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New Ways to Win: Prospecting, Lead Generation!

(Editor's Note: THE MOLDBAKER JOURNAL extends sincere thanks to DME President Dave Lawrence who crafts this "Forum" bringing to the column his own brand of experience, wisdom and foresight. And, Dave will sometimes invite a colleague to share an idea!)

By: Dave Lawrence,
President,
D-M-E Company

As the economy starts to pick up, now is a great time to be searching actively for new business leads.

Prospecting for customers globally is crucial, but changing markets have made the task more complex. Not only that, but the competition for new customers is fiercer, so you may need to step up your efforts and get more creative.

We'll take a look at some ways to do that in this article. But first off, a caveat: lead generation must begin with a well-defined marketing strategy tailored to a



Dave Lawrence

strong value proposition. Because without that strategy, it's hard to know what kind of customer you're looking for.

Understand Your Target Markets -- Given how much the marketplace realities have changed over the last several years, research into your target markets will come in handy.

Fortunately, the Internet

"...you can explore companies within a given market, read recent news and gain contact info for leadership and other decision makers."

makes this research easier and faster than ever. Through business database services such as Hoover's, you can explore companies within a given market, read recent news and gain contact info for leadership and other decision makers. Many industry and business media outlets also publish their own lists broken down by size, market and other criteria.

Plus, most of the industry pubs' news content is searchable and accessible online. To stay up to date with trends and changes, you can set up alerts for keywords related to hot-button issues.

Create a Stronger Web Presence -- With a clear understanding of your target markets and customers in mind, expanding your prospect database is now job one.

Your single most important tool for expanding your database is your company's web presence. If you don't have a well-organized,



"...WEB PRESENCE IS YOUR MOST IMPORTANT TOOL FOR EXPANDING YOUR DATABASE!"

engaging site that conveys a clear value proposition and includes calls to action throughout, you're missing countless opportunities to bring in prospects.

Whitepapers, webinars

and other online knowledge sharing pieces are great ways to gain prospects. Offer timely, relevant content that piques audiences' interest, and you'll find them quite willing to share their contact information.

Leverage Web Analytics -

Besides compelling content that invites visitors to contact your company -- and thus be added to your database -- a good website will also take advantage of the increasingly wide and powerful array of automated marketing analytics available online today.

You can measure everything a prospect does on your site, whether it's downloading a whitepaper, clicking through to product details or asking for a quote. The more information you have about these habits, the better positioned you are to land that customer.

Get Involved in Social

Media -- In addition to your company's home on the web, you can also take advantage of the rapidly increasing popularity of social networks including Facebook and Twitter.

Facebook is good for expanding your network, joining groups relevant to your marketing strategy and simply being visible among the Internet's largest community.

Twitter is ideal for monitoring trends and engaging directly with individuals in target media or those who may represent a potential customer.

Return to Direct Marketing

-- Don't dismiss or overlook the power of more traditional customer prospecting and lead generation techniques such as **direct mail** or **email**.



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The "Good Ideas" Marketing Forum

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The Society of the Plastics Industry, Inc.

However, you may find that direct marketing initiatives such as email campaigns need to be more targeted and specific than in the past. Make sure you tailor your marketing messages to specific audiences. And as always, include clear calls to action.

Lastly, Be Opportunistic -- Using some of the channels discussed earlier, remain on the lookout

at all times for openings to win new business.

For example, news about a new CEO at a company in one of



your target markets may be your cue to enter a discussion there.

After all, those with the most energy, determination and initiative will win the game. So when you spot a good opportunity, be the first one who makes the call.

-- DL

GBC Mission Statement: ...to increase global awareness and competitiveness by providing resources to SPI members, while fostering growth of the plastics industry worldwide.

GBC Meetings: (Future meetings of the Global Business Council will be announced in this column as appropriate.)

References and International Events: GBC is comprised of more than 100 SPI members from all segments of the industry. GBC Committee: Dave Lawrence, D-M-E (Chair); Richard LeNoir, Basell USA Inc. (Vice-Chair); John Blundy, Incoe Corp; Al Cotton, NYPRO Inc.; Steve DeHoff, Stress Engineering Services; Larry Doyle, The Conair Group; Van Durham, Injection Technologies; Al Hodge, Standex Engraving Corporation; Rob Kittredge, Fabri-Kal Corp.; Peter Langerak, Dupont Polymers; Bruce Lecky, Drader Manufacturing Industries Ltd.; Michael Lynch, Illinois Tool Works, Inc.; Jess A. Mellenthin, Plastic Ingenuity Inc.; Wylie Royce, Royce Associates; Charles Sholtis, Plastic Molding Technology; Ursula Tober, Ticona.

Upcoming Events: *amerimold*, April 12 - 14, 2011, Stephens Center, Rosemont, IL; www.amerimoldexpo.com; Lisa Dodge, 734-416-9705; ldodge@amerimoldexpo.com

(Editors Footnote: We invite YOU to become a resource for and contributor to *THE MOLDBAKER JOURNAL*. We freely invite readers to offer your own suggestions as to subject matter for the "Good Ideas (or International) Marketing Forum," and to make recommendations as to other topics we might try to cover in these pages. Our focus in future may not be completely about global marketing, but we need your input to determine the best kind of news and information to bring to the Moldmaking Profession.)

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you to "Talk Back!"
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