

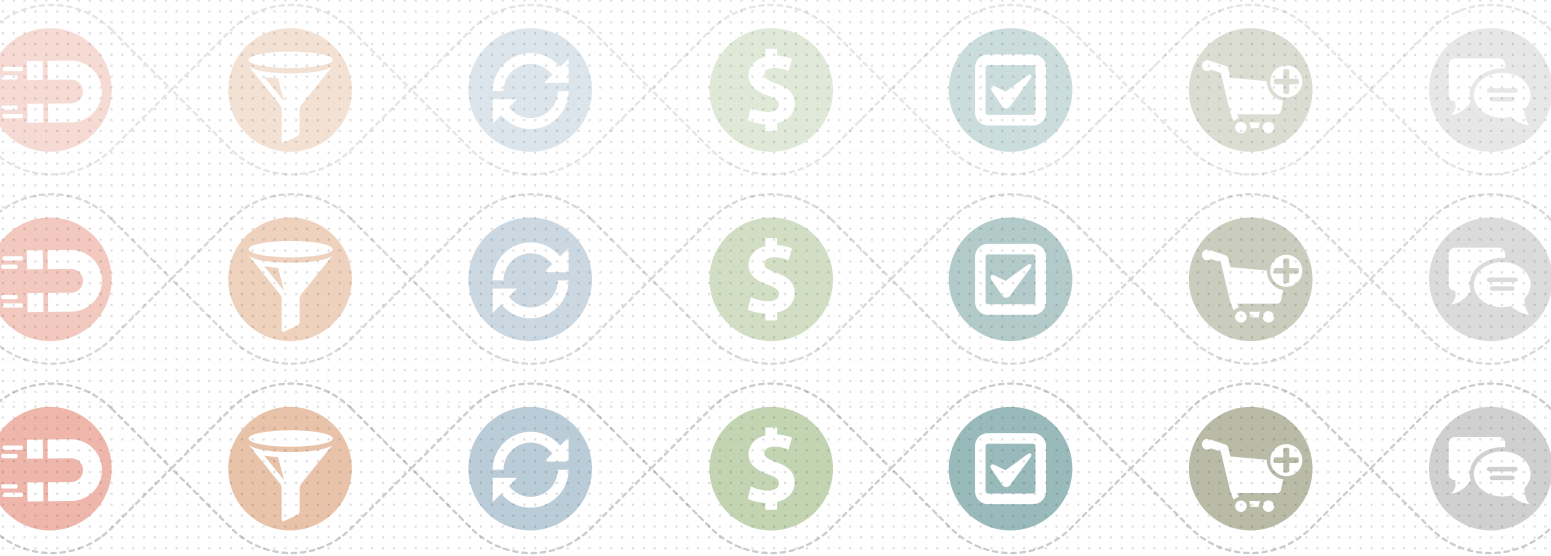


LIFECYCLE MARKETING ESSENTIALS

TURN VISITORS INTO LEADS

HOW TO BUILD AN ONLINE LEAD CAPTURE MACHINE

By Andrea Parker





Imagine that I just handed you a crisp stack of one hundred \$10 bills. Each \$10 bill represents one of the last hundred people that checked out your website. Let's take a look at each of those people who visited your website.

For each visitor you captured, meaning they filled out a web form on your site with their personal information, you can keep a \$10 bill.

For each visitor who came to your site and didn't fill out a web form, you give me a \$10 bill.

At the end of the hundred customers, most small business would have less than \$100 left. The remaining \$900 that could have been pocketed is now gone forever.

This is what happens on small business websites that don't have an effective strategy for capturing leads in place. If you want to build your list of prospects in an effort to get new customers, you have to turn your website into a lead capturing machine.

This is part one in a series on what to do and what not to do when capturing leads on your site. In this e-book, we are going to cover the first thing you should do when capturing leads online.



Small Business Lead Generation: Irresistible Content

The first step to capturing leads online is to create an irresistible lead magnet. The purpose of a lead generation magnet is to attract visitors to your site and give them a reason to opt-in to your marketing. Your lead magnets must provide a lot of value to your visitors.

For example, if you own an online clothing store and you want to capture your visitors' email addresses so you can notify them when you get new merchandise or have a sale coming up, offer them 10% off their first purchase of \$50 or more in exchange for their email address. To make sure the email address is active (not a fake), send the one-time promotional code to that address to verify it works.





There are several types of lead magnets you can use to capture leads. Here is a list of a few popular magnets:

- Online events
- Free samples
- Webinars
- Educational email series
- Reports
- Free consultation/quotes
- Video series
- Downloadable kits
- Free trials
- E-books

Having a lot of website traffic doesn't mean much if you are not capturing leads. It is important to know who your visitors are and what stuff they want you to send them.





Compelling Offer

Once you have created an irresistible lead magnet, you have to offer that magnet to your website visitors in a compelling way.

For example, you may have a really awesome e-book you want your site visitors to download. The messaging that promotes the e-book on your site has to be just as, if not more, compelling as the content inside of the e-book. Tell people what they are going to learn and how it is going to benefit them personally if they download your content.





The traditional “subscribe to something” lead capture method is not going to work anymore. It simply does not offer enough value to the end-user, your consumer. Keep your offer targeted, not open-ended. Make sure that visitors know exactly what they are getting.

Also, place your opt-in forms in a prominent location (above the fold on your site), so they are easy to access.

Automatic Follow-up

Once someone fills out a web form to get your content, you can use technology to help you follow up with your new leads automatically. This technology is called marketing automation. There are several email marketing software options that can help you with this.

Before you follow up beyond the initial download, you want to make sure you get permission. You can do this by putting a check box on your web form that allows people to let you know if they want messaging from you in the future.

This step in the process is a very important one. You don't want to send additional marketing to those who don't want it. If someone downloads an e-book and that is all they want, that is all they should get. But, if they download an e-book and check a box that says they want more stuff, then you have the right to follow up with them.



Here is an example of an email series that a small business could send to a visitor who has downloaded some form of content online and indicated that they'd like to receive more offers and information in the future:

Email 1: Immediately – Confirm their request and deliver your magnet.

Email 2: Day 2 – Send another educational, value-creating message.

Email 3: Day 4 – Discuss the pain points your product or service helps prospects to overcome.

Email 4: Day 7 – Present a special offer that relates to the conversation in prior messages.

Email 5: Day 14 – Deliver more value and follow up on the special offer.

So, without a compelling offer and a thoughtful follow-up strategy, a good lead magnet will go to waste. Remember not only do you have to create something valuable; you have to promote it correctly and continue the relationship after that magnet has been consumed.





Use Content Correctly

Content is a great way to build a strong email marketing list and begin to reach out to people who are interested in a product or service that you sell. You can host web forms on your site where people can give you their information in exchange for a valuable piece of content, like an e-book. But, many small businesses are guilty of making a few mistakes when it comes to this process and could be losing more leads than they are getting.

One of the mistakes that small businesses make when they attempt to generate leads online is being resistible to those people that they are trying to capture.

Being Resistible

The reasoning behind why most “Join our Newsletter” types of forms perform poorly is because they aren’t typically enticing to people on your site. Most people don’t need to join a newsletter just to join one. And with all of the unwanted emails that fall into inboxes today, registering for another newsletter won’t seem very valuable to most.

What your visitors do need is something that is valuable and relevant to the problems, challenges and opportunities that they face at the current



time. People want to know that the product or service you offer will answer their questions and solve their issues. If they don't feel like your content can help them, they won't sign up for it and in turn, you lose the opportunity to follow up with someone your product or service can actually help.

Always give your visitors content that is super compelling in exchange for filling out your web form and giving you permission to follow up in the future.

Don't be resistible. Be simply irresistible. Don't give searchers the option to leave. Create content that people can't say no to.





Asking for Too Much Upfront

Most of the time, the more web form fields you ask someone to fill out when you are capturing their information on your website, the less response you will get. People are busy and although they want your content, if you ask for too much upfront, they will back out. There are times, though, when collecting several fields of information makes sense. But unless you have a good reason to do so, you are killing your opt-in results.





Think about the value of what you are offering along with your business needs to help you determine how much personal information you should be asking for. For example, if someone is simply downloading one of your e-books and you would like their email to follow-up with similar content in the future, just ask for their name and email address. If you are offering them a free trial of some sort and you need demographic information to offer them the best service, then it is permissible to include more fields in the form. It is also helpful if you explain why you are asking for certain fields that people may be hesitant to give you, like a phone number. Let them know what you are going to do with it and always make your privacy policy clear.

Hiding Your Form

If a site visitor has to click a link to see your form, the likelihood that they will fill it out is cut by up to 40 percent. Make sure your web form is visible right on your home page or the landing page you are using to promote your offer. You want to make sure the form appears “above the fold,” meaning they don’t have to scroll down to fill it out. This ensures that everyone can see the form clearly without having to search for it on the page. It will also ensure a higher opt-in rate.

About the Author

Madison Jacobs Madison Jacobs is the Content Manager at Infusionsoft and helps small businesses succeed by managing Infusionsoft's creation and promotional strategy for online educational content. Madison has written for several news publications including the Arizona Republic and 944 Magazine. You can follow Madison on [The Big Ideas Blog](#) and on Twitter [@madisonrjacobs](#).



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