

# Lead Optimization: Are You Targeting the Right Prospects?

**Marketers can't optimize lead generation  
without specifically defining the right  
audience to approach.**

Lisa Cramer  
Co-Founder & President  
LeadLife Solutions  
lcramer@leadlife.com  
770.670.6702

Too often you see marketers jumping head-long into lead generation projects only to wonder why their efforts fail to deliver meaningful results.

It's sort of like that old science project where your bridge was supposed to support X amount of weight. You figured, this is easy, just put some popsicles sticks together and there you go, no problem. Perhaps you got lucky, but more likely the science and physics caught up with you and your bridge collapsed.

In marketing as bridge building, you need a plan. To get results, you need a formula that helps you construct a project to meet your expectations – the target, the dimensions, the timing – so that your campaign project does not crumble along with your reputation, expected ROI and sales leads.

### Define Who You Want to Target?

Marketing, although thankfully not science, still needs that plan to be successful. Marketing campaigns should always start with the “who?” - who will you target, who has a need for your product or service? No one can optimize lead generation without specifically defining the right audience to approach. Targeting can encompass many dimensions:

- » The types of business, typically defined by Industry or Standard Industrial Codes (SICs)
- » The geographical location of the business
- » The size of the business by revenue or number of employees or both
- » The people within the business typically defined by function code or job title
- » Previous interaction with your company
- » Specific events that have happened in the business



### How Specific Do You Need to Be?

When we speak to our prospects about email marketing, or lead optimization in general, much of the discussion focuses on understanding what comprises their very best prospect profile.

Some end up being so specific that they have a very difficult time trying to figure out how to get in front of and influence those buyers. Some think only one person will be the one that makes the decision to buy their product or service, that no influencers or others are ever involved.

On the other end of the extreme are companies that are not specific enough. They want to send the entire world their message and hope their value proposition arouses interest in someone. Marketers are under very real pressure to produce leads their very sales team can talk to. Marketers are often under such pressure that they don't want to narrow their audience or spend the time to accurately define the best prospect profile. They just want the large number of “leads.” This is often a hard cycle to break.

### Circumventing the Suspect Cycle

To circumvent this endless cycle of mass suspect blasts, sales and marketing must collaborate. There must be a definition of the best prospect profile with as much input as possible from both sides on who has a need or is likely to buy the company's products and services. This does not mean these are the only people to target campaigns. Sometimes these definitions are

nearly impossible to target from a marketing perspective or an early outbound first touch.

For instance, a firm selling CRM services would benefit from understanding what stage companies are with their CRM system maturation? Often you can track who has bought and who is looking, but what about the stages in between? There are lots of examples of this type of information where a company has had a CRM system for two years and is struggling in their adoption. These can be the best suspects for your services.

Yes, you could troll through CRM shows and speak to hundreds in hopes of finding the few. Yes, you can blog on CRM sites and pick up a few folks here and there. However, in this paper we are discussing ongoing marketing programs that can bring in more than a few possible leads and are repeatable over time.

There's a fine line between who you market to and who your sales team ends up selling to. There is the best prospect profile that sales sell to and there's the most probable prospect profile that marketing markets to. Maybe you market to the most probable profile and nurture that lead to see if they become more qualified and then onto the best prospect profile. Sales will be able to uncover the rest of the equation through further discovery throughout the sales cycle. It's marketing's job to bring the very best qualified leads to the door.



So, how do you figure out who to market to? And once you figure out who, then how do you market to them. Once marketing and sales determines the best prospect profile, marketing needs to translate that in to the best probable prospect profile. There are many criteria to use. Let's review just a few.

### Industry, Function, Size, Geography

First, look at industries, the types of businesses that would most likely have the need for your product or service. Industry definition can get as broad as "Manufacturing" or as detailed as "Wood Turning." Some types of products and services are very specific to a certain industry – for use in their business processes or workflow. Some products and services, however, can have application to a broader type of business with similar processes.

Next, consider who within that company owns or shares the pain you are trying to relieve. Who owns that pain and who else in that company feels that pain? It's important for marketing to target multiple points within a company. Unless you are selling low-priced commodities, rarely do decisions these days get made with only one person being affected.

Should you target high and hope to get the influence going down? Should you target low and build up the trust of the gate keeper. Should you target both? This is where the Sales team can really help. They can tell you who makes and who influences buying decisions during the sales process. Based on that knowledge you can decide who should be targeted in your marketing campaigns.

That takes us to company size. The "who" can be very different based on the size of the company you are targeting. For larger companies, you may target the VPs or Directors. For smaller companies, you may go to directly to the CEO.

What size company – by revenue or employee size – would be the best fit for your products and services? Are companies over \$1 billion in revenue the ones that your solution fits – have a need for your product or service, the ones that can afford your solution? Or are you better positioned to target the SMB market? The size of a company makes a huge difference. For

instance, we actually segment the same industry, same target title/job function differently based solely on the size. The same industry and title within a SMB has a different pain and therefore in LeadLife's case, we actually have a different solution to sell them versus the large corporations. That may or may not be right for you. It's more common to see companies target just one size company within a market.

Finally, you need to consider geography and this is often based on how you sell your products. Do you sell face-to-face? If you have regional offices you might want to target around those offices? Do you have a national presence, city-only presence, etc? Do you sell over the phone and web? Most companies understand this criterion well.

Of course, depending on what you sell, there are usually several other criteria that factor into lead generation optimization. This discussion is just the starting point to get you thinking about your formula.

---

### About LeadLife Solutions

LeadLife Solutions is a provider of on-demand lead management software that enables B2B marketers to automatically track, score, prioritize and nurture leads. With LeadLife's flexible and intuitive software you can increase the value of your lead generation dollars online/offline, qualify sales leads, shorten sales cycles and increase your marketing ROI. At LeadLife it's not only about leveraging automation, but also delivering lead management best practices to increase marketing and sales success. For more information on lead management and our best practices, please visit [www.leadlife.com](http://www.leadlife.com) or call 1-800-680-6292.