

Must Do's to Maximize Your Internet Lead Generation Results

If your internet advertising is not producing the results you desire or require, before looking for outside causes or blaming the portals you are advertising with, I would like to offer some comments, suggestions and even some advice you will find helpful. Let's begin by defining what you are calling a lead.

In my 25+ years in franchising, the definition of a "lead" has ranged from an initial request for information to someone who is qualified financially and is coming to discovery day.

In the systems I worked with over the years, our close rate was between 3-5% of all "leads" received from the internet, newspapers & magazines. For ease of understanding I will break it down to what I call the P.I.L.E.D. (Prospect, Inquiry, **Lead**, Engaged, Done (Deal or Dead) process. In any given month about ½ of the P's became I's; about ½ of the I's became L's; about ½ of the L's become E's, and between 30% & 40% of the E's became D's (franchise owners). Our internet close rate was closer to 2%. These were raw prospects from the portals with no prequalifying. Our close rate on referrals was in the 30% range. How you define a "lead" will determine your close rate %.

With this as a base for defining a "lead" let's go over a few things to help you maximize the potential of the P's you receive which will result in higher a percentage proceeding through and becoming the best D's, (franchise owners).

There are many steps involved in taking someone from a Prospect to a highly successful franchise owner. Here we will speak mainly to what it takes for you to get a prospect to speak to you about your opportunity. Once we are successful with this, we can talk about the other steps.

One who hesitates has lost!

First and foremost you **MUST** attempt to contact the person in four hours, or less from the time the request was **sent**. This includes early evening and weekends; and never let it go more than eight hours. I don't think I have ever heard someone say; "I wish you had not called me so soon". Actually just the opposite happens and they will often say something like; "WOW that was fast, I just sent it". Call all numbers provided; home, business and cell, which by the way is becoming the preferred choice of contact. By contact, I mean having a live conversation. Over 60% of franchisors never respond at all to the initial request and 75% give up after one attempt (see attached stats). This provides a great deal of opportunity for the other 25% of us. You must make at least two phone attempts the first day (depending on how early in the day you receive the "P"), two attempts the second day and at least one attempt each day for the next three days. Continue making a minimum of one attempt every two or three days for the next two weeks if necessary. If you do leave a message, the script can be a bit different and stronger each time. Make it clear you are responding to **their** request for information and you would appreciate a call back. Vary the time of day you call, and call evenings and weekends. It does not make sense to call the same time each day if you keep getting no answers, answering machines or voice mail. People are busy and chances are they have many priorities that keep them from getting back to you. Again, be persistent; keep your message short and focused; let them know you are looking forward to speaking with them about your opportunity and if they have no interest you would appreciate a courtesy call back to let you know. The worst that can happen; they call to tell you they are not interested and you get a chance to speak with them anyway.

An email is not a personal contact!

Have an effective email campaign lasting at least three weeks after your receive the inquiry. The emails are **in addition to and not in place of** the phone contact attempts. It is a good idea to have an email campaign which includes five to seven different email messages. The first should be an auto responder sent immediately after they submit the request for information form. It should thank them for their interest in your franchise and inform them you are looking forward to speaking with them **that** day, evening or the next day to introduce yourself and your franchise. It is important that the message include your phone number(s), including cell which gives them a way to contact you also. You would be amazed how many times I have received a call from someone who was calling me from their car, the airport; on a business trip and even while they were on vacation. Showing them you are available goes a long way to helping them feel they can count on you right from the beginning, sets a good first impression and a great start to the relationship. It also gives them a call to action and

someone who calls you back has definitely shown a degree of commitment. Do not encourage an email response. If they respond via email on their own, great, they will most likely give you more information about their intentions and preferred method and time for contact.

The additional emails are to go out on scheduled dates and times with set messages, a specific call to action and should get stronger with each email. Once contact is made, don't forget to cancel the campaign so as not to confuse them or make them feel they are just someone on big list and you don't really care.

The early bird gets the worm!

Statistics show; people looking at a business will finish looking at one franchise, before getting heavily involved investigating another. You need to be the first franchisor to make contact. Chances are very high the inquiry you received has also been sent to at least a few other franchise companies. Being first to speak with the person gives you the first and maybe the best chance to create and increase the level of interest in your offering. In addition you begin to develop a relationship that creates a level of loyalty on their part and therefore more likely to give you some additional time you need to present yourself and your opportunity. If your franchise model interests them and your franchisee recruitment process is well established, you will have a much greater of bringing them into your system. Most prospective franchisees will finish their due diligence with one opportunity before looking into another.

I'll be the judge of that!

Never, never make a judgment about whether or not to call an inquiry based on the information, or lack of it on the request form. One of the biggest mistakes I see franchisors make, both new and established, is the decision not to call the person because the amount of money they listed as willing or able to invest is insufficient for their franchise, or their address is in a city or state you are not recruiting in. **This attitude and approach WILL cost you new franchisees.** Many of the best prospective franchisees do not give all the information on the first email. The sharpest, most qualified people will wait until they know more about the opportunity before giving you a lot of financial or personal information. They could be looking to relocate into an area you **ARE** looking to expand or they might be looking at your opportunity on behalf of someone else. It could be a parent looking for their children, or a partner doing the initial foot work for a group of investors. My experience has also shown as many as 90% of the people, who become franchisees, started looking at franchise opportunities in industries other than the one they eventually joined.

Lastly, let me say; franchisee recruitment has always been and will remain a numbers game. There is no silver bullet or "easy button". With nearly 400 new systems launching each year, all of us will need to keep working smarter and yes even harder to get a bigger piece of the lead pie.

If you have any additional questions or would like to discuss this or other areas impacting the development strategy of your franchise system, please feel free to contact via my website, email or phone.

Much success to one and all,

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