

TEN SUREFIRE WAYS TO GET THE MOST OUT OF LEAD SCORING

1 Start Smart

To start, focus on one area of your business and one business process. At first, for example, consider changing the way you handle only those leads that are more likely to convert. Then, use your learnings to design a program to handle each key lead type differently. There are many moving pieces to a lead scoring program — leads and their associated data, lead scores, actions taken based on these scores, program metrics, etc. Take the time to learn from your results before expanding. It's important to make incremental changes, as a shift in one area will most likely affect the others.

2 Don't Skip the Control Group

Results can shift due to unanticipated external factors. Make sure you set up a control group so that you know if such factors have come into play. This fundamental strategy will help ensure that you don't change your lead scoring program without warrant.

3 Integrate Data About Unknown Prospects

If you rely only on internally generated customer data, you are limiting the predictive power of your lead scores. In fact, you'll only be able to predict behavior for consumers in your internal database. To predict behavior for previously unknown prospects, look to incorporate third party, syndicated consumer data including demographics, buying behavior, preferences and lifestyle information. This will dramatically increase the number of unknown prospects that you can score, allowing you to identify those who are more likely to convert, have a higher lifetime value, become loyal customers, etc.

4 Use Only the Best Data

For the most predictive power, make sure you're using data that a) is *household-level* and b) has the *maximum coverage, currency and accuracy*. Why predict behavior for a whole ZIP+4 area when you can score with data for an individual household? To avoid stale or incomplete data, look for third party data that is compiled and delivered at the moment you need it.

5 Don't Ask Too Many Questions

Whether you're talking to prospective customers over the phone or asking them to fill out online forms, too many questions can cause them to walk away. You no longer need to collect heaps of information from consumers in order to qualify or score them. In the last few years, lead scoring systems have become available that combine your customer history data and on-demand third party consumer data to deliver scores that are equally or more predictive than scores built off a series of questions. The predictive power of these next generation scores *can be* enhanced with a few questions posed to consumers. However, limit yourself to the one or two questions that will add the most punch to your lead scores.

6 Make Scores Available at the Moment You Need Them

Your scores will have the most impact if you use them at the moment a prospective customer first contacts you — while their interest is high. This is when you have the best opportunity to turn interest into a sale. If you require multiple information exchanges before you can generate a lead score, you're letting a lot of leads grow cold. Moreover, you should be able to generate a lead score with just a phone number. If you require prospects to provide a full address, you'll aggravate a lot of potential customers and dramatically reduce the number of scores you can generate.

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7 *If You've Got Them, Use Them*

How you handle a lead based on a score is as important as the score itself. Spend time learning about each lead type and their motivations in order to determine how you want to tailor their experience with your brand. You may decide to send your best leads to your top sales agents, present different products/services to different leads, customize scripts based on various profiles, provide premium offers to high-value leads or vary the frequency of follow-up communications.

8 *Put Scores to Work at Every Consumer Touch Point*

These days, consumers have an increasing number of ways to contact you — point of sale, Web, phone and mobile device. With a little planning, scores can be available at any of these touch points, enabling you to provide a more personalized — and ultimately, more profitable — experience to your customers and prospects through their preferred channel.

9 *Test, Test, Test*

Armed with qualitative feedback and performance data, including control group statistics, schedule regular reviews to look at all aspects of your lead scoring program. Identify areas that are working well and areas for improvement. Be sure to think about the multiple factors that need to be addressed in order to work towards improvements.

10 *Share the Wealth*

Lead scores can help you eliminate wasted sales efforts and create more tailored and effective experiences for your prospective customers. They can also inform other parts of your business — advertising, direct marketing, retail location expansion, merchandising strategy, product development and corporate strategy. Once your program is off to a good start, share your insights with others who can benefit.

Lead scoring is only as good as the data it's based on. That's why TARGUSinfo, with our advanced predictive analytics, superior data and real-time technology, is your best partner to help you get the most out of your marketing investments. With unmatched accuracy and coverage of consumer information and the industry's leading verification solution, **we ensure your lead scores are actionable.**

Over 700 leading brands work with TARGUSinfo today to identify, verify, qualify and locate their customers and prospects. Find out how we can boost your customer acquisition efforts today by calling **800.6.TARGUS** (800.682.7487) or visiting www.TARGUSinfo.com