

# Defining and Maximizing Lead Generation

## A Guide for Marketing and Sales Executives

### Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline L&P's perspective on best practices for defining, qualifying, and maximizing leads, grounded in our team's experience and that of our clients. Our goal is to align Marketing and Sales in identifying and pursuing high-value opportunities with clarity and efficiency.

### What Is Truly Considered a Lead?

The term "lead" is often misunderstood or inconsistently applied. Ask three sales managers, and you might receive three different answers:

- A business card from a trade show?
- A name pulled from a whitepaper download?
- A click on a marketing email?

This ambiguity has consequences. When a lead is handed off to sales, it should spark a meaningful and effective action. The type and success of that action depend heavily on how well-qualified the lead is. Therefore, shared definitions and expectations are essential.

### Why High-Value Customers Engage

Understanding the motivations behind high-value customer engagement can help target the right opportunities. Typically, customers engage for two core reasons:

#### 1. New Projects Seeking Performance Gains

- Customers are initiating new projects and seek improved performance, better cost efficiency, or enhanced reliability.
- These situations present the best opportunities and demand fast, focused follow-up.

#### 2. Dissatisfaction with a Current Supplier

- A customer is unhappy with their existing vendor and is looking for an alternative.
- The dissatisfaction must be significant enough to justify the cost of change—this is less common but still valuable.

### The Challenge of Defining a Lead

Without a shared understanding of what constitutes a lead, both Marketing and Sales risk misaligned expectations, poor conversion rates, and lost opportunities.

Effective lead generation programs do not begin by collecting names — they start with clarity:

"What does our ideal prospect look like?"

If every member of your sales team doesn't have the same answer, the first priority is defining that profile.

## Defining the “Ideal Prospect Profile”

Your Ideal Prospect Profile (IPP) serves as a blueprint for targeting and qualifying people as a possible prospect. It ensures your team prioritizes the right opportunities and avoids wasting time on low-potential prospects.

Key criteria to consider:

- Customer Type: OEM, end user, or other
- Industry Fit: Target sectors and markets
- Revenue Potential: Meet your sales minimums
- Buying Ability: Financial stability and market influence
- Openness to Change: Willingness to consider a new supplier
- Need and Value Alignment: They need your offering and are willing to pay for it
- Job Titles: Specific decision-makers and influencers

Another method: analyze your most profitable current customers. What do they have in common?

> Pursuing non-ideal leads incurs a high opportunity cost. Even without 100% clarity up front, a strong IPP drastically improves your odds of success.

## Identifying the Right People at the Right Companies

Once you’ve defined the ideal company profile, identify and target individuals with influence over purchasing decisions. These are the people whose engagement can move the sales process forward.

## Lead Definitions

Marketing programs and sales team actions vary greatly depending on how a “lead” is defined. Standardized terminology helps align effort, track ROI, and streamline processes.

- **Contact Names:** Individuals from right-fit companies with relevant titles, but no expressed interest.  
\*Use: Low-cost acquisition; little sales follow-up.\*
- **Suspects:** Contacts who show light interest (e.g., email clicks, webinar attendance).  
\*Use: Prioritize with telequalification to increase sales team engagement.\*
- **Prospects:** Likely match to your IPP and have shown meaningful engagement.  
\*Use: High-quality; should be handed off to sales with pre-qualification data.\*
- **Qualified Prospects:** Vetted individuals who align with your IPP and have a current or near-term need.  
\*Use: Priority for sales action; track results closely.\*

## When Is a Lead Not Really a Lead?

Many lead generation programs fall short due to a lack of rigor in definitions and qualification. Simply adding names to a database does not create value — intent, fit, and timing matter.

The cost of chasing inappropriate leads is not just in marketing spend — it’s in sales time, morale, and lost opportunities.

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- › Effective programs create a closed-loop feedback system — validating sources, adjusting tactics, and ensuring alignment between Marketing and Sales.

## Goals of a Lead Generation Program

A successful lead generation initiative should aim to:

- Deliver a high volume of qualified leads from the right companies
- Improve sales productivity and return on investment
- Increase visibility, traceability, and accountability of follow-up efforts
- Empower leadership with data to guide growth strategies

## Summing It All Up

The success of your lead generation efforts hinges on preparation and alignment. Defining your Ideal Prospect Profile is not a box-checking exercise — it's the foundation of an efficient and effective sales engine.

By clarifying lead definitions and focusing on high-value opportunities, your team will reduce wasted effort and increase conversions.

- › Let your sales professionals do what they do best — sell — while your marketing efforts deliver the quality and clarity they need to succeed.

## Partner With L&P

L&P has the expertise and resources to design and implement a lead generation program tailored to your business. We help companies create clarity, align teams, and maximize their return on every lead.

*Reach out to us at:*

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