

Vistage International Dramatically Improves Sales Efficiency through Lead Scoring



CASE STUDY

Developing a multi-dimensional lead scoring program with DemandGen® brings together Marketing and Sales for best qualified leads possible.

Vistage International is the world's leading chief executive organization that provides essential coaching programs for CEOs and senior executives of small- to medium-sized businesses. Because the service is so appealing to both qualified and unqualified candidates, Vistage's marketing programs typically generate a large number of unqualified leads.

"We had constant tension between the sales and marketing teams about the quality of the leads," recalls Carlo Saggese, Vice President of Application Development. "At our Tuesday metrics meetings we would report all these leads, and Sales would say they were terrible, and I would be annoyed. We had no background as to why these leads were terrible: they were just all terrible." This situation was resulting in huge amounts of wasted time on the part of salespeople who were attempting to contact unqualified leads and qualify them: in short, it had a major negative impact on sales efficiency.

Having purchased Eloqua, a popular marketing automation system that enables lead scoring and nurturing, Vistage looked at what was available to rate the leads being sent to Sales.

Because Saggese had worked with DemandGen to implement Eloqua initially, the company was a logical choice to provide further consulting, system design, and implementation of a lead scoring system that would systematically rank leads before they got to Sales.

Detailed Process Develops Scoring Model for Qualification and Interest

To kick off the Vistage lead scoring program, DemandGen staff conducted a workshop with the sales and marketing team, and over the course of two days worked up an agreed-upon definition of a qualified lead, the questions and answers that would be used to score leads, and how the information was presented within the customer relationship management system (in this case, Salesforce CRM). DemandGen jumpstarted the workshop by asking the senior sales manager to essentially "sell a membership" to the team. Out of that conversation, DemandGen extracted the nuggets of information that were really important to ask, and developed a rating system for scoring the answers. "We laughed about how they did that: it was so natural," Saggese recalls.

HIGHLIGHTS

MARKET: CEOs and senior executives

INDUSTRY: Executive development

SOLUTION: DemandGen's dynamic lead scoring program

- Scoring model includes qualification and interest criteria
- Modeling and running scenarios helped the team understand how scoring would work
- Sales and Marketing learn a common language

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Now that the qualification model was established, the next step was to incorporate online behavior, and enhance the scoring model to measure interest based on website visit frequency, depth of visits, email responsiveness, and activities such as downloading content, watching videos, and registering for events. "DemandGen's process was very organized, and the workshop tools for the sales teams were very useful," remarks Saggese. "We were able to model and run scenarios of the questions and answers, which gave us a good feel for how scoring would work once implemented. Now we have a scoring model that not only measures the qualification of a person, but the interest level as well." Service level agreements and processes were established; the Vistage Sales team is trained to work only A and B leads, and the C and D leads remain with the marketing group to be flowed through nurturing campaigns until they are sales-ready.

Lead Conversion Jumps Significantly when Scoring Is Implemented

The results of the program have been excellent. In the worst economic times in recent history, Vistage's business grew significantly in 2009 largely due to the efficiency lead scoring provided to Sales. Rather than waste time on unqualified leads, Sales is laser-focused on the right candidates. As a result, lead conversion grew from 44% to over 60% in less than 10 months, and continues to improve.

Currently, Vistage is working to roll out lead qualification in another division, and is looking at building much more lead nurturing into the marketing process, including slow-drip nurturing campaigns that feed leads into the pipeline, and bringing social media into the mix.

"Basically, if you are generating leads without lead scoring, I think you're wasting your time," Saggese says. "Your conversion rate goes up when Sales focuses on the right leads—and when there's no animosity between the Sales and Marketing teams about what makes a lead qualified. What it boils down to is that DemandGen brought us a common language that has changed our marketing behavior and brought us more qualified leads. DemandGen is the best in the business when it comes to lead scoring."

ABOUT VISTAGE INTERNATIONAL

Vistage is the world's leading chief executive organization with a membership of more than 14,000 CEOs, business owners and senior executives in 16 countries. Members have access to "advisory board" peer groups, confidential mentoring sessions with a Vistage Chair, expert speaker workshops and content and connectivity available through an exclusive online community. The sharing of information in a Vistage group is completely confidential, allowing for the open exchange of issues, ideas and solutions.

www.vistage.com



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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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