Scoring: a leading priority for marketers

By Lisa Cramer

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Today, leads flow to marketing from ever-increasing online sources—email campaigns, the company website, Google AdWords and Google searches, webinars, online advertising, blogs and virtual trade shows—as well as from traditional marketing activities such as print ads, direct mail, trade shows and networking. This sheer volume of leads, or "suspects," can be overwhelming.

How does marketing prioritise all these suspects and determine which ones to:

- Send immediately to sales
- Move to telemarketing for qualification and appointment setting
- Keep and nurture with e-newsletters, surveys and other marketing activities
- Set aside for another day>

Spreadsheets and calculators simply will not do. Marketers simply do not have time to crunch numbers as well as craft innovative campaigns with compelling messages and eye-catching images.
A robust database and campaign management application helps marketing score every interaction by every lead, online and offline, and prioritise leads automatically for appropriate next steps.

Scoring guides marketing action

Lead prioritisation is a different discipline than the traditional A-B-C sales categorisation. It's more attuned to marketing action and comprises a set of levels for suspects, leads and sales-ready leads.

Of course, the final action is moving a lead to sales, a lead that has attained an appropriate score threshold. Your company's specific scoring scheme will vary depending on your needs and processes. A very basic scoring scheme might look like this:

Lead prioritisation

Lead score	Priority level	Marketing or sales action
20-40	Suspect	Nurturing activities by marketing
45-55	Possible lead	Move to telemarketing for qualification
60-70	Warm qualified lead	Send to sales for timely action
75-100	Warmer qualified lead	Send to sales for immediate action

Of course, there's setup work to determine the overall scoring scheme and what score and process is appropriate for each action. Those interactions would include:

- Clicks from email campaigns, pages visited, time spent on each page
- Clicks and page viewing from online ads
- E-newsletter and survey responses
- Downloads from your website (whitepapers, case studies, etc.)
- Blog entries
- Telemarketing responses
- Trade show visits
- Direct mail responses

- Webinar attendance

Next, determine how each interaction should be evaluated, what weight it deserves in the overall scheme. For instance, compare the scores below for someone who clicks a link from an outbound email, views your landing page for 12 seconds and downloads a white paper, versus someone who clicks the link, views the landing page for 20 seconds, views three product pages then two case studies, downloads a white paper, and remains on your website for five minutes.

Scoring from email campaign

Visitor	Clicked landing page (score 5)	Time on landing page (score 5 if >=10 sec)	Viewed product pages or case studies (5 each)	Viewed case studies (5 each)	Whitepaper download (score 10)	Time on site (score 10 if >= 2 min)	Score
1	5	5	15	10	10	10	55
2	5	5	0	0	10	0	20

Leads move to sales only when they reach your sales-ready threshold. Leads in the lower scoring ranges are continuously engaged through e-newsletters and other marketing activities to nurture them toward the sales-ready threshold.

Be flexible and adjust based on results

Success in lead generation does not end with lead volume. The metric that matters, for both marketing and sales, is results. It's about sales, not just the number of leads passed on to sales. Lead scoring and prioritisation is the key moving the right leads to right stage at the right time, resulting in more efficient processes and, ultimately, more sales.

ABOUT LISA CRAMER

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