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HOW TO GET QUALIFIED LEADS WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE DIRECT ACCESS TO YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE



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Today's most successful businesses are those that can identify their most responsive demographic and go after it without compromise. Though this might sound tempting, and it might even sound easy, the truth is that the internet has become very much a "saturated" market in recent years. Most demographic groups already trust certain sources for their news and authoritative information, and they're just not in the habit of looking for or relying on new sources. This can prove quite challenging for new companies that know exactly what type of product they want to offer and whom would be most receptive to that product.

Despite the challenging and sometimes perplexing nature of online marketing for new enterprises, one method stands out as a great way to encourage interaction, establish trust, and bring a desired demographic into the fold. The publication and promotion of white papers, eBooks, webinars, and other educational tools can be used by today's companies as a way of organically developing authority, reaching out to users, and generating qualified leads that can later be turned into an ongoing source of revenue and referral.

Why Offer White Papers and Reading Material? A Look at the Benefits

Today's digital marketing is concerned primarily with the word "authority," since Google's latest search engine algorithm has placed great value on those sites that offer useful, engaging content perceived as trustworthy by both new and returning visitors. A great way to play into this desire for authoritative content is to create content like white papers, which use a combination of personal experience and significant research to present a new take on an emerging topic. These white papers come with a few distinct advantages not only for search engine optimization and Google targeting, but also for a company's reputation and their ability to draw users in a precise demographic:

 White papers position a company as the leading authority on a given topic, largely by allowing them to leverage a combination of extensive research and their own industry experience on the business side of the matter.

 Products like white papers, webinars, and electronic books can be held behind a "registration wall." This would require new visitors to sign up for an account with the company's website before they can read the material, and it instantly provides access to customer data that can be used in future marketing leads, white paper development, and targeted content.

 Interaction with the company's registration forms and authoritative publications count as "user engagement" in Google SEO metrics, which allows the company's website to rise precipitously in Google search results. Since this is crucial to long-term corporate relevance and growth online, simply pairing content authority with user registration can make a significant marketing impact.

 The nature of materials posted to a company's website is such that they often answer customers' most pressing questions about a given product, service, or recommendation. By presenting the company's own point of view, along with well-researched material and answers to common concerns, white papers serve as both an educational resource and a persuasive authority that might compel more people in a given demographic to do business with the company.

Don't Do it Alone: Partnership with an Existing Company Can be Key

The combination of persuasion, authority, and outreach contained in white papers is tempting enough for many companies that they almost immediately want to begin crafting their own research documents and drawing a targeted demographic to their own website. The problem is that these companies typically lack the resources necessary to develop a sound marketing strategy that reaches out to an established demographic. That's where a partnership comes in.

The benefits of utilizing a partnership for the promotion of your content are numerous:

 The organization responsible for targeting the white paper comes with the built-in advantage of existing demographic relationships. While a startup company might not bring much gravitas, the leading promoters of white papers online today already come with a significant amount of built-in trust, name recognition and authority. This can start guiding customers toward a new company through the content developed specifically for the white paper.

 Marketing and promotion of the white paper is done on behalf of the company by the partnered organization, significantly reducing the overall time and resource investment made by the startup company. At the same time, that minimal investment is educating new users and funneling members of the target demographic to that company's products and services.

 Partnering with an established company when marketing your content to a given demographic allows companies to take advantage of existing best practices and guidelines for targeting authoritative materials to interested readers. Because these companies have experience positioning content for maximum search discoverability, using their services will minimize the time between opting to use a white paper and actually deploying it successfully for customer use.

Partnerships Can Be Enacted Using Two Different Models

The great thing about striking a partnership with an existing content provider is that it gives business owners two distinct choices when arranging for payment and long-term budgeting. This is because today's content partnerships typically offer two structures that meet the needs of different types of businesses.



1. Pay-Per-Lead Payment Structure

Under a pay-per-lead agreement, businesses will pay only for the qualified leads that are generated by the white paper after it has been put into use. This can be attractive to some smaller businesses that just don't have enough capital for a large outlay of cash up front. On the other hand, a very successful white paper can see business owners paying for hundreds or thousands of leads, which might cause them to exceed their budget for the project.



2. Flat Rate Payment Structure

At the other end of the spectrum, many of today's companies will allow businesses to strike a flat rate partnership instead of one that charges a fee for each generated lead. This is probably a great idea for medium-sized businesses that can afford to pay a larger sum at the beginning of white paper creation and lead generation.

A flat rate fee structure also has the added advantage of being the same price even if thousands of leads are generated. There will be no surprise costs and no significant overhead for this type of agreement. Smaller businesses, of course, may find a flat rate fee structure to be too expensive up front in some circumstances. For this reason, a flat rate alternative is one that requires careful consideration and budgeting.

Modern Marketing Techniques Require New Thinking from Business Owners

For the past decade or so, businesses have been able to successfully draw new customers merely by playing a cat-and-mouse game with Google's search engine optimization guidelines. As the company has become more advanced in its tracking of website characteristics, however, that game has largely come to an end. Major revisions to Google's search engine ranking algorithms in 2013 resulted in a greater emphasis being placed on the development of authoritative content. The search giant also started actively monitoring how users engage with the website and how likely they are to return to that website after their first visit.

This is no longer a cat-and-mouse game with things like keywords, blog posts, and meta tags. Instead, search engine optimization now requires today's businesses to target specific demographics and to do so with the kind of authority and intensity that will drive them back to a website time and time again. White paper use is an excellent way to do this because it brings authority to any website just by its nature.

Today's white papers offer key characteristics valued by search engines and marketing experts like:

 They're authoritative, backed by industry research that proves they're not just marketing material.

 White papers are current, since all of their information contains the most recent news and views from within the industry.

 The content is specifically relevant to the narrow, target demographic group sought by the business. This means those who find the content useful will not only come back, but they'll recommend it to friends in the industry as well.

 Authoritative content like that found in white papers lends itself to social media sharing. This drives up user engagement levels and optimizes a website for search engines.

 Putting white papers behind either a pay wall or a registration requirement enhances user interaction and engagement even more. This is a significant positive indicator for Google, Bing, and Yahoo.

The benefits of this type of content are numerous, and they're compounded by the ability of today's business owners to choose a partnership with a company that already knows exactly how to get these white papers into the hands of a target demographic. With marketing strategies ready to go, and authoritative content just a few steps away, those looking to generate qualified leads and turn their fledgling websites into successful, highly ranked online companies have never had a better, more accessible option available.

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