

READ ME IF YOU WANT TO DRIVE MORE LEADS USING LINKEDIN

#3

in a series of 3

Linked in

Read me if you want to drive more leads using LinkedIn

Lead generation is a numbers game. But it's a game you can't win if you think it only involves one type of number. Contrary to some misconceptions, the objective of lead generation is not just to generate more leads; it's to generate more of the *right* leads. If you want to be a better lead generation marketer, that's what you should be aiming for – and that's what this book will help you to achieve.

We're going to show you how to generate more leads that have greater value to your business, that close faster and that generate the revenue that justifies your marketing investment. We will show you how to do so more efficiently, at a lower cost per lead (CPL). And we'll show you how to align your lead generation marketing with the sales team that's going to close those leads for you.

It's one thing to drive more leads using LinkedIn; it's another to drive more value to your business through the leads you generate. We'll show you how to do both.

Let's start with your lead generation objectives

Take a look at your sales team. Even better, take your sales team out for coffee, schedule some time with them, and listen to what's on their minds.

Are they crying out for leads to work with? Struggling to build out the sales pipeline? Finding it hard to connect with relevant prospects? Or is their system swamped with so-so leads that they are struggling to wade through? Are they frustrated at how long it's taking to close deals? The best possible starting point for better lead generation is understanding the business need that you're trying to address by generating those leads.

If there's slack in your sales team's schedules, if they're struggling to get traction in the market, then you need to work on increasing the volume and flow of leads. However, if your sales reps are rushed off their feet and wading through leads that are going nowhere fast, then it's time to focus more on lead quality. If there are hold-ups lower down the funnel and the rate at which leads convert to revenue is dragging, then this could shape your lead generation priorities as well.



Choose the metrics you'll use to judge success

Different business needs translate into different lead generation metrics. Different companies often use slightly different terms for these, but when it comes down to it, there are four types of metrics to bear in mind when it comes to measuring the success of your lead generation:

- Marketing Qualified Leads (MQLs) measure the volume of leads you're generating and can be a good, early indicator of quality – provided you and sales have a meaningful approach to scoring leads. They might be called Marketing Accepted Leads – or just leads.
- Sales Accepted Leads (SALs) extend your view further down the funnel to show how many opportunities you are creating for sales. Some companies prefer to talk about Sales Accepted Opportunities instead – but the concept is the same: a lead with characteristics and behaviors that make it a relevant opportunity for sales, with the potential to turn into a deal.
- Conversions look further still, to track the number of leads that result in closed deals.
- ROI measures add a crucial final element to the puzzle: giving a sense of the amount of revenue from the deals that your leads have helped make happen.

On the basis of these metrics, you can then calculate your cost per lead (CPL), cost per sales accepted opportunity, or cost per conversion. You can also attribute the eventual revenue that your business receives to the different marketing touchpoints that contributed to generating a lead.

As a marketer, you are most likely under pressure to generate a given volume of leads. However, your ultimate value to the business will depend on the quality of leads as well. You can make your life easier by setting targets and focusing

on metrics that reflect both of these priorities. MQLs and SALs are important for demonstrating the contribution that marketing is making in real-time, and this is particularly important with a long sales cycle, when complex deals could take months or years to close. However, these numbers by themselves may not do justice to the contribution you are making. Review ROI figures on a regular basis (monthly, quarterly or annually depending on your sales cycle), to demonstrate how the quality of your leads is driving value for your business.

Target the right prospects

Lead generation campaigns will always be most efficient when they reflect what you already know about your likely buyers – and what those likely buyers already know about your business. When you tailor your targeting to where prospects are in their decision journey, you will use your marketing budget as efficiently as possible – and make sure that you don't miss out on the highest-value leads that you can pass to sales.



Targeting prospects with an active interest

Start with the easy wins: buyers who you know have an interest in what you have to offer, and who have signaled that they are particularly interested right now. The demand already exists amongst these prospects – and you need to act quickly and efficiently to convert that demand into leads.

Target prospects like this through the website retargeting feature in LinkedIn Matched Audiences. You access this through the Campaign Manager interface where you run your LinkedIn campaigns. Once you've added the LinkedIn Insight Tag to your site (very easy to do), you can define audience groups based on the specific pages of your website that they've visited. You can also get more detail on the kinds of professionals these visitors are through Website Demographics. This is LinkedIn's free reporting tool, which uses anonymized profile data to help you understand the types of prospects you are engaging. Adding the Insight Tag to your site gives you access to Website Demographics as well.

Adding the LinkedIn Insight Tag to your website

The LinkedIn Insight Tag is a lightweight JavaScript tag that powers conversion tracking, retargeting, and web analytics for LinkedIn ad campaigns. To add it to your website:

1. Sign into Campaign Manager
2. Click on your account name or "New Account"
3. Click Website Demographics and click "Setup Insight Tag"
4. Follow the instructions to add the tag to your site



Targeting the prospects who already know you

People who have an existing relationship with your business can be the easiest of easy wins for your lead generation. They know about what you have to offer, they know about the experience of working with you, and they are primed to pay attention when you reach out to them with relevant content and advertising. Through LinkedIn Matched Audiences, you can securely upload lists of relevant email addresses from your database for targeting on LinkedIn: subscribers to your newsletter or blog who are familiar with your thought-leadership, existing customers who might be interested in a new product, or leads that have shown an interest in the past but never quite made it through to conversion.



Targeting priority accounts

Next up are the buyers and influencers at businesses that you know have a relevant need for your solution. They may not be showing an active interest in your business yet – but they certainly should be. This is where you can generate relevant, high-value leads

quickly and efficiently by working with sales on an Account-Based Marketing (ABM) strategy. Use Matched Audiences to upload a list of up to 300,000 company names as target accounts for your lead generation marketing.

Filling the funnel from the top – generating demand and leads at scale

Once you've taken care of the low-hanging fruit, you'll need to expand the scope of your lead generation to the prospects you don't know about yet – and the prospects who don't yet know enough about you. If your primary objective in lead generation is increasing the volume of leads then you'll need a way to reach relevant buyers at scale without wasting budget and without diluting lead quality. In other words, you need LinkedIn profile data.

A sensible approach to targeting using LinkedIn profile data can put your lead generation campaign in front of large numbers of people with a potential interest in buying from you. With the

right creative approach, the right lead generating experience and the right bidding strategy, you can then turn this potential interest into leads.

The key to success is to avoid hyper-targeting. Remember – you are targeting a large group of potential buyers that you don't yet have detailed information about. Don't get drawn into making guesses and tightly defining a specific audience on a hunch. If you do, you'll be excluding people who could just as easily have converted into leads; you might have to bid higher to secure your specific target audience; and you'll most likely increase your cost per lead (CPL).

Here's how to leverage LinkedIn profile data most effectively when generating leads:

- Choose a few particularly relevant but broad targeting parameters. Industry and job function or job function and seniority are very powerful combinations for lead generation marketing. They ensure relevance while also delivering scale. Avoid targeting by job title unless you have a very good reason for doing so – it's far too easy to exclude people who have a different title to the one you might expect.
- Use look-alike modeling to expand your audience by giving LinkedIn algorithms the task of finding similar people to those you've defined with your targeting. Just click the 'Audience Expansion' box in Campaign Manager and see the size of your audience increase.
- Set up different campaigns with different approaches to targeting your likely buyers. This avoids loading too many targeting parameters onto a single campaign and ending up with too narrow an audience. You can then track how effective the different approaches are at generating leads, and switch more budget towards the campaigns delivering the lowest CPL.

When you're broadening the reach of your campaigns and looking to generate leads at scale, you are more likely to be targeting audiences who don't yet know about your business and what you have to offer. Depending on your existing levels of awareness, you may need to generate demand – not just leads. Bear this in mind when you're developing your creative, and don't assume a level of familiarity with your business that might not exist.

You should also consider supporting your lead generation activity with demand generation campaigns targeted at a similar audience, but which don't require them to share details before engaging. When demand generation campaigns lead prospects to your website, you can use Website Retargeting on LinkedIn to follow up with lead generation activity.

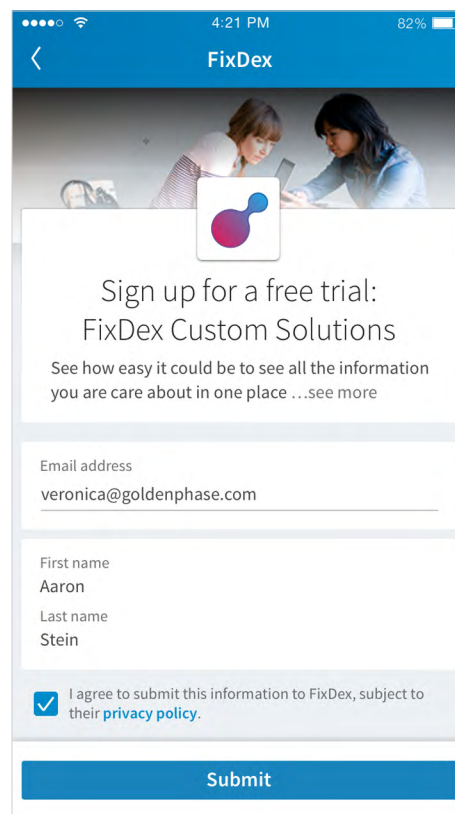
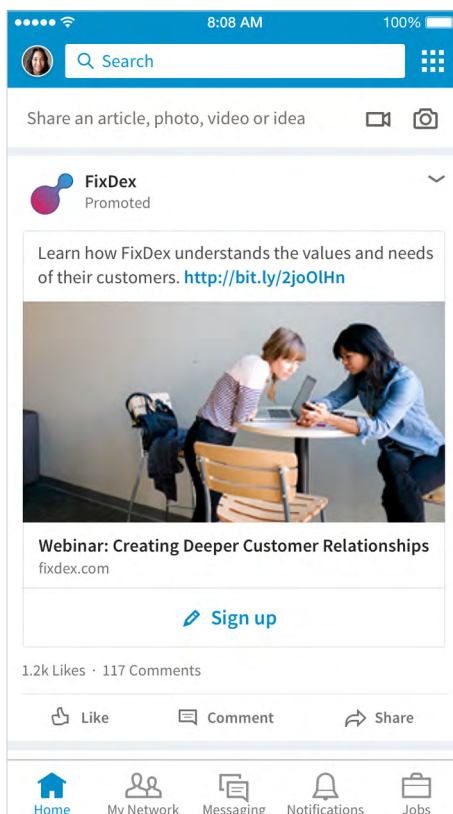


Make your targeting count with LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms

To generate a lead, you need to persuade a relevant prospect to share their contact details with you. Let's face it, nobody likes filling in data capture forms – and busy decision-makers who are likely to be your most valuable source of leads certainly don't. The more friction you can remove from the process of sharing details, the more leads you are likely to generate and the lower the cost of those leads will be. You'll also generate higher quality leads on average, since more relevant prospects make it through the lead generation process.

For all of these reasons, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms are a vital part of any lead generation campaign on LinkedIn. These are shorter, smarter data capture forms that are optimized for mobile, where 57% of engagement on LinkedIn happens. They pull in relevant details from an audience member's LinkedIn profile, which means that they can share contact details in just a few clicks – painless, even on a smartphone. As a result, they are proven to dramatically increase the number of leads that a campaign generates, and send CPL plummeting in the process.

LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms can be combined with the most impactful formats for delivering lead generation content and messaging on LinkedIn: Sponsored Content and Sponsored InMail.



Choose the formats for the prospects you are targeting

LinkedIn offers a wide range of touchpoints that you can use to drive leads – from organic activity that will help interested prospects find you and your business, to paid opportunities that will put the right messages in front of the right prospects. Here's a full list of the different touchpoints that you can leverage for lead generation.

Inbound touchpoints – optimize these to make sure you're turning existing engagement and interest into leads:

LinkedIn Company Pages

A LinkedIn Company Page is your brand's home on LinkedIn. It can be used to share company news, industry articles, and thought leadership pieces to attract followers. When people choose to follow your Company Page, they're signaling potential interest in your business.

LinkedIn Showcase Pages

Showcase Pages are extensions of your Company Page, designed for spotlighting a brand, business unit, or initiative. Create a page for aspects of your business that need their own distinct messages, or which relate to distinct audience segments. This will generate a more targeted group of followers as an audience for lead generation.

Publishing on LinkedIn

Research from LinkedIn and Edelman shows that thought leadership content has a pivotal role to play in generating leads. Nearly half of all business decision-makers said that reading a company's thought leadership had led directly to doing business with that company. When you publish posts on LinkedIn it's this senior audience that you are reaching: 45% of those reading LinkedIn posts are in the upper ranks of their companies, including VPs and CEOs. Support your executives in publishing relevant thought-leadership content that expresses your brand's expertise and gets your key messages out there. Try sharing lessons learned, or crowdsourcing content by answering your customers' and prospects' burning questions.



Outbound touchpoints – accelerate your lead generation by leveraging budget to reach the right prospects at scale:

Sponsored Content delivers your brand messaging as an update in the LinkedIn feed, which is exactly where LinkedIn members look to stay informed. You can sponsor an update that you posted to your company page, or you can publish directly to the feed of your target audiences.

Using Sponsored Content for lead generation – top tips:

- Sponsored Content isn't just for delivering value-adding content – you can also use it to deliver promotions and event invitations as well
- If you're targeting a specific audience with your lead generation campaign, call out that audience by name in your headline and Sponsored Content copy, to increase response rates
- Keep the headline of your Sponsored Content below 70 characters, and keep your Sponsored Content copy below 150 characters to ensure that it displays impactfully on all devices.
- Use eye-catching video and imagery to capture attention – format images to 1200 x 627 pixels so that they display effectively on both desktop and mobile
- Test different approaches and then optimize around those driving leads most effectively



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


Sponsored InMail delivers private messages to your target audience at scale through LinkedIn's messaging environment. It's a fusion of email and instant messaging that professionals trust and respond to, with open rates of 52%. Through Sponsored InMail, you'll be reaching prospects across mobile, desktop and tablet – and you can generate leads through promotions, event invitations or downloadable content.

Using Sponsored InMail for lead generation – top tips:

- Take a personalized approach, with Sponsored InMail that comes from a relevant expert or thought-leader within your business
- Call out the value that you can add as a supplier in the message headline to provide a clear reason to read
- Keep the message itself concise (bullet points are a great format for Sponsored InMail)
- Use a banner images (300 x 250 pixels) to capture attention
- Use a low-pressure, friendly Call to Action (CTA) – data shows that these are most effective
- Add hyperlinks within the Sponsored InMail body copy





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Ruby Hunt

InMail • Become a Board Member for XYZ System


3:15 pm



Britt Booker

I see what I can do for Julien. Let me know when you get this...


12:48 pm



Neptune Messaging

Elizabeth: Can we meet after lunch tomorrow? I'm so swamped...


Yesterday



Brittney and Jared

Jared: Could you give me the address?


Apr 20



SJSU Alumni 2010

Risa: Can't wait to catch up with everyone at the reunion!


Apr 15



Norman Griffin

You: That sounds so exciting. We launched our product recently...


Apr 13



John Smith

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Apr 6



Johnny Kennedy

Maya said you guys are going to the conference tomorrow. I was...


Apr 8



Theresa Cobb

Lunch tomorrow? I'm super busy

Apr 1



John Smith

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Check out our results

Dear Veronica,

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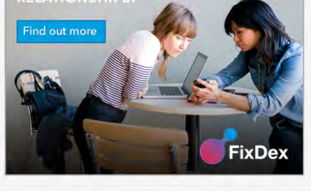
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





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Dynamic Ads leverage LinkedIn profile data to capture attention and deliver immediate engagement through an ad that's automatically tailored to each member of your target audience. Your audience members see their profile photo and name, along with the image that you choose to represent your brand. Dynamic Ads appear on LinkedIn's desktop platform, in the right rail, fitting 300x250 pixel dimensions. They use a pre-populated data capture form that's similar to LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms.



Using Dynamic Ads for lead generation – top tips:


- Leverage the inherently personal nature of Dynamic Ads with wording that reflects what you know about your target audience
- Enable the profile image feature when setting up your Dynamic Ads: data shows that seeing themselves in the ad increases the likelihood of your prospects engaging
- Don't settle for just using your company logo to represent your brand – icons and striking images are most effective


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Scott Walker • 2nd
Consulting Data Scientist

Text Ads appear in the right-hand column of the LinkedIn desktop interface, and feature a small visual and short message of up to 100 characters. They're nimble and cost effective, a bit like search ads only targeted by LinkedIn profile data so that you know exactly whom you're paying to advertise to.

Using Text Ads for lead generation – top tips:

- Use Text Ads to drive prospects to a data capture form on your website
- Create a Text Ad campaign quickly and easily by adapting your search marketing keyword campaigns (the copy length is similar and you can use search keywords as the basis for skills targeting on LinkedIn by just typing them into the relevant field in Campaign Manager)
- Address your target audience directly in your Text Ad copy
- Create multiple variations for each campaign, and optimize around those most effective at driving clicks
- Always include an image – they may be small but Text Ad visuals still increase impact

Programmatic Display Ads also appear in the right-hand column of LinkedIn on desktop, and come in classic 300x250 pixel dimensions that will fit your existing online display ads. This makes it simple to add LinkedIn to your existing programmatic schedule.

Using Programmatic Display Ads for lead generation – top tips:

- If you're running a programmatic campaign with a lead generation objective and call to action, then extending that campaign to LinkedIn is likely to increase the quality of leads that you generate



Align your targeting, bidding strategy and touchpoints

Every time a LinkedIn member scrolls through their feed we hold an auction for the opportunity to advertise to them through Sponsored Content and other advertising formats. We run similar auctions to deliver Sponsored InMail to members. To protect the member experience and ensure strong engagement, LinkedIn carefully controls the amount of in-feed promotions and Text Ads that each member is exposed to, and caps the frequency with which they receive Sponsored InMail. This means that

it's important to be competitive when bidding to reach your prospects with your lead generation marketing.

It makes sense to base your bid on the likelihood of the audience you are targeting converting into leads – and the likely value to your business when they do. Since some LinkedIn advertising formats require higher bids than others, it's also worth basing your choice of formats on the type of audience you are targeting:

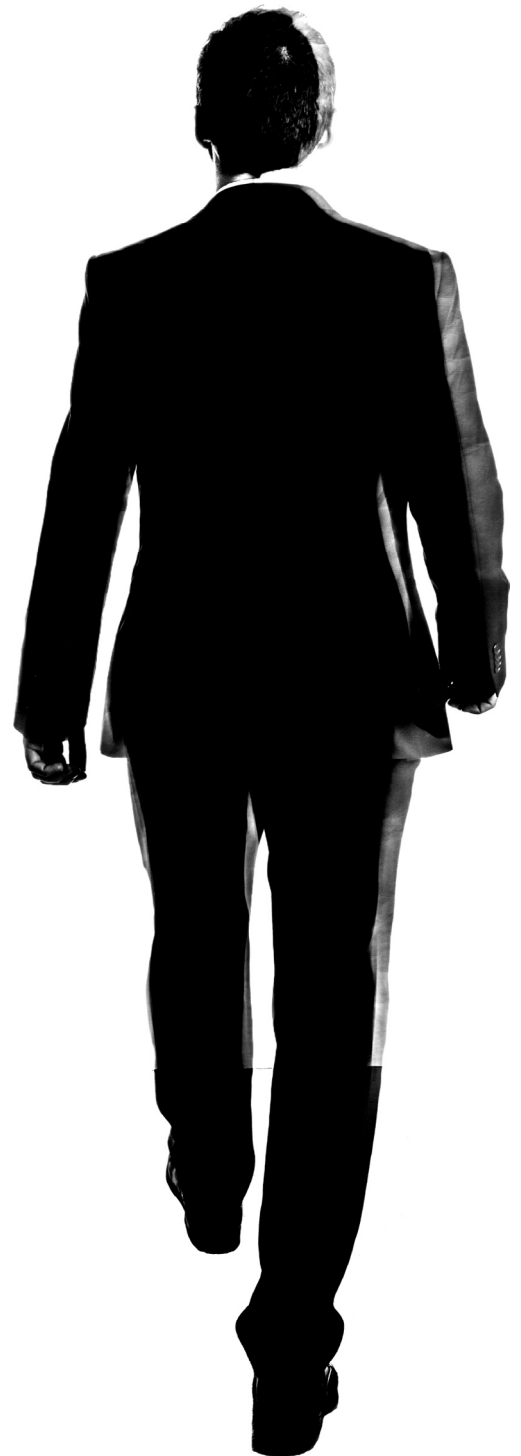
- If you're targeting people who have expressed interest in your business or sector, it's worth investing in high-impact formats and setting your bid \$1 above the top end of the bid range shown in Campaign Manager. These are people with a strong propensity to buy – Sales Accepted Leads (SALs) and conversions waiting to happen. They are worth paying for.

It's not just their end-value that makes it worth bidding high (and using high-impact formats) to reach these prospects. The rate at which they convert to leads will end up lowering your cost per lead (CPL) overall. Using Sponsored Content and Sponsored InMail with LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms means that you can reach them across devices, whenever they engage with LinkedIn. Remember that LinkedIn operates a second-price auction, so that the amount you eventually pay is likely to be lower than the amount that you bid.

- If you're working with sales on an ABM strategy, it's again worth setting your bids high and using the highest-impact formats. These are prospects that your business has identified as priorities. Your sales teams are relying on you to generate warm leads at the companies on their target lists – and your bidding approach should reflect this. Since you've already identified these target accounts as relevant, they should have a stronger propensity to convert to leads, justifying a higher bid amount.
- If you're targeting a broader range of prospects and need to maximize the reach of your lead generation on a limited budget, then you might want to vary your approach. Try supplementing Sponsored Content and Sponsored InMail with Text Ads. Since the bids for these are typically lower, you can bid aggressively while still spreading your budget further and generating greater reach. This is ideal when you're trying to generate leads more widely while still controlling your CPL.

Your understanding of your audience can also inform the basis on which you bid to reach them. Campaign Manager will give you the option of bidding on cost per click (CPC) or cost per impression (CPM). If you're targeting a broad audience and don't yet know what type of click-through rate you will generate, bidding on a CPC basis will ensure you're only spending budget

when someone takes an action likely to result in a lead. However, if you're targeting an audience that you know are likely to click (contacts from your email database, for example) then bidding on a CPM basis may well be more efficient. CPM bids are usually lower than CPC bids – so if you are confident of your click-through rate they can help you to generate leads at a lower CPL.



What your sales team wants: optimization and synchronization

Lead generation can and should bring marketing and sales closer together. When you're able to build a shared view of the customer journey, and how your marketing contributes to closing deals, it drives more effective sales and marketing alignment. Your marketing team is happy, your sales team is happy, and your potential customers get a far smoother and more intuitive experience of your business.

LinkedIn's tracking and analytics capabilities have a big role to play in making this happen – and that's why they are an important aspect of better lead generation on our platform. Once you add the LinkedIn Insight Tag to your website, you'll be able to use Conversion Tracking for a view of which campaigns are generating leads most efficiently. This will enable you to optimize your approach as you go. Through Website Demographics, you'll also have a clear record of which types of prospects are converting to leads, so that you can check you're delivering the types of leads with most value for your business.

You'll be able to take the shared view of customers to the next level through LinkedIn Sales Navigator, our social selling platform. This will provide your sales teams with the ability to pick up on active signals of intent, and identify the businesses that should be a priority for your lead generation marketing. With more precise insight on who to target and when, it can help get sales and marketing working even closer together to generate the leads your business needs.



Ready to drive higher quality leads on LinkedIn? Put these tools and tips to use and [create your ad](#) today.

