

# Role of Pre-Sales in Understanding Consumer Behaviour for SaaS Product

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**Abstract:** *The Influence of Consumer Behaviour in INBOUND marketing of a subscription based model, SaaS Product. Its effectiveness on the Business and the willingness towards buying the product is observed and encapsulated in this Research Paper. This Research is an observation of the Products Buying Behaviour for Four Months in an Organization and capsuled in this research paper.*

**Keywords:** SaaS – Software as a service, Lead, Prospect, Lead Nurturing, Lead Enrichment, CRM- Customer Relationship Management tool

## 1. Introduction to the Study

The Project is about understanding the behaviour of consumer as a Pre-Sales Executive in Report Garden, in order to observe consumer preference and behaviour who are subscribing with the tool. Report Garden is a Software service which work on subscription based model. Digital Marketing agency finds difficulty's while generating reports to their clients, so the company identified a problem that there is a necessity of saving time for the agency so they decided to create reports for the agency. Leads are generated through various sources and the major platform for engaging leads are through email marketing

Many permutations, combinations and estimations are made by using trial and error method for identifying the best possible days of sending mails. Leads are classified into hot leads, cold leads and warm leads, after the leads are generated by using various tools and software's they are pushed into the sales funnel and are scraped into four segments MQL, SQL, Unknown, Unknown+ MQL from this through calling different regions like APAC, EMEA, EST and pitch in sales through calling and understanding accordingly. The leads are qualified on bases of the interest and willingness towards the service, is the main key factor of this project.

The company is a SaaS (Software as a service) product which is fulfilling the needs of all the digital marketing agencies in the recent past. The company is handling 130 employees and it is a start-up, tremendous growth has been observed and also listed for economic times award in the top five in this category. so the major concern for choosing this company is because of the growth it has and the revenue it is generating out of this business model.

Market consumer behaviour is seen to involve a complicated mental process as well as physical activity (purchase decision). Consumer behaviour is a decision process and physical activity individuals engage in when evaluating, acquiring, using or disposing of goods and services. Consumer Behaviour reflects the totality of consumers' decisions with respect to the acquisition, consumption and disposition off goods, services, time and ideas by (human) decision making units.

Buyer Behaviour particularly is the study of decision making units as they can buy for themselves or others.

Thus, buying behaviour particularly involves collective response of buyers for selecting, evaluating, deciding and post purchase behaviour. Buyer behaviour is the study of human response to services and the marketing of products and services. Buyer behaviour researches continuously investigate a broad range of human responses including human affective, cognitive and behavioural responses. The buying behaviour and purchase decisions are need to be studied thoroughly in order to understand, predict and analyse critical market variations of a particular product or service.

The field of consumer behaviour is the broad study of individuals, groups or organisations and the process they use to select secure and dispose of products, services, experiences or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society. Consumer behaviour studies are based on the buying behaviour of final consumers-individuals and households who buy goods and services for themselves.<sup>8</sup> The collective behaviour of consumers has a significant influence on quality and level of standard of living.

### 1.1 Buyer Behaviour

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is to create a competitive advantage by being the best at understanding, communicating, delivering, and developing existing customer relationships, in addition to creating and keeping new customers. It has emerged as one of the largest management buzzword. Popularised by the business press and marketed by the aggressive CRM vendors as a panacea for all the ills facing the firms and managers, it means different things to different people. CRM, for some, means one to one marketing while for others a call centre. Some call database marketing as CRM. A more popular approach with recent application of information technology is to focus on individual or one to one relationship with customer that integrates database knowledge with a long-term customer retention and growth strategy.

**SaaS** stands for "Software as a Service", and it essentially refers to software that is hosted on servers and is provided as

a service. Some initial uses for SaaS included customer relationship management offerings, content management systems, video conferencing, and e-mail communication systems. SaaS applications are provided over the web, which means they can be accessed from any computer without any special software installed. In fact, many applications are designed to run through a standard web browser. When updates to a SaaS application need to be installed, they are simply installed on the server, which immediately ensures that all users are running the latest version. Unlike traditional software applications that require an upfront purchase, SaaS applications typically offer subscription-based pricing and are usually licensed on a per-user basis.

The key selling point for one prospect is a weak point for another. Simply put, people care about what's relevant to them, and don't want to weed through what's not. So Don't send irrelevant content, send only information that matters to recipients, and watch your response rates rise.

The key is to determine what content is relevant, and then divide your list into groups of people interested in the same information. Discuss Questioner on how to collect this information from subscribers at the end of this Project.

The work acknowledged in this document is considered on basis of observation and research on different clients and there perspective towards using the tool. Methods and Strategies are identified which are explained in the upcoming chapters in the project.

## 1.2 Need for the Study

Whenever someone outside the marketing world asks me what I do, I can't simply say, "I created content for lead generation." It'd be totally lost on them, and I'd get some really confused looks. So instead, "I work on finding unique ways to attract people. I want to provide them with enough goodies to get them naturally interested in my company so they eventually warm up to the brand enough to want to hear from us!" That usually resonates better, and that's exactly what lead generation is. It's a way of warming up potential customers to your business and getting them on the path to eventually buying. By showing an organic interest in your business, they are starting the relationship (versus the business starting the relationship with a cold call), making it easier and more natural for them to want to buy from you somewhere down the line.

In the perspective of Pre-Sales, Generating Leads is done for

- Taking service to the digital step of every Marketing Agency so that there need can be fulfilled
- Various Social Platforms are used for Promoting the Product tool
- Lead generation involves identifying prospective customers and qualifying their likelihood to buy in advance of making a sales call.
- It is the single most important objective of any business-to-business (B2B) marketing department.
- The study tells about how the consumer feel about their service.
- The attitude of the consumer can be known.

## 1.3 Objectives of the study

Objectives define the parameters used to fulfil the project title.

- To Identify different consumers of Report Garden
- To have a clear understanding on how email marketing works for DIGITAL MARKETING in Report Garden
- How leads are generated and converted into sales.
- Warming up Leads through E Marketing and pushing them to sales by observing Customer behaviour before purchasing the product.

## 2. Methodology of the Study

### 2.1 Primary Data

The primary data involved in this project is the first hand info collected from the consumer through oral questioner, communicated through telephone. Each call is made via Hubspot CRM tool which is access restricted to few regions and the time limit for each call is 3-5min maximum.

The questioner is mentioned in the list of annexure in the last chapter of this project. Total number of questions asked are 10-15 based upon the consumer willingness.

Population size is 2000

Sample size is 300

Region:

EMEA

APAC

EST

Targeted Audience: Digital Marketing Agencies

Sample techniques used in the process – sequential sampling the collected data is mentioned in the excel sheet for each question and interpreted by drawing pie chart for all the questions mentioned in the project. This will be shown in the further go of the project with tables and charts mentioned with interpretation.

### 2.2 Secondary Data

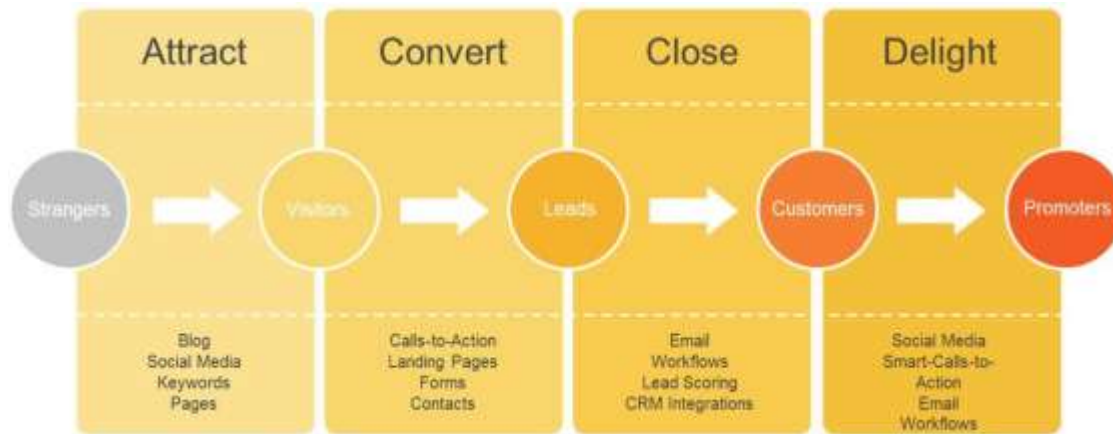
#### 2.2.1 Company Work Flow Structure

Steps involved in Reaching out prospects and generating an initial response

- 1) Set campaign objectives
- 2) Analyse and select campaign targets
- 3) Select campaign media
- 4) Develop a message platform
- 5) Create communications
- 6) Plan fulfilment materials

#### 2.2.2 Lead-Generation Process:

Lead generation is, frankly, more a science than an art. It is based on process, best practices, and continuous testing and improvement. As noted, the company with the best process wins. Smart marketers focus on each step in the process, looking for ways to make it more efficient. The end result pays off in lower costs and higher conversion rates to sales.



The following sections describe the steps, in planning order, but not necessarily in order of importance (they are all important). Each of these process steps is discussed in detail.

### 2.2.3 Inquiry Generation

Reaching out to prospects and generating an initial response begins the process. To break inquiry generation down, you can look at it, too, as a series of steps:

- 1. Set campaign objectives:** Most lead-generation campaigns select from the following objectives:
  - 1) The number of leads expected.
  - 2) The degree of qualification.
  - 3) The time frame during which they will arrive.
  - 4) The cost per lead.
  - 5) Lead-to-sales conversion ratio
  - 6) Revenue per lead.
  - 7) Campaign ROI or expense-to-revenue ratio.
  - 8) Choose one primary and no more than two secondary objectives, and make them very, specific.

**2. Analyse and select campaign targets:** The tighter our targeting, the higher your response is likely to be. Current customers, ofcourse, respond better than cold prospects. In fact, some companies find that much of their lead-generation work involves finding new opportunities in accounts they already have relationships with. So, it's not cold prospecting, but it's still an effort to generate business for new products, new buyer groups, or additional divisions or business units in the account. That said most B-to-B marketer's focus on entirely new accounts for them lead-generation programs.

**3. Select campaign media:** For generating leads among new prospects, the best choices are SEM, tele marketing, and direct mail for ongoing campaign work. Trade shows, web-based lead generation, and referral marketing programs can also be effective. Among inquirers and current customers, you will find telephone and email most productive, telephone being more intrusive and email being the less expensive option.

**4. Develop a message platform:** The platform is the key benefit that appeals to the target audience. Your response improves if you keep the message simple and focus on a single benefit.

**5. Develop a campaign offer:** The purpose of the offer is to motivate the target prospect to respond with an indication of interest in your product or service. Don't be fooled into thinking that you can get away without a motivating offer of some sort. You can't.

**6. Create communications:** Unlike general advertising communications, the copy is the most important element of your lead generation creative treatment, so use a professional direct-response copywriter who has B2B experience.

**7. Plan fulfilment materials:** Speed is of the essence. Studies show that the faster the Fulfilment materials are received, the more likely the lead is to be qualified. The need is still fresh, and competitors are less likely to be in the way. As a rule of thumb, inquiries should be fulfilled no later than 24 hours after receipt, if using printed materials and instantaneously if using a landing page with downloadable materials.

### 2.2.4 Lead Nurturing

When an inquiry is only partially qualified and does not make the grade of readiness for the sales team, it needs to be nurtured in a process that is called incubation or lead development. Nurturing involves a series of communications intended to build trust and awareness, and keep a relationship going until the prospect is ready to buy. You can use a variety of tactics, from newsletters, to surveys, to white papers, to birthday cards. Sources of leads that require nurturing include the following.

- 1) Partially qualified inquiries: They are not ready to deliver to sales, according to the predefined qualification criteria.
- 2) Leads returned by the sales team: Frequently, a presumably qualified lead turns out to require further nurturing. The contact might have changed jobs, or the business need might have changed. So, the sales people return the lead to marketing for further follow-up.

### 2.2.5 Lead Tracking:

Let's not forget the process of closing the marketing loop to attribute a closed sale to a marketing campaign. Business marketers operating in a multi channel world are continually challenged by problems in measuring the results of their lead-generation campaigns. Without solid measurements, it's hard to demonstrate the value of marketing, not to



mention justify the budgets. But, the most important reason for careful measurement is to give you the tools to refine campaign tactics and improve results next time.

When multiple people and functions are involved at various stages of the lead- generation and conversion process, evaluating the contribution of each element can be impossible. Most B-to-B lead-generation campaigns rely on a combination of activity-based metrics, such as cost per lead, and results-based metrics, such as lead- to- sales conversion rates, revenue, and ROI.

### 2.2.6 Market Research for Lead Generation

In the spirit of ready, aim, fire, lead generation is much improved with the help of advance research, like any marketing activity. Perhaps the most essential pre- campaign research you can do is about selecting targets. In the long term and short term, some research can have a positive impact on your lead-generation results. Traditionally, research for sales lead generation was done at a business library, by poring through directories of companies, professional associations, and trade publications. The going was slow, and the data likely to be stale. These days, the primary tool is the Internet, which has become the first line of attack for researchers of all types. The simplest, and perhaps most popular, technique is a simple Google search. But the results are not going to be useful unless you already have a clear idea of who you want to find.

Ideal is a non line research resource that allows you to sort companies and individual contacts according to the variables that typically drive sales targeting strategies:

- 1) Industry (or SIC or NAICS codes)
- 2) Company size (whether revenue or number of employees)
- 3) Geographic location
- 4) Title or job function

Once the right companies are identified, then it's a matter of selecting the right individuals. Some online resources allow you to search not only by job function, but also by variables such as

- 1) Age
- 2) Business biography or background
- 3) Salary or total compensation
- 4) Name

Then, of course, you want to access full contact information so that the initial conversation can begin. A number of useful strategies for identifying high- potential prospects and refining the search have been developed by leading companies over the years. Here are three of the best approaches:

- To get a sense of the highest potential prospects for your product or service, use the "look alike" method Review the characteristics of your best customers, and identify the look alike in the universe of prospects. For example, if your top accounts are apparel manufacturers in New York and California, with sales of \$25 million to \$50 million annually, you will do well by starting with that demographic target.
- Examine the buying process in your target industry. If ERP software purchases are a joint decision between the IT and finance departments, then you will want to select

multiple contacts at the apparel firms, with titles like CFO and CIO, as well as the usual CEO.

- Keep in mind that a name selected based on demographic targeting, no matter how refined, is unlikely to comprise a fully qualified sales lead. These contacts will be yours to include in your lead-generation campaign, to motivate them to raise their hands, and then to assess the quality of the prospect against such qualification criteria as product interest, whether a budget is available, the purchasing authority of the prospect, and the urgency of the need for your product or service.

## 3. Scope of the Study

The scope of SAAS product is increased rapidly in the recent past but the nature of customer behaviour is the same and it is the most prioritized factor consumer behaviour plays a crucial role in understanding so the study of this project is primarily focused on consumer behaviour in the perspective of pre sales executive. The era of software as a service has taken a shape and is growing progressively here are some of the scope of other industries who successfully build their business model based on this model.

## 4. Literature Review

The following are some of the more popular implementations of SaaS:

### Salesforce

Perhaps one of the earliest implementations of SaaS is Salesforce.com. Initially launched in 1999, Salesforce.com has become a major player in the market for customer relationship management (CRM) software services. The company was founded by former Oracle executive Marc Benioff, and has consistently grown year-after-year into a billion-dollar company. Salesforce.com has over 47,700 customers scattered around the globe that use their CRM services. In 2007, the company launched a new platform called force.com. Force.com is a "platform as a service", which allows developers to build plugins for their CRM solutions. The plug-ins run on the force.com platform and are hosted by salesforce.com. In conjunction with their force.com platform, the company also launched an AppExchange. The AppExchange serves as an online marketplace where developers can sell their plug-ins for use in other CRM applications.

### MobileMe Apple Inc.

Originally launched as iTools in 2000, which later became Mac in 2002 and ultimately MobileMe in 2008. MobileMe is Apple's suite of online applications for iPhone, iPod touch, Mac and PC users. Customers can sync their e-mail, contacts, calendars, photos, etc. with the MobileMe online service using their computer or mobile device. Many of their online applications make use of advanced AJAX technologies, which allows for the online services to appear more application-like than traditional websites. Users can, for instance, drag and drop messages from their inbox to other folders just as they do with their traditional mail application. While iTools and Mac served primarily as an extension for Apple's Mac operating system, MobileMe stands by itself as a true SaaS offering.

**Google Apps**

In 2004, Google launched an invitation-only e-mail service called Gmail. At the time of launch, there were already other free e-mail services available, such as Yahoo! Mail and Microsoft's Hotmail. What set Gmail apart from the competition, however, was its simplistic interface and abundant storage. Expanding on the success of Gmail, Google developed many other online offerings that complement their existing services. Google Calendar was introduced in 2006, which also relied heavily on AJAX technologies to provide a more application-like experience. To compete with Microsoft Office, Google acquired Upstartle, which was the company responsible for creating an easy-to-use online word processor called Writely. Google created an online spreadsheets application to complement the word processor, and officially launched Google Docs in the summer of 2006. A year later Google acquired Tonic Systems, which added a presentation application to their online office suite. Google offers all of these services to anyone with a Google Account, but they also offer them to their Google Apps customers. Google Apps allows organizations to use the online services (Gmail, Calendar, Google Docs, etc.) through a customized domain.

**5. Limitations of the project**

The following are the limitations observed while understanding the work flow process

- Data of the Subscribers (Mail ID, contact info) are invalid
- Time constraint is one limiting factor, three minutes for each customer is insufficient to collect the required data.
- Not willing to give their response due to insufficient time and authentication.
- Feedback is taken through telephonic session, distorted call and unable to reach the correct prospective due to lack of availability. (no prior intimation regarding call).
- Only digital marketing agency are my customers. Unknown profiles are my limitations.
- Other industries subscribing to the tool is a cost incurred to the company.

**6. Data Analysis and Interpretation**

Data which is generated throughout the project is tabulated and consolidated in the pdf document. Different Parameters are used to maintain data the consumer behaviour is one of the key elements of measuring the data, due to its vast data certain time is taken as a sample.

Leads are maintained through CRM software Hubspot, which helps to manage activities of the subscribers' other tools and payment gateways are also used for customer retention and engagement.

Tools Used through Out the Process

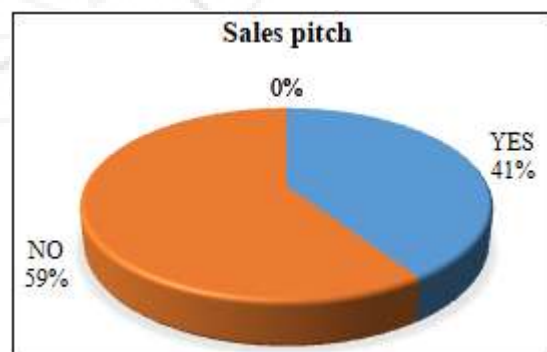
- |                    |   |  |
|--------------------|---|--|
| 1. HUB SPOT        | } | Lead generating tools                    |
| 2. KLENTY          |   |  |
| 3. MAIL TESTER     |   |  |
| 4. SALES NAVIGATOR |   |  |
| 5. RAPORTIVE       | } | client Activity Panel & Payment Gateways |
| 6. CALL PAGE       |   |  |
| 7. ADMIN PANEL     |   |  |
| 8. CHARGE BEE      |   |  |

- Hubspot CRM tool: For monitoring users, for segregating the leads based upon the regions
  - CALL Page: Response of call to action button in the site where people can enquire by asking questions through mobile which is incoming call handled by the presales executive.
  - Admin Panel: It is the UI of Report Garden where we can see the user actual activity on the tool, to find out where and when he is facing difficulty.
  - Charge bee: It is the payment gateway of ReportGarden, ones the subscriber extends his subscription with the tool, based upon his plan he needs to pay. So, the payment is maintained by account manager, presales executive and sales executive.
  - Analysis of the Data is considered from 30<sup>th</sup> May 2017 – 06<sup>th</sup> July 2017
- Large sample: 1200  
 Small sample: 500

Sampling method: Sequential Sampling

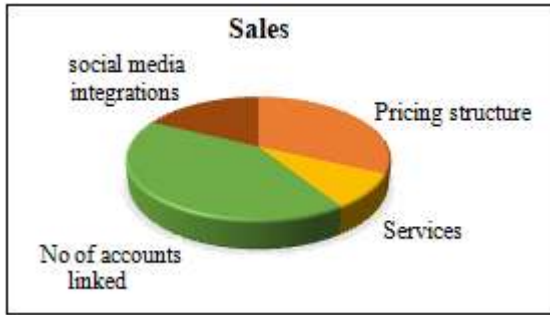
Questions are asked to the users on a telephonic interview no physical approach is maintained with the customer for sales pitch.

Data provided in this project is segregated into three regions  
 EMEA  
 APAC  
 EST



Q1) The tool is challenging, while creating Reports

Sino	Response	No of respondents
1	YES	122
2	NO	178



Interpretation: customer's preferences are initiated by asking their difficulty with the tool over the population of 300 sample most of them said they do not find the tool challenging.

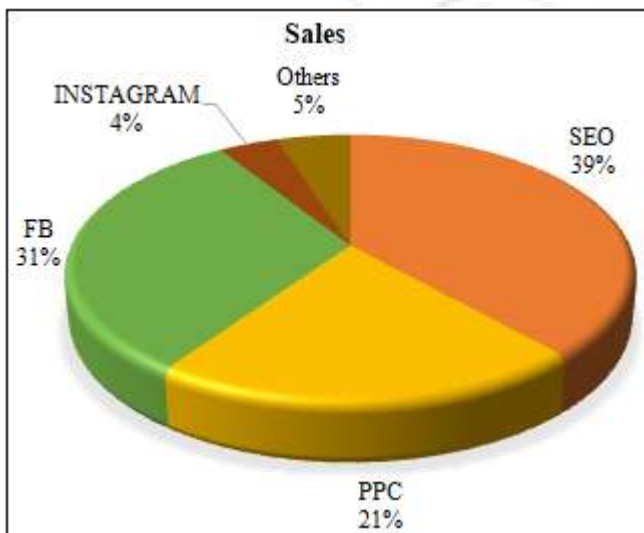
Q2 Preference of creating reports through the Report Garden tool

SINO	Response	No of Respondents	percentage
1	Pricing Structure	96	9.6
2	Service provided	27	2.7
3	No of accounts	124	12.4
4	Social media integrations	53	5.3

Interpretation: The responses given by the customer regarding the tool is, most of them told the accounts linked are unlimited which other tools are not providing so the preference towards this tool has increased. Others are preferred based upon their interests.

Q3) Preferred social media platform for the Marketing Agency

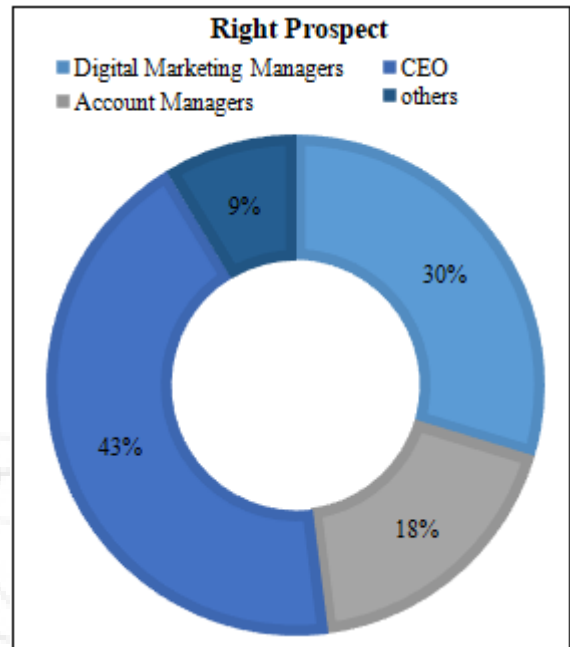
Sino	Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	SEO	115	11.5
2	PPC	64	6.4
3	FB	94	9.4
4	INSTAGRAM	12	1.2
5	Others	15	1.5



Interpretation: the most preferred social platform is SEO (search engine optimization) because the integration takes more time to process, report garden tool helps in analysing the data in the most stipulated time.

Q4 The target customer profiles for pitching sales regarding decision making

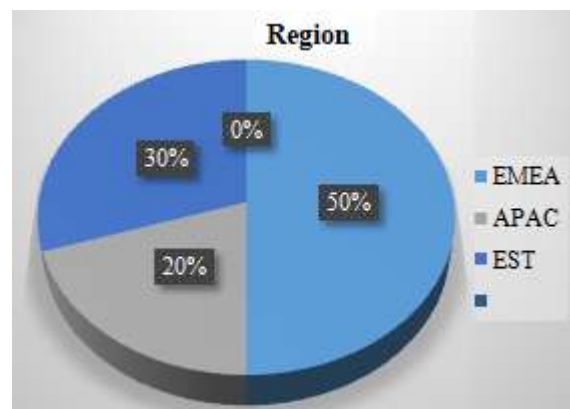
S. No	Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Digital Marketing Agency	89	30
2	Account Managers	55	18
3	CEO	130	43
4	Others	26	9



Interpretation: The Account Holder or the user in an organisation should take decision for purchasing the tool so according to the analysis, CEO and Digital Marketing Managers can have the right to take decision to take within the organisation so our target customers are CEO of start-up's having 150-300 employees.

Q5 Most potentials are identified throughout the globe for targeting the location, so that we can target prospects

S. No	Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	EMEA	150	50
2	APAC	60	20
3	EST	90	30



Interpretation: The regions are classified into three emea, apac and est, most prospects are from emea region.

## 7. Conclusion

Lead generation and E-mail marketing basically involves in identifying and qualifying the prospects for marketing tasks which is not the core competencies of a firm. Hence it helps to majorly focus on the core competencies of firms which help in cost reduction, quality improvement and the most importantly selling process. This also helps in resource optimization resulting in low cost to company. With advancement in technologies there are several others methods in generating leads apart from traditional methods like SEO, Website optimization and increase in number of business data directories.

## 8. Summary

### 8.1 Findings and Learning

**Findings:** After working for a couple of months in ReportGarden, a reporting tool company, my findings and learnings are covered in this chapter. Basically why companies do outsource the lead generation process.

#### **Concentrate more on your core business.**

Do what you do best – let us handle the lead generation process. Increase sales and profits. More efficient lead generation and better-qualified sales leads create bigger sales Opportunities.

#### **Give your business a competitive edge**

You'll have a special lead generation team in your corner, drumming up a fresh pipeline of sales leads. Can your competitors say the same? Save on employee turnover and training costs Rather than hiring a lead generation company, you can obtain more exclusive and qualified leads with a dedicated Outbound Marketing team. Instead of more operational costs, you get more qualified sales leads.

#### **Scalability to expand or retract the size of your sales team**

Scale up or scale down depending on your changing business needs. Seamless representation of your company, products, and services.

There are no “newbies” here – we have a team dedicated for lead generation and appointment fixing who will represent our company with competence, cultural fluency and category-specific expertise. Mail Bounce rate is comparatively very low due smart techniques employed in research through internet, business directories etc. Most of the CXO and VP levels in the organization are showing interest towards services provided by the company.

### 8.2 Learning's

- As a Market Research Intern my work involves generate the data of prospective leads.
- Preparing personalized email content for each prospective lead.
- Cold-emailing the prospective clients by including the earlier prepared personalized content.

- Being proactive and professional team member, I have to do a basic research, qualify and present new business opportunities and meet or exceed aggressive targets, every week for my team.
- Working with a start-up company makes us self-driven and independent, yet work well with others in teams During my internship I'm supposed to access three to four business data websites and some tools which improved my technical and data cleansing skills. Me being a quick learner who is fast on their feet given me an added advantage to start my internship on a full phase.
- Most of our communication with clients is done through emails from which I have learnt proper email etiquettes and improved my written skills.

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**Naveen Prasad Polimati**, would like to dedicate this research work to his parents Prameela and Rajkumar who supported him in completing this Research work. Author is pursuing Post Graduation from ISTTM Business School in the Stream of Marketing and Human Resources. Currently residing in Hyderabad, He has completed his Graduation from Andhra University in the stream of Electronics and Communication Engineering and this is his first Research paper.