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DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO B2B LEAD GENERATION

Executive Summary

Traditional B2B lead generation, focused on form fills and email captures, no longer meets the needs of today's complex buying journeys. Modern buyers expect role-specific enablement, seamless omnichannel engagement, and clear proof of value before engaging with sales.

This definitive B2B lead generation guide provides actionable strategies to turn brand interest into measurable pipeline and revenue growth:

Target the right accounts: Use ICPs, intent data, and buyer signals to identify and prioritize high-value opportunities

Deliver role-specific content: Create and distribute insights tailored to different stakeholders across their omnichannel journeys

Orchestrate engagement: Align data, technology, and retargeting to enable consistent, frictionless buyer experiences

Activate multithreaded buying groups: Nurture multiple decision makers and operationalize intent to drive sales-ready opportunities

Discover how to evolve B2B lead generation from simple contact capture into a unified, revenue-driving strategy.

For most, lead generation marketing is the primary objective of business growth. 80% of B2B marketers agree that getting new, qualified leads is the most important objective for their organization ([Pipeline360 and Demand Metric, 2024](#)).

However, the focus of B2B lead generation must shift from simple form fills to a strategic driver of revenue in order to produce higher-quality pipeline, improve conversion rates, and deliver measurable business impact.

This guide explores what [lead generation](#) is and how it converts buyer interest into measurable pipeline and growth.

What is B2B lead generation?

Lead generation refers to the process of identifying and attracting potential clients for a business. In B2B, this involves strategically engaging the right accounts and decision makers that drive purchase decisions.

B2B lead generation is the outcome of effective [demand generation](#). By building sustained interest and awareness, demand generation creates the conditions needed to convert engaged audiences into leads, and ultimately, into paying clients. In this sense, lead generation does not stand alone; it is a direct result of the demand generation strategies B2B marketers use to create, nurture, and capture demand across their pipelines.

How B2B lead generation is changing

B2B lead generation has become more complex, as it now requires the careful coordination of demand signals, [buyer enablement](#), and account engagement to collectively turn interest into revenue.

The B2B buying journey is complex and buyer-led

B2B buyers operate in complex [buying journeys](#) that involve multiple stakeholders; an average of nine individuals across different functions ([Voice of the Buyer, 2026](#)). These groups expect vendors to enable their journeys with relevant, timely insights rather than interruptive outreach.

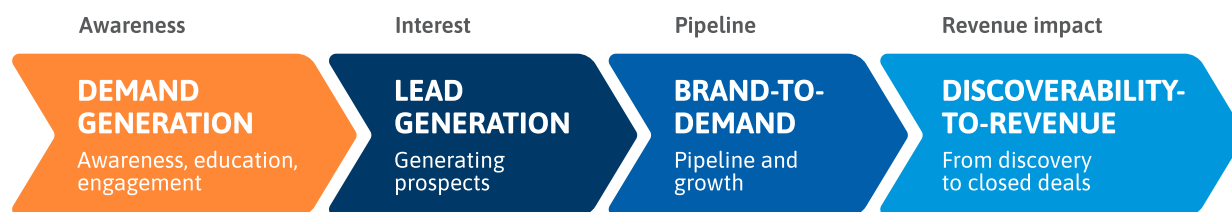
Modern B2B buying is non-linear, with buyers researching, self-educating, and building consensus long before sales engagement. [Research from 6sense \(2025\)](#) shows that buyers are already 61% through their decision-making process before speaking with sales.

To influence buyers throughout this non-linear journey, marketing and sales must operate as a coordinated system by engaging accounts from early, anonymous research through late-stage validation and partner selection.

Defining demand generation, lead generation, and brand-to-demand

Before exploring lead generation further, it is important to distinguish lead generation from closely related concepts, namely demand generation and [brand-to-demand](#):

- **Demand generation builds the foundation** by creating awareness, shaping brand preference, and enabling buyers with the information they need to engage and move forward
- **Lead generation is the conversion point** where interest becomes identifiable through buyer signals and identified contacts within target accounts
- **Brand-to-demand is the broader outcome**, the orchestration of demand and lead generation into measurable pipeline, deal velocity, and long-term growth
- **Discoverability-to-revenue** connects how buyers find you to how revenue is ultimately created, ensuring early, often anonymous discovery, translates into measurable pipeline and closed deals



Buyers engage across channels, devices, and moments

Another shift is where and how buyers engage with brands today. Today's buyers move across devices and contexts, researching from their phones on the commute, from personal laptops at home, and across professional communities during work.

[Voice of the Buyer 2026](#) found that B2B buyers engage with an average of 7-9 content formats and channels before making a purchase decision. These buyers require a seamless, omnichannel experience and are likely to look elsewhere if the journey feels fragmented.

Complementing this, [6sense's 2025 Buyer Experience Report](#) shows that nearly 80% of engagements are still initiated by buyers themselves. Crucially, buyers have already ranked their shortlist and formed a clear preference before that first contact, meaning the choice of vendor is largely decided long before sales conversations begin.

These patterns of self-directed research, multiple channels, and early preference formation make it clear that effective lead generation cannot rely on isolated campaigns or single touchpoints. Instead, it requires a persistent, coordinated, omnichannel presence that delivers the right insights, offers, and proof points at every stage of the buyer journey to influence decisions before buyers even raise their hand.

Why B2B lead generation needs to change

Lead generation is only possible when relevant content, offers, and proof points are offered at every stage and channel where buyers are actively exploring solutions.

In practice, B2B lead generation prioritizes quality over quantity, moving away from “filling the funnel” with as many leads as possible. Instead, the focus is on:

- Identifying the right accounts and signals of intent
- Enabling each member of the buying group with personalized, role-specific content and experiences
- Orchestrating touchpoints across digital, human, and partner-led channels in a consistent, scalable way
- Proving impact not just in terms of leads captured but in accelerated pipeline, higher conversion rates, and revenue contribution

Through this definition of lead generation, it becomes clear that the process is not a siloed tactic but a strategic pillar of revenue marketing. It forms a connection between brand, demand, and sales outcomes to create a unified [buyer experience](#).

[Learn how to drive lead nurturing results through targeted engagement](#)



Modern principles for effective B2B lead generation

Below are a few examples of key areas where modern B2B lead generation is shifting:

Principle	Example
Buyer-led journeys and buyer enablement	Content assets that support different buying group roles
Omnichannel account engagement	ABM and demand hybrids to reach multiple stakeholders in target accounts
Intent-first segmentation	Applying 1st, 2nd, and 3rd party intent data and predictive scoring
Efficiency and outcomes-led messaging	Position vendors as optimization partners rather than just product providers
Privacy-first data practices	First- and zero-party data is more important than ever for richer insights

[Discover the latest trends and insights in B2B demand generation by exploring our Outlook report](#)



How to create an effective lead generation strategy

Developing and executing a lead generation strategy should take into account the rapidly evolving behavior of B2B buyers.

Below are six actionable steps to help you create an effective B2B lead generation strategy:

1 Conduct ICP and intent research

A strong lead generation strategy begins with clarity on who you are targeting and how you will define their interest in your solutions.

B2B buying is shaped by large buying groups, 20% of which now include more than 15 stakeholders ([Voice of the Buyer 2026](#)). Buying processes also include asynchronous research and fast-changing priorities, so building your [ideal client profile \(ICP\)](#) requires more than static [firmographics](#).

Without a dynamic, insight-driven ICP, marketing and sales risk targeting the wrong accounts, missing emerging opportunities, or engaging buyers with irrelevant messages. A well-researched ICP ensures that your lead generation efforts focus on the right people, at the right time, through the channels they actually use. Doing so increases the likelihood of meaningful engagement and revenue impact.

When researching your target audience, consider the following elements:

- **ICP data points:** ICPs should leverage demographic, firmographic, technographic, and psychographic data. Combine this with real-time intent signals and first-party insights gathered through surveys, events, or preference centers
- **Buyer insights:** Understand your audience's current goals, challenges, and priorities to inform relevant engagement
- **Channel preferences:** Identify where buyers are most active to meet them where they engage

This information ensures you define who to target, where to reach them, and their current priorities.

[Read the definitive guide to creating B2B buyer personas](#)



2 Prioritize and tier your target accounts

Once ICPs and intent data are mapped, the next step in generating sales leads effectively is account prioritisation. Top accounts demand deeper, more orchestrated engagement, while mid-tier accounts may require lighter, programmatic approaches.

Adopting a tiered model that blends ABM precision with scalable demand generation aligns with lead generation best practices for ROI.

The table below is an example of how this could be executed:

Account tier	Description	Engagement approach
Tier 1	Small set of high-value, high-complexity targets	Intensive, multi-threaded engagement with personalized touchpoints across sales and marketing
Tier 2	Accounts that align strongly to the ICP but with lower deal size or intent	Semi-personalized programs with coordinated sales-marketing cadences
Tier 3	Broader set of accounts casting a wider net	Automated, scalable campaigns with personalization based on industry, use case, or behavior

This approach ensures marketing and sales resources are invested where they have the highest impact, while still building momentum across a wider market.

[Discover why demand generation is more effective than lead lists](#)

3 Create valuable content

Effective lead generation requires content that enables buying decisions across the entire buying group. B2B buyers now consume an average of nine content pieces in a typical purchase process, which reveals the increasingly important role of content in reaching buying consensus ([Voice of the Buyer, 2026](#)).

When creating content to generate leads, the focus should be on [buyer enablement](#), helping each role in the buying group navigate the process, reduce risk, and move toward consensus. Practical assets allow buyers to self-educate asynchronously, while selective gating should be reserved for truly high-value enablement assets like proprietary research or diagnostic tools.

The most effective content strategies draw from data insights and [demand intelligence](#) to shape messaging around real buyer needs.

Practical approaches for effective content planning include:

- **Researching trending keyword searches** and layering them with buyer intent data to uncover topics that matter most
- **Analyzing competitor content** to establish a differentiated voice
- **Applying insights from CRMs** and automation tools to identify emerging trends
- **Employing competitor displacement strategies**, which involve developing content that highlights the challenges faced by competitors' clients and demonstrates how your solutions provide a better alternative

Together, these methods ensure that content is aligned with buyer roles and rooted in data-driven insights. Ultimately, this allows B2B marketers to deliver the kind of accurate, valuable, and persuasive content that drives both engagement and lead generation.

[Explore the definitive guide to B2B content marketing](#)



What content is best for B2B lead generation?

Effective B2B lead generation content balances value, credibility, and accessibility. Buyers expect formats that address their specific role and stage in the journey, while also being easy to share across the buying group.

Some of the most impactful content formats include:

- **Decision-support assets:** Research reports, ROI calculators, templates, or diagnostic tools that help buyers evaluate options and build internal business cases
- **Interactive experiences:** Short demos, simulations, or videos that allow buyers to explore solutions and understand practical implications
- **Trust-building thought leadership:** Webinars, virtual events, or expert roundtables that provide insights, best practices, and validation from credible sources
- **Peer and social proof content:** Case studies, customer stories, and social posts that illustrate real-world outcomes and facilitate alignment across buying groups

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[Contact our team of demand experts](#) for high-performance demand generation programs crafted to your specific needs and objectives.



4 Apply strategic omnichannel distribution

Even the best content will fail to drive results without a deliberate, well-planned distribution strategy.

B2B buyers move fluidly across platforms, highlighting the need for [omnichannel marketing](#) and intent-driven. Blending owned, earned, and paid approaches maximizes reach and relevance.

Examples of omnichannel tactics include:

- **Paid intent campaigns:** Target accounts showing in-market signals with personalized messaging
- **Consultant and partner co-marketing:** Leverage established voices that buyers in your market already trust
- **Communities and events:** Extend your content's reach through peer-led spaces where decisions are shaped
- **Product-led experiences:** Offering free trials or sandbox demos lets leads test the value of your solutions first-hand
- **Short-form video and social storytelling:** Engaging videos capture attention and build brand-to-revenue impact

[Explore the difference between multichannel and omnichannel marketing](#)



5 Implement retargeting to re-engage prospects

Retargeting is a powerful strategy to re-engage leads who have engaged with your brand but have not yet converted. To be effective, it must be executed thoughtfully, using triggers and timing that reflect buyer intent.

For example, immediately showing ads to someone who just read a blog post can feel intrusive and reduce engagement. Instead, establish retargeting cadences that respect natural buyer journey timelines and prioritize ads toward leads who visit high-value pages, such as product or case study downloads.

Personalizing content based on the type of interaction ensures your messaging aligns with the lead's current stage in the journey. This recognizes, for instance, that reading an article indicates early-stage research, while downloading a case study signals a deeper evaluation intent. This relates to [lead scoring](#), which is an important step in achieving greater ROI in B2B buying processes.

Well-structured retargeting lead generation tactics balance frequency, relevance, and timing. Doing so turns passive website visitors into engaged leads while maintaining a positive brand experience.

6 Nurture and enable the entire buying group

When considering effective lead generation, one cannot overlook lead nurturing as a critical part of the same process. Lead nurturing is the process of building relationships with leads by providing relevant information and guidance throughout their buying journey to move them toward a purchase.

This is closely tied to buyer enablement, which equips leads and internal champions with the knowledge, tools, and proof points they need to evaluate solutions confidently and advocate internally.

Email drips sent to a single lead are no longer an [effective nurturing strategy](#). Buyers make decisions as multithreaded committees, and nurturing must address each role's priorities while equipping internal champions to advocate for your solution.

An effective nurturing strategy involves cadences that blend email, social, events, and peer proof points. Personalizing these by role and buying stage makes them more relevant and engaging.

However, when the lead reaches the "in-market" phase, establish a seamless handover to sales with a record of past engagement, key signals, and recommended next actions.

When should leads be handed over to sales?

Once won, a lead is not guaranteed to make a purchase. A lead only demonstrates interest in your content; the challenge then is to qualify them as sales-ready.

Lead nurturing and lead scoring are two methods go-to-market teams should combine to determine when to pass leads on to sales.

Lead scoring

Traditional lead scoring models that assign static points to actions (e.g. downloading a whitepaper) may indicate interest, but they do not fully capture sales readiness. Instead, effective lead scoring should combine behavioral engagement, intent data, predictive analytics, and buying group triggers. This hybrid approach reflects the reality that buying decisions involve multiple stakeholders, touchpoints, and extended timeframes.

To implement this approach, start by defining point thresholds aligned with [the sales funnel](#). For most B2B organizations, this means:

- Establishing thresholds for top, middle, and bottom of funnel activity (TOFU, MOFU, BOFU), so that leads progress based on meaningful engagement
- Agreeing on how leads are scored. Marketing and sales teams should define the criteria for when a lead becomes marketing qualified (MQL) and when it advances to sales qualified (SQL), informed by historical behavior patterns of previous buyers

As you implement your lead scoring system, assess gaps in your client experience. Modern scoring often highlights opportunities to create content that better aligns with lead behavior or to bridge stages of the buyer journey where leads may stall. This ensures that lead scoring identifies intent and guides improvements in engagement and nurture strategies.

Finally, building a handover checklist to equip sales ensures sales outreach continues seamlessly and avoids repetition. A checklist can include a summary of context, relevant content consumed, observed signals, and a recommended next step.

[Explore how to drive ROI with demand intelligence](#)



Lead nurturing

Most B2B leads are not immediately ready to buy. Effective lead nurturing helps buying groups progress with confidence by delivering the right information, proof points, and support at the right time. When done well, nurturing builds trust, accelerates decision making, and increases client lifetime value.

To implement an effective nurture strategy:

- **Design role-based cadences:** Blend email, LinkedIn, events, and retargeting to reach each committee member with tailored content
- **Enable internal champions:** Provide assets that help your advocates build consensus inside their organisations
- **Track and optimise:** Monitor engagement across channels and roles; use A/B tests to refine cadence timing, content types, and messaging
- **Extend beyond purchase:** Continue nurturing post-sale with onboarding guides, benchmarks, and exclusive insights to strengthen relationships and drive renewals or expansions

[Discover the key differences between lead generation and demand generation](#)



B2B lead generation strategies and channels

Implementing effective B2B lead generation techniques can blend [inbound](#) and [outbound](#) strategies. This combination is often the best way to get B2B leads.

[Inbound strategies](#) attract leads by creating and distributing content that answers buyer questions and proves value. [Outbound strategies](#) help marketing and sales proactively engage accounts and buying groups. Today's outbound is data-driven, personalized, and activated by intent.

Below are some of the most effective B2B lead generation strategies:

Inbound lead generation

Search and SEO: Evergreen, intent-optimized content and thought leadership

Content marketing: ROI calculators, technical deep dives, compliance checklists

Events and communities: Virtual and in-person forums for trust and peer validation

Organic and owned social: LinkedIn posts, employee advocacy, niche groups

Outbound lead generation

Social selling: SDRs build credibility by sharing insights and value-led content

Targeted email outreach: Personalized, educational cadences

Calling: Insight-driven conversations focused on problem-solving

Ads (outbound-led): Paid search, paid social, and display targeting in-market accounts

Activation and enablement (supports both)

Paid media: Extends reach of inbound and outbound efforts

- LinkedIn Ads (sponsored content, InMail, ABM targeting) efforts

- Programmatic display (behavioral and technographic targeting)

Activation and enablement (supports both)

- Consultant and partner amplification (co-branded campaigns)

Technology enablement:

- Marketing automation (nurturing, scoring, orchestration)
- CRM systems (lead and account management)
- CDPs (unified first-party data across touchpoints)
- Intent data providers (in-market signal detection)
- Sales engagement tools (coordinated multichannel outreach)

Lead generation partners and services:

- Agencies and demand platforms providing syndicated reach and enriched data

The most effective lead generation programs orchestrate these inbound, outbound, paid, and partner channels into a unified strategy. By combining role-specific content, intent-driven activation, and technology-enabled orchestration, B2B marketers can convert brand interest into omnichannel account engagement and, ultimately, revenue.

[Learn the best tactics for how to generate sales leads](#)



Key takeaways

- **Intent-driven, role-specific engagement:** Modern B2B lead generation enables buying groups to engage in ways that reflect their intent and responsibilities
- **Aligned ICPs, content, and channels:** Successful B2B lead generation depends on coordinating these elements to deliver engaging omnichannel buyer journeys
- **Scalable revenue driver:** When operationalized with data and technology, lead generation fuels both pipeline growth and long-term business expansion

Frequently asked questions

What are the most effective strategies for B2B lead generation?

Target high-value accounts using intent data, deliver role-specific content, and orchestrate omnichannel engagement to convert interest into [qualified leads](#).

How can I optimize my B2B marketing funnel for better lead generation?

Map your funnel to the buyer journey, use tiered account prioritization, and nurture prospects with personalized, multichannel content at every stage.

Can AI improve lead generation in B2B marketing?

Yes, AI can enhance lead scoring, predict buying intent, personalize messaging, and automate engagement across multiple channels.

What are some innovative lead generation activities for B2B companies?

Apply interactive content, virtual events, product-led experiences, account-based advertising, and peer-driven communities to engage buyers in new ways.

What should I look for in a lead generation service or agency?

Look for a partner that combines data-driven targeting, technology orchestration, and omnichannel expertise to deliver high-quality, sales-ready prospects. Explore how INFUSE's [demand generation programs](#) can drive measurable pipeline results.

INFUSE demand experts are ready to create demand strategies designed for complex, buyer-led journeys and meeting your performance goals.

Whether you are looking to surface buyer signals, enable decision making with high-value content, or deliver engaging omnichannel experiences, our team is here to help.

[Get in touch with a demand expert](#)



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