

# Buyer's Guide to Survey-Based Lead Generation

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# 10 Key Attributes

## Introduction

Selling technology solutions to successful enterprises has become a much more complex undertaking in recent years for a number of reasons:

- The decision-making "committee" has become larger over time and it's important to involve all affected parties, or their representatives, in the choice of solution. Otherwise deals can easily be lost because an important influencer was overlooked. These include users, beneficiaries, IT, finance, management and more.
- The responsibility for making sizeable investments has moved up in the organization and the amount of discretionary budget available to each individual manager has declined.
- Buyers have come to understand that, however complex, technology is becoming a commodity. This means that there's little difference between a product from one vendor or another. What little variations there are will be reduced over time. The biggest differentiators are in listening to the customers' real issues and implementing the solution in a way that deals with their stated challenges. The crucial question then becomes "who is the most trusted vendor/salesperson?"
- The volume of information available via the Internet and social media now makes it easier for buyers to understand and evaluate potential technology solutions and select a short list of vendors without having to talk to a sales person. In surveys buyers indicate a preference for spending less time with salespeople. This means that marketing must become the primary driver of new business.
- Because of the uncertainty and risk (both corporate and personal) associated with bringing in new vendors, larger companies will often stay with existing vendors even when their solutions are no longer best in class. Breaking into an organization is more challenging than ever!
- Most large enterprises have purchasing departments staffed with savvy negotiators whose job is to drive costs lower and who prefer to deal with known/existing vendors.
- Many enterprises also have strict guidelines limiting the acceptance of gifts, including dinner and entertainment.

Yet the 80/20 rule still applies to technology purchases just as it does elsewhere, i.e. the top 20% of technology spenders purchase a disproportionate amount of the total volume. If you are marketing a high ticket or complex solution or have been asked to penetrate a named set of enterprise accounts you will likely have one or more of these top accounts on your target list. How then can you identify the right contacts, engage with them and help the sales team get traction?

### Challenge

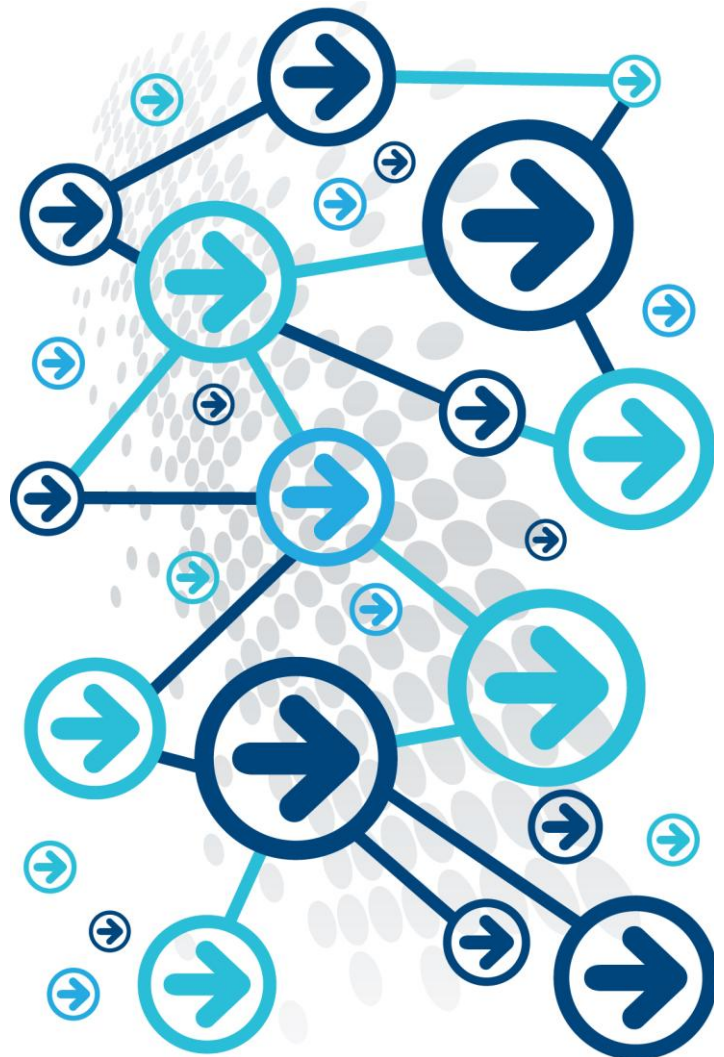
The challenge can be broken down into three parts.

- a) **Discovering who the decision makers and influencers are.** This has traditionally been a sales responsibility but without an existing "champion" inside a large organization, it can take a long time to navigate to the right people and can tie up a lot of sales time.
- b) **Identifying current issues and hot buttons.** The enormous volume of content now available online makes it imperative to understand what a prospect's current areas of focus are. Without that knowledge it's hard to differentiate messages, content and solutions and relate them to the prospects specific challenges.
- c) **Engaging with the prospects.** With normal sales approaches "engagement" generally means "meet", but unless the contact is already considering a purchase, they are unlikely to have the time and less likely to want to meet with someone from sales. The "trust factor" is the most important buying criteria but it only makes sense to evaluate it for vendors whose products meet the buyer's needs. Consequently, meeting with sales has been pushed to the later stages of the purchase process and it must fall to marketing to influence the buying decision and demonstrate the value of their company's solution.

### Solution: Survey-Based Lead Generation

#### **The role of a survey-based lead generation vendor**

is to address these challenges with clients in a cost effective and timely fashion. Working with the marketing team, vendors first help by augmenting existing contact lists or creating entirely new and accurate databases and will identify the specific individuals, by role, with responsibility for purchasing the type of product or solution that the client offers. Next they undertake a survey of the identified prospects, offering an attractive incentive. Participants are told that the client is the survey sponsor and then asked about their relevant responsibilities, issues and challenges. Detailed results are made available to the client and a summary is given to each participant. Lastly, as part of the survey process, participants are given an opportunity to have the client contact them. Given the demonstrated interest in the participants' challenges (related to the clients solutions), the proportion of participants who opt-in to be contacted compares very favorably to most other marketing approaches.



## Buyer's Guide to Survey-Based Lead Generation

The purpose of this guide is to help you identify the key attributes of an effective survey-based lead generation vendor.

### Ten Key Attributes of an Effective Survey-Based Lead Generation Vendor

#### 1) **Strong Lead Generation Focus vs. Supplying Lists Only**

Does the vendor you are talking with have a strong focus on lead generation? Or is their primary business list vending? Are they able to create custom contact lists to meet your specific needs for up-to-date contact information for specific roles and responsibilities? Can they survey those contacts to determine their challenges and potential interest in your solution? For example, maybe they've collected contact names from publication subscribers who they surveyed in the past on their broad areas of technology interest and their decision-making responsibilities. However, now they are only offering use of a static list and very superficial role information. Or maybe their expertise is both in getting the right contacts and contact information in target accounts and in successfully polling those contacts to discover up-to-date and relevant opinions? Look to see if their focus areas align with the challenges you are facing and the goals you identified in the sales process. They should.

Key questions to ask:

- a) Can you take my list of target accounts and provide a list of contacts that either make or influence decisions regarding the purchase of our solution?
- b) Can you provide a list of all relevant VP and C-Suite decision makers within enterprise companies in our target geographic region?
- c) How will you successfully survey those contacts to discover their level of interest and will you guarantee the number of responders?
- d) Can we ask those contacts who appear to have a strong need for our solutions to opt-in to receive a call from our sales team?

#### 2) **Goal oriented sales approach**

The simple question to ask yourself is "Are you buying a demand generation service or just buying/renting a list". If the latter you'll simply need to know the purchase/rental terms. But if you're interested in having your vendor as a partner who can help you achieve the results you need, you should expect the vendor to use a goal-oriented selling approach during your conversations. Are they concerned to know what your goals and objectives are for the program? Are they looking for ways in which their unique capabilities can not only help, but also provide you with an advantage? Do they use a solution selling approach for their survey-based demand generation and database creation services?

When they are presenting their capabilities you'll see slides about who they are and what they do, but they should understand that their services are most compelling when they can be seen as potential answers to the business challenges you are facing. They should be asking about the timing and urgency of your program. Other questions they should ask include: What is your definition of success? How are you being measured? What are the metrics and benchmarks most important to you? Also, what does the size and makeup of your internal team look like?

Key questions to ask:

- a) Have you worked with clients who have faced similar challenges?
- b) How does each piece of what you are proposing take aim at my challenges and goals?
- c) What is the timeframe for achieving these goals, based on the strategy you have in mind/outlined for my business?

### 3) Demand generation services beyond surveys

While it's not necessary for a survey-based lead generation vendor to offer additional services beyond contact database creation and surveys, doing so indicates a desire and concern to get you closer to your goals. It also demonstrates a broader understanding of the challenges you face. Vendors who offer additional demand generation services know that your time is limited and that you may need more than just the basics. Often there's a resource gap that needs to be filled so that leads are followed up in a timely manner, even before they become truly sales qualified.

Additional services that can be helpful include:

- Lead nurturing campaigns (e.g. based on survey responders or the contact database)
- Direct mail (email, post) campaign execution and management
- Telephone appointment setting services
- Existing list cleaning, updating, augmenting and verification

Key questions to ask:

- a) Beyond contact database creation and surveying, what additional lead generation services do you offer?
- b) How do opt-in surveys work and what resources/help do they require from us?
- c) What's the process for managing leads? How do we know when leads are ready to be contacted? How can you help us get them ready?

### 4) Flexibility

Even if you start with an accurate and up-to-date contact database, the contacts are only valuable if they meet your needs for authority level and decision-making responsibility and if you can segment the list appropriately. Will different segments have different issues and do you need to craft your survey questions accordingly? What if you need to segment the database on different criteria e.g. users of public cloud services versus users of in-house cloud services?

Vendors who can help you go beyond the standard approach of using job title, geographic region and decision making authority, by augmenting your list and developing cost effective survey campaigns targeted at smaller segments, allow you to meet your specific project objectives and deliver a higher ROI on your end goals. For example, if you have specific target companies to penetrate, can they deliver a list of the contacts within those companies with responsibility to buy or influence the purchase of your specific solution? Can they then segment the list and survey the contacts in a way that meets your specific needs? Are they able to easily and quickly collate survey results and provide them in a format that you can use?

Key questions to ask:

- a) What is your process for finding contacts with the roles and responsibilities we need (e.g. VP or C-level contacts) to target or are you just offering access to a standard/compiled list?
- b) If we need additional information or levels of detail about contacts do you have a way to get it?
- c) When we have an accurate and up-to-date contact database will you work with us to define and execute surveys that deliver the information we need to know on each segment with the accuracy we are seeking?
- d) Are you able to provide support to help us in executing our surveys and collating the results?

### 5) Accuracy

Contact lists that are sourced from subscription programs, crowd sourced or elicited from independent third parties via the Internet are often inaccurate and incomplete. When you use these types of lists to conduct prospect surveys you cannot guarantee the accuracy of the results. The challenge is that to get contacts to respond to surveys you do have to offer them a small incentive. If they do not have responsibility for, or influence over, the purchase of your category of solutions, they may still opt to complete the survey in order to receive the incentive. Then their opinions will bias your survey results and provide an inaccurate picture of the real challenges and issues your prospects face. The larger and more general purpose the contact list, the more likely is it to contain either inaccuracies or incomplete records for your purpose.

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In fact, the best lists are custom built or phone-verified to make sure they have the right contacts to meet your needs. Super-accurate contact databases reduce waste; names are fresh, emails don't bounce and the contacts that respond to surveys provide current, accurate and relevant information

Key questions to ask:

- a) How do you verify the accuracy of the records you provide to us?
- b) Can you verify and/or augment the records in our existing database?
- c) How can we check that survey responders have the right roles and responsibilities to meet our needs?
- d) How many responders should we expect to see?

### **6) Defined delivery processes**

For vendors who are simply providing access to an existing, predefined list the process is often very simple. Vendors who wish to help to ensure your success will likely have more robust processes. For example:

- A set-up process that might begin with interviews with key sales and marketing staff. The goal is to understand the key objectives of the project, the lead management process and the roles of the staff involved, as well as your offerings and the attributes that define a strong prospect. The process should include definitions of targets (what kind of companies, what kind of contacts), what qualifies as a good lead/bad lead, how the company currently qualifies the lead, how the company expresses its value proposition to the lead, etc.

- A list development process or proven methodology for developing high quality, target market databases drawn from a combination of original research, well maintained master databases, license agreements with other data sources, and lists or targets provided by the client.

- A self-qualifying survey methodology for engaging decision-makers and getting them to discuss their current needs and interest in pursuing further discussions plus a robust mechanism for reporting survey participation and results and for producing a final report.

- Optional processes to gain further intelligence about your targeted contacts needs and to produce pre-qualified leads, e.g. a phone verification process

Key questions to ask:

- a) Do you have processes in place to ensure that we get the maximum benefit from using your lead generation survey services?
- b) What process will you go through to develop our contact database or list?
- c) What other processes do you use to help increase response rates and customer engagement?

### **7) Strong project management skills and capabilities**

Marketing campaigns are rarely simple. They often involve lots of "moving parts". There's never just one email, letter or phone call to make. If you opt for a qualifying survey, survey design and deployment require management, and the coordination of responses, fulfillment of incentives, lead management and reporting can become resource intensive. If you're like most marketing departments these days you are under staffed, so it's important that your vendor can manage the process for you so that you can focus on the creative side or on sales enablement.

Key questions to ask:

- a) What tools do you use to help with project management?
- b) Will my program have a dedicated project manager?
- c) What tasks will I be responsible for and what resources will I need to deploy?

### **8) Teaches and supports your staff - training offered**

To ensure the smooth running of your program, it's essential that training be available on all processes and systems used. Training need not be a lengthy activity but it will help greatly to make sure that all involved are using a similar vocabulary, that any PC software needed for input or reporting is well understood and that best practices learning can be shared with your entire team.

Key questions to ask:

- a) What kind of training is available?
- b) What does it cover and how long does it take?
- c) Can it be done virtually or over the phone, or do we have to be physically present?
- d) Do you do follow-up training after the program to identify and improve best practices?

### **9) Presents compelling case studies, survey results and recommendations**

Any vendor truly hell bent on delivering ROI will be eager to show you how they've done it for others. Ask for this input early on. Case studies should include not just benefits for the end clients, but also results and strategies that summarize the impact of their work.

Make sure you consider the core services when looking at these results. Do these case studies cite proof that these guys were able to generate leads from the target accounts? Were there qualified leads that turned into customers and affected the companies' bottom lines? What did previous customers have to say?

Ask prospective vendors for examples of survey results and reports as well as for references. As long as there isn't a conflict of interest, and a non-compete is in place, they should have no issues. Award them bonus points if the client they refer you to is actively working with them. Retainer work means the vendor's performance has earned them an ongoing commitment.

Key Questions to ask:

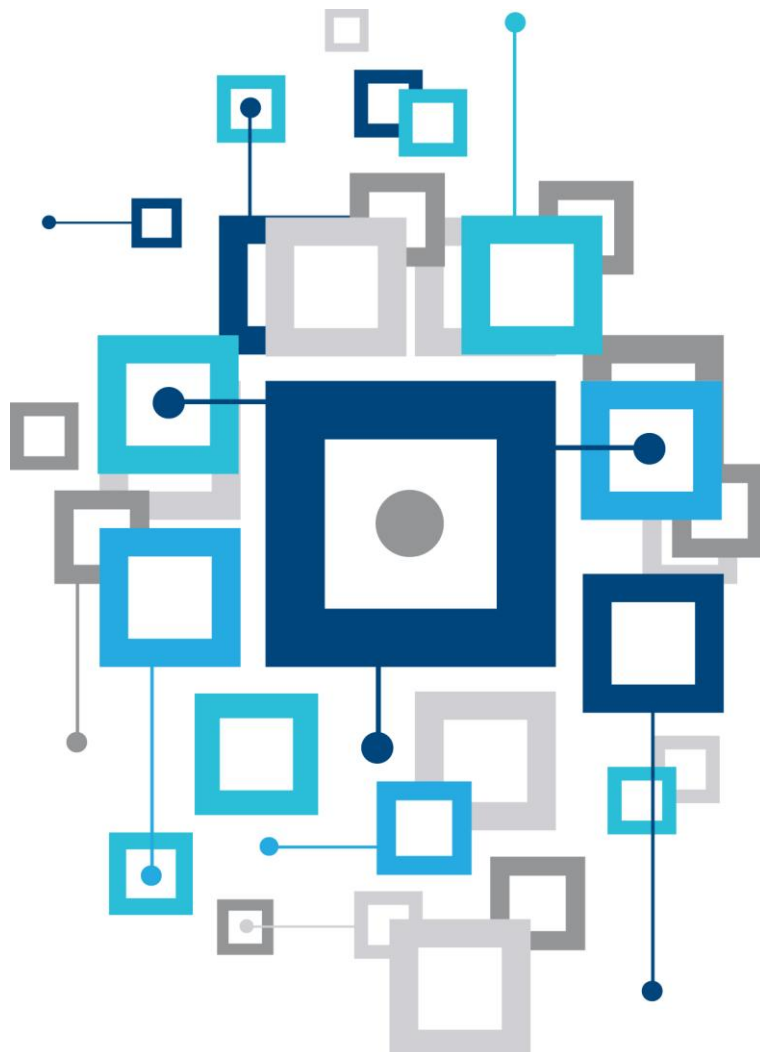
- a) Can you provide case study materials, survey results and references from other clients you have worked with?
- b) What lessons do you plan on applying to our business from success you have achieved for other clients?
- c) What are the critical success factors when creating an accurate contact database?

### **10) In house capabilities or trusted partners - Ecosystem**

Vendors who offer a broader set of services often outsource or leverage trusted partners themselves. This enables them to focus on their core areas of expertise while having the flexibility to expand projects into adjacent areas and to scale up quickly when larger projects arise. And while partnering also benefits their clients, it's important to check out the reputation of partners and to ensure that the project ownership and management remains with the vendor at all times.

Key questions to ask:

- a) Do you do all your contact database creation work in-house?
- b) If yes, who on your team specializes in what?
- c) If no, to whom do you outsource what? And how long have you worked with them?



## Buyer's Guide to Survey-Based Lead Generation

### Conclusion – Find the survey-based lead generation vendor that best meets your needs

You're short on the time and manpower needed to execute key marketing programs that will deliver qualified leads to your sales team. Plus you've been asked to find the right contacts and generate leads within a specific set of target accounts. There are a number of campaigns you'd like to run but you know that executing them without an up to date understanding of the target account needs, or with an out of date and poor quality contact list, will result in an inadequate ROI and impact your reputation among sales management. Fortunately, there are vendors who specialize in survey-based lead generation who can help. But like any other partner, make sure there is a good strategic match for the type of goals and challenges you have, as well as the talents of your internal teams and your existing processes. Vendors whose personalities, leaders, skill sets and core values map to the above 10 attributes will be well positioned to deliver on their promises.

### Special Offer: 25 Free Hard-to-Discover Contacts

**[Click here](#) to provide us with your “hard to discover” titles, functions or roles and a list of up to ten key target accounts (and their locations). We'll email you 25 contact records free of charge (one time per company only).**

SimplyDIRECT helps you identify, engage and qualify prospects with maximum precision through custom database building into your target accounts. We specialize in account penetration by delivering accurate, high-level contact information for Director, Vice President and C-level decision makers as-well-as managers. We focus on:

- Key account marketing: Our account-based approach focuses on the right contacts with the roles you need to target, in the accounts you'd like to win. We phone verify our contacts to ensure accuracy.
- Survey based demand generation: Identifying not only prospects but also details about their need for your product or service. Those with appropriate needs are invited to opt-in to be contacted by your sales force.

Find out how we can help. Take advantage of our offer of [25 free contact records](#) for the titles/roles you want to engage within up to ten target accounts of your choice.

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