

Make those leads count

By Raymond Johnston Jr

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Today's online marketers are much more sophisticated and enlightened than ever before. Advertising has always been a very important part of an entrepreneur's makeup, yet today that importance grows. With the growth of the internet, the number of different opportunities continues to increase at an amazing rate. Leads were always very important but in today's market, each one becomes even more precious. In this article, I will discuss means of getting leads but more importantly, how to handle a lead once you have it.

The word lead can be used in a variety of ways depending on the article that you are reading or the conversation in which you are involved. For the purpose of this article, the word lead will be used as someone who has shown an interest in your type business, whether it be an affiliate program or if you market toys. I do not consider random e-mail lists as leads, but potential leads, but so are the other millions of people who call this universe home.

There are many different ways to obtain leads, the most common being to run advertisements yourself. There are many different options of where to run these advertisements. Some of the more popular ways are e-zines, classifieds, newsletters, newsgroups and websites. This is by no means a complete list, in fact with the evolution of the internet, the number of places is limited only by the imagination.

Another way of obtaining leads is by purchasing leads or targeted leads. These leads are obtained by running generic type ads on different websites on the net. These ads come in a number of different forms but they are basically just a signup form for those interested in working some type of business, either online or from home. These are the type of forms that most of the affiliate

program co-ops use. Targeted leads are obtained from what I will call a double opt in process and are usually a much higher class of lead. (These are discussed in more depth in another article coming soon, "Should I pay for leads")

Generating leads is very important to the success of your business but possibly the more important part is how do you handle the leads once they are obtained. Once you get a lead, you must decide in what manner you will approach this lead. I am going to discuss a couple of different ways to handle this followup process.

The first method that I am going to discuss involves using autoresponders. This method requires a lot less of your time but as I will discuss later, it is much less personal. This method is used by a lot of people and is taught by a lot of the leaders in some of the top affiliate programs. This method works very well if one has the financial means to generate a sufficient amount of leads. By just the sheer numbers alone, this method can be successful for those that are involved with a good MLM program or have a quality product to offer. The problem I see is that the majority of people who are working programs on the net, do not have the capital required to generate the number of leads necessary to make this method a success. I am certainly not saying that using autoresponders cannot work or that they don't have a place in today's online marketing. There are too many people using them successfully to ever imply that they cannot be useful. They certainly save time and if you are having success with them, that is great. If you are not having the desired results from their use, then maybe it is time to add a more personal touch. Even if you are having decent results from them, you may enjoy even greater results by modifying the way you use them and injecting an additional dose of personality.

The other way to respond to leads is by using a more personal nature. A lot of the "how to" books, will tell you that repetition sells. In other words, find a sales letter that is productive and stick with it. Repetition personally turns me off. If I receive an offer that seems to be of the variety that I have browsed many times in the past, it's gone. Don't misinterpret this analogy and think that you need to make every letter you send original.

If you get a response to one of your advertisements requesting more information or you purchase a list of leads, there is nothing wrong with having a letter on file that you send in this type of situation. If a lead responds to an ad with questions or even just responds in a more personal way, take the time and make the response personal. It may take more of your time but building a good strong relationship with that one potential client, could pay big dividends down the road. A couple of the "right" clients can

turn your whole business situation around. Encourage questions to your leads, it makes them feel as if you have an interest in them personally. This will help bring a feeling of trust in you as a leader and business partner and this is something that is required to be a success in today's competitive market. The personal contact also breeds the feeling that you are there to help and everyone that is starting in business for themselves needs that reassurance. This helps build the kind of relationship that will help them become more productive as affiliates, should they decide to join your team.

The art of working leads is no exact science in any one's eyes. Try putting more personal effort into communicating with your leads and see if this doesn't bring you a higher success rate. Use this personal method to help increase the number of signups as well as helping motivate the members that you already have on board. I think you will enjoy much greater success if you start treating your leads like friends instead of affiliate number 14u2.

Anyone can reprint this article as long as this paragraph is included. This article is written by Raymond Johnston Jr who is an advertising executive. Ray can be contacted at <http://www.moneyforhire.com> or doug@6fi.zzn.com

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