, filter and isolate the qualified leads that have the highest potential value and are most likely to buy in the shortest amount of time. In addition, embedding technology within a successful lead management program enables you to automate and track performance metrics across the full buying cycle, from lead, to sale, to growth and lifetime value.

Planned Research

- **Maturity model for B2B lead management.** Marketing leaders in B2B organizations grow revenue through customer engagements across multiple channels. Performance metrics hinge on the ability to share data and coordinate engagement across multiple teams. Orchestration — the planning and design of engagement delivery across a complex customer journey — is crucial for B2B brands pursuing account-based marketing or sophisticated lead management initiatives. This research provides a model to assess your processes and technology investments for maximum impact.

- **Strategies for accelerating lead momentum.** Marketing leaders face tremendous pressure to build digital marketing strategies that drive customers' progress through the pipeline and toward the point of a sales conversation. In a typical purchase process, however, B2B buyers report heavy use of digital channels throughout the entire buying journey, even after direct sales engagement — simultaneously making use of live and digital channels even at the very latest stages of a typical buying journey. Today's marketing leaders in B2B environments must stop thinking about progress on their own terms and instead enable the end-to-end customer's journey. Use this research to learn how to speed customer progress through the most critical buying tasks with consistent support delivered through digital and in-person channels.

- **Use cases for B2B social marketing.** Once considered social marketing laggards, B2B brands now view the channel as the most effective means to deploy across all stages of the customer journey. Marketing leaders in B2B environments now dedicate fully 13% of their annual budgets toward social efforts. This research will focus on best practices in using social marketing to identify, engage, nurture and convert prospects.

- **Unlock the ROI potential of predictive lead scoring for B2B marketers.** Predictive lead scoring is becoming a "must have" for marketing leaders responsible for B2B multichannel initiatives with high lead volumes. Even marketers with lower lead volumes can improve conversion rates and pipeline contribution over traditional scoring methods alone.

How do I improve the sales-marketing relationship?

In a survey of B2B marketing organizations at large and midsize companies, Gartner research found that, on average, only 3% of marketing-sourced leads convert to revenue. And, a survey of over 1,200 salespeople found particularly low levels of preference for marketing-sourced leads. In fact, the survey indicated that, all things being equal, sales would prefer to work with a customer's procurement department than chase a marketing-sourced lead.

Leading marketing organizations are re-evaluating their end-to-end demand generation approach with the goal of figuring out precisely when to pass a potential customer to sales, driving lead conversion up in the process. To accomplish this goal, marketers must re-examine how they create and distribute content, leverage technology and data analytics, and, most importantly, how they interact with sales.

Planned Research

- **Align content to the buying journey.** Leading companies map out the customer buying journey, focusing on the key questions that customers must ask at each stage on the path to purchase. Co-creation of commercial insight and content strategy by sales and marketing builds a deeper and stronger partnership, especially when marketing content better enables sales reps and sales development teams to meet the needs of business buyers. This research explores how content anchored to insight delivered early in the purchase journey, the moment when customers are most malleable, can reshape buying criteria in your favor. Use engagement with content to measure where a customer is in the buying process and determine the appropriate point for sales involvement.

- **Develop your understanding of sales enablement technology.** Marketing leaders in B2B organizations are showing increased interest in sales acceleration and enablement solutions. We'll show you which vendors are meeting client needs, particularly by automating multichannel engagement for and improving the productivity of sales development representatives with marketing-approved scripts and email templates.

- **Partner with sales to encourage lead acceptance.** Despite significant investment in demand generation, sales still holds marketing-sourced leads in low esteem. This research examines several successful tactics for improving relationships with sales, including appointing a marketing envoy to build informal connections with sales and troubleshoot cross-functional relationship challenges, and instituting a lead council that includes representatives from across the commercial organization.

- **Build a challenger marketing capability.** Many B2B marketers realize that the buying environment is changing — customers have more information sources, and buying groups are ever-increasing in size. Marketing leaders can combat both of these scenarios by resetting their customers' buying criteria through building a challenger sale experience. The insight-driven challenger sale teaches customers about a new or previously underappreciated problem. It then demonstrates how they can solve this problem with your company's products or services and has very specific applications for marketing organizations.

How do we develop and grow a strategic account-based marketing program?

B2B marketing leaders are under increased pressure to acquire new customers and expand revenue from existing accounts. Gartner's CMO Strategy Survey 2017 reports that almost one-third of marketing leaders regard customer retention and growth as the most important capability vital to supporting the marketing strategy over the next 18 months. A separate Gartner survey of B2B marketing leaders found heightened expectations from senior management that marketers must take on more responsibility for growing and retaining customers.

Growing account revenue by renewing or expanding existing customers is typically more cost-effective than trying to increase revenue by adding new customers. However, the two objectives need not be mutually exclusive. Account-based marketing (ABM) techniques offer B2B marketing leaders a structured approach and set of tools for efficiently reaching both sets of buyers, helping to focus internal resources on the best business opportunities.

Think of ABM as an application of lead management best practices across all your target accounts and individuals. It adds predictive analytics to score the quality of those leads, targeted programmatic advertising to reach multiple decision makers and personalized content to engage these influencers at each stage of the buying journey. ABM is all of these things operating in a highly coordinated fashion.

Planned Research

- **Implement an ABM plan.** A key factor distinguishing ABM programs from traditional demand generation is that marketing-led engagement continues across the account well after an opportunity has been created. This engagement occurs over more channels, with more individuals and for a longer time, increasing the complexity of campaign orchestration. Our Ignition Guide looks at ways to effectively use multiple inbound and outbound channels to increase the likelihood of engagement from key decision makers and influencers within target accounts.

- **Make ABM and content marketing work together.** Content remains an essential element of the lead management process. With ABM, orchestrating specific content needs can become more complex with multiple opportunities within an account, and multiple contacts at different stages relative to one another. This research covers how to refine your content strategy for an ABM approach, including how to modify personas to match target accounts.

- **Track the right metrics in ABM.** Compared with traditional demand-generation campaigns, ABM programs require new metrics to demonstrate their success. Most notably, B2B marketing leaders need to apply the lens of an account, not a lead. Starting small, typically with a pilot program, can help you refine what success looks like. This research explores the metrics that existing ABM programs are using and examples of the results they are seeing.

- **Use cases for ABM.** As B2B marketers begin to move past the "pilot" phase of ABM implementation, they are exploring different strategies to expand the reach of these programs. This research will share best practices from companies who have developed successful approaches to scaling their ABM programs beyond their top tier accounts.

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Related Priorities

Priority	Focus
Multichannel Marketing and Communications	Multichannel marketing constitutes purposeful, mutually orchestrated engagements, across digital and traditional customer touchpoints.
Mobile Marketing	Successful mobile marketing uses valuable data emitted by mobile devices while balancing effective microtargeting of audiences with overwhelming prospects and customers with interruptions.
Advertising	Advertising encompasses the creation, delivery and orchestration of paid marketing messages and content across channels.
Social Marketing	Social marketing involves listening to and engaging customers, distributing content and cultivating brand advocates. It can increase awareness, consideration, conversion and advocacy.
Digital Commerce	Digital commerce involves the use of marketing technology, techniques and channels — along with data-driven insights and compelling content — to deliver revenue growth through digital sales channels.

Source: Gartner

GARTNER RECOMMENDED READING

Suggested First Steps

"How to Align Marketing, Sales and Technology for Successful Lead Management"

"Four Ways B2B Marketers Can Generate Demand Within Existing Accounts"

"Account-Based Marketing Defined"

"Making the Case for Account-Based Marketing"

"How B2B Marketers Approach Technology Adoption"

"Expand B2B Mobile Marketing Investments Beyond the Basics"

Essential Reading

"Three Keys to Success for B2B Inbound Marketers"

"How to Build, Deploy and Manage a Thriving B2B Customer Reference Program That Works"

"Use Cases to Refine Your B2B and B2C Content Marketing"

ABOUT GARTNER FOR MARKETERS

Digital has redefined the role of marketing, adding new players and creating bigger complexities

Gartner for Marketers helps you get up to speed on and stay smarter in the eight marketing areas that matter most: social, mobile, multichannel and data-driven marketing, digital commerce, customer experience, marketing management, and emerging marketing technology and trends. Our clients say that they use our real-time, expert advice and objective research, data and tools to:

• Target the right audiences

• Choose the right channels

• Quickly shortlist marketing and technology providers

• Stay informed on market and competitors

• Save time and avoid costly mistakes

Gartner helps companies improve their business results through the use of technology. Our independent research and advice is trusted by business and technology leaders in more than 10,000 distinct enterprises around the world.

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