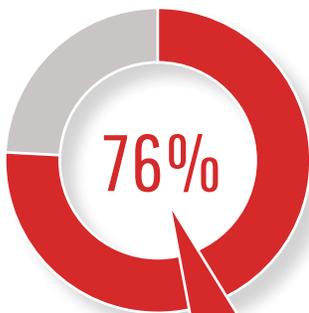


ILG WHITE PAPER

# ONLINE LEAD GENERATION FOR MANUFACTURERS: WHY IT'S CRITICAL FOR COMPLEX SALES AND HOW IT CAN TRIPLE YOUR LEADS PER MONTH

EXECUTIVES BIGGEST  
CHALLENGE



"GENERATING  
HIGH-QUALITY LEADS"

Today's manufacturers are under intense and sustained pressure to deliver strong financial results to their stakeholders. Bottom line profitability is driven by sales, and every single sale begins with one thing: A LEAD.

If your company produces specialty industrial products sold to other businesses (B2B), you understand that acquiring new sales leads on a regular basis is a critical challenge to your business success.

If you find yourself wishing you had more leads to deliver to your sales team, you are not alone. In a 2011 study done by Marketing Sherpa, 76% of senior executives said "generating high-quality leads" was their biggest challenge.

## THREE FUNDAMENTAL REASONS COMPANIES STRUGGLE TO HIT SALES GOALS HAVE TO DO WITH LEAD GENERATION

### 1 NOT ENOUGH LEADS

Your sales team doesn't have enough leads to sustain sales growth (stagnant or declining sales). It's simple math. If you don't have enough leads coming in, your sales team can't possibly succeed long-term.

### 2 INCONSISTENT AMOUNT OF LEADS

You don't have leads coming in on a regular basis (significant swings in month-over-month sales). A "feast or famine" lead generation system is difficult to manage and has the effect of creating periods that overwhelm your sales team, followed by periods of slow or nonexistent sales.

### 3 LOW QUALITY LEADS

Not aligned with the profile of your ideal customer, wasting your sales team's time and resources (most leads do not convert because they are not a good fit). Not only do these low quality leads waste time, they also discourage your sales team.

THE BIGGEST CHANGE AND GREATEST CHALLENGE FOR EVERY BUSINESS IS HOW WE START SALES CONVERSATIONS WITH OUR PROSPECTS.

## THE ROLES OF SALES AND MARKETING HAVE CHANGED - FOREVER!

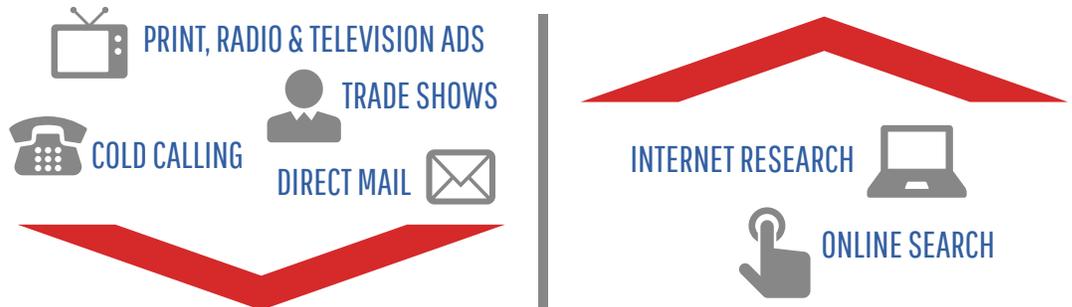
The changing sales and marketing environment is making it more difficult to consistently generate more leads. Over the past ten years, the effectiveness of traditional sales and marketing methods has been on the decline. In her book *Selling to Big Companies* (Kaplan Publishing) Jill Konrath describes this phenomenon as “The Perfect Storm” of change. The following excerpt puts it best:

*Companies keep getting bigger and more global. They're constantly restructuring, reorganizing, and rightsizing. These changes have left employees doing more jobs with less people and less time to meet with salespeople and are clearly adverse (or numb) to any more changes you may be proposing.*

*No one today returns phone calls, (they let it go to voice mail), or responds to emails, that is what a delete button is for. These modern conveniences all act as gatekeepers to your decision-makers.*

*Today, corporate decision makers continue to embrace technology in order to enhance communications, educate themselves, protect their valuable time, and prevent interruptions in their already over-the-top schedules.*

— Excerpt from *Selling to Big Companies*, Jill Konrath. Kaplan Publishing.



Whether you like it or not, in the minds of your potential customers the Internet is now the expert they turn to first for answers. **Buyers are now self-educating before they ever want to hear from your expert sales team.**

Despite all the changes brought by technology and the need for employees to perform multiple tasks, one fundamental thing has not changed: We are still selling to **PEOPLE**. The biggest change and the greatest challenge for every business is how we start our sales conversation with them.

With the evolution of Internet and online search, the process by which we gather information and interact on a business level has changed. Today, most people begin a search for a product or service online. (Google alone reports 38 million searches daily from people looking for products.)

**NOW THAT PROSPECTS ARE DOING THEIR OWN RESEARCH BEFORE THEY REACH OUT TO COMPANIES, THE CHALLENGE OF SELLING JUST GOT EVEN MORE DIFFICULT.**

Because of this shift, our prospects spend much more time in the research phase of the buying process and don't need or want to talk to a salesperson until well into their decision to make a purchase.

In Matthew Dixon and Brent Adamson's book *The Challenger Sale*, the authors' research shows that prospects don't want to talk to a salesperson until they are 55%-75% of the way through the decision process. As we explain later, this can actually be a phenomenal opportunity, but for now it is a persistent threat that ensures your sales team is left out of the loop during important steps in the decision process.

It is generally accepted that traditional sales and marketing such as: advertising, direct mailers, trade shows, or face-to-face sales are now less effective. These tools haven't been eliminated, but their effectiveness has been greatly reduced, as happened to radio ad sales after introduction of the television. Your prospects are now spending more time researching solutions to their problems online and on their own before they want to talk with anyone.

These recent trends toward Internet research pose special challenges for industrial product manufacturers who have relied on traditional marketing methods as well as inside and outside sales reps or sales agents to generate their leads.

As we will see next, the inherent complexities of B2B industrial sales requires a higher level of information transfer (hand-holding) and technical interaction between trained sales teams and their prospects. Now that most prospects are doing their own research before they reach out to companies, the challenge of selling just got more difficult.



**YOUR PROSPECTS DON'T WANT TO TALK WITH YOUR SALES PEOPLE UNTIL THEIR DECISION TO BUY IS 55% TO 75% MADE.**

THESE CHALLENGES  
REPRESENT A  
NEVER-ENDING  
CYCLE OF ISSUES,  
COMPLICATIONS AND  
PROBLEM SOLVING

## THE EXTRA CHALLENGES OF A COMPLEX INDUSTRIAL SALE

Over and above the issues of the changing sales and marketing environment, companies involved in complex sales have to deal with additional issues that make the sales process exponentially more difficult. If you are a manufacturer of industrial products, then you understand that these sales take an enormous amount of time, resources, and energy to close.

Why? Because of what we call *the 10 challenges of complex sales*. These challenges represent a never-ending cycle of issues, complications, and problem solving to close this type of sale. They are:

- 1 LONGER SALES CYCLES
- 2 NARROW MARKETS
- 3 SIGNIFICANT INVESTMENT
- 4 GREATER EDUCATION
- 5 STATUS QUO AS YOUR COMPETITION
- 6 GREATER VALUE PROPOSITIONS
- 7 COMPREHENSIVE JUSTIFICATIONS
- 8 COMPANY-WIDE (TEAM) SELLING
- 9 EXTRA LAYERS OF APPROVALS
- 10 HIGHEST LEVEL OF RISK

These challenges are not going away. They are inherent in the complex sale itself and will dominate any sales process.

Let's look at a few in more detail to better understand why they are so challenging.

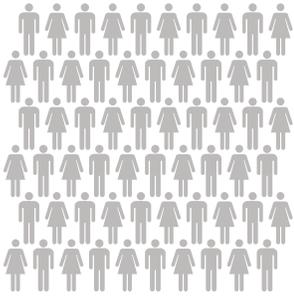
### LONGER SALES CYCLES

Each and every one of these complexities extends your sales cycle. Long sales cycles are the hallmarks of complex sales. By definition, if your typical sales cycle requires between 3 months to 36 months to close, you are in the complex sales business.

And, as the length of your sales process increases, so does the level of risk of losing a sale or it being put on hold by circumstances beyond your control.

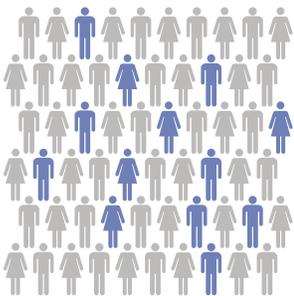
### NARROW MARKETS

Unlike consumer products, industrial products serve very narrow markets. They may be selling products to a specific industry or into a specific process within a specific industry — these products are specifically designed for one purpose or function, which makes their potential markets much smaller.



**PROSPECTS**

Your potential customers in the research phase of their buying process



**INTERESTED LEAD**

A prospect who has researched your product and reached out to your company

Prospecting for new leads is much more time consuming in specialty markets than in business-to-consumer (B2C) markets. It takes longer to find qualified leads and longer to develop relationships. Keeping the pipeline filled with leads may also require you to expand to international markets, which adds even more levels of complexity.

**GREATER EDUCATION TO UNDERSTAND THE PRODUCTS AND VALUE**

Industrial products are sophisticated and the value to the customer is often difficult to grasp. Even though your product is designed to solve crucial business issues, integration of these products into your customer’s process presents an additional layer of complications. This means that you need to allocate even more time and resources to educating prospective buyers.

This extra level of sales complexity creates a condition consultant and author Jill Konrath describes as “the dreaded D-Zone” – the place sellers get sent when they have failed to articulate their product’s value. They get: Deleted, Delayed or Dismissed for other products.

**THEIR BIGGEST COMPETITOR - STATUS QUO**

For your potential customer, time is precious commodity, and they’ll try to protect their time at all costs. A prospect will live with the status quo as long as they can, even if it will cost more money and they are not happy with their current results. Why? Because change creates more work and eats up even more time. As the old saying goes, “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.”

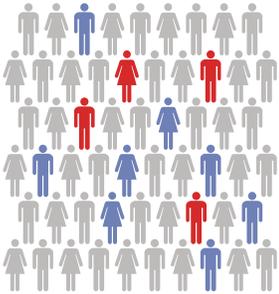
The only change that is taking place today is “must” change – because something is broken. As a seller, you need to show just how broken your prospect’s current situation has become. As we have seen, if you don’t, they will make the safest choice of all: No decision.

For most B2B sellers, the number of sales opportunities ending in “NO decision” is well above 35%.

**LOOKING BACK OVER THE LIST ABOVE, HOW MANY OF THESE CHALLENGES DOES YOUR COMPANY FACE? 1, 3, 5, OR ALL? HOW MUCH TIME DOES YOUR TEAM SPEND NURTURING AND CLOSING SALES VS. GENERATING NEW SALES LEADS?**

These challenges won’t go away and we can’t change them. What we can do is create an environment that minimizes challenge and integrate them into the sales process so they don’t feel like death threats to your potential sale.

Now that you have a better understanding of the process, let’s focus on how lead generation can impact your business and change the way you view these challenges of complex sales.



**QUALIFIED LEAD**

A lead who matches your ideal customer profile, has a need for your product and has started the conversation with you

A 2013 STUDY BY HUBSPOT, INC. SHOWED THAT INDUSTRIAL LEAD GENERATION METHODS BROUGHT IN 54% MORE LEADS THAN TRADITIONAL MARKETING METHODS

**WHAT IS A LEAD GENERATION SYSTEM?**

A lead generation system attracts and educates prospects, generates interested leads, and refines them through the process to deliver qualified leads into your sales team and is built on sustainable and repeatable processes to produce results month after month. This system is diametrically different from reaching out to cold prospects, interrupting them with your product or service, and trying to pull them in.

**BEGINNING WITH A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH**

Without a systematic approach to lead generation, companies struggle to maintain the levels of consistency, quantity, and quality of incoming leads to reach their sales goals. This leaves companies more vulnerable to economic changes and market fluctuations.

Today's most successful industrial B2B companies are implementing online lead generation systems designed to reach, educate, and engage their ideal customers during the initial research phase of their sales journey. By being there precisely at the point when prospects are looking for information, they familiarize themselves with YOUR products and service and establish a level of TRUST before they even reach out to your sales team. Your prospects are still out there and they still have a need for your product or service. How they find you and your product is much different today.

Implementing a well planned and executed lead generation strategy produces qualified leads that are engaged in the sales process. They receive the educational information they need during their research phase and reach out to your sales team when they are ready. It is reported that 78% of sales are awarded to the company that made the first contact.

While the idea of trusting that prospects contact you when they are ready versus priming the pump (with cold calls, trade shows, and direct mail), then following up with sales calls may seem difficult at first, but the reality is that this is the way today's prospects expect to do business. The good news? When highly qualified leads reach out to you, they are easier to close. Your sales team will become more successful and more engaged. It's a win-win for you and your customer!



CUSTOMERS

**78% OF SALES GO TO THE FIRST COMPANY TO MAKE CONTACT.**

Simply stated, industrial lead generation is the most effective method for generating sales leads because it is focused on presenting your message to your ideal customer who is already searching for products and solutions.

**THE KEY TO EFFECTIVE  
LEAD GENERATION IS  
MATCHING PEOPLE  
AND COMPANIES WITH  
THE RIGHT PRODUCTS  
AT THE RIGHT TIME  
(BUYER'S TIME)  
TO PRODUCE THE  
HIGHEST PERCENTAGE  
OF CLOSURE RATES**

## HOW CAN A LEAD GENERATION SYSTEM IMPACT YOUR BUSINESS?

The most effective way to thrive in the new sales world of industrial lead generation is to attract your ideal customer when they are searching for the solution to the problems your product solves.

Think of it this way, every salesperson has closed the “Effortless Sale”, one in which everything went perfectly. Ever wonder why? Because the product the prospect was searching for aligned perfectly with what the seller was offering (including capability, ROI and price) at the precise time the prospect was in the market to buy. Have you ever wondered why those kinds of sales don't happen more frequently? It's because until now there was no way to efficiently and consistently find those prospects in the first place, let alone find them when they are ready to buy.

### KEY FACTS:

- Every day **YOUR** ideal customer is somewhere in the world looking for solutions to problems your product can solve.
- The majority of industrial customers will begin the buying process with online research. (In fact, reports show 38 million online searches are performed every day just for the purpose of conducting product research.)
- Each one of these prospects is actively looking for information and solutions to their problems.

As you now know, in today's selling environment when people are ready to reach out to inquire about a company's product they are already 55-75% the way through the buying process. They have researched, read, compared, analyzed and likely even had internal meetings to discuss investing in your product or something similar. **NOW** they are ready! The question is: **Will they contact YOU or your competitor first?** The answer depends on how easily your product was found during their initial research. Remember, 78% of the sales go to the company that was contacted first by your prospect and if your product isn't part of their initial research the prospect may not contact you at all.

The industrial lead generation system puts your company in front of prospects and starts the sales conversation without requiring time or effort on the part of your sales team! The implications of this are both profound and extremely profitable. The implications of failing to implement such a system are also profound, as inaction virtually assures that your company won't have a seat at the table.

*The key to effective lead generation is matching people and companies with the right products at the right time (buyer's time) to produce the highest percentage of closure rates.*

Industrial Lead Generation provides your sales team with sustainable, repeatable leads that are matched to your ideal customer profile and your sales team's ability to process them. This ensures that your sales team will be spending their time nurturing quality leads and closing more high quality sales instead of cold calling uninterested prospects or being forced to take low quality "fill" orders. Industrial Lead Generation dramatically improves your sales process because **YOUR PROSPECTS** are initiating the sales conversation, not the other way around.

- ILG'S SYSTEM:**
- ATTRACTS AND EDUCATES PROSPECTS
  - GENERATES LEADS THAT MATCH YOUR CUSTOMER PROFILE
  - DELIVERS VALUABLE, HIGH-QUALITY LEADS TO YOUR SALES TEAM IN A CONTINUOUS, RELIABLE STREAM



## EXAMPLE OF A LEAD GENERATION SYSTEM FROM AN EXISTING CLIENT:

### BACKGROUND

One of our industrial lead generation clients commissioned us to create a system to deliver qualified leads for a piece of specialty industrial equipment. The client had been averaging only one new **Interested Lead** every two months for the previous 12 months.

Historical sales data (compiled over the previous five years), showed the client would need to acquire between 50 to 60 **Interested Leads** for every new sale. Furthermore, the typical sales cycle for the machine was 27–36 months from the time the client received a new **Qualified Lead** to closing the sale.

- Market price of product: \$750k to \$1 million
- Sales cycle: 27–36 months
- Number of **Interested Leads** prior to launching system: .5 per month
- System target 5–10 **Qualified Leads** monthly

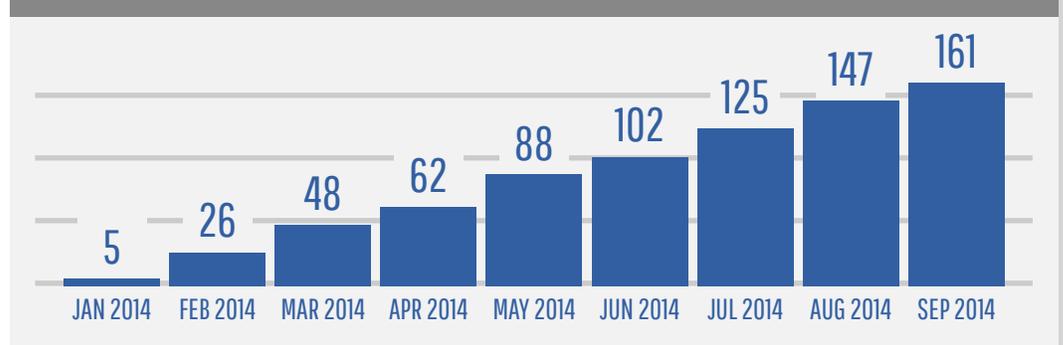
### IMPLEMENTATION

Upon discussing our client’s business goals, researching their market, analyzing their product’s benefits and developing a comprehensive ideal customer profile (ICP), we implemented a customized, industrial lead generation system and launched it at the beginning of the year.

### RESULTS

During the first three months, our customized Industrial Lead Generation system had produced nearly 50 new sales leads. After six months, the customer received more than 100 new leads, which in turn generated \$4.4 million in new proposals. Most importantly, the client’s online lead generation system continues to generate highly qualified leads at the rate of nearly one per day. Through continuous refinement, our system will to generate these results, giving the client’s sales team (and company) a sustainable and predictable sales stream that is thrilling stakeholders.

NUMBER OF LEADS GENERATED FIRST NINE MONTHS:



Launched Lead Generation System January 2014 (Actual Client Data)

BEFORE LAUNCHING  
INDUSTRIAL LEAD  
GENERATION SYSTEM:  
**1/2 LEAD PER MONTH**

AFTER IMPLEMENTING  
INDUSTRIAL LEAD  
GENERATION SYSTEM:  
**AVERAGE 17.8 LEADS  
PER MONTH OVER THE  
FIRST 9 MONTHS**

LIKE COMPOUNDING INTEREST, THIS GROWING POOL OF LEADS CONTINUES TO APPRECIATE IN QUALITY AND VALUE OVER TIME

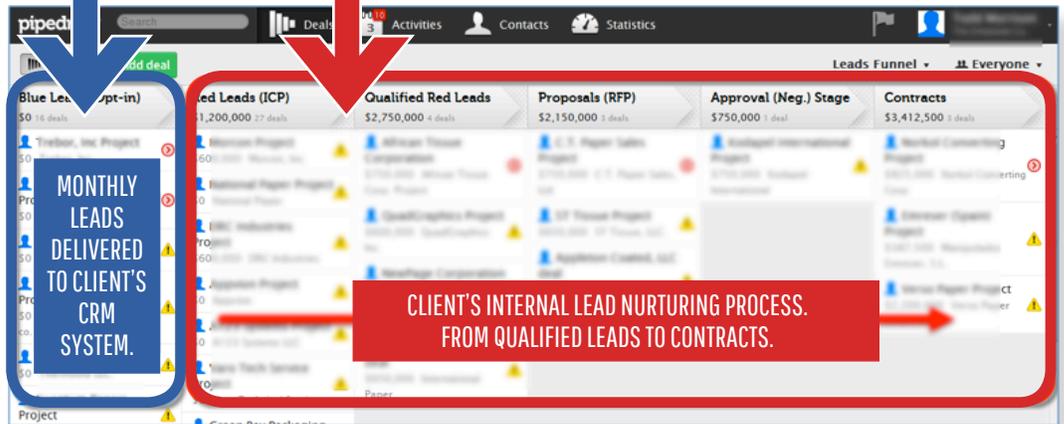
NINE-MONTH RESULTS SNAPSHOT:

17.8 AVE. INTERESTED LEADS PER MONTH

6 QUALIFIED LEADS PER MONTH

TOTAL PROPOSALS GENERATED  
\$6.31 MILLION

CONTRACTS GENERATED  
\$3.41 MILLION



Screen Capture from Client CRM System

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS OF AN ILG SYSTEM

Not every lead becomes a sale. However, like compounding interest, this growing pool of leads continues to appreciate in quantity and value over time. The client is now able to build a portfolio of the most ideal customers to nurture, and when leads are ready to purchase, the company has a big advantage over competitors.

## OUR PROCESS

We are not consultants. We collaborate with our clients as a strategic partner with one goal: to deliver the highest quality leads possible to your sales team.

We are committed to getting our clients up and running with a lead generation system in the first 60 days. Our onboarding process begins by talking with senior management and your team about your business goals, product offering(s), your market and your definition of a high quality customer.

Then we leverage our 30 years of expertise in the development and sale of industrial B2B products and 15-plus years of online marketing experience to develop an online lead generation system that is laser focused on showcasing your product attributes and engineered to attract, educate, and capture your ideal customers.

### PHASE I: ONBOARDING PROCESS

- Understanding your ideal customer, product and market.
- Development of project management plan.

### PHASE II: SYSTEM EXECUTION

- Development of online lead generation assets.
- Launch basic lead generation pipeline.
- System begins to deliver leads to your sales team.

### PHASE III: MONITOR & CONTROL THE SYSTEM

- Ongoing adjustments to improve lead quality and system function.
- Ongoing refinement of content and message to targeted ideal customer.
- Monthly team meetings to review system quality and goals and targets.
- Daily system analytics tracking and conversion testing.
- Monthly development and launch of new assets to improve system.

### **PHASE I: ONBOARDING**

We develop a solid foundation for your program by analyzing your market, fully understanding the major benefits of your products to end users and developing a comprehensive profile defining who your ideal lead is and what they are looking for.

### **PHASE II: SYSTEM EXECUTION**

Based on the analysis conducted in our onboarding phase, we begin to build your basic online lead generation assets and launch your system.

### **PHASE III: MONITOR AND CONTROL**

We continually work to build and refine the system monthly to make sure it meets your business goals.

To successfully implement a lead generation system in your business, you must employ dozens of elements organized into a framework that is designed to bring qualified leads into your business. This system requires specialized expertise to set up, implement, and maintain. It is not a single part that makes the system successful, but a combination of parts working together that we have found to be the most successful over the years.

We simplify the process for you by handling the creation and management of a complete system, custom designed for your product and deliver qualified leads to your team.

## CONCLUSION

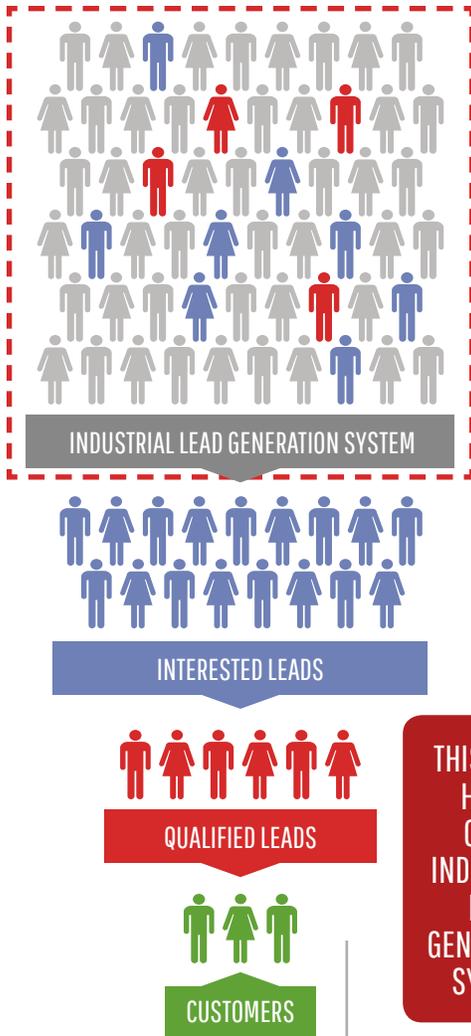
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More than ever before, customers are embracing technology to fill their need for information. This information gathering is on their terms and timing. Your potential customers are researching purchases long before you can begin a sales conversation using traditional methods. The days of completely relying on those methods to create awareness, educate prospects, and generate leads are gone.

Today's leading companies are connecting with prospects during their initial research phase, providing them quality information and opportunities to engage with their sales teams on the prospect's schedule. (Where and when THEY are ready to purchase.) This approach fosters more effective lead generation and a positive sales experience that generates results.

We help companies transition from rigid, product-based strategies of traditional sales and marketing toward solving their ideal customers' challenges, problems, and issues. We find where your ideal customer is looking for solutions and put your company in front of them right when they need answers.

We are not an advertising agency, SEO, or consulting firm. We are a lead generation firm for manufacturers of industrial products. We specialize in developing, launching, and managing custom online lead generation systems designed to deliver qualified leads for complex sales of industrial products. The individualized services we provide and systems we develop, provide our client's with qualified sales leads designed around their ideal customer. Find out first-hand how our approach to lead generation delivers highly qualified leads that already know the value of your product and are ready to buy.



**If you are interested in discussing how an online lead generation system could benefit your industrial manufacturing business we'd love to talk with you. Please begin by filling out our short discovery form. Access our discovery form here: [IndustrialLeadGeneration.com/discovery](http://IndustrialLeadGeneration.com/discovery).**