



Whitepaper

Forget the ABC's of Lead Scoring

Learn how to score a lead's interaction both online and offline, and prioritize automatically for appropriate next steps.

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In the age of the Internet, lead scoring has become crucial for marketers. Leads must be scored and prioritized for appropriate action. Otherwise, you'll be wasting, time, effort and your budget.

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.

The sheer volume of leads, or “suspects,” can be overwhelming. How does Marketing prioritize 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

Automated lead scoring and prioritization is the key. Spreadsheets and calculators simply will not do given the volume of leads and the varying sources and interactions. Marketers simply do not have time to crunch numbers as well as craft innovative campaigns with compelling messages and eye-catching images.

It's Prioritization, Not Categorization

It's important not to confuse lead prioritization with traditional lead categorization. Lead categorization—the classic A, B or C categories—is a system more associated with Sales than Marketing.

Typically, leads in a Sales funnel are categorized A, B or C. They are all deemed to be Sales-ready, but A's are more ready than B's, and B's more ready than C's, so Sales works them in that order. And Marketing refills the funnel. Lead categorization can be helpful, but traditionally, it's been prone to a “toss it over the fence and meet the lead quota” perception.



When Sales loses confidence in leads coming from Marketing, those leads get minimal attention, or they are ignored completely. That means Marketing wastes its time, effort and budget generating leads Sales does not pursue. Leads fall to the side, and some purchase products and service from competitors. That's not good for Sales or Marketing.

Scoring Guides Marketing Action

Lead prioritization is a different discipline than categorization, more attuned to Marketing action than Sales. It 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 PRIORITIZATION

Lead Score	Priority Level	Marketing or Sales Action
0 - 40	Suspect	Thought leadership nurturing activities by Marketing
41 - 60	Lead	Move to Telemarketing for qualification or nurture with more product content
61+	Sales Ready Lead	Send to Sales

Of course, there's setup work to determine the overall scoring scheme and what score and process is appropriate for each action. Do not expect to get it right the first time. It's a process, so remain flexible to adjust based on experiences.

Collect and Score All Interactions

You'll want to be sure your system can help you craft campaigns as well as capture and display results for both Sales and Marketing uses. You'll especially need behavior tracking and scoring rule features as well as alerts for moving leads through to the next level. Behavior tracking records where leads go and how long they stay on each page of your website. Scoring applies points for actions, everything from attending a trade show to spending 10 seconds on a detailed product page. And you'll want the ability to import and assign scores to bring data in from various external campaigns.

Marketing must be able to collect results and score all the possible interactions leads might have with the company, both online and offline.

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 3 product pages then 2 case studies, downloads a white paper, and remains on your website for 5 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 (10 each)	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

Clearly, these two visitors demonstrated different levels of interest in what you have to offer. Based on the LEAD PRIORITIZATION chart, Marketing would move Visitor 1 to Telemarketing for further qualification and keep Visitor 2 for nurturing activities. But, if Visitor 2 had scored 25 from previous interactions, its accumulated lead score would be 45, and Marketing would also move it to Telemarketing.

Leads move to Sales only when they reach your Sales-ready threshold. Or, depending on circumstances, your process might dictate that leads with scores just below the 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.

This type of scoring and prioritization is for all interactions over the life of the lead – whether online or offline. Has the same lead that downloaded a whitepaper from your website been to one of your trade show booths lately, or a seminar you hosted? If you don't know, you should, and those interactions should be scored. That's the only way to fully judge a lead's interest in your company's products and services over the life of the lead.

Be Flexible and Adjust Based on Results

Finally, what happens to those suspects that fail to reach the next threshold? Most likely you'd not waste any marketing effort on them for the moment, but keep them tucked away and revive them for new offerings, new ventures, new circumstances. You determine the answer, but scoring allows you to automate how it happens. Of course, your scoring scheme must remain flexible, honed over time based on campaign and sales 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 prioritization is the key to moving the right leads to right stage at the right time, resulting in more efficient processes and, ultimately, more Sales.

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 or call 1-800-680-6292.