

Managing Sales and Marketing Programs

Part 2: Connecting with and Nurturing New Leads

By Chad Root



Part 1 of this series was published in the 2025 Q2 issue.

The basic foundational elements of your sales and marketing program should be in place and well-maintained. Those include your strategic marketing plan, branding, website, search engine optimization, Google Business Profile, other local listings, social media accounts, and CRM. This article will cover the “Connect” and “Nurture” steps of the framework I shared in Part 1.

I began my career in 1993 in corrugated plastic returnable packaging. My brother and I were having an interesting discussion after Thanksgiving dinner about our early career adventures. He was a mechanical engineer at a large tier-1 automotive supplier. I was a sales engineer. He shared how much his company put on his plate for the procurement of everything from packaging (my world) to conveyors, automation, etc. He commented that I would never be able to get to guys like him. I asked why not. He said, “Because I won’t answer your calls.” I thought about it and replied, “But wait, isn’t a major part of your job procurement? I don’t need you to answer my calls. I just need to be in the right place at the right time when you need to buy, and I need to make it easy for you to choose me over my competitors.” Ironically, we passed each other on an escalator at the next Pack Expo.

He was right. Cold calling is not a great solution. Back then, we only had desk phones, and yes, I left a lot of voicemails. I soon realized that there was a process for developing new relationships with potential buyers. It occurred to me that I needed to have a good reason for calling; something more than, “Can I quote your

next order?” This is where understanding the buyer’s journey from Part 1 of this series — awareness, consideration, and decision — is crucial.

CONNECTING WITH NEW LEADS — CONTENT IS KING

One of the companies we own today is Fast Heat by Spark Industries. We acquired the company in December 2020. At that time, their website displayed their products with their features and benefits, similar to a product brochure. Still, it lacked content related to the issues that customers faced daily, such as electrical consumption, preventative maintenance, troubleshooting, processing windows, overcoming common hot runner connector problems, and Industry 4.0 opportunities. Here is the library of content we created to meet this need: <https://fastheatbyspark.com/injection-molding-best-practices>. Whether or not a person ends up buying our products, they will surely find educational value and insight through this content. That’s the goal at this stage.

INBOUND MARKETING

The Best Practices content provided us with a foundation for what is known as inbound marketing. Brian Halligan, co-founder and CEO of HubSpot until 2021, coined this term back in 2005. His team at HubSpot educated the world on the power of publishing helpful, relevant content on your website, sharing it with email subscribers, posting it on social media, equipping sales representatives with it, distributing it via direct mail, and more. I highly



BRAND EXPERIENCE

BUYER'S JOURNEY CONTENT PLAN

AWARENESS		
<p>Relate to buyer's symptoms, triggers, problems, or opportunities.</p>	CONSIDERATION	
	DECISION	
	<p>Help buyer do their homework and get prepared.</p>	<p>Create emotional desire and provide rationale to justify it.</p>
<p>CATEGORY LEVEL CONTENT:</p> <p>Videos, eBooks, Getting Started Guides, or "How to Overcome/Achieve..."</p>	<p>SOLUTION SET CTAs:</p> <p>Planners, Idea Books, Before/After Stories, Pros/Cons, Dos/Don'ts, What X Costs.</p>	<p>UVP:</p> <p>Sales Collateral, Featured Work/Testimony, ROI Calculators, Test Results.</p>
<p>"Does Your Office Need a Makeover?"</p>	<p>"10 Tips For Best Office Layout"</p>	<p>"The XYZ Office Difference"</p>

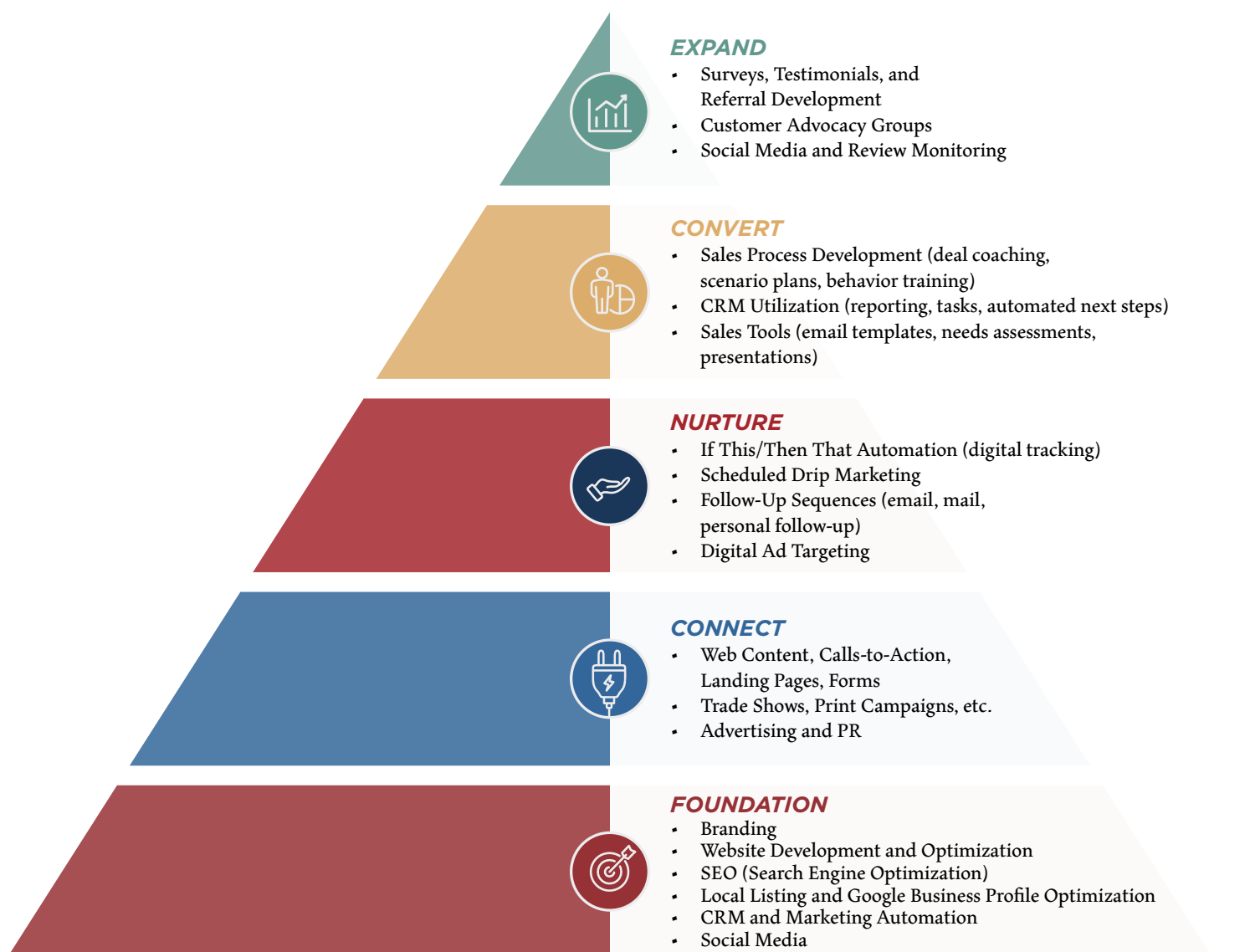


FIGURE 1

Category Level Content	Solution Set Call-to-Actions	Unique Value Proposition
Videos, eBooks, Getting Started Guides, or “How to Overcome/Achieve...”	Planners, Idea Books, Before/After Stories, Pros/Cons, Dos/Don'ts, What X Costs.	Sales Collateral, Featured Work/Testimony, ROI Calculators, Test Results.



encourage you to read their book, *Inbound Marketing: Get Found Using Google, Social Media, and Blogs*, for a deeper dive.

The idea is to attract web visitors to your blog using search engine optimization techniques and a mixed bag of outbound tactics previously mentioned. A person searches for content about a symptom they've noticed, or looks for a solution to a problem they've already identified. At the end of a blog post, you would then offer a Call to Action (CTA). See Figure 1 for a reminder from the previous article about some ideas for CTAs.

It's really up to you to understand your target audience well enough to know where you can use a form to get someone's contact information. Even without someone filling out a form, you have the option to show them “retargeting ads” after they leave your site.

Another valuable aspect of investing in this type of content is that you will then have a training library for new employees and manufacturers' representatives. You can also use it as a refresher course with your team before going to your next trade show. Booth visitors will recognize that your team is polished and informative, precisely the kind of people your potential customers are looking for.

OUTBOUND MARKETING (AKA ADVERTISING)

Advertising is a broad term. It can include creating a first impression through postcards, billboards, digital ads, letters, e-news sponsorships, show sponsorships, and other media channels. It can also be used to solidify your brand promise, introduce new products to existing customers, or strengthen internal marketing to foster a positive company culture and strengthen your team's connection. Before digital advertising, the return on ad spend (ROAS) was often more of an art than a science. Today, we monitor web traffic, leads, sales, search engine visibility, keyword rankings, and paid ad performance alongside a running CPA (cost per acquisition), whether that be for a lead or an online sale. Our ability to split-test ad content and campaign parameters enables a process of continuous improvement, much like you would see on a modern manufacturing floor.

SOME FUNDAMENTALS HAVEN'T CHANGED. WHAT SHOULD A FIRST IMPRESSION ACHIEVE?

Attention.

1. Get attention. Break through today's clutter.
2. Make a relevant connection.
3. Make a positive brand impression.
4. Lead easily to the next steps, whether that be awareness, consideration, or decision.

ENABLE is an acronym we've used at Spearhead for almost 20 years. In other words, enable a buyer to make a reasonable decision to buy from you. Want to maximize your lead generation and conversion? Hit all of these points in your marketing communications.

- E** → Emotional connection to addressing a threat or capitalizing on an opportunity
- N** → Necessary benefits of your solution, without which they will not succeed
- A** → Actual proof that your solution works (how did you test it?)
- B** → Believable because other people say it's true (testimonials)
- L** → Licensed by certifications, endorsements, etc.
- E** → Equipped with specific features that support the above

Standing out in a crowd means you'll need to be different, get uncomfortable, use one big statement in the headline, and use outstanding visuals. Time to get creative! To establish an emotional connection, consider the buyer's state before and after the purchase. What were they dealing with? How did they feel? What was an average day like? Where did they fall in the pecking order? Now, what's it going to be like after doing business with you?

This can be particularly challenging for B2B marketers to articulate. Here are some additional points to consider as a reminder from Part 1 of this article series. Can you help them meet commitments, feel important, help others, prevent mistakes, manage key variables, communicate, manage time, or have fun?

CHOOSE YOUR CHANNEL

Beyond traditional advertising channels, such as magazines and media kits, manufacturers can utilize numerous digital tools to effectively reach their target audiences. Here are some examples to consider:

- **Geofencing** - Ideal for capturing device IDs of individuals who attend a trade show or specific location.
- **Addressable** - This feature is only available for residential use and will reach all device IDs within a household. This is perfect for driving e-commerce sales.
- **Search** - Captures device IDs of people who have searched specific keywords. This can complement Google PPC advertising.
- **CRM** - Reach the device IDs of your CRM contacts using their email address, and also reach the device IDs of people with similar online attributes.

- **Social** - Captures device IDs of people who show interest in specific subjects, content, or influential figures across social media platforms.
- **Website** - Captures device IDs of visitors to your website. These are also referred to as retargeting ads.
- **Behavioral** - Leverages a broader digital footprint, including website visits, product interactions, content consumption, and transaction history.

TRADESHOWS

Trade shows are the ultimate combination of inbound and outbound marketing. Attendees are seeking assistance with specific opportunities or threats. They find you online as they register for the show and make a note to visit your booth. That is an inbound marketing tactic. At the same time, you're emailing your list, running ads, maybe sending direct mail, or perhaps even having your sales team send personal emails or make calls to leverage the show. Those are outbound marketing activities. Trade shows are also an excellent way to meet with existing customers and further develop those relationships.

STAY TOP OF MIND — NURTURING RELATIONSHIPS

So, you have a stack of trade show leads, inherited leads from a new territory, new web leads from your outbound advertising campaigns, and a list of former customers, now what? Hopefully, you have them well-organized in your CRM by source (ideally also including digital ad attribution). The best nurturing systems will

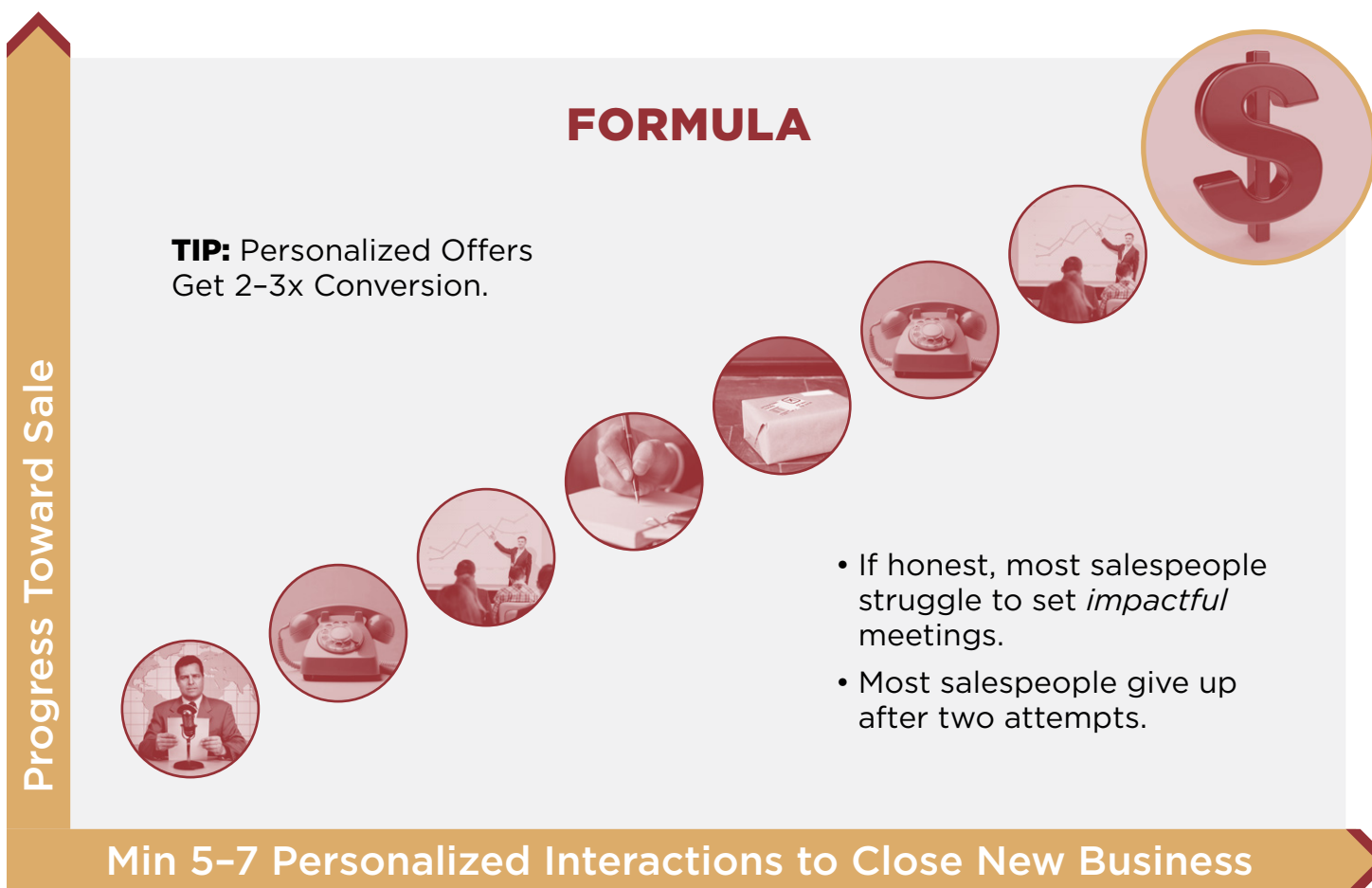
“ Standing out in a crowd means you’ll need to be different, get uncomfortable, use one big statement in the headline, and use outstanding visuals. Time to get creative! ”

deploy mixed-channel follow-ups, such as emails, texts, assigned sales follow-up calls, handwritten sales follow-up notes, direct mail, parcel mail, and video shares, while keeping track of their digital footprint on your website and responses to the follow-up activities. The goal of these touches is to stay top-of-mind in a helpful and relevant way. It’s also how you learn more about your leads with each touch and ultimately guide them toward becoming sales-qualified.

Essentially, we know what works when it comes to following up with people. It’s an age-old concept, as pictured in Figure 2 from almost 20 years ago, when we created a follow-up sequence for a printing company. It’s just that today we have the benefit of digital marketing tools.



FIGURE 2





Here are some statistics to encourage you to implement a nurturing system that keeps your company and sales team top of mind.

- Between 45% and 65% of people in a given market will decide, every 6 to 18 months, either to switch suppliers or remain loyal to their current one, according to the American Marketing Association. A related resource is Brian Carroll's book *Lead Generation for the Complex Sale*. **This means roughly half of all potential buyers make a conscious decision about who they'll buy from once a year!**
- According to Sales and Marketing Executives International, the following go-to stats are accurate:
 - » 2% of sales are made on the first contact
 - » 3% of sales are made on the second contact
 - » 5% of sales are made on the third contact
 - » 10% of sales are made on the fourth contact
 - » **80% of sales are made on the fifth to twelfth contact!**

This means it is essential to stay in touch with leads and former customers.

Publishing helpful and relevant buyer journey content gives you a reason to follow up with existing leads and customers — in other

words, “nurturing” relationships. The next time your sales reps need a good reason to call a potential customer, arm them with some solid content to share. A follow-up call might sound something like this... “Hey Joe, this is Tom. I'd like to send you a link to a featured project we completed for XYZ company, which solved their problem of [fill in the blank].” This is a great way to stay in touch with leads.

We'll take this concept even further in Part 3 of this series, where we'll cover converting leads into sales and expanding your success with referral development and raving clients. **A**



CHAD ROOT founded Spearhead Sales and Marketing in 2006 while serving as general manager of hot runner systems and controls at Fast Heat. Before that, he was director of sales and marketing for Freeman Company thermo-form tooling and general manager of Freeman's forged cutting die business from 1996–2003. From 1993–1996, he worked as a sales engineer for Fremont Die Cut Products, specializing in corrugated plastic returnable packaging. In addition to Spearhead, Chad is a managing partner of Fast Heat by Spark Industries, hot runner controls, and owner/operator of Root Industrial, a manufacturing representative for automation and unique industrial solutions. Spearhead provides strategic planning, branding, web marketing, digital advertising, and trade show support for many manufacturers.



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