

6 Steps to Get Your Sales Team to Embrace Personal Marketing

Selling *is* prospecting with a little presenting and negotiating thrown in, and today's prospecting requires that sellers help solve their own lead generation problem.

Management can help. With the right marketing strategy and training salespeople on personal marketing efforts, companies can generate a steady flow of qualified inbound leads.

It's time to train your team on how to create inbound lead flow with personal marketing in 6 easy steps.

Step 1: Introduce personal marketing

Personal marketing is a strategy where the seller personalizes their online communication with targeted individuals; engaging prospective customers online *before* selling to them.

B2B sellers have historically used cold calls and mass emails to try to reach potential buyers who were at the bottom of the sales funnel. But most of their efforts missed that small target, instead hitting the biggest portion of the funnel, those people who are at the top of the funnel -- people who are qualified, but not looking to change.

Personal marketing reaches the ever-growing group in the middle where qualified prospects, formerly at the top of the funnel and soon to be at the bottom, can now be found. The prospective buyers currently located in the middle of the funnel:

- recognize their own needs and are beginning to educate themselves about possible solutions.
- want to stay current with the latest thought leadership involving relevant business issues.
- want to hear what their peers think about solutions/products in order to form their own opinion.

The goal of personal marketing is for the seller to find and engage these people online.

Step 2: Consistent effort

Every day salespeople need to be setting themselves up for future success by blending personal marketing into each day's prospecting efforts

They will still need to cold call for short term success, but long term you can count on personal marketing to pay off. Proactive prospecting has a place: it's for sales within the next 30-90 days. Personal marketing and inbound lead generation is an effort they need to do today in order to see results 90 days to potentially even years out.

Once you get this going, the inbound lead flow should allow your salespeople to reduce down their traditional outbound prospecting, as well as, improve their ability to close inbound leads.

Step 3: Research

Your sellers will need to find and listen to prospects on the platforms they are actively using to learn more about specific products or services.

If you were the prospect, what websites would you visit and trust? What discussion groups would you join? Which blogs and newsletters would influence your thinking? How would you use LinkedIn and other social media sites?

Your team needs to find the prospect online so they can listen and learn before jumping into their sales pitch. They need to tailor everything they say so they come off as helpful and informative, rather than pushy and salesy.

Step 4: Content

Help your sellers mine sources of great content. Content is the magnet your team can use to lure in best-fit prospects who will be more likely to buy.

What content is potentially most interesting to your prospects?

Ideally it should bring insight, be helpful, relevant, and shareable. It may be your own company's research, a blog article written by a credible expert, or another resource such as a video, eBook, quiz, or infographic. None of this content is a sales pitch.

Step 5: Share

Salespeople can share information with the right prospects through a combination of blogging, commenting, and participating in discussion groups, in addition to social media profile updates and thoughtfully crafted emails.

Personal marketing emails need to be just that: *personal*. Containing no attachments or endless paragraphs, these emails should just be a note that is timely and relevant, not something that comes off as spam.

Step 6: Grow the network

Personal marketing works best if the seller is active on social media, updates frequently, and is actively adding new names to their list of friends, connections, followers and contacts. Get your team on the grid and make sure they get their message out there.

Stop relying solely on traditional prospecting and make the most out of what personal marketing can offer your team in terms of lead generation.