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Break through the noise:

6 steps to building stronger demand

We're hearing a lot of chatter in the demand gen world right now about strategies for building and nurturing an audience. This should be nothing new—while it seems every marketer has a different flavor of demand gen, it's always been about creating a relationship with your audience. Done comprehensively, it can even carry all the way through the sales funnel.

Frankly, though, the lead gen muscle takes over demand gen for a lot of organizations. It happens with individual marketers and marketing teams—and it also happens because of the immediate results stakeholders push for. Demand gen is a long game, focused on interest and desire for your product or service over the long term, but companies need fresh leads (and the revenue they bring) *now*.

Demand gen feels like a luxury because it draws a longer line between customer and revenue. Bringing in leads is faster, easier and cheaper than building those long-term relationships. And demand gen is hard. We get it! Marketing messages saturate every digital channel on the planet, and standing out among the noise is never simple. More so when budgets get limited.

Yet demand gen is a necessity for bringing in *quality* leads with longevity—a necessity in the same way oil changes and new tires are necessities for a car. You can get away without them for a while... until you can't.

We believe in the need to get back to true demand gen. That means moving away from lead gen for the pure sake of generating leads (with diminished regard for lead quality). It means investing time in strategies that will establish genuine rapport with your actual target audience—strategies that will cut through the noise to reach the customers you really want.
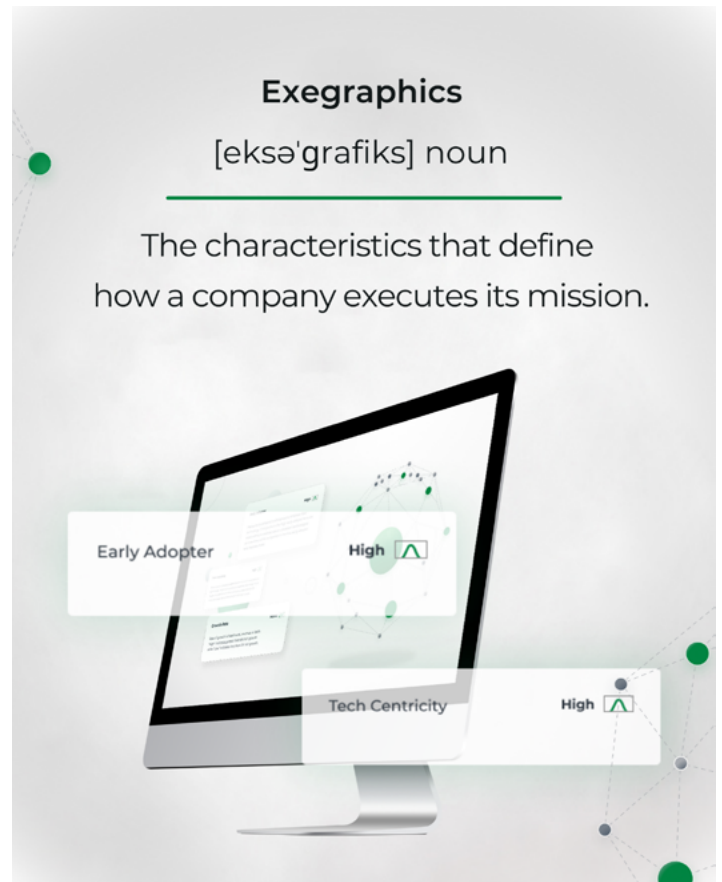
1 | Get to know your real audience

Assuredly your demand gen organization has been selling into segments defined by your company's ICP. But, how dynamic is that ICP? How deeply does it understand your best customers to identify your best prospects?

In too many companies, an ICP fits on a single slide: it's a bullet list of maybe half a dozen firmographics such as industry, size, revenue and location that offers an accurate but highly superficial look at your best customers.

The B2C giants figured out years ago that demographics weren't enough for them to build a picture of their customers. So why should the equivalent firmographics be enough for understanding B2B customers?

Short answer: it's not. To establish the kind of rapport that demand gen seeks, you need to go beyond how your best customers *look* to how they *behave*. You need to get a clear sense of how they function on the inside. You need to develop a profile of the traits that actually make them your best customers, rather than trusting that companies that look alike will also act alike.

Rev has developed AI-driven ICPs using [exegraphic](#) data (our B2B equivalent of psychographic data) to build better customer profiles that understand how companies behave and change. But even with more traditional ICPs, re-evaluating your best customers will help you understand how your actual ideal customer functions—far beyond what a PowerPoint slide can contain.

Exegraphics

[eksəˈgrafiks] noun

The characteristics that define how a company executes its mission.

Early Adopter   High

Tech Centricity   High

2 | Identify which companies fit your actual ICP

Once you've honed a sense of what makes your best customers tick, you can turn the search outward to identify what companies and prospects fit the new-and-improved ICP.

Purely as a simplified example: say your best customers have always been banks. Now, though, you've discovered that your best customers are also scaling their in-house software development teams but outsourcing their HR departments. Rather than limitingyour audience to financial institutions, you can identify other companies that align with that profile.

Now, you're no longer trying to build a relationship with whole swaths of unlikely customers—you can target the banks most likely to engage with you, while also tailoring your demand gen for entirely new audiences.

Some questions for evaluating a sample list of your newly identified ideal prospects:

- What new companies and market segments are you discovering? You may discover other patterns and trends within this list that shape your demand gen strategy. For instance, if a significant number of prospects are in the same sector, you can likely invest more heavily in a campaign for that segment.
- What opportunities do you and your team identify in this list? And, are the opportunities really there? By branching out, you're bound to uncover and create new ways of engaging. Conversely, you may realize that opportunities are limited, and that you need to re-evaluate your ICP.
- Should you refresh (or launch) an ABM program? If some specific prospects on the list show particular promise, implementing or reworking an ABM program in order to build targeted relationships may be warranted.

3 | Speak your audience's language

Alright, you've identified your actual ICP and created a brand-new target list! Your product or service might be the absolute best thing to ever happen for these new prospects—but if you don't speak their language, they'll never know it.

This is where you really need to flex that demand gen muscle and proactively steer away from a lead gen model. You're not waltzing into a new space to sell something as quickly as possible; you're entering to build relationships.

That means speaking their language—sometimes literally. In a field with its own jargon, you need to be able to converse about your audience's needs and experiences in ways that resonate with them.
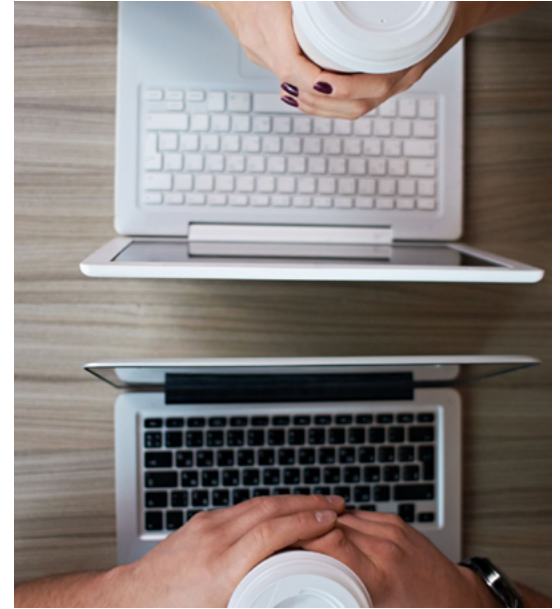
It also (and more importantly) means shaping your messaging to speak to the pain points they're likely facing, their aspirations as a company and as an industry, and (ultimately) how you can close that gap.

After all, relationships are built on helping each other out. You and your team may need to invest learning time in understanding different fields and testing its messaging with those new audiences to ensure that the relationships to come establish true rapport.

4 | Reach them where they are

Along with speaking your prospects' language, you need to reach them where they are. That means both in the spheres where they will engage with you, as well as where they are in their customer journey.

Sure, most companies are on Instagram or Twitter—and you probably will be, too—but your best bet is a multi-channel strategy that establishes your brand as leaders in the space and your solution as an inevitable improvement for your prospects, especially within a long-tail campaign.

The possibilities are, as they say, endless. But you can emphasize the channels that both maximize your contact with your ideal customers, and that you can feasibly do well. If you don't have ready access to the time or expertise for a podcast, don't prioritize it!

Some possible channels for providing value to your audience (beyond social media and advertising) include:

- Webinars and panel discussions. These are opportunities to provide free or low-cost educational value to prospects. They highlight your in-house expertise, and offer a glimpse into what customers can expect by working with your company.

- SEO-driven thought leadership content. Again, providing no-cost value to readers establishes brand trust and credibility, while positioning your company as an accessible source of information and industry perspectives. These pieces may be more labor-intensive than pure SEO-driven boilerplate articles, but the depth can cut through the noise to set your company apart as a real resource.

- Speaking engagements. Whether a LinkedIn Live or a keynote address at a conference, getting your company's faces in front of your audience humanizes your brand and establishes it as respected forerunners in the field.

- Panel discussions. Branching out from speaking engagements, panel discussions have the added benefit of bringing audiences from 3-4 organizations into one tent. Each participant gains exposure into the others' audiences. Your company can establish itself by hosting panel discussions, and your in-house experts can participate in other organizations' events.
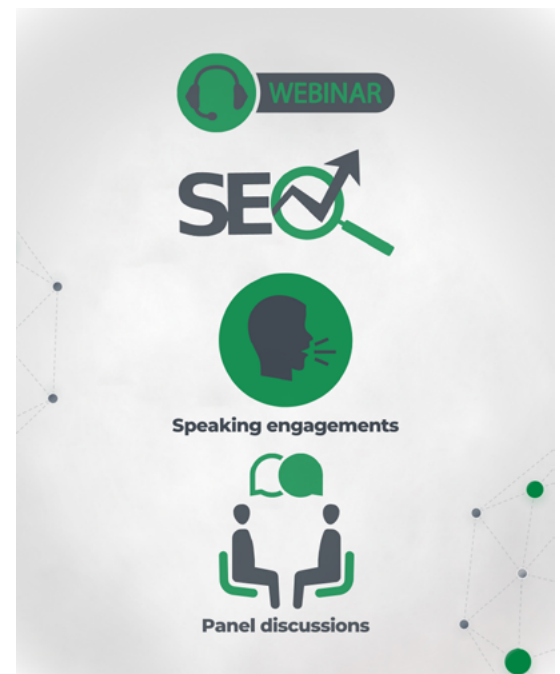
5 | Engage in conversation

All good relationships are two-way streets. Generating and providing immense value for your audience is necessary—but insufficient. True demand gen relationships go both ways, so whatever channels you incorporate into a multi-channel strategy, implement them as best you can to engage in conversations with your audience.

Sometimes—possibly even most of the time—this is as simple as opening the floor for questions. Solicit questions for upcoming webinars; source ideas for thought leadership posts; incorporate real-time Q&As into panel discussions.

It can also mean answering your audience's calls. Ask questions in their AMAs, in their own webinars, on their social media. Heck, even just saying "Congratulations!" on their product release post shows your company is paying attention to their company and celebrating their victories.

Not only does opening these channels of communication offer immediate engagement, but over time, hearing from your audience builds a stronger understanding of what pain points they experience and what needs remain unmet.

6 | Track and measure against goals—then refine, iterate and test

Because demand gen done well—with an emphasis on relationship-building and prospect engagement—is such a long game, it's admittedly difficult to measure progress. So many demand gen teams have nightmare stories about executives demanding updates on results days or weeks after implementing a new demand gen program.

But just because demand gen plays the long game doesn't mean you can't (or shouldn't) create trackable, measurable goals. You absolutely can, and should. Doing so allows you to iterate your strategy and test different approaches for efficacy, as well as demonstrating your work in ways stakeholders can digest.

Short-term, you can implement testing strategies with A/B testing on new messaging, email campaigns and advertisements. You can also pretty quickly establish some baselines for things like social media engagement, blog readership and webinar attendance. (In fact, establishing the benchmarks for these is much quicker than creating the content itself.)

Of course, all the viewership in the world doesn't matter if it doesn't ultimately translate to revenue. There are some standard demand gen metrics out there—among them MQLs, SQLs, cost per lead and customer acquisition cost—that integrate the value proposition. By all means, use these, with the understanding that most demand gen efforts start to show progress after months rather than weeks.

In addition, though, you can create, track and measure goals related to your demand gen programs themselves, long before they become leads. Think of ways you can measure what really matters to demand gen—**relationships and engagement**. How many people sign up for a webinar? How many of those ask a question? How many sign up for a second webinar? How can you boost attendance between the first and second webinar? Perhaps most valuable of all, how can you test your approaches to determine which ones create the strongest connections? Which of your efforts are growing your pipeline with accounts that match your ICP?

Final thoughts

The pressure to quickly convert demand gen programs into leads and revenue is what pushes demand gen ever closer to lead gen. Proactively establishing trackable metrics sets the stage for what matters most to demand gen—and testing against them demonstrates that your demand gen strategy is continuously improving. Keep this up in shorter, more iterative cycles, and the long-term results will follow.

Build stronger (and more profitable) demand.

Get a free ICP audit and discover the exegraphics behind your best customers.

888-708-6649 | sales@getrev.ai

Generating stronger demand starts with knowing your audience

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40% of marketers say their top priority is to generate more leads.[1]

For demand gen leaders, the focus in 2023 is all about lead quality over lead quantity. But reaching your audience, generating demand and bringing in leads through digital channels that are saturated with messages from so many other B2B companies is tough.
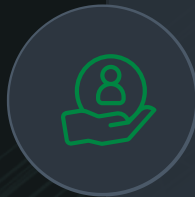
Companies with a strong understanding of their ICP achieve 68% higher win rates.[2]

As Demand Gen 101 as it sounds, get to know who your ideal customer really is. It's likely a lot more complex than the static PowerPoint Slide the company references. Your ideal customer profile (ICP) should include firmographics, technographics and exegraphics details, so have a handle on what your ideal customer looks like and how they behave.

25.5% of marketers use AI to identify prospects based on ICP.[3]

And once you know who your ideal customer really is, use AI to help you find other companies that share those same traits.

45% of marketers say their top challenge is attracting quality leads with content.[4]

Getting your audience's attention isn't easy. The good news? By getting hyper focused on who your ideal customer is, you'll have the insights you need to create meaningful campaigns that build trust and attract future customers.

Educational content on B2B blogs drive 52% more organic traffic than company-focused content.[5]

Trust matters. The fastest way to build it is to deliver immediate value, no strings attached. Give your audience content that helps them solve a problem or level up their skills, regardless if they use your product or services.

52% of marketers say social media and community building remain the top priority in 2023.[4]

Relationships shouldn't be one-sided, and this is true for brands too. Build strong demand and rapport with your target audience by engaging with them via live streams and social media comments.

Organizations that A/B testing every email see 37% higher returns than those that never A/B test.[5]

And remember, it's all about testing. What got your demand gen program to where it is today won't get it to where it needs to be in the future. Test new approaches, measure the results and iterate on your approach—always.

1. State of Marketing Trends Report 2022   2. 38 Account-Based Marketing Stats to Know in 2021   3. 10 Lead Generation Trends for 2023: Top Forecasts & A Look Into What's Next Ahead
4. Build Content That Tells Your Story   5. The B2B Content Marketing Report   6. How the World's Best Email Brands Run A/B Tests