



The Anatomy of an Effective B2B Lead-Generation TVR Marketing Campaign

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Okay, you've figured out the hard way (and expensive way) that Spam, PPC, print ads, direct mail lists and mass email broadcasts haven't produced the B2B sales results you were seeking.

So what does work?

Answer: There are many strategies that can potentially work to produce viable high-quality B2B leads, and one such solution of note is Targeted Value-Response (TVR) Marketing Campaigns.

This article discusses and illustrates exactly what a TVR Campaign is, and how to execute one.

The Problem

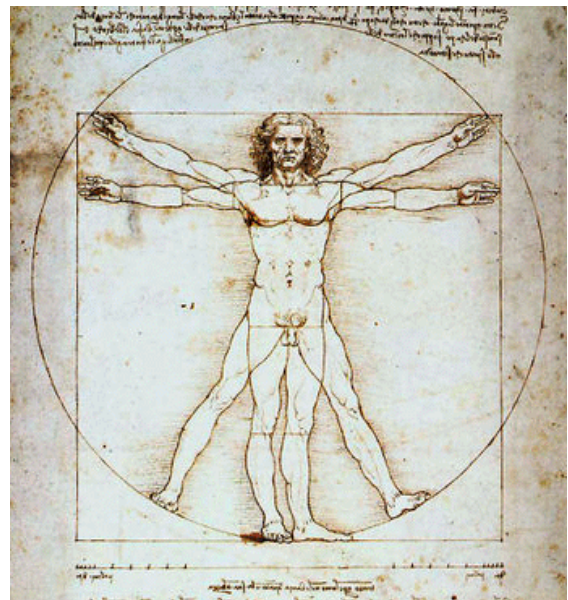
The main problem with Spam blasts, PPC, mass direct mailings and e-mailings, and general advertising is that they are predominately consumer-commodity oriented marketing tactics, i.e. purely shot-gunning to the masses with a big net, hoping something thrown out there to the general public appeals to someone and they choose to respond.

The commodity-oriented thought is, if you can blanket millions and millions of people with your message or offer, and even if only 1% respond and buy, then perhaps that 1% will be sufficient to both cover the cost of the campaign, plus generate enough Convert-to-Purchase transactions to turn a profit. For example, if five-million direct mail pieces successfully produces 50,000 transactions, that's potentially a good thing. Right? In the consumer world, yes.

The problem is that in the non-consumer, Business-to-Business (B2B) world, there are few market segments where five million or more viable purchasing entities exist. By definition, the Fortune 1000 only has 1,000, of which not all of them may be applicable to what you have to offer. And, for the sake of discussion, let's say even if all 1,000 companies could use what you have to offer – landing only 1%, which would be just ten of them, may not be sufficient to achieve your revenue goals.

On the upside, most B2B transactions are not single user products and services. Even if your goal is to capture only 10% of the Fortune 1000, or 100 major accounts, each one may represent large transactions and multi-year recurring revenues, benefiting many individuals within their organization, or in turn, their own customers. Nevertheless, getting even one large transaction closed has to start with an interactive engagement of some kind with one or more individuals within that organization.

Add to this the fact that most large B2B transactions are heavily Relationship-based, not advertising based or impulse buys, and you therefore have an even bigger obstacle to overcome.





This is where a strong and creative Targeted Value-Response (TVR) Campaign can be of greatest value to you, and represents your strongest ROI for each of your marketing dollars.

The TVR Solution

A TVR campaign consists of five (5) key elements.

1. **A Concise Target Database**
2. **Creating A Value-Based Offer, Not a Solicitation**
3. **Artfully Disseminating Your Offer**
4. **A Simple/Easy Response Mechanism**
5. **Planned Follow-Up**
6. **An Engagement Opportunity**

A Concise Target Database

This is actually the hardest part of the whole process to do properly, due to the fact that it forces you to make critical business decisions about exactly who you are going to target with your Value-Based Offer. Few people can be brutally disciplined enough to do this.

Precise targeting is the polar-opposite of the idea of “shot-gunning;” it is instead the idea of firing a carefully aimed “rifle-shot” directly at a bull’s-eye. This approach can be used on a little as ONE single account to penetrate it and win it, or a dozen, or a hundred, or even a thousand. The key is for all targets to have a detailed common **qualification profile** of desirability as a customer, and clear applicability and potential need for your products or services.



The first exercise in creating your target database is to sit down and decide what your “ideal” customer looks like. The more specific, the better. The common tendency is to not want to exclude anyone, fearing missing an opportunity to appeal to more prospects rather than less. That’s a mistake. Tell yourself that you’ll get to more and more segments in time. But to start you first need to identify the “best” target – your most fruitful path of least resistance.

Ask yourself: What specific businesses, and why, most need what you have to offer? Don’t guess. Develop an actual **weighted point system or schema** to make this determination. Does the employee size of the company matter? Their budget for purchases in your area? Annual revenues? Growth rate? Geographical locations? Industry? Their specific products or services? What else?

The obvious question here is: Where might one find such information about all the possible companies you might ever want to do business with? There are only three possible answers to this question:

1. You data-mine it yourself – a tedious and potentially time-consuming process (but sometimes a financial necessity if you can’t afford Options #2 and #3.
2. It already exists and is available from a List-Broker or Marketing Research firm – and you buy it, which can be expensive.
3. It doesn’t already exist and you hire a Marketing Research firm to go data-mine it for you – which is probably the most expensive option.



There are some cost-effective and less tedious ways to use Option #1, such as by starting with industry analysts' reports on specific market segments or trends, which often list the attributes you're looking for in your target segment, or even some public records sources. A little imagination and detective work can go a long way here.

Creating A Value-Based Offer, Not a Solicitation



Once you have your target database constructed, inclusive of key contacts (Decision-Makers, Recommenders, and Influencers) – i.e. specific individuals you will actually approach, then comes an important exercise in creativity.

Your goal: to come up with a specific offer that will be perceived as genuinely valuable, compelling and desirable, and not in any way seen as a sales solicitation to buy something or obligate the recipient in any way.

Blatant email sales pitches almost always get deleted by Spam filters and are subsequently never seen by the addressees. Paper junk-mail that looks like junk-mail, even if sent in cleverly colored envelopes or printed on attractive post cards get tossed into the trash by administrative assistants before the intended recipients ever see them. Attempted cold-calls and telemarketing are usually stopped cold by well-trained administrative gatekeepers. This is why so many mass-market oriented campaigns fail in the corporate world – they never reach their intended targets.

On the other hand, an offer of a free and very “applicable to them” Report or insightful Article or White Paper, or an invitation to a special industry-related educational type Event, can convey value without pitching any specific product or service. Remember, the primary goal in B2B selling is to first and foremost **start a dialogue**, not to ask for an order. That comes later, after credibility and trust have been established.

You have to realize that the very busy business executives and operational managers that you would most like to sell to all go out of their way to erect formidable defensive barriers to keep sales people from bothering them and squandering their very valuable time. Quite simply: If you don't give them a good reason to give you some of their time, you won't get any of it.

Ironically, there is another way to get a favorable response in addition to offering something valuable or useful to the recipient – and that is to ask for their help. Just don't try to sell them anything yet.

In addition to trying to accomplish their difficult missions on a daily basis with never enough time, money, and people to do so, and yet somehow miraculously managing to do so for far less compensation than they feel they deserve, a very strong motivator for many a business decision-maker is: **Respect**.

Many people will be happy to interact with you if they feel they are sharing an appreciated opinion, giving an expert perspective, mentoring or coaching – i.e. being taken seriously as a professional whose views matter. This is why value-offers in the form of industry surveys, journalistic type interviews, or award nominations work. Again, there's no sales pitch, rather this is the value of having an ego stroked.

Artfully Disseminating Your Offer

So once you decide what it is you're going to offer, you then have some decisions to make about how that offer gets communicated to its intended recipients. These decisions are often budget-driven, which is understandable. But those decisions need to be made, not just in terms of empirical cost, but in terms of



overall ROI – i.e. measuring their effectiveness to the value of successful engagement with a new prospect.

Email campaigns are the cheapest to execute (with no materials and no postage fees), but they can also be the least effective due to the pervasiveness of Spam filters. Email campaigns should be undertaken when two things are true:



- 1) You can't afford anything else; and
- 2) You can come up with a **Subject Line** strong enough to both get by Spam Filters and to be intriguing enough to compel a recipient to open the email and read it (as opposed to a quick delete).

Direct Mail can potentially be more effective than email, but obviously you have materials and postage costs to consider. However, if you can afford it, Direct Mail can reach more recipients if it simply doesn't look like Junk-Mail and instead looks like something important.

How do you make something look important? By sending it Priority Mail or FedEx – or in something that *looks a whole lot* like it came Priority Mail or FedEx. Think about it. When a large, colorful, heavy-stock envelope arrives on your desk, or in a box, you more often than not open it up to see what it is. If it's junk-mail, you toss it; if it looks like something of value you take a closer look. That's what everyone does – and in so doing, it increases the “reaches the recipient” rate from single-digit percentages to over 50%.

Even administrative assistants are reluctant to arbitrarily toss out anything that “might be something important” – like possibly a contract or official notice of some kind. Of course, the goal once your target has your offer in their hand is for them to view it as something valuable and desirable. If it's just a solicitation, it will not only get tossed very quickly, but most likely anything from you they receive in the future will get tossed or deleted even faster.

Now consider the idea that if your average sales transaction with a new account is worth over \$50,000 to you, or is perhaps routinely six-figures in revenue value or more, then investing \$5.00 or even \$20.00 or more per target prospect just for postage might be worth it to you. Even if you targeted 1,000 prospects at a cost of \$20 each, or \$20,000 invested, if even a few of those turned into clients, you will have more than paid for the campaign and then some.

And thus, that becomes the real question: What is New Customer Acquisition worth to you?

If the answer is “A lot!”, then investing a lot to get them could be a good idea. That is, beyond email and snail mail campaigns, there are also one-to-one in-person campaigns to consider. These can be a lot more expensive to execute, especially factoring in travel costs, but they can certainly be worth it under the right circumstances.

Actual Example High-Unit-Expense Campaign: 100 CIOs of Fortune 500 companies were the targets of a young software company. Each CIO was overnighted a Remote-Control toy car in a big gift box. These were expensive, not cheap, over \$100 each electric toy cars. A letter inside the box stated that the car was a gift for the recipient's child or grandchild to enjoy – cleverly tied into an overall branding theme of the campaign. A request was also made to come to the recipient's office to give them and their staff a 45 minute presentation about important industry trends and innovations. In exchange for accepting the presentation, the sales person giving it would kindly bring them the remote-control unit for the car (which was useless without it and was not in the box).

The acceptance rate for these presentations was almost 100%. Numerous six-figure deals came out of this campaign within ninety days – i.e. once the dialogues got started. This was a highly successful market penetration campaign with an outstanding ROI, even though it took well over \$25,000 to pull it off.



Who wouldn't spend \$25K to generate over a million dollars in new revenue, and get it all from new clients to boot?

A Simple/Easy Response Mechanism

So you've offered something of value to your targets. Now, they need to be able to respond to you in some simple way.

Just putting a phone number and saying "Call us if we can be of service," won't get you much of a response. A target taking the initiative to pick up the phone and call you is a major psychological commitment of their time and desire – which they may not be willing to give you at that point. If they do call, wonderful, just don't make that your only expectation.



What's easiest is a simple **landing page** on a website, that is accessible with a single click from your email campaign, or something easy to type in from a direct mail campaign. Or better yet, even in a direct mail campaign, include some type of digital media (like a CD, mini CD, or inexpensive flash drive) with information your prospect can open and click on that takes them to a landing page, so they don't have to type anything. **DON'T SEND THEM ALL YOUR MARKETING LITERATURE.** That's peddling again, not offering value.

The importance of a landing page is automation and analytics. Every person who clicks on a particular link and comes to a specific landing page can be tracked, quantified, etc. And you want that information.

It's also smart in your value offers to experiment with segmented test groups on a small scale before investing in wider and more expensive dissemination. Test group analytics can tell you which offers are being received better than others. That's valuable, money-saving information.

The main key to your easy response is to: **DELIVER VALUE**, with no strings attached.

Again, don't go for the close. You want to initiate a relationship, which starts from simple interaction and dialogue. Don't get greedy and blow it.

Just take them to the report, article, white paper, invitation, survey, free sample, etc. with as little fuss as possible. The fact that they responded is what's most important.

However, many companies at this point make a common mistake – which is to force the respondent to fill out a complicated sales qualification form in order to be able to download the information or whatever other offer you've promised them. Of course, you'd love to have all that data right away, but asking for it all on the first interaction with them is like going on a blind date and being asked for a credit report. Kind'a spoils the mood. Not likely to foster a second date.

The exception to this caution above is a formal survey. If you are asking someone to participate in a "prestigious industry-related" survey, then it's perfectly normal for some of the survey questions to be qualification questions in nature – to ascertain their perspective of the topic being surveyed. That's also what makes surveys so powerful, in that you can use them to learn a lot very quickly about your prospects.

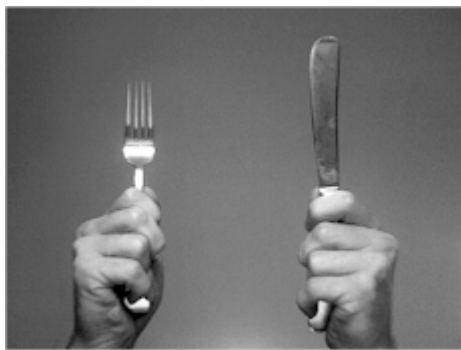
So, let's say you sent out 1,000 emails or direct mail pieces. You get 100 responses to download your information offer. That's great that you got a 10% response rate, but you don't know which 10% to follow-up with. Right? There are ways to get this information.



If your web analytic software isn't reasonably clever, you might be able to figure it out passively (without the recipient participating) simply by virtue of their IP address, which may reveal their business domain. Your temptation will be to ask them to tell you, by asking them to enter an email address or some other information. But beware if you do, for you will surely hurt your response rate. That's because inputting someone's name or email address constitutes "strings attached" that they may not wish to give you, nor have you earned the right to have them yet.

But you can know exactly who they are – i.e. if the URL link you give them to click on is unique to them with an identification parameter that gets passed back to your landing page. You can purchase that software capability if you don't already have it. But lacking any other automated option, you could ask them to enter some identifying data.

Planned Follow-Up



So some number of your targets have downloaded your information, and hopefully enjoyed it and found it valuable. Plus, you know who they are. Now it's time for a second interaction – a "second helping" if you will, via a planned follow-up step.

The idea of the follow-up is to once again DELIVER VALUE, without trying to "sell them something." You want to turn a good first impression into a lasting perception of value—of you.

However, the second-helping offer can also be an occasion to learn a lot more about your targets. For example, what if your second offer is not only a thank you note for downloading the first information and expressing your hope that they found it helpful, but it also offers them a new choice of additional premium information/content, with each choice articulating a discussion of a different issue or "pain point" that is very pertinent to the industry your prospect is in. So you give them a choice of one item to download. That choice tells you something important about their more pressing priorities.

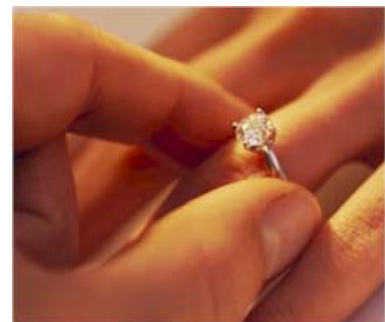
Or another tactic might be to extend an invitation and "free passes" to a valuable speaking event in their area that is germane to their needs. Of course, this is an event you are either hosting yourself, or sponsoring in conjunction with a respected third-party, like an analyst organization (they offer these events just for this purpose, inclusive of big-name presenters/speakers, for a price, of course).

The point here is that you need to leverage your first interaction with the target of delivering value by continuing to deliver even more value. When you finally get the opportunity to engage with the target, either on the phone, at an event, or face-to-face in their office, imagine the positive impression you've created in advance. Now compare that to everyone else who are still trying to Spam or Cold-Call this person. Might the prospect be more inclined to take your call?

An Engagement Opportunity

Even though it isn't very likely that targets will voluntarily pick up the phone and call you on the first or second interaction, it isn't impossible. So everything you send a target should have your telephone number, email address, and other contact information readily available.

Landing pages should have a blurb somewhere on them, apart from the main messaging, about "...for more information, call/contact XYZ."





But beyond passively waiting for your phone to ring, or a query email to appear in your inbox from a target, every part of your campaign plan should include a proactive engagement opportunity. And to be clear, “engagement” means to actively interact with them in a real-time conversation, either by phone or in person.

There are a variety of engagement tactics that can be employed for this purpose. There really is no hard and fast list of how to do it right or wrong. Metaphorically speaking, finally “asking the girl to dance” (which is what we’re talking about here), is limited only by your imagination and circumstances of the moment.

Some examples: (via email or voicemail)

“I hope you found the XYZ report I sent you helpful. Actually, there’s a much more detailed analysis available that we found recently that I’d love to share with you. If you’re going to be in your office later this week, I’d be happy to stop by and drop it off...”

“I wanted to give you a call and let you know that [*noted industry person*] is going to be speaking on [*the topic of the stuff I sent you*] week after next, and if you’re interested in meeting [*him/her*] and hearing their presentation, I’ve got some free passes. Please let me know what would be a good time to get those to you...”

“I’m calling to see if you might have a few minutes to share some of your thoughts on [*important topic to them*]. We’re putting together a white paper on it, and it would be great to get some first-hand perspectives and insights.”

“Hi, this is [*you*]. I was just calling to follow-up and find out if you were you able to download all of the information you wanted okay and hopefully get your feedback? What did you think of it all? Have you ever experienced [*the issue discussed*]...”

SUMMARY

TVR Campaigns are about much more than what is commonly referred to as simple “Lead Nurturing”; rather, they are about **proactively initiating targeted desirable relationships**, in situations where Relationship Selling is paramount.

It’s about going after manageable groups of targets at a time, and developing scalable penetration and engagement models – and not wasting precious marketing dollars shot-gunning.

It’s about circumventing the automated Spam filters and human Gatekeepers and successfully getting to the real players that you need to be talking to and giving them a good reason to do so.

Admittedly, this market penetration strategy is no foolproof guarantee that any target prospect is going to “like the taste of your cooking” once you’re in the door – but this approach has been proven very effective to get you in the door to at least have the opportunity to serve the meal.

If you’ve never planned and executed a TVR campaign before, and need guidance and support in doing so, then contact JPE Inc. Consulting. It’s our specialty.

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