

Perfect Timing: Building an Award-Winning Lead Scoring System



CASE STUDY

DemandGen® helps Bella Pictures drive lead conversion in the business of wedding photography services.

Bella Pictures is a technology-driven company that is transforming the \$4 billion market for wedding photography services. The company's Inside Sales staff is responsible for setting appointments, during which the Outside Sales staff meets with the couple to understand their photography style.

Eloqua marketing automation has been a key part of Bella Pictures' marketing strategy since 2006, primarily as a basis for nurturing campaigns, but the company's early approach to lead scoring didn't contribute much to lead management. "We had a lead scoring program at the time that was very static," recalls Teresa Almaraz, Channel Marketing Manager at Bella Pictures. "It just took qualification attributes from our web inquiry form and assigned numbers to them, which added up to a score between 1 and 100. The bulk of our leads came in as 45, or someone could be a 65, but we couldn't define what that meant." For Sales, this vagueness translated into a poor ability to prioritize leads and predict monthly goals.

Although planning a wedding can take up to a year or more, the photography decision process usually happens within a very brief two to three week period. Much like getting the perfect shot of the bride and groom, converting a lead to a sale means picking exactly the right moment.

"When we learned about DemandGen's lead scoring program that included qualification *and* interest information, it was a new concept for us," says Almaraz. "In exploring it, we learned that we could dynamically score leads as they come in: not only looking at qualification attributes but also at the interest attributes. For example, a person may be qualified to look like a callable lead according to what she selected on the website form, but if she is not spending time on the website, she's not opening our emails, or she's unsubscribing, she's probably not the person we want our Inside Sales team to spend time calling."

Developing the Model

To get started, Bella Pictures performed some extensive business research as well as data mining through its Salesforce and Eloqua systems. DemandGen's help was important to establishing the structure for the lead scoring program. "We could have gone down the path to collect all these variables to look at and then found we couldn't implement them in Eloqua," Almaraz remarks.

"DemandGen was very helpful in coaching us to build profiles, based on the behavioral and buying data we collected, that gave us a true picture of where prospects were in the buying cycle." Significant attributes—both positive and negative variables—were measured using statistics to measure relative strength of qualification and interest. For computing qualification, DemandGen guided the Bella Pictures staff in analyzing what data to include, and identified a specific question, "Have you selected a venue?", as being a primary qualifier. Using these findings, a scoring algorithm was developed.

Clients sometimes find it difficult to visualize the progression of a lead scoring program, so DemandGen creates detailed Microsoft Visio flowcharts, which Almaraz and the Bella Pictures executive team found very helpful.

HIGHLIGHTS

MARKET: Engaged couples

INDUSTRY: Wedding photography services

SOLUTION: DemandGen's dynamic lead scoring program, incorporating both qualification and interest data

- Data mining and deep research reveal the right scoring criteria
- Profile development and complex filtering create meaningful scores
- Special 'sales dashboard' alerts staff to the right moment for contact

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ABOUT DEMANDGEN

DemandGen is a global team of marketing automation and lead management experts, with centers of excellence across North America and Europe. Best known for its award-winning lead scoring and nurturing methodologies, DemandGen has helped hundreds of clients establish best practices, implement effective lead management programs, and produce measurable results.

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“And once we saw the model, when we saw the impact that it could have for the business, and the dollars we could be saving, we wanted to get it up and running within four weeks—a pretty short timeframe, but they were very responsive to get things moving right away. They were very good, very professional, and very realistic,” she emphasizes.

DemandGen staff guided the project and built the program. “Mike Hancock is one of the most creative developers I know; he is such a genius!” Almaraz explains that the complex filtering required created some difficulties. “Mike and the rest of the DemandGen staff were very creative on solving these problems. He never came to us and said ‘I can’t build that.’ He said, ‘Let’s see how to make this happen.’ It was very encouraging, and more importantly got us to the point of actually creating the model that we had designed.”

Focusing on Facts Delivers Results

“It’s incredible how well this lead scoring program has worked for us,” says Almaraz. “The dynamic lead scoring program accounts for both qualification and interest variables, so the range of scores has expanded: we see a nice distribution of scores from 1 to 100, rather than everyone being 45, so we know that these values mean something.” Inside Sales can simply call down the list in numerical order without having to prioritize their own leads.

Leads are continuously evaluated in real time, rather than only on form submission, so each time the Inside Sales person refreshes the list, someone’s score may have changed. Interest activity—such as website visits, email clickthroughs, unsubscribes, bouncebacks and more—trigger revised scores, so that Inside Sales continually sees the hottest leads at the top of the call list. “Brides love to submit forms, and we have nurturing programs continually in progress, so a bride who might have been a 40 yesterday may be a 60 today as she starts shopping more seriously.”

Almaraz is especially enthusiastic about the customized dashboard that was created in Salesforce, offering a breadth of information displayed in a way that’s easy for the salesperson to grasp at a glance. “This dashboard gives Sales the exact information they’ve asked for to help them close business. Budget is a big one, the search keyword is another one, and we also show the interest activity including how many website visits and what areas of the website were visited. DemandGen gave us the concept and design recommendations for the dashboard.”

Almaraz explains that Bella Pictures can now predict appointment set rate by lead score, which has helped the company forecast more accurately on end of month conversion. “For example, we know that if we bring in a certain number of 80s, we will get a specific number of appointments from them. We know how well 60s and 70s do in terms of conversion. Inside Sales has become more efficient because it now takes fewer calls to make the same number of appointments. This has really been huge for us.”

“The more we are able to identify and target these people at the right time, the more success we will have for the future,” concludes Almaraz. “DemandGen has been a big part of building the foundation for our sales organization to increase efficiency and our appointment set rate, and we plan to work with DemandGen in the future.”

ABOUT BELLA PICTURES

Founded in 2002, Bella Pictures is a national wedding photography and video services company, recognized by top industry resources such as The Knot, Wedding Wire and Here Comes the Guide. Bella’s mission is to offer quality wedding photography at an unbeatable value, with transparent pricing and exceptional customer service.

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