StratMg
Results... Period

Demand Generation:

3.2 | Planning Effectively

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Introduction

There are many white papers, blogs and forums that discuss demand generation programs. Many offer advice about the merits of using one automation system over another or the tactical benefits of this over that to boost response rates.

Their initial standpoint is that B2B marketers understand what demand generation is and know how to plan their programs, but this may not always be the case.

*This series of white papers (**3.1-3.4**) has been written for those marketers who may need some planning guidance; to shed some light on the key stages that they need to consider before any tactical activity takes place.*

*This, the second in the **Demand Generation** white paper series (**3.2**), takes an in-depth look at planning effectively, including:*

▸ Targeting Prospects

▸ Buyer Personas

▸ Understanding the Buyer and Buyer Behavior

▸ Communication Strategy

▸ Traditional vs. Digital Channels

Targeting Prospects

The Importance of Data

Your database is your most valuable marketing asset. A clean database allows marketers to maximize every opportunity to connect with customers and should be updated with current and accurate information, such as demographics, buying responsibility, company size, purchase behavior. Aligned with relevant content, a powerful proposition and timeliness, an accurate, up-to-date database provides marketers with the best tools to engage both new and existing customers.

Buyer Personas

Buyer personas help marketers identify the types of prospects likely to develop into bona fide sales opportunities and are a vital step when planning demand generation programs. It also acts as a perfect guide when acquiring data; how else will you know who to target? The ideal profile will include such information as:

▸ Job Function	▸ Industry
▸ Job Title	▸ Employee Size
▸ Decision Makers	▸ Annual Revenues
▸ Influencers	▸ Information Sources Used

Use existing customer information to help build the ideal prospect profile, as well as data acquired from research, web analytics and the CRM system. There may also be some advantages in creating profiles for the types of customer you do not want to target (this information will be found via internal sources). The process should be an iterative one; with deeper data, it will be possible to populate personas with such information as lifetime values (LTV) and retention costs (presented as averages) to help justify whether or not certain activities are worth undertaking.

> **" I love an audience. I work better with an audience. I am dead, in fact, without one.**
>
> *-Lucille Ball, Actress*

Understanding the Buyer and Buyer Behavior

Understanding the steps customers take before making a purchase presents marketers and sales people with a window into their world. Interaction with, and questioning of, the buyer will reveal a great deal to inform future engagement with them. This may include:
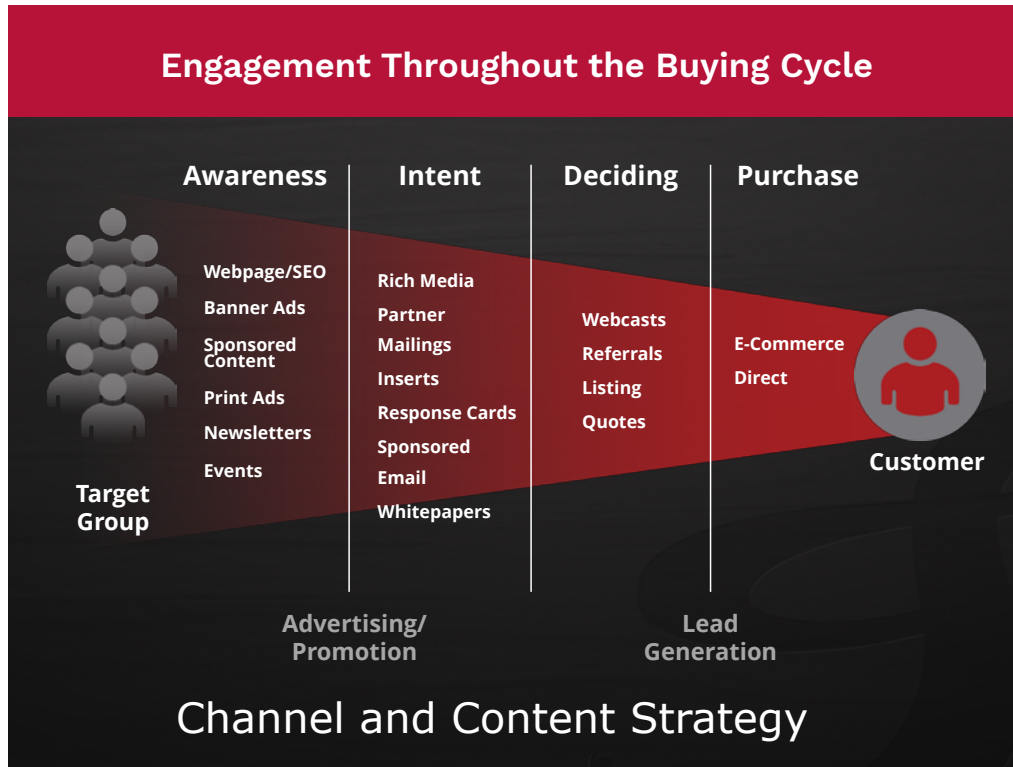
▸ What their need is

▸ What they are doing to find a solution

▸ How quickly they need a solution

▸ The key decision makers involved

▸ Their chosen sources of information

▸ How they consume this information

▸ How they want to be contacted

▸ If they have compiled a shortlist

▸ Who is on the shortlist

| Communication Strategy

How marketing and sales engage with the customer will, in part, depend on how much is known about them. Marketing can use this information to manage the relationship with the person; for example, how they will be contacted, the type of content they'll be sent and how often this will happen.

Engagement Throughout the Buying Cycle

Awareness	Intent	Deciding	Purchase

Webpage/SEO

Banner Ads

Sponsored Content

Print Ads

Newsletters

Events

Rich Media

Partner Mailings

Inserts

Response Cards

Sponsored Email

Whitepapers

Webcasts

Referrals

Listing

Quotes

E-Commerce

Direct

Target Group

Customer

Advertising/ Promotion

Lead Generation

Channel and Content Strategy

> **Communication, the human connection... is the key to success.**
>
> *-Paul J. Meyer, Funder Personal Development Industry*

The above model makes this point really well.

As mentioned earlier, the **buyer persona helps to identify the type of prospect likely to become a customer.** Marketing will now need to consider the media channels and relevant content to engage their ideal buyer.

How this is done is really important; buyers tend not to wait until they receive a brochure or see an advertisement before realizing they have a specific need. More traditional channels are more likely to hit the mark if they happen to coincide with a buyer's need to search for a solution.

On the other hand, information via online channels, such as blogs, search engine marketing, organic search and social media, is available continuously and is eminently searchable. In this way, buyers can engage with your company, products and services whenever they choose to research.

> **Business has two functions... marketing and innovation.**
>
> *-Milan Kundera, Author*

▎Traditional vs. Digital Channels

Ideally, a combination of both traditional and online channels works well. For example, print and online advertising, exhibitions, newsletters and search marketing are proven tactics for getting noticed at the awareness stage. At the stage of intent, the buyer will be looking to create a shortlist of options. To help them, they may sign up for webinars, download white papers or complete response cards. Marketing now has a tremendous opportunity to exchange valuable content for information about the buyer. This newly-acquired data will be used to determine how to manage the relationship and lead the buyer through the various nurturing stages to becoming a sales opportunity.

A highly effective process for managing the conversation with the buyer is **marketing automation**. Messaging via traditional and digital channels can be managed through a series of automated steps, where triggers are employed to identify who should be communicated with, when and what they should receive. Automation removes the guesswork from measuring performance, providing greater clarity into what works and what does not and allowing marketers to "amend as they go".

Summary

Before embarking upon your demand generation program, think carefully about what you are trying to achieve, how you intend to do so and what success actually looks like.

Things to consider include:

▸ The quality of the data you are using will have a direct impact on the quality and volume of responses you receive. Poor quality data may also affect how a buyer perceives your company and, therefore, if and how they respond.

▸ The buyer persona will provide much needed focus when targeting specific buyers and deciding exactly how to engage with them throughout their respective buying cycles.

▸ Managing the relationship with buyers can be made so much easier with automation.

▸ How sales and marketing work together needs agreement, especially with regard to what an actual sales opportunity looks like, at what point it should be handed over to sales and forecasting.

*Please check out all of the white papers in our **Demand Generation** series (**3.1-3.4**). Next in line (**3.3**) we will discuss the keys to success.*

> **❝ Success is a science; if you have the conditions, you get the result.**
>
> *-Oscar Wilde, Poet and author*

About StratMarketing Group (StratMG)

With 95%+ in customer satisfaction ratings and 100s of projects, our proven methodology has successfully generated more than $100M+ in sales for our industrial manufacturing customers. We help build deep and meaningful relationships with their prospects and customers which in turn is a catalyst to organic sales growth.

We consistently exceed objectives by leveraging complex technologies and analytic methodologies to deliver simplified sales, faster. Our methodology breaks the process into three main categories:

▸ Make Customers
▸ Manage Customers
▸ Monetize Customers

Specialties

Demand Generation | Marketing Automation | Go-to-Market Strategy | Marketing Operations
Marketing Services | Marketing Strategy | Lead Management | Lead Nurture
Database Marketing | Sales-Marketing Alignment | Lead Qualification

Let's Talk

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