

10 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT LEAD GENERATION FOR YOUR FRANCHISEES

As a Franchisor, you most likely purchase your Internet leads from Franchise Gator, Be the Boss, Entrepreneur Magazine, BrandExpansion and others. This is a very accepted method for growing your potential franchisee pipeline. But what is it doing for your franchisees? Have you implemented an Internet lead program for them? If not, odds are you are at least thinking about it – or should be.

You may be wondering just how to create a results-driven, standardized and easy-to-follow, low effort system for your franchisees. Don't worry, that's where Qiigo comes into the picture.

By now you have probably heard about Google, Yahoo, MSN.com and others offering the ability to capture leads from the Internet. Sounds like a great tool, but if you have tried this avenue you know it has a very steep learning curve and requires daily attention, analysis and tweaking. In fact, some would say that search marketing is very similar to playing golf.

If you have never played golf, you could conceivably play 18 holes with a single golf club (pick any club of the 18 primary types of clubs). While it would be painful, frustrating and probably not a lot of fun, you could finish the course. Of course you probably would not get the results you would expect or even hope for. Additionally, without specialized training, practice and dedication on a regular basis, your results would be far from stellar.

This is the problem with search engine marketing. You could do it yourself, but without the correct tools, specialized training, dedicating the time, focus and lots of practice, you will probably not get the results you expect.

So what's a Franchisee to do? The last thing your franchisees need is another task to burden their already very busy daily business. The best route to take is to focus on what

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you/your franchisees do best and outsource the rest. There are over 1800 Search Engine Marketing companies in the marketplace today. Just pick one, but be very careful in doing so.

Use this article as a checklist when evaluating Search Engine Marketing vendors. Doing a little bit of homework now can save you time, money and problems later.

Deciding Who to Choose

Be cautious of the firm that promises that they do everything when it comes to marketing. It's kind of a jack of all trade, master of none situation. For something as important as your Search Engine Marketing you should always go with a specialist, and more specifically a Search Engine Marketing firm that specializes in franchise environments. The firm should be structured to treat your brand as a single enterprise but recognize that franchisees also have the need to make their own decisions. This is a very fine line that if crossed can cause difficulty in your network. When choosing a Search Engine Marketing company, be sure to:

- ◆ Hire a marketing firm that specializes in Search Engine Marketing and has experience working with franchising. If they don't have experience with franchising they may not understand your audience, challenges and what the ideal solutions are.
- ◆ Find a firm that will professionally manage your entire campaign

Expectations

By now you have at least scanned over this article and may have realized it's not just 10 things you need to know. It's more than that and the good news is that we are over delivering on our promise, which brings up the next point. The first thing you should look for in a lead generation vendor is someone that over delivers on your expectations. Not sure what type of expectations you should have when looking for a firm? Start with this

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checklist:

- ◆ They should have thorough franchise experience.
- ◆ Keep it simple – the company should be doing the work they are being hired to do. You and your franchisees have enough to deal with and should not have to learn new software or do their work for them.
- ◆ While a “single source” is nice, you generally do not get best of breed. Look for vendors who are specialists in what they do. After all, your message to your franchisees is “focus on what you do.”
- ◆ Manage as a single account but have the ability to bill each location separately.
- ◆ Understand and maneuver the delicate balance between the franchisee and the franchisor.

Tool Belt Checklist:

When deciding on a firm, there are few tools that should be in their tool belt. These tools provide a great deal of benefit to your brand. They range from saving you money to providing you with information as to whether you should continue the service.

Start your tool belt checklist with these items:

- ◆ Automated bidding tool - save as much as 50 percent on entire spend
- ◆ Specialized landing page: easy to understand and find what someone is looking for. It should be designed for maximum lead conversion.
- ◆ Analytics - who is visiting the site? How long are they staying? What actions could be taken to increase your response (conversion) rate? It's important that you know who is at your site so you know how to keep them coming back and have a higher conversion ratio.
- ◆ Tool to automatically distribute leads and distribute them in real time.

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- ◆ A Firm that can provision unique local numbers, rather than 800 phone numbers is ideal.
- ◆ A Firm that can record calls - provide insight into your sales process and identify areas of improvement.
- ◆ Click fraud detection tool

Results Checklist:

How are results measured? How do you determine success? Ideally through a detailed measurement of results, including Franchisee and Franchisor reporting. Franchisees need to be able to do cost of lead analysis. Franchisor needs this plus overall network visibility. This is key to the growth and competitiveness of your online efforts. Additionally, for this to be part of your long term sales/marketing strategy, the process must be economically repeatable.

- ◆ The outsourced firm's compensation should be performance oriented
- ◆ Is it clear how the outsourced firm is making money?

Tracking Checklist

Ok, this is a big one. If you don't track everything, how will you know if you are getting your Return on Investment? There are things you absolutely must track in order to know how well you are doing with your ROI. Start by tracking these things:

- ◆ All phone calls
- ◆ Phone numbers
- ◆ Are phone number Caller ID reconciled to a database of record (such as US Postal Service)?
- ◆ Length of call
- ◆ Who handled the call?

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- ◆ Call Recording?

This provides your team with insight into how your franchise concept/brand is handling inbound sales calls. Of course, you'll need to let them know the call is being recorded. Many times just the knowledge that a call might be recorded can have impressive results. You might not want to record all the calls, but there are definitely times when you want to focus on training and quality control. This is mystery shopping at its best.

- ◆ All email leads with full detail

Reporting Checklist

There are many different routes to take when it comes to reporting. Different reports show different aspects of your business. They can give you insight into how things are going, what needs improvement and much more. Some of the different reports you can generate that can be useful include:

- ◆ Executive reporting
- ◆ Aggregate reporting
- ◆ Soft copy of all leads generated by your network which creates opportunity to further reinforce your brand.
- ◆ Quality Control
- ◆ Determine Closing ratio
- ◆ Determine who needs training
- ◆ Justify expenditures
- ◆ Identify "hot" market areas
- ◆ Central leads database
- ◆ Ability to "re-market" and reinforce the Brand to already hot prospects
- ◆ Receive a copy of all leads in Excel or database format

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Franchisee Buy-In

Instead of adding another line item to budget, evaluate your current advertising mediums. By eliminating the under/non-performing advertising mediums, you can easily create a budget for an Internet Lead Generation program. It does not have to be large amounts, because once your franchise community sees the results, participation will drive itself. Your franchisees will thank you for this!

Celebrate the big and the small wins. When a franchisee closes a lead from the campaign, let everyone know. Circulate a monthly report showing leads received by each location. This helps create awareness and engages a friendly competitive spirit. A lot of baby steps make up big steps.

Conclusion

There are many benefits to centralizing your franchisees' lead generation. You can make sure you get standardized messaging to the market. Additionally:

- ◆ Consolidated efforts save your network thousands of hours each month. Instead of each franchisee fending for him/herself, set up a program. Success breeds success. Instead of having each zee go through trial and error, guarantee each more success.
- ◆ You can save money by going with nationwide traffic from second and third tier search engines.
- ◆ You can help identify areas hot for a new location because it's a great way to identify a region that could support a franchisee.
- ◆ It's economically repeatable.
- ◆ Provides a great inexpensive way to jump start new franchise location.

At this point you know a lot more about search engine marketing than you did 10 minutes ago. Ready to get started and have your business on the way to search engine marketing

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success? Great, contact us today. We meet and exceed all the key elements you are looking to find in a company. Qiigo is a specialist in Sponsored and Organic Search for franchised and multi-location businesses. Our proprietary software application, combined with deep technical knowledge, creates, tracks and distributes targeted, actionable leads at a much lower cost than our competitors or in-house.

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