

# Sales Leads

# Steps for Success

A guide for small businesses and business owners on where to get sales leads, how to use and profit from them.

By Richard Lloyd  
*General Manager of infoUK*

DO YOU  
WORK IN A  
BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS  
(B2B) ENVIRONMENT?

•  
DO YOU PROVIDE  
GOODS OR SERVICES TO  
OTHER BUSINESSES?

•  
THEN THIS GUIDE  
SHOULD GIVE YOU  
REAL COMPETITIVE  
ADVANTAGE!

## About Richard Lloyd

Richard Lloyd has personal experience of setting up and running his own business. This insight, coupled with over 20 years in the business-to-business (B2B) marketing industry, ensures his place as one of the leading spokespeople and thought leaders on the power of direct marketing and business data for profitable business growth.

He started his data career in 1986 with Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) where he went on to become the company's Director of Database Marketing Services in Europe.

Leaving to join Experian in 1999, Richard led the company's entry into the B2B marketing industry establishing its B2B Marketing division. His achievements during this time included the development and launch of the National Business Database, Commercial Intact (the UK's first online business data cleansing tool), and Commercial MOSAIC – another UK first in the B2B marketing space to help businesses identify and target profitable customers.

In conjunction with other industry heavyweights, Richard was also a key figure behind Cyance, a new start-up business providing B2B data and digital marketing services. Leaving in 2008 to lead the *info*GROUP's entry into the UK, Richard is now General Manager of *info*UK.

Richard is the co-author of the Handbook of B2B Marketing published by B2B Marketing Magazine and is a Fellow of the Institute of Direct Marketing (IDM).



# Foreword by Richard Lloyd

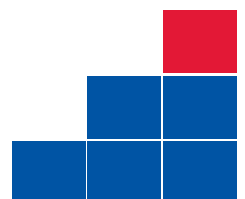
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I'm passionate about business data. Whilst you may think that's a bit of a sad confession to make, I think you'll be amazed what an impact good business data, and what you do with it, can make on your business.

I should know. I've worked with business data for over 20 years, bringing it together with the power of direct marketing to help businesses, of all sizes, to become more profitable. Through *infoUK*, I'm now bringing this knowledge to help smaller businesses like yours to get the sales leads and support needed for better business success.

This practical guide is designed to give you a better insight into sales leads – where to get them, how to use them to find the best new prospects and customers, and how to profit from them.

If you work in a small business, are a business owner, entrepreneur or just starting out in business, this guide will help show you the way to more profitable business. Enjoy.



# 1.

## Sales leads, sales leads and more sales leads

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Whatever industry you are in, new sales leads are crucial in order to increase your sales and win new customers. The search for new sales and customers should never stop. They are critical for any business and should be essential to you.

But, sales leads do come with a word of warning. You need to make sure that the sales leads you bring in and use are the most appropriate for your business – so they aid rather than harm your cash flow.

Why? Well, sales leads means new customers, new customers means more sales, more sales means more business, more business equals more profit. However, new customers need to be the right kind of customers. For example, you don't want to spend your time and energy bringing in the wrong type of business that will help you waste money rather than make it.

# 2.

## Traits of success

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A key trait of any profitable business is that they are always on the lookout for new sales and customers, and the right kind at that. Have you ever heard the saying “don’t keep all your eggs in one basket?”

In business never a truer word has ever been spoken. For example, what happens if your main customer goes bust or your key contact leaves the company? More often than not you’ll lose business and money.

In some cases, where you have built your entire business on the back of supplying just a few customers, even bringing on staff to cope with demand, you and your business are in a very vulnerable position if anything happens.

As a result, it is always wise to keep a balance. A simple rule is the 80:20 one. This means you should try to spend at least 20% of your time on new business activity such as using your sales leads to drum up new business through calls, letters or emails to potential new customers. We’ll cover this direct marketing activity in greater detail a little later on.

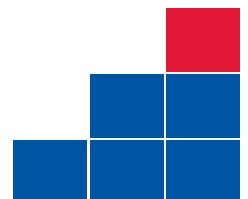
With the remaining 80% of your time you need to look after the customers you’ve already got.

There is no substitute for retaining your existing customer base. Stay in constant touch with them so they are less likely to go elsewhere. Keep them happy and they’ll buy more, more often and even recommend you to other businesses.

Don’t forget those customers that haven’t bought off you in a while either. Why don’t you get back in touch and find out why. Once you have this information, use it and go out to illustrate that you want their business back.

Of course, if you are new in business or having a very lean time you’ll need to spend more than 20% of your time securing sales leads and using them. This is where the reverse 80:20 rule applies.

The top tip and lesson to learn here is to always keep the balance right between looking for new business and retaining your existing customer base.



# 3.

## Existing customers

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Your existing best customers are actually your best route to sales leads and for winning new customers. Best of all, you don't need any fancy or expensive consultants, equipment or technology to find out who your best customers are. Just take a look yourself.

So, what are you looking for?

Well, you need to look at your customer information and ask yourself who exactly your 'best' customers are:

- Who buys regularly from you?
- Who spends the most or makes you the most money?
- Who is good to work with?
- Who pays you on time?
- Who doesn't waste a lot of your time?

Use the answers to help work out the value of each of your customers. Are there any surprises?

You now need to list these higher value customers and ask yourself:

- What do they look like?
- What do they have in common?

This is where the words of Rudyard Kipling, The Jungle Book author, come in handy: "I keep six honest serving-men...their names are What and Why and When and How and Where and Who..."

- What do they buy? What are their needs? What industry or sector are they from?
- Why do they buy? Are there any particular reasons? Do you help them address any particular issues or provide them with any specific benefits?

- When do they buy? Are there key times of the year when they buy?
- How do they buy i.e. over the phone, online or through the post?
- Where are they based? Are they local or in a specific geographic (postcode) location? Does their location influence what they buy?
- Who buys i.e. is it a small or large business? Who is the main decision maker?

Now you have this, are there any patterns emerging such as where they are based? Make a note of all the things they have in common i.e. the patterns. You now have exactly what you need to go on to the next step.

If, on the other hand, you are just starting out or don't have any 'best' customers, you can go through a slightly different process. For example, have a look at your competitors or make a wish list of the kind of customers you want. This information may already be contained within your business plan.

If not, it makes sense to put aside some time to work up a list of customers that you would like to win new business from.

Your wish list will depend completely on what type of customers you are looking for and the reasons why. It could include things like the fact that they are located within five miles of your business – so they are easy to deliver to.

Use this information to make a note of all the factors and information you need to find your best new customers.

# 4.

## Look-a-likes

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Once you've identified your best customers you need to find look-a-likes.

Look-a-likes are essentially that. They are potential new customers/sales leads that have similar characteristics to your existing best customers. These characteristics can include the size of the business, number of employees, sales volumes, industry sector, location etc.

Getting these look-a-likes is a very simple process. Here's how it works:

You find a good business data provider that can provide you with sales leads online or over the phone. Step 7 will give you some helpful hints and tips on how to find the best suppliers to meet your needs.

For example, here's an idea of how it works at *infoUK*. Through our online service at **www.infouk.com** we are able to match your customer information against our database of more than 2.2 million UK businesses.

All you need to do is type in a few basic details about your best customers online through the website such as the company name and address. You can add in details on up to 10 companies in one go. Then press search. Using the information you've provided, we'll check it against the business information we hold and return back to you details of how many sales leads we can provide you with. This will take a matter of seconds.

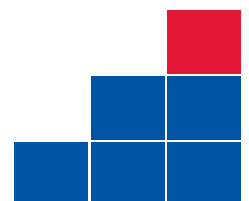
These sales leads are look-a-likes i.e. businesses that look like your existing customers. The kind of prospects you want to turn into your next best customers.

Choose the number of sales leads you want – they only cost a few pence each – and we'll send them to you straightaway. You can choose to download them in a secure area of the *infoUK* website or get them sent to you by email. Or, if that doesn't suit, you can ask for them over the phone and have them posted out to you.

You can choose exactly how the sales leads should be sent to you. For example, you can get them as an Excel spreadsheet, in the form of mailing address labels so you've only got to put the labels on your envelopes, as a telesales list or as a list of email addresses.

The information you get is entirely up to you, but it can include the following:

- Name, title and role of key contact
- Email addresses
- Company name and address, parent company information i.e. who owns the company
- Size of business i.e. number of employees or how many sales they make
- SIC codes i.e. the Government Standard Industry Classification (SIC) coding system that codes the business activity of the company such as advertising
- Location i.e. postcode, region, county. You can even search by number of miles from your business location
- Financial information i.e. turnover, profit and loss.



# 5.

# Triggers

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Another good source of sales leads which you can download and get regularly is trigger data.

Put simply, trigger data is information on businesses that have a trigger to buy. These triggers can include seasonal factors such as key periods when specific industry sectors buy. It can also include triggers such as when a new business is opening.

So why is this sort of information useful?

Typically, new businesses are a good source of sales leads as they need products and services. For example, new businesses often need:

- IT equipment, including computers and IT support
- Insurance
- Office equipment, stationery, furniture
- Legal, accounting and payroll services
- Graphic design
- Banking services
- Security, including burglar and fire alarms
- Cleaning services.

They are usually also in need of:

- Printing
- Telecommunications
- Marketing and public relations
- Recruitment support
- Admin support...the list goes on and on.

If you have a product or a service that new

businesses may need, or a seasonal product, for example, it makes sense to add trigger data to your list of sales leads to download when they become available. Or, to be alerted when the time comes along for you to contact your sales leads with relevant offers and services.

# 6.

## Planning for success

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Now you understand a little bit more about the type of sales leads you can get, it is important to spend some time planning what exactly you want to achieve. Like step 2 you need to remember the 80:20 rule and spend 80% of your time on planning and 20% of your time on the doing.

Better planning equals better success. One of the best planning tips is to consider the following questions and write your answers down:

- What are your objectives i.e. what do you want to achieve?
- Why is it so important to achieve your objectives?
- How are you going to achieve your objectives – what steps do you need to take?
- Who do you want to reach? By understanding who you want to reach you'll have a better understanding of what you want to say (your message) and how you want to say it i.e. what sort of creative will hit the spot
- Are there any other important factors to consider i.e. is timing important?

By going through the steps contained within this guide you'll have a better idea of the questions you need to ask. If you are clear on what you want to achieve, you will be in a better position to choose the route you need to take to get there. You'll also be able to look back at everything you've done and check whether it's been a success or not.

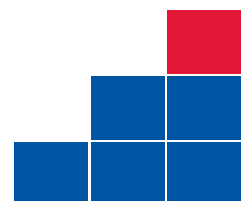
It is critical that you finish your planning first before getting your hands on your sales leads.

There are a number of good reasons as to why this is:

- Businesses and contacts/decision makers at businesses change all the time so information such as the name of the Marketing Director can quickly go out-of-date. That's why it is important to only get your sales leads when you need them, get them regularly and use them straightaway
- The more accurate your sales leads the more effective they will be at bringing you in potential new business. If you don't use them quickly, the information will change and the chances of you contacting the wrong person/business increases
- From a legal standpoint, it is important that the sales leads you use are accurate. Businesses and business owners have a right to protect their information from being used for sales and marketing purposes and can choose to opt-out and stop getting mail, email or telephone calls at any time.

Best practice is to always get your sales leads just before you intend to use them so that they are fresh and free of any contacts that have chosen to opt-out. A small supply regularly is better than one big list that will be out-of-date by the time you use it.

Many firms get a fresh supply of sales leads every month. In terms of how many leads you need to get, it really depends on how you will be using them and who you want to reach.



# 7.

## Suppliers

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There are lots of suppliers of sales leads out there for you to choose from. What you need to know is which one to choose.

Like with any service or product you use, referrals or testimonials from already satisfied clients are really helpful and give you confidence that you are choosing the right supplier.

It is also important to ask lots of questions of any potential suppliers to make sure that they can provide you with what you need. If you have any specific needs i.e. you sell a specialist service to a very niche marketplace, make sure that the supplier has the information you need. It is important that they make it easy for you to contact the right decision makers within your chosen sector.

With regards to what questions to ask your potential data/sales leads supplier, here's a few to get you started:

- What information on businesses do you have? You want to know how much data they have such as how many business records i.e. number of businesses, amount of contact details and what sort of information they provide i.e. email addresses, web addresses, number of employees etc.
- How do you get this information i.e. where does it come from? Here, it is useful to find out whether they own their own data and whether they gather the information via the telephone so they get the chance to check it and add in extra information
- How up-to-date and accurate is your information? You need to make sure that the information provided to you is as up-to-date as possible. So, the more frequently the information is checked the better. Find out when it was last checked and find out how they check it. For example, is it checked over the telephone?
- Who uses your data? It is always useful to know who else uses the data and what they say about it
- What's your goneaway rate? A goneaway is when a mailing (for example) is returned back to you because the person it has been addressed to is no longer there. The average is between 3-6%. Remember, no list is perfect and business people move around quite a bit so you'll always get goneaways. However, what you need to know is whether you get your money back on those mailings that

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haven't been delivered and have come back as goneaways. It is also useful to find out what they do with goneaways i.e. do they correct the information?

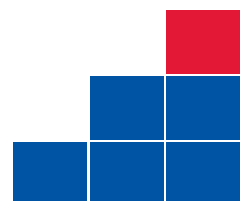
- Is there a minimum order? You need to be careful here. Some suppliers only accept orders of a certain value so you're always best off with a supplier that doesn't especially if you are only doing a little at a time
- What do you charge? You need to find out what the cost is per record/sales lead. The cost will depend typically on what level of information you have requested. As a guide, the average cost for basic information, including name of contact, company name and business address is £100 a thousand
- Will you provide me with a free trial? Many suppliers will give you a free test of their sales leads so you can try them out first before you buy
- What support can you provide me with? If you are new to using sales leads and direct marketing it is important that you get a helping hand.

For a limited period, we are offering 100 free sales leads. Check this out at [www.infouk.com](http://www.infouk.com) – it's free so well worth trying out to see just how our service works.

You'll also find the Direct Marketing Association (DMA) a good source of information. Take a look at their website at [www.dma.org.uk](http://www.dma.org.uk), as it lists suppliers of sales leads and business data.

You'll also need to think about what other sort of suppliers you'll need.

Relook at your objectives as this will give you the guidance you need to decide on whether you can do everything yourself or whether you need to employ other suppliers to help you with the printing etc.



# 8.

## Method

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Now that you're clear on your objectives, know what sort of sales leads you need and where to get them, all that you need to know is how to use them.

This is where you need to do a bit more planning and understand a little bit more about the different methods for using sales leads.

As well as looking again at your objectives and what you want to achieve, budget and resources are the main factors that will probably influence your decision on which methods to choose. And, whilst there are lots of different ways out there to use your sales leads, I'm going to concentrate on direct marketing.

Direct marketing is actually one of the most successful and cost effective methods of profiting from sales leads.

If you've ever picked up the phone to call potential new customers, sent letters or posted leaflets direct through a business letterbox, ordered things from a catalogue sent to your business or responded to an email offer – what you've been doing and responding to is direct marketing.

According to the Institute of Direct Marketing (IDM), direct marketing is: "The planned recording, analysis and tracking of individual customers' responses and transactions for the purpose of developing and prolonging mutually profitable customer relationships."

In other words, it's about making contact and getting a message out there to your customers and prospects and asking for a response i.e. to buy from you. It can include things like:

- Direct mail – sending out business letters, postcards, flyers and mailers to your sales leads. Each direct mail needs to be addressed to a named contact
- Phone calls – both inbound and outbound calls
- Email marketing – emailing prospects and contacts
- Other forms of direct marketing include adverts, newspaper or magazine supplements.

The steps to follow will concentrate on direct mail, telephone and email. These are the forms of direct marketing that smaller businesses use most often.

There are many benefits to be had from using any of these direct marketing methods to communicate and hopefully sell to your sales leads – bringing onboard new customers as a result.

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## Benefits:

- Targeted – you are contacting your sales leads list for a reason i.e. you have a service, offer or product that is relevant to them
- Personalised – you are contacting a named person
- Measurable – you can measure the success
- Cost effective – because of all of the above your costs can be kept low as you are taking a much more specific and targeted approach.

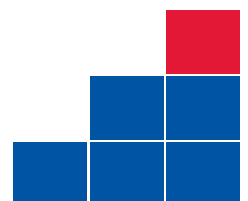
The method(s) you choose depend on the business and contact you want to reach. The steps you've already gone through above should have given you a better understanding of your sales leads – the potential new customers you want to reach.

When using your sales leads you'll find that combining a range of different methods will often bring you the best results. This is known as integrated marketing and can include multiple mailings, a combination of direct mail and phone calls, and email in combination with direct mail and phone call follow up, for example.

Using a combination of methods in this way is also often referred to as bringing about a 'halo effect'. This effect occurs when awareness and recognition of a particular company, service or product has been built up through the use of consistent messages via different channels of marketing i.e. the use of phone, direct mail, email etc. The result is  $2 + 2 = 5$  in that one form of

direct marketing on its own will receive results, but combined with another method or methods, there will be greater success.

Before making your final decision on which methods to use, relook at the steps above. Are there any particular methods that would suit your look-a-likes the best? Or, is one method more suited to your particular message?



# 9.

## Direct mail

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Direct mail includes sending out postcards, sales letters, a mailing containing a brochure, catalogue etc. to either your existing customers or potential new customers – your sales leads.

The focus here will be on using direct mail to drum up business amongst your sales leads.

Direct mail can be a very economical way of getting your message out to your targeted audience – the businesses contained in your list of sales leads. The cost to you is time, postage and the mailing itself i.e. the design and information it contains.

Once you know who your target audience is – the work you've already done to work out your best sales leads will tell you this – you need to decide what sort of direct mail you need to send and what the best message is. For example, if you are a firm selling computer equipment you might want to send details of a special offer to your sales leads to encourage them to get in touch.

Direct mail always works best when it includes some form of call to action. A call to action makes it clear what you want the person receiving the direct mail to do next i.e. a free trial or money off offer will give them a reason to call your number, fill in and send back the reply paid card you've included or order online.

Here are a few more hints and tips on getting the best out of direct mail:

- **Plan**  
Make sure you have a good plan of action so you know what you want to achieve and how to achieve it. Planning equals better results, more success and will help minimise any problems you may come up against
- **Use good up-to-date data**  
Put simply, if you don't, the direct mail will just fail to reach its intended audience and go to the wrong person or no one instead
- **Keep it simple**  
Don't overcomplicate your message. You will only have a few moments in which to grab the attention of the person receiving the direct mail. You must make it very clear what you are offering, why they need it and how to get it – your call to action
- **Make it compelling**  
A deal or some sort of offer tends to work well i.e. money off, free trial, buy one get one free... Something that will grab their attention and make them want to respond
- **Format**  
What will work best for your intended audience and the message you want to get across i.e. postcard, sales letter, brochure, newsletter, catalogue?
- **Creative**  
The words and pictures you use. You need well-written copy that sells rather than confuses. If you can't do it yourself you

could get a copywriter to do it for you. It isn't expensive, but make sure you see examples of direct mail copy they've already done. Eye-catching and professional looking design also works but it needs to be appropriate for the audience and the mailing you are sending out

- **Call to action**

Make it easy for people to respond by presenting them with a real need to get in touch and an easy way to do so

- **Test**

It always pays to test out your direct mail and welcome a bit of trial and error. Send out a small quantity of direct mail first and try out different offers/timings to see what gets the best response. But don't be afraid to go with your gut instinct and have a go. The use of good sales leads will minimise any risks

- **Results**

Once you've tested your direct mail you are ready to go. Before you do, make sure that you've set up a process to measure the success of your direct mail. This is where your call to action comes back into play. For example, always include some form of reference number or promotional code in the direct mail that you send so that if people call or order online, for example, you'll be able to match their response against the direct mail you sent out

- **Repeat**

If you find it works don't be afraid to do it more than once. However, please be aware and make sure that you don't become a nuisance. A one off mailing won't deliver the results you need nor will a constant barrage of direct mail

- **Follow-up**

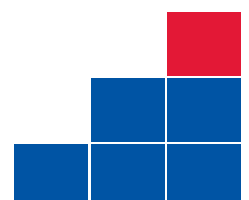
Once you've gone to the trouble of sending out direct mail, make sure that you always respond. As a potential customer, there is nothing more frustrating than replying to direct mail and then not getting a response. It hardly gives them a good reason for giving you business

- **Existing customers**

Direct mail is also a good way to keep your customers informed of what you are doing and of special offers too.

- **Opt-out**

Always provide an opt-out facility so that your sales leads can tell you if they don't want to receive any further information from you.



# 10.

## Sales calls

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The phone can be a great selling tool but let's face it, it's sometimes hard picking up the phone.

However, like most things, the more you do it the better it becomes. Or, hire someone else to do it for you, but make sure they are more effective by providing them with a regular list of hot sales leads.

We're not talking about cold calls here. It pays to have a reason for calling someone. This could be as simple as following up some direct mail you've sent.

It also pays to do your research before you pick up the phone. The fact that you are contacting look-a-likes is a bonus as they should already be more likely to be interested in the service or product you are offering.

When you get your list of sales leads, as well as details of the contact, company name and telephone number plus any other information you've asked for, the list of sales leads would have gone through a process that is usually called data cleansing.

This means that your sales leads have been checked over before being sent to you. As a result, any business that has opted out of receiving marketing phone calls from other businesses (like your business) will have had their details removed from the list of sales leads.

If a business doesn't want to receive marketing and sales calls they can sign-up to the Corporate Telephone Preference Service (CTPS).

You can find out more information about CTPS at [www.tpsonline.org.uk/ctps/what](http://www.tpsonline.org.uk/ctps/what)

The phone is also a great way for keeping in touch with existing customers. You also need to pick up the phone or go to see them if a customer stops buying from you.

When you are making sales calls – get your best people to do it. Also make sure that the person answering the phone is able to deal with the call effectively. Whether it's you or a member of your team, a good telephone manner is a must.

When receiving calls – make it easy for people to do business with you by supplying a low cost or free phone number, having enough phone lines to cope with demand and always answer the phone. People won't bother to call again if they didn't get an answer the first time.

When handling calls, always make a note of the direct mail they are responding to, for example. That way, you can more effectively measure the success of any direct marketing activity you are doing.

# 11.

## Email

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Email is very handy for generating new business as it can be easily tracked i.e. you'll be able to find out how many of your sales leads opened up the email.

However, email work best when it is used in combination with other methods such as direct mail and phone calls.

To help you on your way, here are a few tips on how to get the most of your email sales leads. Please remember, the company supplying you with your email data (your supplier) should also give you support to make sure that you are getting the most out of email for new business and to help ensure that you are sticking to the rules and doing it right. The useful links section at the end of this guide will also provide good sources of contacts to help.

Like any form of communication, the most important thing is that the email actually gets delivered and gets delivered to the right person. To increase the likelihood of this, ALWAYS use a reputable supplier.

When sending out an email, it is important that the subject of your email is clear, that the content and subject of the email match and that it doesn't contain any words that will see it heading straight for the spam box.

Because rules on spam are always changing, please check with your supplier what the latest best practice is.

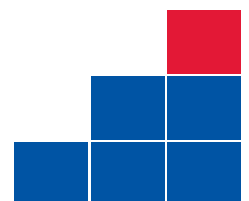
Always test out the email you want to send before sending the email out to your entire list of sales leads. For example, just send 50 emails to start with and make a note of any problems you are

having such as undeliverable messages (the email doesn't get delivered).

Take into account what you have learnt and always ensure that you set up an auto reply. An auto reply will ensure that if any of your sales leads responds to your email, they will get a message straight back, letting them know that you have received their email and are responding to their request. Then make sure that emails are answered and followed-up.

In order to increase your open rates i.e. increase the likelihood that the person receiving the email will actually open it, please take account of the following best practice advice:

- Always have a good email subject line that encourages the person receiving it to open it. This could be doing something as simple as saying that the offer is for one week only
- Always include a relevant subject line that reflects the content of the email
- Always limit the wordcount of your subject line so it appears in full
- Always think about timing. It is often said that the best days to send emails are Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. The worst? Friday afternoon. People also try to avoid opening their emails over the weekend and come Monday they will have lots of emails to check over so your email will be more likely to get lost or ignored



- Always think about the person at the receiving end. Remember what it's like if you've ever received lots of annoying emails from the one company. Limit the number you send
- Always stick to best practice and make sure you include a note whereby people can unsubscribe and opt-out of receiving any further emails from you
- Always check it. Spelling errors are a big turn off.

Now that you've done all that, don't ruin it now.

Check that when the email is opened, people can actually read it. Not everyone can read emails in HTML and many people block images coming through on email.

What you need to do is to send a text version of your email along with the HTML. Make sure that it is readable i.e. the text size isn't too small, is well spaced out and not too wordy. Your call to action also needs to be above the fold (can be seen on the first page) so that people don't need to scroll down to work out what to do.

Use the first part of your email message most effectively to include your call to action i.e. an email address they can respond to, a number they can call, a website they can go to or a form for them to fill out and return.

Backup your content with good graphics so the email looks good and the text is broken up so it is easier to read. Remember, people tend to skim emails, so bulletpoints or anything that makes the email quick and easy to read is always good.

With any form of direct marketing, planning is the key. Focus on what you want to achieve and outline your objectives. For example, what is the purpose of the email? What do you want the email to do? Is it to generate traffic to your website? Is it to get the person receiving it to ring up and place an order? Is it to get them to sign-up to receive further information?

Make sure the information contained within the email supports what you want to achieve and makes it easy for people to respond.

Finally, before you send emails to any person within a company, they must have given you or your third party supplier permission to do so. When you use a supplier to send out your emails, they should only ever send out emails to those individuals/companies that have opted in and given permission.

The supplier will be responsible for sending out the emails and won't supply you with the email addresses to do this on your own behalf.

If you do want to send emails yourself, always ask for permission. This could be as simple as asking a contact if it is OK to add them on to your email mailing list when you trade business cards, for example. Also, always include an unsubscribe option at the end of the email so that the person receiving it can opt-out of receiving any further emails.

# 12.

## Budget

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How much do you want to spend? How much can you spend/what do you need to get back in return to make it worthwhile?

It is important that you set a budget before making a final decision on how best to use your sales leads. When setting a budget it is important to consider the following things:

- **Your objectives**

Ultimately, what you want to achieve will determine what your overall budget should be. However, you need to make sure that your objectives are measurable and specific i.e. that you know exactly how many new customers you want

- **Percentage of sales**

As a business do you know what percentage of new sales you would like to make? By knowing the answer to this question you'll have a better idea of how much you need to put aside for your sales leads and direct marketing activity

- **The costs**

Design, copywriting, your sales leads, cost of printing, stationery, postage, staff costs and costs for handling enquiries. These are a few of the costs you need to take into consideration with direct marketing. Make a note of all the costs against each activity so you know exactly what your total spend will be. You will then have the basis on which to agree what level of success you need in order to be profitable

- **Response rates**

A 1-8% response rate for direct mail / 5-15% for email.

### Example budget for direct mail:

- A. The number of people you want to send the direct mail to i.e. 850
- B. The cost of the mailing itself i.e. £700
- C. The cost of the sales lead list i.e. £125
- D. The cost of postage and sending the direct mail out, including labelling and sorting i.e. £450.

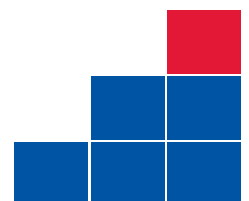
Now do the maths:

$$B \text{ £700} + C \text{ £125} + D \text{ £450} \div A \text{ 850}$$

This will give you the cost for each direct mail item you send out:

**£1.50**

This information is also useful because if you know what your overall costs are, you can work out how many orders you need to ensure that the direct marketing activity is profitable.



# 13.

## Checklist

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Now's the time to order your sales leads and get cracking on using them.

But, before you do, here's a mini checklist to tick off before you get started. A review basically of some of the steps above and a few yet to cover:

Features	Description	Checked
Plan	The more you plan the better your results will be. What do you want to achieve i.e. how many new customers do you need? Who is your target audience? How are you going to contact them?	
Targeted	The best sales leads are targeted. They are personalised so go to the right person, in the right job at the right company. They are also appropriate to your business and take account of what the customer needs. Make sure you get the best sales leads to do the job.	
Handle	Make sure you have the systems and people in place to handle responses i.e. brief staff so they know what to say when they get calls, know how to answer any queries, and are up-to-speed on all offers.	
Timing	Think about when it is best to send out your direct mail and emails. When is the best time to pick up the phone?	
Check	Always check your work before sending it out. You don't want to spoil all your hard work with typos, missing codes or any other errors. Get someone independent to take a look as you can sometimes be too close to something to see the mistakes.	
Measure	Have the procedures in place so that you can measure the success of your campaigns i.e. how much new business you have won.	

# 14.

## Measure

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How you measure your success in using your sales leads will depend on what you actually wanted to achieve in the first place.

One of the best ways of measuring the success of your activity is to ensure that you always include a code before sending out your mailings, emails or making or receiving calls. The type of code you include is up to you, but it often makes sense to include a date so you know when the direct mail went out, for example.

You need to make sure that you or your team always collects all the responses and codes when they come in. The best way to do this is to make sure the team is briefed to always ask for/make a note of the codes. Try and sort out a good system for logging all the codes.

- Phone calls – when you take an order or a call over the phone always ask for the code. You'll probably have to point out where on the mailing, for example, the code can be located
- Mailings – make sure the code is printed on all the direct mail you send out so that when people respond you know what they're responding to
- Email or website – make sure your website requests the code when order forms are filled in online etc.

These codes are very important as they enable you to link each sale or order with a specific action i.e. a mailing or email. You can then see which sort of action worked well and worked best with whom. That way, you can do more of the same or change what you are doing if it isn't working.

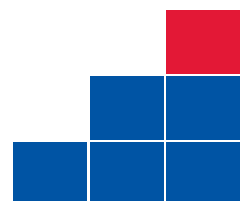
You can then use this information to order new sales leads and start the process again.

In terms of responses from using your sales leads for direct marketing purposes, an average 1-3% response rate is the kind of return you should be looking at to begin with. Don't worry if you don't get this. The most important thing is whether you have won new business and made money out of using your sales leads.

Once the orders are coming through, take the time to look at what these sales leads have cost you.

For example, if you worked out that using your sales leads to send out direct mail would cost you £1,275 at a cost of £1.50 per direct mail piece, you need to achieve success over and above £1,275 to make it a success.

So, if you got a 2% response rate with 17 responses, which leads to three sales with orders worth a total of £6,450 – your overall profit is £5,185.



# Conclusion & summary

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I hope you found these handy steps helpful. Although not exhaustive, they should go some way to give you a better insight into sales leads, including where to get them and how best to use them.

Whilst you need to remember that not every sales lead will result in a new customer, you are more likely to be successful if you use them and use them wisely. Remember, the better the sales leads and the more targeted they are, the greater the likelihood of your success in winning new customers and profitable new business.

Here is a quick reminder of the route to sales leads success:

1. Sales leads – the search for new business should never stop
2. Traits of success – why you should never keep all your eggs in one basket
3. Existing customers – actually your best route to finding new customers
4. Look-a-likes – prospects just like your existing best customers
5. Triggers – targeting businesses that have a trigger to buy
6. Planning – spend 80% of your time on the planning and 20% on the doing
7. Suppliers – how to choose a good sales leads supplier
8. Method – lots of different direct marketing methods to choose from
9. Direct mail – get the best out of your direct mail
10. Sales calls – a great selling tool, you just need to make them
11. Email – increase the chances of your emails getting opened
12. Budget – some budget considerations to take into account
13. Checklist – order your sales leads and start using them
14. Measure – put the systems in place to measure your success.

# More information

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Please call us on

0800 048 1010

email us at

[info@infouk.com](mailto:info@infouk.com)

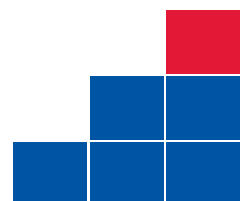
or visit our website at [www.infouk.com](http://www.infouk.com) if you want any further information on sales leads, including how to get them and how to use them.

## About *infoUK*

*infoUK* provides the most in-depth and accurate B2B sales leads and business data in the UK today – all verified, available online and direct from *infoUK*'s B2B marketing database of more than 2.2 million businesses.

With its headquarters in Manchester, *infoUK*'s in-house team of researchers make more than two million calls, every year, to get the latest information about businesses, including key contact names, company names and addresses, telephone numbers, website and email addresses.

At [www.infouk.com](http://www.infouk.com) business customers can look-up businesses, download prospects just like their own best customers, and access the most up-to-date B2B sales leads and business data to create targeted direct mail marketing and telemarketing lists, easily sorted by industry sector, size of business and geography, to acquire new customers, generate sales and secure more profitable business.



# Useful links

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## Advertising Standards Authority

The ASA makes sure all advertising, wherever it appears, meets the high standards laid down in the advertising codes. Its website will tell you more about the rules for advertising, let you complain online, and explain how the ASA is working to keep UK advertising standards as high as possible.

[www.asa.org.uk/asa/](http://www.asa.org.uk/asa/)

## British Chamber of Commerce (BCC)

The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) is the national body for a powerful and influential Network of Accredited Chambers of Commerce across the UK; a Network that directly serves not only its member businesses but the wider business community.

[www.britishchambers.org.uk](http://www.britishchambers.org.uk)

## Business Link

Business Link is a free business advice and support service, available online and through local advisers. Visit the website for more information on the services available and contact details for Business Link in your local area. The website also contains guides on direct marketing and other sales and marketing advice.

[www.businesslink.gov.uk](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk)

## Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM)

According to its website, the Institute is committed to delivering world-class support to equip marketers with the knowledge and tools they need to stay ahead and excel in this most challenging of professions – through market leading industry awards and practical courses, and professional services which members can call upon whenever they are needed.

[www.cim.co.uk](http://www.cim.co.uk)

## Direct Marketing Association (DMA)

The Direct Marketing Association UK is Europe's largest trade association in the marketing and communications sector. The DMA was formed in 1992, following the merger of various like-minded trade bodies, forming a single voice to protect the direct marketing industry from legislative threats and promote its development.

On its website you'll find a direct marketing supplier directory and various Best Practice Guides.

[www.dma.org.uk](http://www.dma.org.uk)

## Institute of Direct Marketing

The Institute of Direct Marketing is Europe's leading body for the professional development of direct, data and digital marketing. Founded in 1987, the IDM is an educational trust and registered charity.

Further information on training courses, events and free planning guides for direct mail and email can be found on its website.

[www.theidm.com](http://www.theidm.com)

## Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)

The ICO is the UK's independent public body set up to promote access to official information and protect personal information by promoting good practice, ruling on eligible complaints, providing information to individuals and organisations, and taking appropriate action when the law is broken.

The ICO website contains lots of useful information, including best practice guides to marketing and details of legal obligations and regulations such as The Data Protection Act and Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations.

[www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)

## Telephone Preference Service (TPS)

The Telephone Preference Service (TPS) is the central opt-out register on which you can record your preference not to receive unsolicited sales and marketing telephone calls to your home or mobile telephone numbers. It is a legal requirement that all organisations (including charities, voluntary organisations and political parties) do not make such calls to numbers registered on the TPS unless they have your consent to do so.

Further information on Corporate TPS can also be found on the TPS website.

[www.tpsonline.org.uk](http://www.tpsonline.org.uk)