Data - A Driving Force Behind Every Successful Demand Generation Initiative

Introduction

This Ebook looks into business development best practices for startup companies based on the perspectives of some key sales and marketing executives that Jeff Leroux, Head of Sales and Channels at B2BSignals, has interviewed.

Across the various interviews, one central theme has emerged - that executives in both sales & marketing rely heavily on data to gain access to the RIGHT people at the RIGHT companies while ensuring marketing and sales objectives are consistently congruent.

Data is the building block upon which the success of all marketing initiatives is anchored. Specifically, right data fuels the effectiveness of a company's demand generation engine.

Inspired by Jeff's 3-part blog series, we will look at the importance of having the **RIGHT Data** to propel a successful demand generation campaign. We will then sift through some key takeaways from his conversation with sales and marketing leaders on their proven strategies to get sales in front of the **RIGHT Accounts** and the **RIGHT People**.

Lastly, we will wrap up this feature by highlighting the importance of creating the **RIGHT Content** and why delivering it at the **Right Time** could ensure success to the sales rep and the company he or she works for.

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RIGHT Data Drives Lead Generation

One of the major challenges startups face is how to drive lead generation. From the interviews with a couple of folks who have overcome that challenge, one will see a consistent theme from executives and direct contributors about the "four RIGHTS". **The four RIGHTS are people, companies, time and content. Having the right data is the starting point when building demand generation programs – especially for start-ups.**

To put some context to this, we can gain perspective from David Chan, Inside Sales Rep at zSpace. zSpace is a VC funded, leading virtual reality vendor focused on education solutions based in Sunnyvale, CA.

Speaking to David about his challenges as a demand generation rep, he indicated his greatest challenge was to understand and scale outbound targeting. That is, he sells into the education market and much of the education marketplace has different needs. Some organizations suffer from low enrollment, others from low test scores. David sees his day-to-day challenge of finding in market leads has more to do with targeting the right message to the right people, at the right organization and at the right time.

Within the education marketplace there could be up to ten very different and distinct end user hot buttons. Unless he hits the right hot button with the right individual, he is not going to get any traction with those individuals he is targeting. Having the right data helps David gain traction with his lead generation efforts.

The main mechanism for getting the value proposition to market is broad-based marketing programs and case studies. The case studies are of existing educational institutions that have used their platform and are able to document significant improvement in key performance metrics around their particular hot buttons.

What we can learn from David is that he understands the strategic importance of the four RIGHTS and feels it at a very tactical level – his productivity & results. Data is his core ingredient.

Finding the RIGHT Accounts and the RIGHT People

Speaking with Steven Sayman, a Regional Sales Manager with Malwarebytes – a leading anti-malware solution and is one of the fastest growing startups to come out of Silicon Valley, his biggest challenge lies in finding the right types of leads.

Steve is looking for leads that are in market and have budget ("aren't we all" he added). Steve knows exactly the profile of an account that will make an ideal prospect, who in the account he needs to speak with and what they are interested in. His challenge is to find enough of these in his territory to continue being a top performer.

Steve wants the RIGHT accounts, the RIGHT people in those accounts and he knows what the RIGHT content is to share with them at the RIGHT time. The foundation of his demand generation efforts begins and ends with data about people and companies. Knowing what other technology platforms they have installed allows him to narrowly target those individuals with specific roles.

Steve uses a variety of tools to help him define his target account attributes, identify look-alike companies in his territory and reach the influencers, champions and decision makers essential to making his sales goals. Some data-as-a-service platforms offer free trials that let you find your RIGHT account and that person.

Aligning the goals and compensation of marketing with sales is a key contributor to how effective organizations will be in pursuing a successful demand generation strategy that helps drive growth.

Talking with Steve and David, it is clear that executives in both sales & marketing rely heavily on data to gain access to the RIGHT people at the RIGHT companies.

RIGHT Content and the RIGHT Timing Can Make or Break a Startup's Demand Generation Campaign

A very experienced marketing executive, Daniel Sands, Managing Partner at Agent3 shared some of his insights. Agent3 is a world class marketing and software business that supports clients to link sales and marketing more closely to drive competitive advantage. Daniel opined that demand generation is about getting to the RIGHT people at the RIGHT company at the RIGHT time with the RIGHT content.

Daniel sees his role as building marketing strategies that help his clients do just that. There are many moving parts to delivering on the four RIGHTs. **One of the keys to effective execution is to engage clients with insights into their business and into key issues they care about. That is, create content that is contextual and relevant to the client's challenges.** Then, creatively get this content into places where clients can find and engage with it.

Speaking with Jim Lodestro, Chief Revenue Officer at Aerospike - a leading, VC funded, NoSQL database vendor in Mountain View, CA, he views demand generation as first, creating the infrastructure that allows a client to self- educate, and then ultimately raise their hand when they are ready to speak with a sales person.

The website is the obvious location and the challenge (assuming you have that self- education infrastructure) is to get the RIGHT people to your website. One of the keys to the success Aerospike has achieved is that they have aligned marketing's compensation and goals with sales. They use specific ABM and other targeting technologies and strategies to help drive the right type of buyers to their website. They have taken a rifle shot approach to targeting and have seen tremendous success with record revenue growth over several quarters as a result.

Jim believes the keys to their success at Aerospike lie in aligning marketing with sales' objectives and in taking a highly targeted approach to get the RIGHT people to their website.

It is clear that both these executives see the importance of aligning marketing with sales and creating great content that resonates with prospective clients. Implicit in this understanding is the assumption that not every lead is an A lead – or in market – and that there needs to be a nurturing process that leverages content that really does engage their target audiences. Knowing who and how to target those audiences is hard to do, but achievable as evidenced by Aerospike's success.

However, content marketing and having the RIGHT Content is not enough. Ensuring having the RIGHT Person at the RIGHT Time and supplying them with the RIGHT Content will make your demand generation strategy even more compelling.

Conclusion

The relative importance on these four "RIGHTS" — people, companies, timing and content to ensure the success of every demand generation initiative cannot be overemphasized. **Nonetheless, without data, (the right kind), from which these four "rights" are hinged upon, a demand generation campaign could hardly thrive.**

Meanwhile, alignment of goals between sales and marketing is crucial to stimulate unprecedented growth in a company's lead generation efforts. Moreover, the synergy between the two entities is critical in order to produce a more coordinated strategy and the right content that truly engages and resonates with the customer's needs.

Sounds easy or daunting enough? But how do you kick-start your demand generation engine with a lot of "noise" around? First, you need to filter the "noise" and get only the most relevant data. Some on demand B2B data platforms can do that for you. But bear in mind that not all providers are created equal. Data accuracy and coverage vary widely among vendors[1]. Be extra cautious when you consider working with a data provider. As you evaluate data providers, consider B2BSignals. We are going to help sales and marketing to be much more relevant and targeted in their efforts to acquire, nurture and grow customer relationships.

[1] "Online Sources of B-to-B Data: A Comparative Analysis"

About B2BSignals

B2BSignals is an on demand B2B data platform that addresses market data challenges for sales and marketing teams. It provides sales executives with detailed information on targeted accounts. B2BSignals fills the gaps felt by sales and marketing, and leverages Salesify experience to deliver data and insights. B2BSignals is powered by Natural Language Processing, Social Listening and human oversight, which is layered in with its own proprietary data dictionary, resulting in deep insights on companies, role-based contacts and technology product install base information.

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