



# B2B SALES LEADS - THE MODERN MANUAL

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By  
**2020**  
a million B2B salespeople  
**will lose their jobs.<sup>i</sup>**

# Introduction

Over the past few years there have been dramatic changes in the B2B sales cycle – ever-developing buying patterns, the growth of innovative formats in content marketing, and the rise of experienced specialists in marketing automation. This has left some B2B salespeople feeling overwhelmed, underutilised and concerned about the future of their role.

## But, should salespeople really be concerned about their role?

**Well, yes and no.** If they don't adapt to the industry changes and use their marketing counterparts to empower them, then yes, they should be concerned. If however, they are able to build a closer relationship with marketing then there should be no need to fret. In fact, it should be a time to rejoice in the fact that companies' lead generation and sales conversion potential is now greater than ever.

In order for this to be possible, it's simply a case of salespeople collaborating more with their marketing team and implementing some simple processes. The most important of these procedures that must be addressed is the handing over of leads by the marketing department.



# 90%

of marketing deliverables  
are not used by sales<sup>ii</sup>







## Too much information

**Salespeople want to be selling. They want hot leads that they can pick up the phone and call immediately.**

**Analysing hundreds of sheets of paper and notes on related activity is a waste of their time and will have a negative impact on their ability to reach and exceed sales targets.**

So what's the solution? Well it's easy... simplification. Marketers are the lead generation experts and utilise solutions such as marketing automation, content marketing and social media to hit their targets. But, this is largely irrelevant to a frontline salesperson. Sales simply want a hot lead and the information that will help them get a sale – nothing more, nothing less. So, start by aligning sales and marketing teams and explaining the issue - providing just a phone number and name for a hot lead is not enough, but sending 30 pages of documentation is too much.

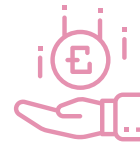
By doing so, it'll be much easier to find the happy medium for both parties.

This new process is simply a case of identifying which parts of marketing's myriad of lead data will help to close the deal, and which parts will simply hinder the salesperson's ability to get on the phone quickly. This identification process will enable the time-consuming and unnecessary pieces of data to be removed, therefore streamlining the entire process.

# Why implement lead criteria?

With marketing teams generating so much information on leads' behaviour (thanks to marketing automation), there can be a mindset where they believe sending all this data to sales will help them close the lead. In actual fact, all this information simply means salespeople have to trudge through it all before they can make a call – keeping them away from the phones for longer. It'll also no doubt fry their brain due to information overload.

**So, to enable marketing to empower the sales team and to ensure they have only what they need, it's necessary to introduce hot lead criteria.**



Marketing automation drives a

**14.5%**

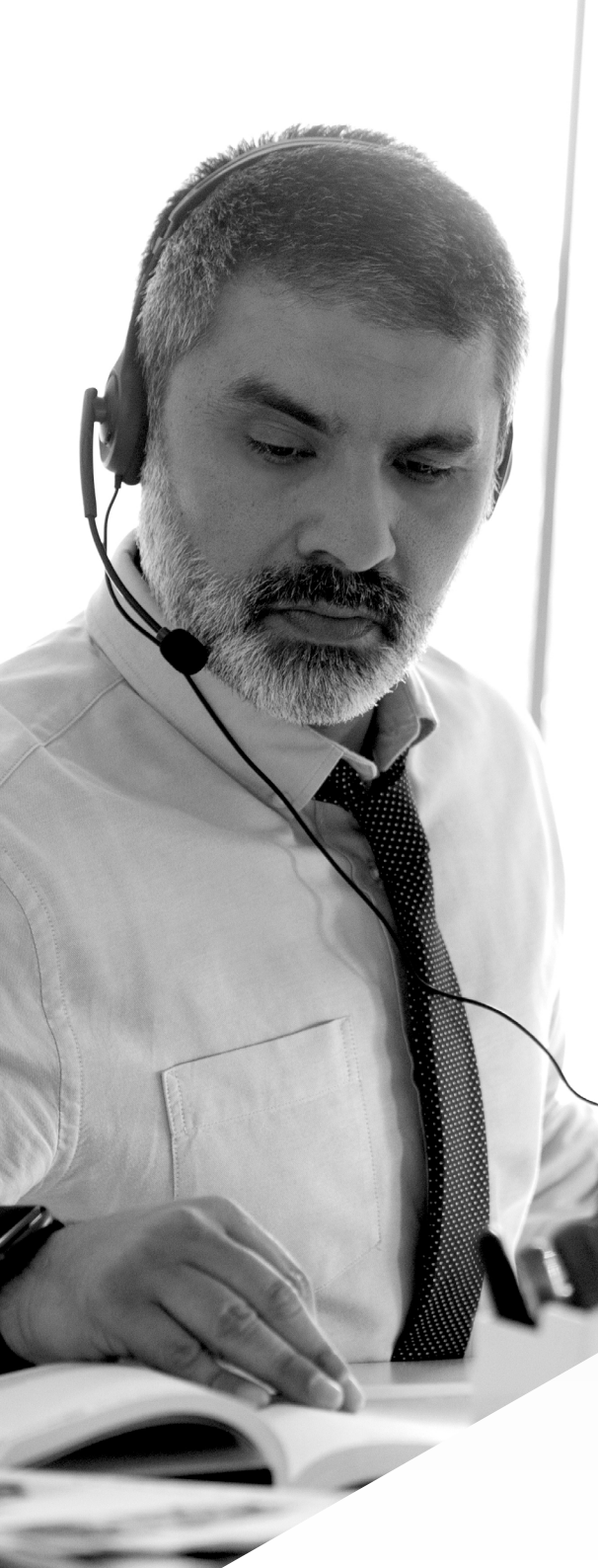
**increase in sales productivity**

with an outstanding

**12.2%**

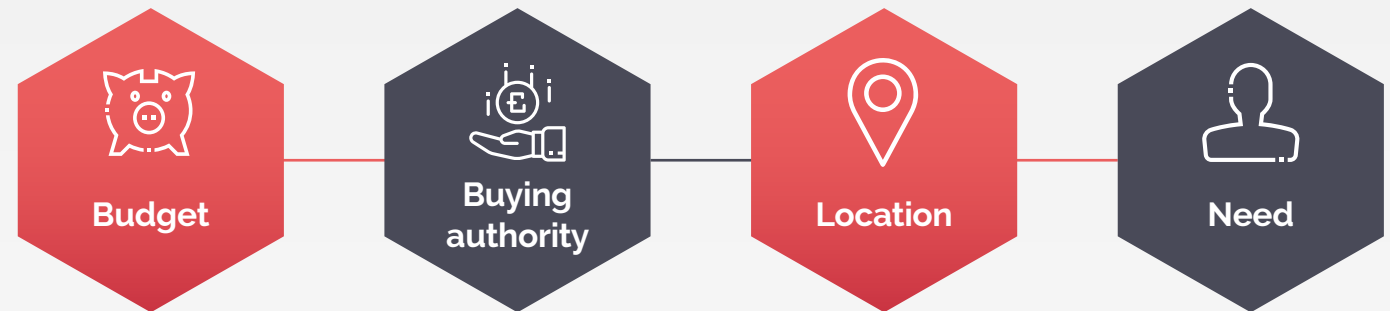
**reduction in marketing overheads.<sup>iii</sup>**





## So what is hot lead criteria?

These are the guidelines you'll need to put in place to help marketing determine whether the lead is qualified or not. For example, does the lead have:



Marketing accompanied by inside sales will be able to gather all this information easily, so it's simply a case of ensuring these criteria are met and then handing the lead over to your sales team. Failure to accurately qualify leads against these criteria before sending them to sales is a huge waste of time and energy. It means the sales team will need to carry out more research before they start a sales conversion - **potentially impacting conversion results.**

55%

of marketing decision-makers plan to increase their spending on marketing technology, with one-fifth of the respondents expecting to **increase by 10% or more<sup>iv</sup>**

# How can marketing automation help?

Marketing automation may seem largely irrelevant to salespeople, but its capabilities in the hands of a marketing team will make a big difference to their ability to reach and exceed sales targets. Unbeknown to many salespeople, marketing automation tracks a multitude of metrics for every single lead. This data can include website visits, time spent on each page, content downloaded, social media post engagement, plus much more.

As you can see from the image, marketing automation software offers an insight into leads which sales' teams are unlikely to have ever seen before. So what does this mean? Well granted, a lot of the information that is tracked is specific to marketing, but there's still an opportunity for salespeople to get an in-depth understanding of the lead before they call them. For example, by reviewing the pages leads have viewed and those that they've spent the most time on, it's possible to help identify their pain points and their interests.

Average Pageviews:	3
First Page Seen:	http://info.reallyb2b.com/unique-b2b-content-scrapbook?
First Referring Site:	
Last Page Seen:	http://info.reallyb2b.com/blog-hs/
Last Referring Site:	http://info.reallyb2b.com/blog-hs/
Number of Pageviews:	3
Number of Visits:	1
Number of event completions:	0
Original Source Data 1:	LinkedIn
Original Source Data 2:	LinkedIn Own Content to Company Page
Original Source Type:	Social Media

61%

of B2B marketers send all leads directly to sales. However, only **27% of those leads will be qualified<sup>v</sup>**





## Lead scoring

A key feature of some CRM systems and of all marketing automation technologies is lead scoring. As discussed previously, sales need to clarify their requirements for a hot lead directly with marketing. At this point however, marketing can programme the automation software to allocate points to the leads that meet sales' criteria.

They can identify a lead's relevance by either asking related questions on content landing pages, or by allowing the system to track the information in the background. For example, marketing automation software can identify and record a lead's location based on their IP address, and data such as their main pain point can be gathered via landing page questions.

The key to lead scoring is that marketing can carry on with their marketing tasks and simply allow the system to notify them when a lead has met all the criteria (and reached a certain level of points).

More importantly for sales, they can focus on making calls and converting leads, secure in the knowledge that only the hottest leads will be passed to them. This lead-scoring process simply enables both parties to focus on what they do best, generating leads, and converting them to customers.

This automated process may not have been a consideration for salespeople, but it can make a great deal of difference to their ability to convert leads and meet their targets.

**Simply working closer with marketing and utilising a tool they already have in place, may prove to be the difference between success and an uncertain future.**



## Next steps...

Obviously it's essential to ensure your CRM records have the most up-to-date data and include information such as name, telephone number, and company name etc. But, in addition to this fundamental data, it's also important to see behavioural data on the following:

- Content downloaded
- Webpages visited and time spent on each
- Blogs read
- Social media interactions
- Membership of LinkedIn Groups
- Whether the lead has their own blog and what they post about
- Buying authority
- Key pain points

If you have marketing automation or IP tracking software, some of this data will be readily available, whereas some may require a bit of research time. All this valuable information will enable your sales team to truly personalise their conversation, and get that conversion rate up!

The world of B2B sales has changed, but not to the extent that salespeople no longer have a place within it. By providing your salespeople with high-quality leads and the ability to quickly get on the phone and make sales, your company is able to ensure growth.

But, in order to do this, there needs to be a simple and efficient distribution of hot leads from marketing. The leads are already being generated using modern techniques and solutions, so it's simply a case of handing over the best information in the best possible way.

To **find out more** about generating high-quality leads and empowering your sales team to reach and exceed their targets, **speak to us today on**

**023 9231 4498**



**or email us at**

**[info@reallyb2b.com](mailto:info@reallyb2b.com)**

**Really.**