



Does your business have more leads than it can handle? If not then you'll want to follow along as we explore all types of prospecting ideas. **We encourage you to print out these ideas, take them to your sales meeting, and encourage your staff to brainstorm ways to implement these ideas.** We'll take a look at:

- Using technology for lead generation
- Tried and true methods
- Being involved in the community
- Out of the box ideas

Using Technology in Lead Generation

Whether you're a technology expert or a novice, there are lead generations strategies using technology that can help you grow your business. Here are a few of our favorites:

- **Prospect Smarter** - Imagine getting a card with a picture of you or even of your website on it. Inside there's a link. Of course you're curious so you follow that link to a customized video. Immediately you have the attention of your target market. It's a new and innovative way to capture their attention.
- **Call Fire** - Offers several services, but if you want to supercharge a calling campaign check out their [cloud calling campaign](#). Save time and boost morale of callers as you skip voice-mails leaving pre-recorded messages and only talk to those prospects that answer.
- **Help a Reporter (HARO)** - Register to be an expert in your field of business! The go to place when a reporter needs someone to interview for a story. Great way to be an "expert" and be mentioned in relevant press pieces.
- **Mail Chimp** - Email campaigns are a great way to stay in touch with your leads. Mail Chimp provides a free plan that is robust enough to get most businesses owners started with email marketing. If you're already doing an email campaign, you might look into auto responders. Auto responders let you set criteria such as "new client" or a birthdate and send targeted messages to contacts fitting the criteria. For instance, you can set new clients up to receive a welcome email or a series of welcome emails that explain part of your services to them.
- **Pay Per Click** - Google is the first service that comes to mind, but many other online sites are using the pay per click model in selling advertisements. You might consider Facebook or even LinkedIn as a place to run an ad. The best part is that by using the pay per click method you can target your clients and stay within a set budget.
- **Claim It** - In the world we live in, your business is "listed" and collecting reviews without you lifting a finger. Sites like Yelp, Urbanspoon, Angieslist, Google, and Yahoo are collecting your data and sharing it. The bad news is that if you're not proactive, there's no one to tell if that information is correct or

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flattering to your brand. Make sure you claim your businesses starting with main sites such as Google and Yahoo and then venturing into industry specific sites. It doesn't take much time as the same information can be used across all platforms, but it's an important step.

- **SEO** - You may have [read our in depth articles on SEO a while back](#), but it bears repeating. More and more people are turning to search engines to find places to spend their money. Don't fall asleep behind the wheel.
- **Video** - There are many platforms that allow you to share quick videos with your clients including Instagram, Vimeo, Vine, and YouTube. You may think, "I don't have the means to create a video," but these days creating a short video is as simple as pulling out your cell phone. The videos don't need to be long, but should focus on entertaining and informing your target market. Check out Lowes Fix in Six ([#lowesfixinsix](#)) video clips on quick home improvement tips done in six seconds to see a quick and affordable way of using video.
- **Speaking of #lowesfixinsix** - Don't forget about hashtags. Hashtags are simply ways to search on social media sites. Using sites like [Tag Board](#) you can search across multiple social sites. You can use the hashtags to start a trend such as encouraging people to use a certain hashtag when discussing your business or you can search hashtags that would lead you to people that would be likely to like your products and services.
- **QR Codes** - Chances are you've seen a QR code, but have you thought about how you can use them in your business? Many people think QR codes are used to take you to a website and they can, but there's also many other features. You can create QR codes to download contact information, to make a phone call, send a text message, and so much more. They're easy to generate using free technology (try [QR Stuff](#) or google QR generator for more). How do you use them in Lead Generation? They can be used in conjunction with campaigns that you have now such as websites, fliers, brochures, and emails. Others are being more creative with them by putting them on billboards, t-shirts, name badges, and more. Software such as [Delivr](#) allows you to track the success of your campaign.
- **Swipely** - Geared to the retail and restaurant industries, this software allows you to scan your receipts and mine customer data to increase your sales. After all, the easiest leads you can find are your current clients.
- **Mine for leads** - There are plenty of tools that you may already know to mine for leads online. Some of the common ones include the free to use Manta or the pay for service Sales Genie. A new trend that you might keep an eye on is sites such as [Business Leads](#) that are using crowdsourcing to generate leads. The idea is that you offer a referral fee to anyone that connects you to a quality lead.
- **Online Forums** - Become known as an expert in your field. People turn to the internet for advice in online forums and there are forums out there for just about every industry. LinkedIn, Yahoo Answers, and Ask.com are great examples of national forums. It's worth noting that if your target market is limited based on geography you might look for more local forums. At the same time, participating in the national ones will also allow you to continue to build your SEO. This way if a lead does type in your name they can see your activity which starts to set you up as an expert in your field.
- **Build an App** - Think an app is out of reach for your small business? Think again! There are many companies that allow you to create affordable apps without knowing how to program. Check out [Como](#) as one example or simply google "apps without programming" for more options.



Tried and True

Let's go back to the prospecting ideas that were just so good you stopped using them! These tend to be prospecting techniques you used when you first started but got so busy (because they produced sales) that you just stopped. We challenge you to read them without the assumptions and prejudices that you've built up over time. It will be easy to read the list and say, "been there, done that." We challenge you to take the list to your staff and ask, "How could this work for us?"

- **Press Releases** - What's going on in your business? Chances are there are many great things happening but the community, your clients, and prospective clients won't know unless you find a way to tell them. For double points, research ways you can use technology in lead generation to broadcast your message.
- **Introductions** - Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to introduce yourself to someone new every day for 30 days.
- **Lunch/Coffee** - We all have to eat. You've probably heard this time and time again, but instead of eating at your desk make it a habit to meet a client, a prospect, or even a vendor at least once a week for lunch or a quick cup of Joe. Need help getting started? Try reading [Never Eat Alone](#) by Keith Ferrazzi.
- **Asking for Referrals** - Yes, this one again! Want to know why this lead generation tactic makes just about every list you read? Easy. It works. If you do it!
- **Door to Door** - Remember this old trick when you went door to door to meet new people? There are a lot less people doing this today, but guess what? It still works! Do you know your neighbors? If not start there.
- **Cold Calling** - It has a bad reputation, but here's what we know...If you pick up the phone and dial enough numbers you will get leads. It's a numbers game and only through repetition will you know what the numbers are for your business.
- **Friends and Family** - Your natural market grows with time and it's easy to assume that everyone knows exactly what it is you do, but knowing what you do and understanding how you can help them are two different perspectives. Make a list of your natural market and the last time you spoke to them about exactly what it is that you can do for them. If you can't remember, chances are neither can they!
- **Newsletters and or Direct Mail** - We discussed this in the Using Technology section, but it might be worth the time and effort to send out "snail" mail.
- **Billboards** - Electronic or traditional billboards are a great way to get your message out. People read them. In fact, the billboard industry has the best advertising campaign for this. You may have seen a variation of it. The signs will ask, "Do billboards work?" And the answer is, "This one just did. Advertise your business today".

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- **Giveaways/Contests** - Get people excited! People love to participate in giveaways and contests. The trick is to make it something they "want" and tie it back to your business. You don't want to give something away just to give it away. Don't forget to work with your network to find the best deals for a giveaway or a contest. This might be a great place to cross promote with another business.
- **Coupons** - "Extreme" couponing has been a trend in the past few years, proving that, yes, people are still attracted to coupons. They're a good way to get people in the door to "try" something for the first time. You want to make sure the coupon doesn't distract from your brand, but instead is a lure to get new people inside your business.
- **Chamber of Commerce** - It's not enough to be a member, your business needs to be an ACTIVE member of the chamber of commerce. Figure out what committees and volunteer spots they have open and that you or your staff could join. Track their calendar of events and add it to your sales meeting agenda. The benefit you get out of the chamber is often a direct reflection of the effort you put into being a member.
- **Being Active in Community** - Being seen in your community matters. In fact, it matters so much we're dedicating an entire section to our suggestions on how your business can get involved and generate leads.

Got Community

Community involvement is something we see a lot of business owners do when they first get started. We mentioned it in the tried and true section because the activity typically wanes as a business matures. Why? You get busy. You get older. Your kids get older and have fewer activities. The reasons are many, but our focus is not just how "you" can be involved in the community, but how your "business" needs to be involved in the community. Once again, this is a team activity and these ideas should be shared and discussed with your staff.

- **Be a member of (fill in blank here)** - First and for most, to be a member of the community you need to show up. Your team has interests and passions that will help influence how they're involved in the community. Start discussing those and the passions and hobbies that your target market has as a way of creating a list of organizations that should count your team as a member. Organizations could include: VFW, Elks, Rotary, Boys or Girl Scouts, School Organizations (PTA/ PTO, Boosters), 4H, etc. If you're business is serious about staff being involved, make it clear by offering volunteer hours or providing a flexible work schedule when needed.
- **Be Proactive** - When something happens in your community, be one of the first people to respond. If your city is in danger of flooding, close the doors for two hours to fill sandbags. If there's a natural disaster heading your way, figure out beforehand how your business can help and be prepared to serve clients, employees, and the community. Make it a point at staff meetings to discuss what's happening in the community.
- **Hold a fundraiser** - Heard of something horrible that's happened to a client, an employee, or just someone in the community? Don't wait for someone else to do something. Be proactive. Either start a fundraiser or talk to someone who is to see how your business can help. A little activity goes a long way.
- **Sponsor a (fill in the blank here)** - It could be a little league team or a local event. The goal isn't to just give something money so your name shoes on the sponsor list, but something that your business and team can get actively involved with throughout the year. If you sponsor a little league team, make an effort to get to a few practices and a game or two. Perhaps schedule an outing for ice cream near the end of the season. If you sponsor an event, figure out how you can be involved. Perhaps your team can



volunteer or hand out flyers during the event. The [10 Minute Marketer's Secret Formula](#) is a great resource for this topic.

- **Plan an event** - It can be time consuming, but if there's not an event that you and your team see as a great opportunity to become involved you can always create your own event. All events have to start somewhere and it might as well be with you. Think about events that would logically pair with your industry, your team's strengths, your community's needs and plan from there. Great news is the E-Myth way can be applied to the event so that it runs like a well-oiled machine. Again this is a great way to get cross promotion and work with other businesses that would benefit from the same target market. You want to be involved, but you don't have to do it all.
- **Show Appreciation** - Let people in the community know that your business appreciates what they bring to the community. Groups of people you might show appreciation to include, but are not limited to: Teachers, military, police, first responders, hospital workers, fire fighters, etc. Show your appreciation by dropping off a treat, offering some type of discount or special event, or even dedicating a percent of profits to a special profit in their name. Also don't forget to show appreciation to your clients. Host a barbeque or luncheon and invite current clients and their friends.
- **Adopt a (fill in the blank here)** - You've seen the signs on highways or even at zoos or park benches. There are a lot of different items your business can "adopt." It's a great way to get your name out there. You get bonus points if it's something that will make you proactive in the community as well.

Lead Generation Your Competition Probably Isn't Doing

Let's discuss lead generation that is meant to be explosive and creative. Being creative isn't always unique, but can mean using an idea you've seen done successfully and figuring out how your business can do something similar. The ideas this week are meant to be a bit more creative and create a buzz. We encourage you to get this in the hands of your staff and start talking about what is possible and stop focusing on what is impossible.

- **Non Flat Snail Mail** - We discussed direct mail as a tried and true method, but don't be afraid to step out of the box regarding the type of materials that you send. Sure you can send a postcard for less, but imagine sending something that isn't flat. Why non flat? It stands out visually from the "junk" mail and immediately captures attention. If you make it a quality piece or even a funny piece then it's more likely to be kept. And who doesn't want a lead generator that's around to remind your leads of who you are?
- **Street Art** - Whether you place it in front of your business, work with another business to use their location, or find somewhere in your town to place it (within code of course) street art can be an eye catcher. What type of street art? It could be a sidewalk chalk advertisement (check the weather forecast before trying this), a sculpture, stickers, or a sign, but it's meant to grab attention. Check out this [article for some big name examples](#). Just don't think that this type of lead generation has to have a large budget to make a splash. For instance, imagine an insurance company that convinced a scrap metal business to

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borrow a car that had been in an accident (making sure it wasn't a local accident that people would remember) for a week. During that week the car with a sign saying something like, "This driver didn't know on Monday that someone would run a red light on Tuesday. If they had, they might have had an expert review their insurance Monday night. Let us be your expert." The following week you could easily have a sign thanking the scrap metal business for their help thereby promoting their business as well.

- **Mascots** - A fun and creative way to get people talking. Plan out a mascot for your business (one that molds with your brand) and get out in the community. Have your mascot make trips around town, show up at events, and even have its own twitter page or hashtag for sightings.
- **Vehicle Wraps** - You've probably seen bigger companies with their vehicles wrapped, but there's no reason that you can't employ this technique for your own business. It's a great way to take your branding on the road. Speak with companies like [SpeedPro](#) about your options! Don't be surprised when people not only start mentioning they've seen you, but actually stop you to talk. Remember those introductions per day we discussed in our [Tried and True section](#)? It's not a stretch to be able to meet one new person each day when you make a bold statement everywhere you go.
- **Scavenger hunts** - Want people to remember you? Help them create a memory. And what better memories than a scavenger hunt. This can be done on your own or cross promote with a few other local businesses to hit more leads.
- **Be Known for (fill in blank here)** - On I-80 outside of Des Moines there was a gas station that was known as the "free ice cream" stop. For years, they simply advertised to travelers to stop and get a free ice cream. Not surprisingly, people not only stopped but planned their route to stop there for their free treat leading to more sales for the gas station. And you better believe they told people that were traveling on I-80 to stop there. They were simply the "free ice cream" shop, but that sure added up to a lot of leads over the years. What you're known for doesn't have to be a product, but can be information as well. Shark Tank investor Barbara Corcoran's real estate business the Corcoran Group started off with \$1,000 investment and grew to \$66 million. Along the way they became known for their Corcoran Report which is still used today as a standard for information in the real estate industry.
- **3-2 or 3-2-3 Campaign** - We've seen this work for any type of business that works with homeowners. The idea is that your staff goes to the houses surrounding the home (3 across the street, two on the side, and sometimes the three behind the house) and introduces the business. If you're a construction company you'd want to do it before construction begins and let them know if they encounter any problems to give you a call. If you're an insurance agent, you give them your card and ask them to call if the home owner is on vacation and there's visible damage to the house. Always get permission from the home owner before visiting. It's a great way to stand apart from your competition.
- **Use Your Space** - Be inventive with the space your business uses. Look for cross promotions that would bring leads to you. This might be offering to "showcase" a local artist in your lobby or opening your restrooms to the public during a festival. You might consider allowing an organization with a similar target market to yours host an event or use space during your non business hours as well.
- **Join the crowd** - Is there an event or festival happening nearby? If so get out there! Don't "hope" they come to you. Have staff out there inviting them in to visit. It might be something as simple as handing out business cards or fliers, but could also be handing out samples or bottled water with your logo on it (for free).



- **Sky Writing/Aerial Banners** - We saved this one for last. You've probably seen these tactics used, but have you thought about using them for your own business? If not, that's the point of this article. Lead Generation doesn't have to be "new" it just needs to grab attention. Start dreaming NOW!