



## Don't Let Lead Screening Hurt Your Marketing

This article first appeared on [raintoday.com](http://raintoday.com)

### RELEVANT RESOURCES

ARTICLE:

[Banking Relationship Strategies and Fake Trust](#)

ARTICLE:

[Don't Treat Clients Like Competitors! The Four Principles Of Trust-Based Selling](#)

BLOG POST:

[Bad Marketing 101: Trust Me!](#)

Take a look at how your firm manages its sales process. Odds are it's heavily built around the concept of sales efficiency. Sounds like a good thing. But the focus on sales efficiency may be hurting your marketing. Here's how.

### SALES EFFICIENCY

Whether you use dedicated business development professionals or rely on deliverers to do the selling, they have limited time available. Sales management processes and systems are very much designed to measure this time, and to help allocate it in ways that are most likely to yield sales — i.e., to be the most efficient.

At least, that's the theory. But what problem are we trying to solve? Does your firm tend to over-invest, or to under-invest in business development opportunities?

Here's what I've seen — check it against your experience.



Charles H. Green, 2007

## Don't Let Lead Screening Hurt Your Marketing

We tend to over-invest on a few major potential accounts, treating them as exceptions to the sales management process — “special” opportunities to “take the firm to another level,” or “break into a whole new market.”

*Chronic under-investment in the vast majority of accounts also hurts marketing.*

Then, as if performing penance by way of the sales management process, we atone for the sin of over-investment by enforcing systematic under-investment in all other leads. You know the lines: “that lead has been on the radar screen too long, when are you going to face reality?” or “You can’t afford to spend all that time on small beer,” or “we need to have Joe facing off on bigger opportunities.”

So we end up with a two-tier sales management process: one for the favored leads, another for all else. We binge on the first, and purge or atone on the second. The likely result is that both tiers are sub-optimal.

But that’s just sales. Chronic under-investment in the vast majority of accounts also hurts marketing. Here’s how.

### MARKETING BY SELLING

For complex-sale firms — particularly professional services — the most powerful form of marketing actually isn’t called marketing at all — it’s a byproduct of the sales and business development process.

In a consumer goods business, branding — a rather pure marketing function — has a big impact on the buying decision. In complex-sales businesses, especially professional services, not so. Branding will get you on the short list, but it will usually not get you selected. That is done through selling.

Yet selling also bleeds back into marketing. Branding is not just about ads and positioning statements. Branding for firms like UBS, Skadden, or Deloitte is heavily influenced by accumulated personal experiences that clients have with those firms.

Many professional services firms are fond of saying, “It’s a people business,” “our assets go up and down the elevator every day.” That’s not even the half of it.

For those businesses, strategic differentiation itself is very much a function of interpersonal interactions. The firm’s image is



Charles H. Green, 2007

## Don't Let Lead Screening Hurt Your Marketing

transparently who the firm's people are.

That means that when you are in business development mode with new clients, you are also creating the brand. You are creating differentiation in the marketplace. You are doing marketing.

Systematic under-investment in the vast

*When a lead looks lukewarm, the usual reaction is to qualify the lead and cut back on the investment to match the likely low return.*

majority of leads means we are choking off marketing opportunities. In the pursuit of sales efficiency, we hurt marketing effectiveness.

But even that's not all. It also means we are branding ourselves — as being not particularly trustworthy, having our own interests at heart.

So we have a three-level negative arising from the way we screen and qualify leads. First, we exclude the marketing value of selling. Second, we under-invest in the majority of leads. Third, because we are driven by sales efficiency, we undercut a message of trust.

The way we manage selling can suck value out of marketing.

### WHAT'S TO BE DONE?

The answer lies in changing our attitude toward sales, from a narrow and inward-looking focus on sales efficiency, to a broader and client-looking focus on marketing effectiveness.

When a lead looks lukewarm, the usual reaction is to qualify the lead and cut back on the investment to match the likely low return. Often this results in just calling back, saying “just wanted to let you know of our continued interest” but not offering any value. These responses are all based on the needs of the seller — not on the needs of the buyer.

Instead, business developers need to focus on the potential client. What does this person need? Where can they best get it? If your firm is not the best answer for this potential client — then who is? Should they talk to a competitor? To a different kind of supplier? Do it themselves? Re-conceive the issue?

Instead of cutting investment, sellers need to become quick consultants: give the client some fast value-adding advice about how they can best pursue their needs.



Charles H. Green, 2007

## Don't Let Lead Screening Hurt Your Marketing

For example:

*“You know, in the brief discussions we’ve had, I’m not sure we’re right for you. You should talk to several other firms too, in particular ABC and XYZ. I see two issues you need to explore with them.*

*Don’t let a narrowly defined sales management process choke off the potential of marketing, brand creation and client value that exists every time you practice Trust-based Selling®.*

*ABC may offer you more expertise on both issues, and XYZ may give you a lower price-point approach than we can. Why don’t you talk to them, and then get back to me and let’s talk about what’s best for you.”*

Note: this conversation cuts your sales investment going forward. But more importantly, it does some important marketing.

It creates a powerful branding impression of your firm in a specific person — a potential client, who almost certainly knows other potential clients — one who is in a position to talk about you to others.

The marketing message it delivers is:

*“We are a firm that helps clients — existing and potential. We focus on you and your needs — not just our sales budget. We care enough to offer you objective advice rather than to hustle you. We believe that if we behave in this helpful way toward you, we will eventually benefit as well. This is how we do business. This is who we are.”*

Now, that’s branding! And that’s marketing. And the opportunity to do it exists every day, with every lead. Don’t let your inability to measure it get in the way of your practicing it — you know in your bones it works.

It doesn’t take much extra investment. Sometimes, it even takes less investment than the continued nagging and whining that go with the usual approach to lead screening and qualification.

Don’t let a narrowly defined sales management process choke off the potential of marketing, brand creation and client value that exists every time you practice Trust-based Selling®.

## TQ DIAGNOSTIC TEST

[TAKE THE TQ Diagnostic Test](#) and discover your Trust Temperament™.

Answer 20 simple questions based on the [Trust Equation](#), and you will discover a powerful tool for business success—your Trust Quotient and your Trust Temperament™. These revealing answers will tell what you do that helps people trust you, and the things you can do to improve the way you are perceived.

Your Trust Temperament report will tell you whose trust you are most likely to gain, what about you people are likely to trust, and specific actions you can take to be as trustworthy, and as trusted, as possible, so you can:

- Increase sales results
- Improve credibility in business
- Build deeper and more satisfying personal relationships with people who matter

Invest in yourself now! Take the Trust Quotient diagnostics now and get your 20+ page personal report now.

**DEEP ANALYSIS, BIG REWARD, SMALL PRICE.**

*Take the TQ Diagnostic Test*

## SUBSCRIBE

If you enjoyed this article and want more from [TrustedAdvisor](#), please [click here to subscribe](#) to my mailing list, where you will receive monthly updates from us. And, of course, we'll never share your email with anyone else.

© This ebook is protected under the [Creative Commons](#) license. No commercial use, no derivative work. Feel free to share it, post it, or copy it.