
Haley Marketing's Essential Guide to

Staffing Sales Lead Generation



Sales is just a numbers game, right?

If you know me, you know it's no secret that I grew up in the staffing industry. My Mom and Dad got started in staffing in 1968, and they started, built, and sold multiple staffing firms.

Back in the old days (i.e., before the Internet), my Dad was a metrics guy. He would tell me "sales is just a numbers game." Placements are a function of send outs, which are a function of the number of job orders you have, the number of appointments you went on, and of course, the number cold calls you made.

**So if you want more sales, just make more calls.
It's that simple.**



But is it really that simple?

Personally, I cannot think of a more inefficient, frustrating or annoying way to develop sales. Cold calling has a success rate of less than four percent. It antagonizes your prospects and burns out your sales people. And if that wasn't bad enough: Cold calling instantly puts you into the "commodity" bucket!

If you sell staffing for a living, the last thing you want to do is put your company into the commodity bucket. And you don't want your first conversation with a prospect to be in a situation where the prospect is mostly thinking "how do I get off this call?"



Yes, cold calling works. But there is a better way!

In 1993, I heard a consultant by the name of Jim Cecil talk about a concept he called “nurture marketing.” The concept was amazingly simple:

- Stop selling all the time...nobody likes to be sold!
- Instead, focus on nurturing relationships...with the people you want to win over.
- Show your ideal prospects the kinds of problems you can solve.
- Position yourself as THE top expert at solving those kinds of problems.
- Nurture relationships over the long term to keep your firm top-of-mind.

That's it.

In 1993, Jim Cecil taught me how to implement this concept. We applied it in Mom and Dad's staffing firm from 1993 to 1996, and it worked. REALLY, REALLY WELL! It opened doors with higher-level decision makers. It allowed us to get into companies that previously hadn't given us the time of day. And it positioned our firm as a trusted advisor...not a vendor.

In fact, this process was so successful that in 1996, we started Haley Marketing. Our intent was to bring Jim Cecil's nurture marketing process to the staffing industry – and our mission was to make world-class marketing affordable for companies like my Mom and Dad's.

From 1996 to 2016: The evolution of lead generation in staffing

When we first learned Jim Cecil's nurture marketing methods, Jim advocated doing a lot of education, primarily via direct mail. But that was in 1993. Over the years, marketing technology evolved greatly, and today a well-designed nurture marketing campaign will incorporate digital communication (email, web content – text, image and video, social media, etc.) along with traditional methods (mail, drop-offs, speaking events, and of course, the phone).

As marketing technology has evolved, so have best practices in lead generation in staffing. At Haley Marketing, we recommend two approaches, used in conjunction with one another:

- 1 INTEGRATED DIRECT MARKETING**
- 2 CONTENT & INBOUND MARKETING**

Let's look at these two strategies in more detail.



Integrated Direct Marketing

A strategic and systematic approach
to going after your top prospects.



As the name implies, integrated direct marketing is about integrating multiple channels of communication to directly go after the companies (and people) you want to land as clients. The process is really quite simple, and it works as follows:

- 1** DEVELOP A LIST OF COMPANIES TO TARGET... THOSE THAT MATCH YOUR IDEAL CLIENT PROFILE.
- 2** GET THE NAMES OF THE APPROPRIATE DECISION MAKERS WITHIN EACH FIRM.
- 3** DIRECT MARKET TO THESE DECISION MAKERS USING TWO OR MORE FORMS OF CONTACT.
- 4** INTEGRATE SALES FOLLOW-UP INTO YOUR MARKETING WITH **EVERY** PROSPECT.
- 5** CONTINUE TO MARKET TO THE PEOPLE YOU WANT TO REACH...OVER AND OVER AGAIN.

While the process of integrated direct marketing is easy, designing an effective campaign is not. Where most companies fail is in developing the content for steps three and five.



For direct marketing to work, you have to follow the AIDA model:

A = ATTENTION

A = ATTENTION

Effective direct marketing needs to get people to pay attention. It has to break out from the clutter of the thousands of marketing messages we see every day. It has to jump off the prospect's desk (or out of their inbox), and it has to get the prospect to take notice.

So what works? FedEx packages. Dimensional mailers. Gift boxes. Anything delivered by courier. With direct marketing, your goal is to get 100 percent of the people you are targeting to pay attention to your message. Do whatever it takes to get your message seen. It is worth the investment!

I = INTEREST

I = INTEREST

Capturing attention is just the start. Once your prospect has opened the package or email, you then have to get them mentally engaged. You have to tell people a compelling story. You have to get them interested in a problem you can solve.

And here's a hint: staffing topics rarely create interest. If you want to interest someone in staffing services, you have to reframe the issue around issues that are more relevant and interesting to the recipient of your marketing.

For staffing firms, the best way to generate interest is by developing a compelling "core story." A core story is an educational message that illustrates a problem or challenge the prospect is facing, teaches people how to resolve that problem, and introduces your services as all or part of the solution. A great core story creates an "a-ha" moment for the prospect that makes that person want to learn more.

D

= **DESIRE**

D = DESIRE

I'm dating myself here, but if you are a fan of the band Cheap Trick, and their song *I Want You to Want Me*, you understand desire. Creating interest is about getting a prospect intrigued about a topic that matters to them. Creating desire is about getting them to want you...or at least your company as the solution to the pain they feel.

Your direct marketing must bridge the gap from attention to interest to desire in order for your sales calls to be effective. Once you bridge this gap, your first call is to someone who already knows who you are, what you do, and how you can help. They see you as a solution to a problem—and they see you in a completely different light than all the other commodity staffing firms. At this point, their biggest concern is usually “Can I afford this solution?” and “Do I believe you can really deliver?” not “What’s your markup?”

The desire step is really about positioning. Creating a perception of your firm, the problems you solve, and the value you offer that clearly distinguishes you from everyone else. In the book *Good to Great* by Jim Collins, the author discusses a concept called the “Hedgehog principle.” Essentially, this concept is about being the best in the world at something. You want your target prospects to see you as being the best in the world at solving the HR / staffing / business challenges they have.

A

= ACTION

A = ACTION

The final step in direct marketing is getting the prospect to take action. In staffing, this is the easiest step because you are going to integrate your marketing with sales follow-up. You don't need the prospect to call you, visit your website, or do anything else. You just need them to take your call.

Of course, calling isn't the only way to connect with your target prospects. At Haley Marketing, we recommend that follow-up includes:

- Calling.
- Personal email.
- Connect on LinkedIn, then use LinkedIn messaging to follow-up.
- Follow target decision makers on Twitter; if they follow you back, you can direct message.
- And if all else fails, drop by the prospect's facility and drop off a personal note.

AN INTEGRATED DIRECT MARKETING

Case Study

THE CHALLENGE: GETTING PAST PRICE BUYERS.

The situation:

A client of ours (LI staffing) was having a rough time with HR managers who did not see their value. This client did a better job sourcing and screening talent than most of their competitors, but their services were also higher priced. Prospects loved their talent evaluation process, but they kept losing business because they were unwilling to match the competition's prices.

The integrated direct marketing solution:

We helped the client create a core story that showed the real value of their services to employers. Through a little research and mathematical analysis, we were able to show that the higher-performing workers our client delivered resulted in approximately 250 percent greater ROI than the workers provided by other staffing firms that did not do the same level of screening.

We used the core story to create a multistep direct mail campaign that included a teaser greeting card, an educational booklet, four follow-up greeting cards, and sales calls at appropriate points in the direct mail process.

The results:

This company's cold call to appointment ratio increased by 100 percent. When making calls, one out of every nine people contacted became a client. And the average sales cycle decreased from three months to four weeks. And our favorite part of the story is they actually had HR managers tell their sales reps that they could use data from the marketing materials to go back to their own managers and justify paying a higher markup!

Content & Inbound Marketing

The art of selling...without selling.



Where direct marketing is about being deliberate, strategic and systematic in going after your ideal prospects, **content and inbound marketing is about attracting people you don't know and are not targeting.** It's about getting your company found, using ideas to position your firm, educating people about the value you offer, and creating a lead-generation funnel that attracts the right decision makers and gets them to engage with you.



With content and inbound marketing, you strive to:

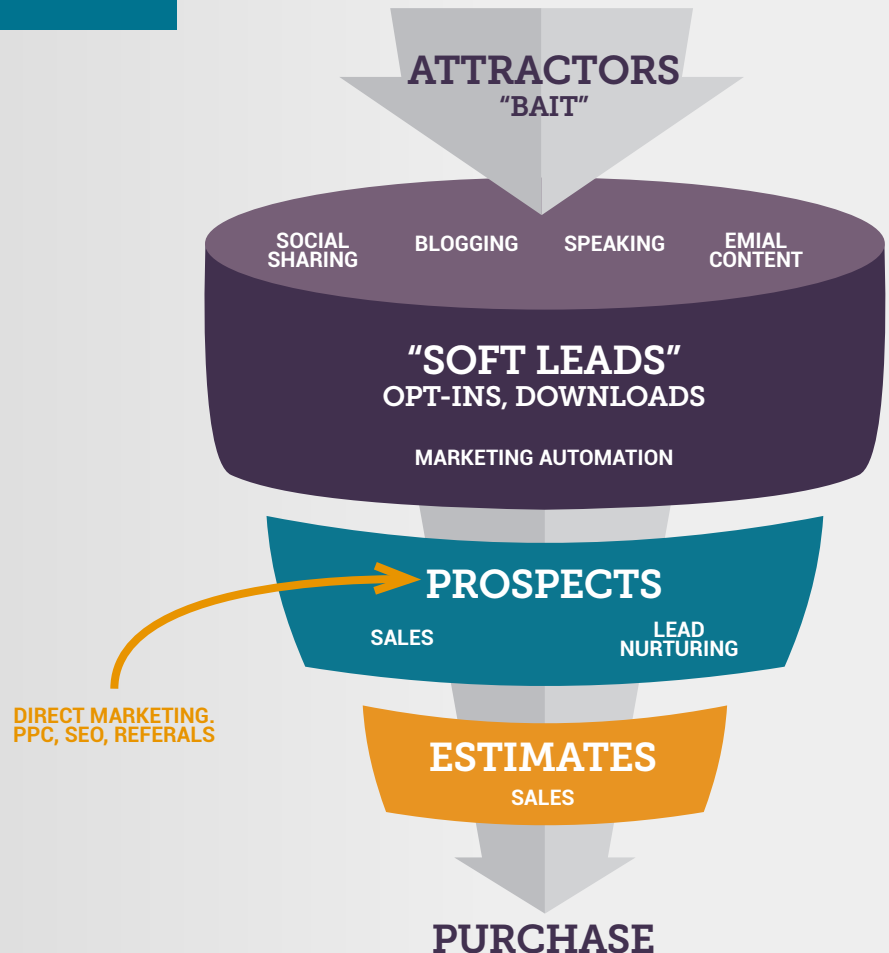
- Determine topics of interest to the people you want to reach.
- Develop compelling content around those topics.
- Post the content to your website (or find other ways to get your content in front of people).
- Promote the content via email, social and other channels.
- Use your website to capture information and convert visitors into sales leads.
- Nurture relationships to bring visitors back to your website over and over again.

When done correctly, content marketing positions your firm as an expert. It creates interest in your company by teaching people how to use your services to solve their challenges. And it generates sales leads by making it easy to respond, connect or otherwise engage with your firm.



As the following diagram shows, content marketing is the top of your sales funnel.

The content you create is the “bait” that lures prospects to you. Your website is the place that converts visitors into “soft leads,” that is, people who are interested in your ideas and opt-in to further contact from your firm.



The bait you offer can come in many different forms, including:

- Blog posts
- How-to articles
- eBooks
- White papers
- Infographics
- Videos
- Webinars
- Podcasts
- Case studies
- Research surveys



STEP #1

Define your content



For most staffing firms, the biggest challenge is “What should I write about?” And the answer is really quite simple: ***Anything that would be of interest to the people you want to reach!***

While you don't have to write about staffing, recruiting or HR topics, the topics you write about should tie back to your services. But don't make your content a sales pitch! Content marketing is about educating people. You need to provide truly useful and relevant ideas. You need to offer solutions to the challenges your clients (and candidates) are facing.

When developing a plan for your content, think about how you want to be seen. The right content will position your firm as an expert on a particular topic; ideally you'll become a leading authority on this topic in your local community or industry. If you need some topic ideas, here are a few suggestions:

- Recruiting challenges and solutions for a specific niche.
- Hiring, managing and motivating specific types of people.
- Improving workforce performance.
- Reducing talent management costs.
- Workforce strategy.
- Compensation and benefits for a specific industry.

And if you really don't know what to write about, start with some research:

- Interview your clients and ask them “What keeps you up at night?”
- Monitor LinkedIn groups that cater to your clients and see what issues are being discussed.
- Follow your target clients and industry thought leaders on Twitter and see what kinds of content they are sharing.
- Contact trade publications in your industry and ask for their media kits—they will contain an editorial calendar that shows the topics each publication is going to write about.
- Subscribe to RSS feeds from bloggers that serve your client's industry and see what they are writing about (you might even contact these people and ask for a guest post for your site!).



STEP #2

Create a calendar

Once you have an idea for a topic (or topics), create a content calendar. Plan the content you will create for at least 90 days. Your plan should define the content you will produce, the format, the timing, and the people who will be responsible for the production. A content calendar looks like this:

JULY CALENDAR			
Date	Topic / Title	Format	Owner
7/4	Independence Day eCard	Email	John
7/7	Top 5 ways to lower recruiting costs	Blog post	Beth
7/14	The real cost of hiring	Infographic	Peter
7/21	Interviewing for soft skills – tips and tricks	Blog post	Beth
7/28	Hiring Boot Camp	Webinar	Peter

The easiest form of content to produce is a blog post.

A good post is typically 300 to 500 words in length, and it offers meaningful insight. Blogging can be done by anyone, and unless you have someone on your staff who really loves to write, it's best to get everyone on your team involved in blogging.

You may also want to outsource blog writing to get a little professional assistance. A third party can help plan content, write your posts, optimize the content for search engines, and ensure you are blogging on a consistent basis (Insert not so subtle sales pitch here – Haley Marketing is REALLY good at blogging, and we'd be happy to help!).

While blogging is a great start, you want to create content in multiple formats.

Why? Because the people you want to attract will be attracted by different things! Some people love reading blogs. Others prefer longer form content like eBooks and white papers. Some people don't like to read at all, so infographics, social graphics, podcasts, webinars and videos might be better options.

At Haley Marketing, we recommend repurposing content in multiple formats. For example, a blog post can be converted into a how-to video that you upload to YouTube. An eBook can be broken down into a series of blog posts (or a series of blog posts can be assembled into an eBook!). A webinar can be presented live and then recorded for future sharing. You can also create blog posts and social graphics to promote your webinars and the recordings you offer. You can even create your own website just for the recordings like we did for our Lunch with Haley webinars (www.lunchwithhaley.com).



STEP #3

Get your content found



This is the most critical step in content marketing. You can create the world's greatest information, but if you're lousy at promoting your content, it's won't generate sales leads.

When promoting your content, don't think one dimensionally. You want to use any—and every—method you can to get your ideal clients and candidates to find and be drawn to your content. Here are a few ways you can promote your content:

- **Email** – send newsletters, announcements, event invitations.
- **Social messaging** (one-to-one or one-to-many).
- **Social sharing** – share links to your content on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and Google+.
- **SEO** – optimizing your content so it gets found by search engines.
- **PPC** – use paid promotion to put your content in front of the people you want to reach.
- **Get others to share your stuff** – ask clients, candidates and vendors to your firm to share.
- **Be a guest contributor** on someone else's blog or website.
- **Pick up the phone** and invite people to take advantage of the content you offer.
- **Direct mail** – send invitations to events or encourage people to visit your website.
- **Drop-offs** – create a teaser or invitation that you drop off to clients and prospects.
- **Email signatures** – create a message or graphic to promote your content.
- **Business cards** – include links to your blog or featured content on your cards.
- **Feature the content on your website.**

STEP #4

Convert



The goal of content marketing is not to create content. It's to generate sales leads (or get candidates to apply to jobs). But content alone won't yield leads.

If you want to generate more sales leads, you have to create a deliberate plan for getting visitors to your website to take the next step—to contact you, apply to a job, or at a minimum to opt-in to future communication from your firm.

A great staffing website will offer many different ways for visitors to respond, and it will be filled with strong calls to action. Let's look at each of these separately:

Ways to respond.

When someone comes to your website, how can they contact you? Sure you have a Contact Us page, but what else? Can people apply to a job? Can they submit a resume? Can they request information about your services? Can they opt-in to a newsletter? Can they register for an upcoming webinar? Can they complete a form to download an eBook?

A well-designed staffing website offers many different ways to respond at many different places throughout the site.

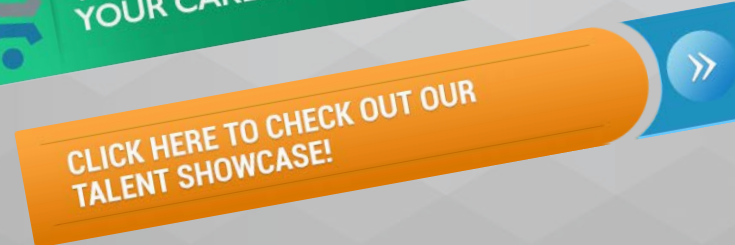
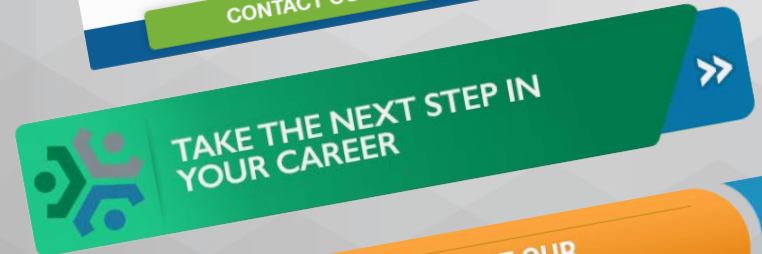


Strong calls to action.

If you want people to do something, tell them what you want them to do! Sure. That's obvious, but most staffing websites have terrible (if any) calls to action. Here are a few examples of good calls to action:

- Download our salary guide.
- Apply now!
- Check out our Top Candidates.
- Join our mailing list.
- Get job alerts delivered right to your inbox.
- Be the first to know about our hottest jobs (or top talent).
- Free consultation!
- Free resume formatting!
- You're invited to attend our next webinar.

A good call to action offers a strong value, and it tells people exactly what they have to do. At Haley Marketing, we are BIG fans of call-to-action banners – creating graphics you can use in blog posts and elsewhere on your website to drive immediate response. Here are a couple of examples:

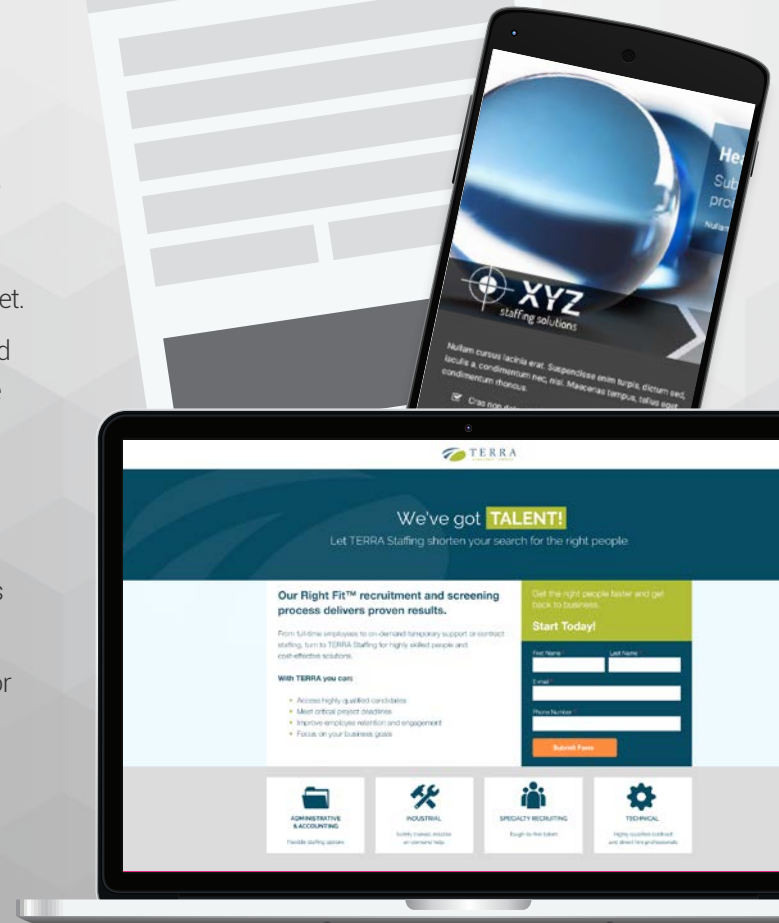


Response forms and landing pages.

To maximize the number of leads you get from your content marketing, you need to make it easy for people to respond. When you are asking people to apply to a job, complete a contact form, or opt-in to a newsletter, the easier the form is to complete, the more response you will get.

Optimally, your response forms will have three or fewer fields (every field over three will decrease your response). However, with some forms, like job applications, you'll need more data. For these forms, look to make responding as easy as you can. For example, you might offer one-click options like Apply with Indeed or Sign-up with Facebook. You might break a long form into a series of very short forms, so you can capture essential contact information first (just in case your prospect abandons the form).

When you are driving people to a specific offer, like to get a free eBook or signup for a webinar, you'll want to create a landing page – a separate web page that is optimized to convert. A well-designed landing page eliminates distraction. It will repeat the offer you are making, reinforce the value you are promising, and it only allows one course of action – complete the form.



STEP #5

Nurture



Staffing is not a one-call close. And content marketing is not a one-contact process. Content marketing is about getting people interested in your ideas. It might be one specific piece of content that attracts people to your site, but then you have to continue to stay in touch and nurture relationships with these people.

Nurturing is done by directly sharing content with people who have asked to receive it. This might be through an email newsletter, an ongoing series of webinars, consistently sharing your content on the social media sites where your prospects congregate, or even old-school tactics like direct mail and drop-offs.

The goal of a nurturing campaign is to use content to continue to educate, to reinforce your positioning message, to prove the value you can deliver, and to keep your firm top-of-mind until the time that the prospect has a need for the solutions you offer.

When done consistently over months—and years—a nurturing campaign positions you as an expert, builds trust, and ultimately generates a consistent stream of new sales leads. And best of all, it allows you to stay in contact with hundreds or even thousands of people with little to no disruption to your sales team and their direct marketing efforts.

So what's best?

Direct or Content marketing?

That's a trick question. The correct answer is both! The most successful staffing companies implement a mix of integrated direct marketing to strategically and systematically go after their top prospects AND content and inbound marketing to attract clients and candidates to their firm.

If you need immediate sales, direct marketing is likely to have the fastest result. If you want a steady stream of sales leads coming to you, content marketing can reach a much larger volume of prospects and generate a greater number of leads.

For our clients, integrated direct marketing is used to go after larger accounts where there is more competition. It's used to break through the clutter, create a strong business case for an initial meeting, differentiate our client from their competition, and provide the sales team with a structured process for going after target clients.

Content and inbound marketing is then used to create a stronger local / industry brand. It's used to educate prospects, strengthen the staffing firm's positioning message, and attract people not being directly targeted by the staffing firm.

Content and inbound marketing is also a very cost-effective addition to the recruitment marketing our clients are doing. It helps to attract and engage job seekers—especially those passive candidates who may never see your jobs being posted online.

Need help with your lead-generation strategy?

Contact Haley Marketing at **1.888.696.2900** or
check out our content at **www.haleymarketing.com**

About Haley Marketing Group

At Haley Marketing, we are staffing industry specialists. We offer a range of services to satisfy the marketing needs and fit the budgets of all kinds of staffing firms.

We founded our company with a simple mission: to make great marketing more affordable. Whether you're looking for an effective way to stand out from the competition or you just need a new website or brochure, we can provide it.

Our services include:

- Blogging & Content Marketing
- Social Media Marketing
- SEO & PPC Management
- Direct Mail
- E-newsletters & Email Marketing
- Website Design
- Website Content
- Integrated Staffing Campaigns
- Marketing Strategy
- Creative Services
- Reputation Management
- Re-Recruiting

Solutions to the staffing industry's challenges.
Prices YOU can afford.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL US TODAY.



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