



# You Won't Believe What This Q&A Says About Leads

*By Susan Saldibar*

I caught up with an old marketing colleague at an event a few days ago. She's in sales now. And, right before she left, she talked about how she needed to get her sales numbers up in Q3. Apparently, her sales guys were complaining they didn't have enough leads. "Gotta go," she said. "Gotta get more leads to my crew." I bit my tongue. I had just done a great Q&A with Lynn Madderra, VP of Operations for Continuum CRM (a Senior Housing Forum partner) a few days before. And a key takeaway was that success isn't about more leads, it's about better-qualified leads. I wasn't about to lecture my friend as she was walking out the door. But it did make me realize how much "old think" is still out there.

So here's the Q&A with Lynn. I think you'll see what I mean.

- 1. Looking back over the last 5 years, what changes have you seen in terms of how people are using data in lead generation?**

I am seeing a desire to want to segment and target the right group of people based on better demographics, such as financial status, ailment data, etc. There's a bigger push to get into the psychographics profiles as well as demographics. Marketers want to reach only those who the message will resonate with. And the data is out there. I talk to many marketers who can't really

describe who they are looking for because they haven't captured enough data to get a good profile together. So they know they want more. But there is still a ways to go.

**2. What does senior management need to know about data that they don't know?**

First, that data, in and of itself, is not information. Data needs a purpose to become good information. And you need to know that purpose to create a good plan for capturing that data. Marketers need to lead and direct that push. We still see administrators completing appointments for an already overburdened sales staff. They tend to stifle the drive for more information. And intelligent information is so important to the organization. Marketing needs to make time to do it right and accept new responsibility with the data available.

**3. What are the signs that you can no longer get what you need out of your current CRM?**

I see a couple of red flags. One is when your teams are beginning to manually collect and/or report on the information you need from them. If they can't get what they need from the CRM, they'll revert back to spreadsheets. In fairness, it may not be that the CRM can't do it. Maybe it's poor training, often due to frequent turnover. Sometimes management changes strategy and doesn't update the CRM software. Frequently that's one of the last things to happen. Another flag is if your CRM can't communicate with other critical systems. There's no excuse for systems not being integrated.

**4. Why do you think it's so hard for management to abandon the old "make more calls" mentality?**

When people are unable to create quality measures or analyze information correctly, they find themselves falling back to old ways; back to something measurable, such as quantity. In the absence of intelligent information and/or the ability to gather it, we tend to revert to our comfort zones. So, if you're faced with the stress of low occupancy and need to get it higher, you'll fall back on old ways. There is a real fear of change. And yet that is exactly what is needed to reverse

the negative trend and move forward. But change is never easy!

**5. Who do you think will drive the change from quantity-based lead generation to quality-based lead generation? Sales? Marketing? Prospects?**

Prospects are becoming more sophisticated. They're self-educating. And they want to do that self-education before personal contact is made. So, they're driving marketers to provide a more quality-based interaction. It's really the prospects who are forcing us to redefine how we do things. They will push the envelope. That's why the mass, shotgun approach to just call everyone is no longer efficient. But it's a tough transition, especially for smaller communities who want to call everyone who comes to their website. I can appreciate the challenge of smaller communities to engage in new ways.

**6. What does the future of lead generation look like?**

We're moving towards more capturing of psychographic data to learn more about who's looking at you. While they may have something like HubSpot, I still see this industry is on a slower path to truly buying into environments where people can self-educate, learn, and raise their hands when ready. We'll see more automation and messaging that meets buyers on their journeys. This next generation will be more sophisticated and savvy. If you can't keep up there will be fall off. The big guys will be able to put that foot forward. Smaller communities who don't will probably be bought up and absorbed by larger ones.

**7. What question didn't I ask that you'd like to answer?**

We need to see balance among technologists and developers. We need to be progressive to lead a new world of CRM integration and marketing automation. But we also need to remain flexible to support our clients. Our primary goal is to provide a platform that is effective for sales teams. But we also need to foster a new lead generation mindset. Do we want to call every lead that comes in the door? No! We need to move into a new paradigm of letting a lead mature until they are self-qualified. But to get there, we need to support our clients wherever

they are in the journey towards making that move. That's how we can be responsible and positive influencers.