

A Study On Identifying Prospects For Onboarding Customers

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ABSTRACT

Customer Onboarding is the process that comes under customer management. It helps in developing and creating a relationship between the company and the newcomer. The key concept of onboarding is to understand what kind of value each new customer expects from the business. Onboarding can be carried out in different steps which begins by Prospecting. It comes at the first stage of Sales life cycle. Prospecting is considered to be the important steps as it involves in the process of finding and identifying the companies who can be the potential customers. It is considered to be the long process as it consumes more time and cost at each stage for onboarding the customers. This study uses different types of tools like LinkedIn Premium, Decision Analysis and Resolution, InsideView, Adobe, Hubspot, VOIP, Data.com, Hunter which is used at the various stages of cycle. This study analysis in using the tools effectively identify and onboard customers at an effective cost and time.

KEY WORDS: Onboarding, Prospects, Customers

INTRODUCTION

The journey of customers into the company's Product/Services will begin by Onboarding customers. The experience that the customers has during the Onboarding process is important to make it positive as possible. The stage of customer journey often describes the relationship of customers to the company. Van Doorn et al.,(2010), in his customer engagement behaviour article says that the customer engagement behaviour, is defined as the customers' behavioural manifestation toward a brand or firm, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers. The author says that the engagement of the customers can also be attained by the word-of-mouth activity, recommendations, helping other customers, blogging, writing reviews, and even engaging in legal action. The Onboarding of customers into the company can be done by using the sales life cycle process. This gives the way to Prospect the potential customers at the early Prospecting stage and bringing them into sales funnel to make them the loyal customers. Michael R. Solomon et al.,(2008) in his book Power of selling has mentioned the seven steps to successful selling, which is used at the each stage of the study. Prospecting is considered to the early and important step of the Sales life cycle as it involves in finding the Prospect customers and qualifying them to the next stage. This step involves in collecting and developing the database of the prospect customers and communicate with them systematically in aim of converting them into the lead. A study on new customer acquisition through various Prospecting model. This article briefly describes making use of available database and linking them to different areas in order to make effective targeting.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Customer Onboarding is a term typically used to describe the process users go through, from the start of their journey to become a customer and beyond. It encompasses a variety of interactions and engagements with your brand, typically created to enhance the customer experience and influence the ongoing relationship your customer has with your brand and service.

Onboarding helps in creating competitive advantage. With the rise in the service economy, the success of service providers now depends on their ability to provide customer centric services (Halvorsrud et al., 2016). Onboarding a new customers is a critical process that begins by suspecting and converting them into leads. The Onboarding process presents excellent opportunity for the company to lead a customer towards a mutually beneficial relationships, which helps in having long term relationship with them. Fiserv White paper (2010). The Value of any organisation lies in keeping the right customers. Retaining customers from the customer churn rate is one of the key metrics. The main goal is to bring and keep customers who can provide value to value to and who are valuable to you (Gallo & Amy 2014). Providing customers with quality experiences has been proven to be a sustainable, competitive advantage with a clear financial impact for companies (Fornell et al., 2006). With the rise in the service economy, the success of service providers now depends on their ability to provide customer centric services. The importance of perceived service quality (Edvardsson, 1998, 2005) and customer experience (Walter et al., 2010) is widely acknowledged. Having a proper customer Onboarding strategy in place is crucial to achieving a higher customer retention.(Cherie Foo 2020). Service research has traditionally concentrated on understanding, measuring and optimizing the core service delivery.(Clay 2017). Customer satisfaction, quality and retention are global issues that affect all organizations, be it large or small, profit or non-profit, global or local. Most of the companies do analysis, strategic implementation that aim at improving customer retention and maximizing share of customers which in view is beneficial for the financial performance of the firm. (Shubhendu Mandal 2015). E-mail marketing is increasingly recognized as an effective internet marketing tool. E-mail marketing is compared with other forms of direct and internet marketing, identifying its key advantages. (Chittenden, L. & Rettie, R.,2003). Customers now interact with firms through myriad touch points in multiple channels and media, and customer experiences are more social in nature. These changes require firms to integrate multiple business functions, and even external partners, in creating and delivering positive customer experiences (Katherine N. Lemon2016).

THEORITICAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY:

Customer prospecting term refers to the finding new customers in business to track, locate, and attract new customers (Reinartz & Kumar, 2003; Shultz, 1995). All companies should have the database which have the detailed information and need of the Prospects as well as the customers(Thomas 2001). In Beginning of the sales life cycle, customer Prospecting plays a major role(Payne 1994). Retention and acquisition of customers are not the independent process and examined the methodology to make the loyal customers (Thomas, 2001). The customer experience and journey in this era of increasingly complex customer behaviour. In order to achieve this they examine the data to have the historical perspective of customer experience within marketing, then they bring together all the data to identify critical areas for future research (Katherine N. Lemon et al.). The performance of the sales force can be evaluated by number of customers that the company acquired and lost during a particular period (Walker et al.). In order to achieve the sales and marketing objectives the sales force depends on the data of marketing for making presentation. All these concepts are used in this current study to collect and filter the historical data, to get the right Prospect customers, to fetch and enter the data into sales force. The

aim of the study is to onboard potential customers through Prospecting in Sales Life cycle by using the tools that qualifies leads for the sales process. This study also focuses on identification of effective and efficient tools that are used in various stages of sales life cycle. The Primary objective is to convert prospect into customer through the sales life cycle methodology and to identify the leads from the prospects and study responses from them.

METHODOLOGY:

This study uses the Non-Probability sampling technique, in which the samples are selected for a specific purpose with a pre-determined basis of selection. Under this, Quota sampling is used in which the specific characteristic or potential respondents are observed. The first step is to divide the samples into subgroups based on their Profile, Revenue, Reputation, Future growth etc. Then to identify the suitable samples from the whole population. This method of sampling helps in increasing the efficiency level and reduction in cost of sampling. The data of this study are collected by the Desk research method. This way of data collection uses secondary data for collecting data. It involves in collecting the data from the existing sources making the study a cost effective one compared to the field research method. The desk research can be done in two ways. Firstly, the data can be collected by the internal desk research methods which involves in getting the data directly from the historical data of the organisation. Secondly, it can be done by using the external desk research method where data are collected outside the organisational boundary. It includes online desk research, Government publishes data, Customer desk research. The total number of 35 samples are collected, in which 14 samples are onboarded as a customers into the company.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION:

Onboarding of the customers into the company involves in several steps in the Sales Life Cycle Process. These steps starts with the Prospect identification and ends with the Proposal submission. After Identification of the Prospects in the first step, it will be carried out to the next following steps starting from Prospect Identification, Company Profiling, Leadership Profiling, Leadgeneration, E-mail/Cold calling, Fixing appointment and finally proposal submission where many companies are filtered in each stage according to various factors. Filtered data at each stage will pass on to the next step. Finally, after winning of the Proposal, the leads will be onboarded as customers into the company.

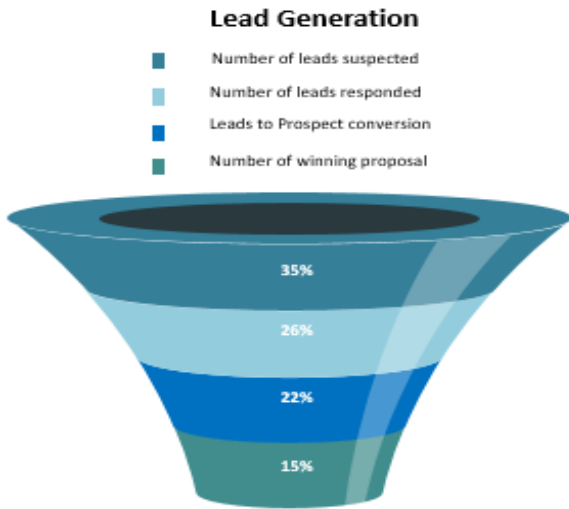


CHART NO 1: Filtering of Companies

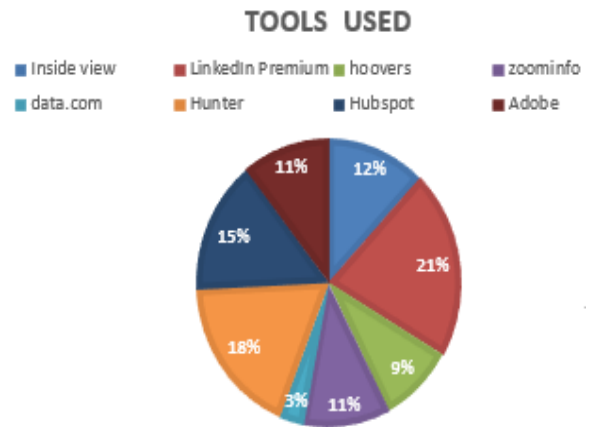


CHART NO 2: Usage of Tools

The Chart 1 represents the data are filtered at each stage. It gives the percentage of the leads suspected, Number of leads responded, leads that has been converted into prospects. The number of suspects that is taken in the initial stage is not same in the final conversion. Filtration is done at each level based on the prospect’s response and interest. Few Leads are chosen to be at the final stage as a customer.

The Chart 2 represents the percentage of data collected from various tools for Prospecting. The contribution of each tool for prospecting is identified and illustrated. LinkedIn Premium, Zoom Info, Hoovers, and Data.com are data fetching and verification tools, whereas Hunter, Hub Spot and Adobe are E-Mail verification tools.

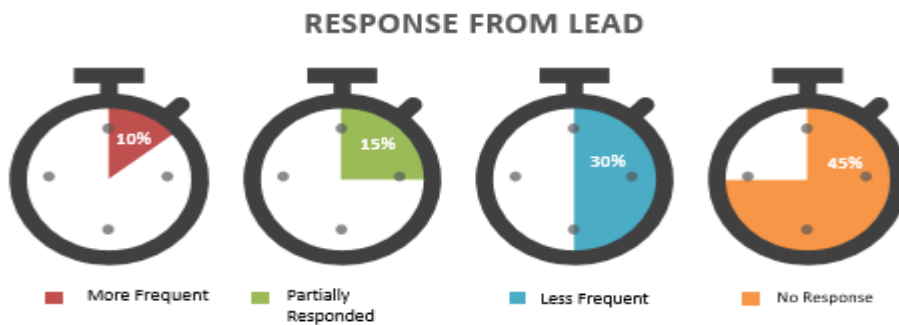


CHART NO 3: Response collected from Leads

The Chart 3 represents the percentage of response that is given by the prospects. Only few percentage of people reacts more frequent. The percentage of No response is comparatively high compared to the most frequently responded prospect. Further actions will be taken to bring in partially responded and less frequently responded to convert them into lead.

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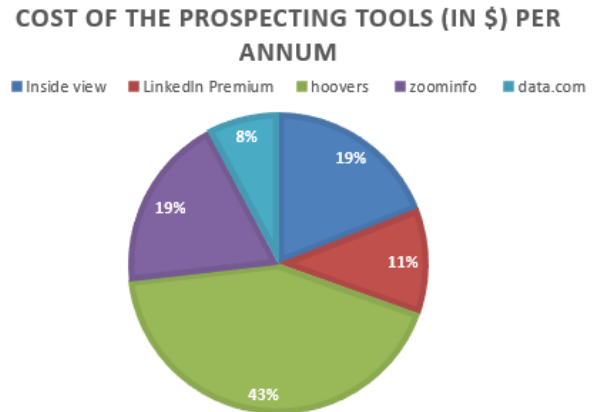
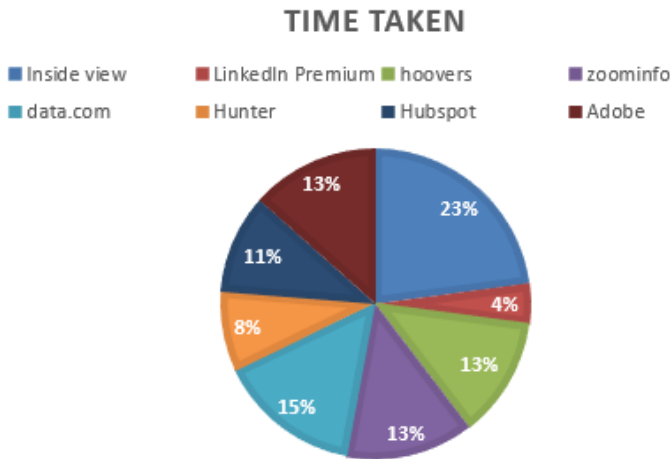


CHART NO 4: Time taken by Tools

CHART NO 5: Cost of the Prospecting Tools

The Chart 4 represents the percentage of time consumed by each tool for fetching details in it. From the analysis, it is observed that the LinkedIn Premium consumes more time than ZoomInfo. But the reliability of the data is more in LinkedIn compared to ZoomInfo and every other tool.

This Chart 5 represents the cost of each tool spent to get the data from it. From the analysis, it is observed that Hoovers is paid larger amount compared to other tools. The ZoomInfo and InsideView costs the same. LinkedIn Premium is the next highly paid tool. The cost of the LinkedIn is low compare to the other tools like InsideView and Hoovers.

COST OF THE EMAIL TOOLS (IN \$) PER ANNUM

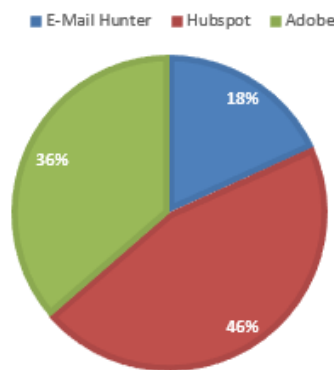


CHART NO 6: Cost of the Prospecting Tools

This chart 6 represents the cost of E- Mail verification tools. The E-Mail verification is done by using three tools, E-Mail Hunter, Hub spot and Adobe. Among the three the Hub spot is paid higher followed by Abode and E-Mail Hunter. According to the analysis E-Mail Hunter is the cost effective and user friendly tool compared to other two tools.

From the above Analysis, results at each stage are given below:

- **Prospect Identification:** As a result of Prospect Identification, the list of engineering services oriented companies are taken by using Desk research. By using the DAR, the top 5 ranked companies are taken for the further steps.
- **Company Profiling:** As a result of Company Profiling, the detailed study of the company are made and its data are profiled in the Presentation. This gives us the information about their background, Interest, Spending etc. By this, we can better approach the Prospects.
- **Leadership Profiling:** As a result of Leadership Profiling, the detailed study of key people in the organization are made. It makes the in-depth analysis about the Personality, Interest, Education, and Experience. It helps in understanding the person and approach them appropriately.
- **Lead Generation:** As a result of Lead Generation, We are able to get the quick overview of the prospects and the people in the high position related to Engineering department whom we can easily approach and fix the appointment for further discussion.
- **E-Mail/Cold Calling:** As a result, Mail is sent to the respective persons about our approach and offering to them by using the data collected from Lead Generation. If the mail is not responded, they can be approached by making the cold call.
- **Fixing Appointment:** As a result, after making conversation with the lead companies, the appointment will be fixed according to the convenience of both the parties. All the expectation and expertise are shared during the meeting.
- **Making Proposal:** As a result of the discussion, the Proposal is built accordingly that will meet the expectations of the lead. All Information like Team Structure, Resources, Delivery models, Budgets, Duration, Terms and conditions are mentioned here.

Finally the leads will be onboarded as customers if the proposal meets their expectation and requirement, else it may go for further revision and changes can be made as per the request of the clients and onboarded as a customer into the company.

CONCLUSION:

From this study, it is found that LinkedIn Premium will be the better tool to use compared to all other tools in terms of both cost and time. Though the consumption of time is more for the LinkedIn premium compare to the Zoom Info, the reliability of the data collected in the LinkedIn are high. In terms of E-mail verification, The E-Mail Hunter is the one that gives good result when compared to the other tools used.

RECOMMENDATION:

To make this study, there were limited availability of secondary data. Waiting for the response and getting the response from the leads are crucial at some point. The cost of the tools used in the data collection and verification of the information are high. There were more consumption of time. In some cases clients may have one time need. In a further study on Onboarding prospects into customers, instead of using various tools for prospecting, maximum 3 accounts can be created in LinkedIn and can be shared to the members of the team. This will improve the efficiency of the work with the limited cost.

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