

# A short guide to identifying and using leads from your content marketing

"I create loads of marketing content and post on social media all of the time, but I'm not getting any sales!!!"

I hear this a lot! Now, I truly believe in the power of content marketing (obvs!) and using the consistency-visibility-engagement-leads model that I developed...however, there is a difference between marketing and sales and you cannot forget that!

## Understanding the difference between marketing and sales

Marketing is all about making yourself known. However, you can't stop there and expect the sales to come flooding in.

*My analogy....*Imagine you own a little shop and your beautiful shop window and displays are your content marketing. Now, if you saw someone peering in the window or browsing, what would you do? The most natural reaction is to say "Hi there, is there anything I can help you with?" ...*this is engaging with a sales lead!* To continue the analogy, equally, you wouldn't ignore that person who approached your shop and just continue to re-decorate your shop window...*this is endless marketing without engaging with your leads!*

My favourite definition of sales is 'helping to buy' – you are not being pushy! You are not irritating people who are uninterested! You are going to go after your 'leads', those people who are interested in you and are already "peering in your shop window"; thanks to catching their attention through your content marketing.

What's interesting, is that if you owned a shop, you wouldn't think twice about this kind of marketing and sales follow up. However, when we consider our digital marketing, we don't adopt the same approach. Many small business owners are essentially ignoring potential sales leads; ignoring those who show interest and are engaged...so, let me show you how to capitalise on what you may be missing.

## 5 ways to identify leads

You are most likely going to be publishing your content marketing on social media platforms, in emails to your mailing list, and on your website and a blog. Unsurprisingly, this is where you are going to find your leads too.

Here are five ways to identify leads and easy ways to engage and follow up with them...

### 1. Follow up with those who are liking your posts on social media

Go through some of your recent social media posts and see who is liking and reacting to them. If you are on Facebook and LinkedIn, what sort of reactions are they giving you? Who is more than 'just' liking your posts? If they are all current clients, friends, family members and supporters, then fair enough...but, what if there is someone in there who you have not worked with. Perhaps it is someone who has made an enquiry in the past or you met once at a networking event, but nothing more. Ask yourself – why are they taking the time to react? Consider: could they be peering in your shop window??? So, what are you going to do? Send them a PM! Say thank you for their support. Explain how hard it is at the moment and that any social media engagement is gratefully received and then...ask them "Is there anything I can help you with?"

### 2. Follow up with those engaging with you on social media or blog posts

Better than a reaction, what if you have someone who is commenting on your social media or blog posts? Do you 'heart' and thank them for the comment? ...Is that it?! Why?!

They have taken the time to comment. They are a sales lead! Why not write something more engaging and inspiring? For example, ask them another question...it may be as simple as asking them if there is anything you can help them with, but it may also be an opportunity to start a more meaningful conversation. Are they suggesting that your content resonates with them? Perhaps, you have a solution to a problem they are mentioning...offer your services or more information, that's all...a polite, kind offer.

### 3. Follow up with followers

On social media, if someone connects or follows you (or accepts a connection request or follows you back), send them a message and thank them...then, ask if there is anything you can help with or that they are interested in, especially if their profile suggests they are an ideal client! You don't have to be sleazy or pushy, but at the end of the day, they have made that decision to connect and/or follow you, so they have shown that interest...they have peered through your shop window...and you are just responding politely!

LinkedIn also tells you who has viewed your profile...again, if this person turns out to be your ideal client, then why not connect and message them saying that you noticed they looked at your profile and you have looked at theirs. Tell them that you have taken the time to look at their posts and can see that perhaps you could work together. Offer to tell them more about your services.

I know direct messaging can be scary, but don't over think it. Be you. Write what comes naturally. Again, imagine the shop, or you had met in person at a networking event – what would you say? What would you tell them? Importantly, what would you ask them?

I often take a look at the profile of someone who has requested to connect or who has accepted my request and mention something about their business or recent update. I show I actually know who they are, before a very simple: "Is there anything you would like to know about my services?" or "Can I help you with anything in particular at this time?" ...some don't reply. Some say no. Some ask for more information. Some book a call. Some buy from me! ...but if you don't start that conversation, you will never know what the response could have been.

### 4. Follow up with those who open your emails

I come across so many business owners who spend ages crafting beautiful emails and become absolutely obsessed by their open rate and click rate. Now, I like analytics and it is interesting to see what content resonates with your audiences, however, don't forget the human element – who is actually reading your emails? Who is opening? Who is clicking? These are your leads! ...you are being given a list of names or, at least, their email addresses.

We all know how many inboxes are full to bursting. Don't forget the fact someone has gone to the trouble of opening one of your emails. They are DEFINITELY peering in your shop window! Why not send them a personalised email and ask them how you can help? You don't have to state that you have been following their open rates, etc., just consider how you can use this information and follow up this lead.

Equally, there is no harm in exploring who has signed up to your list and then never opened a single email...why not ask them why this is, and, perhaps, even offer to remove them from your list. After all, if nothing else, they are just dragging down your precious open rate percentages! ....and, best case scenario, that personal engagement may be the encouragement they need to buy from you.

## 5. Follow up with those who visit your website

Website traffic is so important and yet, unfortunately, it is difficult to identify who is visiting and who is not...however, it is not impossible. Going back to your mailing list – who are the people that clicked through from an email to a certain web page or sales page. With social media, if you shared a link to your website, who were the people who reacted to this post. You can ask them if they followed it and found the content interesting, for example.

Most importantly, if you have a contact form and you have had an enquiry email, via this channel (which I am going to assume you replied to), have you followed up with those who didn't then send a reply? It may be a long shot...but, what's the harm in following up? You worked hard on your website and this person found you via this channel and took the time originally to contact you, so one more email can't hurt.

## One last piece of advice...a “No” won't hurt you

With all of these sales approaches, the worst that can happen is a 'no thank you' or, more likely, simply no response. Are either of these going to hurt? No!

Going back to my shop analogy, how often have you replied to the shop assistant's offer of help: “No thank you – I am just browsing”. Did you spend the rest of the day worrying that you had hurt the shop owner's feelings? Did the shop owner spend hours after you left feeling down? ...hopefully not! Most likely, they (and you) just moved on...and rightly so...moved on to the next 'lead' and again, simply asking, “Is there anything I can help you with?”

## Making the most of your content

All of this advice is simply about making your content marketing work hard for your business. You have spent time, energy and passion creating every piece, so I hate the thought that it's not actually leading to anything. It's important to take advantage of every ideal client who takes an interest in your business.