TRAINER'S BOX®

Lead-score like a rock star

Infusionsoft by Keap

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Lead scoring—either you rock, you suck, or you just aren't doing it

If you're like many small business owners we've worked with, you have leads but are struggling to find time and resources on the ones most ready to buy. Nothing is more frustrating than wasting energy on cold leads.

Part of the problem is that **your marketing efforts may not be bringing the best leads to you and your team**. It's a common problem. You need lead scoring to sort this out.

Fact: According to the BtoB Intelligence Center, only 23 percent of sales professionals say marketers constantly deliver sales-ready leads.

Lead scoring is a feature of marketing automation and customer relationship management (CRM) software that enables you to have a more complete view of how clients are interacting with you. In short, lead scoring will make you a rockstar for your business.

Let's be honest: we all want to be rockstars. Don't tell me you've never wanted to shred a guitar riff in front of 15,000 screaming fans, surrounded by amplifiers stacked up like skyscrapers. And just when you hit that perfectly timed power chord, the pyrotechnics blast sparks and smoke across the stage.

Granted, there won't be as many lasers and your biggest successes might not be accompanied by skull-rattling drum solos, but you can still kick a lot of butt at what you're good at: providing the best product or service you can offer to the people that need it and want it.

Many small business owners ask us about lead scoring because they've heard the hype about how it can help their business. They want to know how to get in on the action. There are lots of exciting stats on the internet that can get small businesses revved up.

Here's a crowd-pleaser:

63% of companies that are outgrowing their competitors use marketing automation, a major component of which is lead scoring.

Source: The Lenskold and Pedowitz Groups "Lead Generation Marketing Effectiveness Study 2013"

When you start lead scoring, you can maximize your sales and marketing impact and free up time by focusing on the right leads.

It's actually a simple concept: by scoring each and every one of your leads based on how they interact with your business, you can gauge just how ready they are to buy your products or services. When they hit a particular score, you know they're ready to talk sales. This way, whoever does your sales will always get the best leads. They won't have to waste time with calls to people who aren't ready to buy.

When your lead scoring is dialed to 11, your small business rock and rolls. Cue the pyrotechnics.

But here's the deal: people don't sort of do OK at lead scoring. Either your rock, you suck, or you're just not doing it.

Keep reading to find out how to be a lead-scoring rockstar.

The most important part of lead scoring is not lead scoring

As we said in the intro, if you're actually doing lead scoring, you're either doing it right or you're doing it wrong. We haven't seen much in between.

So what's the difference? What sets the rockstars apart from the losers? The secret to success is not in the actual lead scoring. The success begins well before.

1. You have to know your business

We're big fans of businesses that think in terms of lifecycle marketing.

Lifecycle marketing refers to marketing and sales campaign strategies that seek to address your client's needs over time. Lifecycle marketing will help you:

- Generate more revenue by attracting leads and wowing your existing clients
- Make your sales and marketing efforts more efficient, saving you time and money

Lead-scoring rockstars understand this principle and integrate it as their core sales and marketing strategy.

Infusionsoft by Keap employs a clean, simple, and very effective lifecycle marketing strategy that has helped thousands of small businesses.

Attract, sell, wow

In a nutshell, this three-part strategy looks like this

1. **Attract:** Clarify your best clients, identify what they need, and understand how to connect with them.
2. **Sell:** Create content that connects with your clients and guides them along the buying process.
3. **Wow:** Anticipate your clients' needs, go the extra mile, and deliver more than what you promised.

Lead scoring functionally falls into the sell and wow phases, which we'll discuss in chapters 3 and 4. **But to get ready for that, you have to set up the attract phase, which follows.**

2. You have to know your client

Ultimately, lifecycle marketing isn't much use if you don't know who your clients are. Without a clear sense of who is into your products and services, you'll be taking shots in the dark. You can't afford to waste resources like that. And it's really expensive to try to reach everybody.

The solution? Create buyer personas to help you be sure you target the right people. Depending on how many products and services you offer, you may want to create several personas to correspond with the kinds of people that personify your client base.

To be clear, we're not talking about demographics, which are powerful, and mandatory to your company's growth. But they don't tell you anything about your client's personality. Demographics describe statistics about your ideal client. Personas put a face to the people who run those businesses, and are like character sketches using the buyer's language. Include key details about them such as:

- Age
- Income level
- Industry
- Tech savviness

- Job title
- Why do they seek your products/services?

The content you produce should target these personas, and knowing them will help you keep your marketing efforts on track.

Think about it. The Ramones weren't writing songs for soccer moms. OK, so some soccer moms might jam out in their minivans to Judy Was a Punk, but they weren't the target. Disaffected urban teens of baby boomer parents tended to be the main persona. **So, if the Ramones were to make a client profile, they might make it something like this:**

Judy S. Punk. 19 years old. Living in a crummy apartment in Brooklyn. Doesn't talk to her parents much. Works a crappy day job to go to punk shows at night. Loves the Ramones and buys their merchandise. Also loves the Sex Pistols, the Clash, and the Stiff Little Fingers. She hopes someday to play in a punk band of her own. (Will grow up to drive a minivan.)

Knowing that Judy's profile is out there, the Ramones could create lead magnets that target her persona type—such as a new T-shirt that features their 1981 show at Cornell University. They wouldn't likely get many soccer moms as leads, but that's fine. They'll have much more success when they target the right persona.

Knowing your personas, you'll be better able to relate to your clients and thus understand how they're interacting with you, which is an absolutely critical part of scoring your interactions.

Map your sales process

Once you understand just how lifecycle marketing works for your business and you have identified your client profiles, it's time to map your sales funnel to move them from first contact to conversion and beyond.

Pro tip: A clean, realistic map of your sales process is the secret to going from garage band with big dreams to full 20-city stadium tour.

This exercise will only do your business good. Later on in this chapter, we're going to look at a map that one of our customers used for their dentistry business. It's a thing of beauty. (That's right, dentists are rockstars, too.)

Mapping your sales process is a lot like writing a great power ballad: you have to reach deep down inside to know what your business really is, understand what it takes to woo your client, and find a way to get them to commit to you.

Just like Aerosmith, you "Don't Wanna Miss a Thing," so your map should be thorough. What ways do you reach out to your leads, and in what ways do they seek you out? How do you (or could you) follow up on each interaction?

Then there's Meatloaf. To write his power ballad, he had to do some deep introspection to determine just what he would and wouldn't do for love (it turns out that he would do anything for love, but he wouldn't do that). You've got to follow that example. Look closely at who you are and what your business is all about. What will you do and what won't you do to reach out to your potential clients?

Fact: 68% of successful marketers cite lead scoring based on content and engagement as most responsible for improving revenue contribution.

Source: The Lenskold and Pedowitz Groups "Lead Generation Marketing Effectiveness Study 2013"

How many interactions do you need?

Every interaction with a lead is a "touch." Your strategy for following up on engagement is a matter of knowing how many touches are necessary to move your prospects through the funnel.

After the right number of touches, you can expect that the client is ready to buy. Lead scoring is really all about knowing how to keep track of all these touches so that you can know just how ready the client is.

But before you can score, you've got to be one step ahead of your leads. You need to know just what path they can take to tell you how committed they really are.

Don't let version one become version none

Here's the caveat: A sales and marketing map can get really complicated. When you see a beautifully mapped process two screens wide, colored lines crossing like lasers at a Styx concert, it can be quite impressive. Maybe a little daunting, too.

We work with a lot of small business owners who have never suited up and tried this exercise, and a lot of these businesses come to the table with the expectation that their map should be so complicated and awesome that it could be framed and hung on the wall.

I'm sure you already know what I'm going to say: keep it simple. If you try to capture every detail with a hyper-complicated map, it's likely that you'll burn out and not finish.

You don't need to go crazy. You just need to be realistic.

The map

So let's walk through the concept really quick, using our dentist friend as an example. Since lead scoring is a component of marketing automation, we assume that you're using a CRM / marketing automation software tool. We're using Infusionsoft by Keap in this example.

There are two basic parts of the map:

1. Activity that is driven outside the automation.
2. Activity that the automation software picks up.

This simple map strategy uses Excel to walk through your sales process. It's a great way to start out, and will make it much easier to score your leads, which will quickly help you reap the benefits.

Section 1:

Answer each question in order and point to how it impacts the subsequent message.

1. Front-end marketing (how do people know you exist?)
2. Lead generation (how can people find you?)
3. Offers (how can you interact with people to get their contact information? i.e. lead magnets)

Here's an example from the dentist:

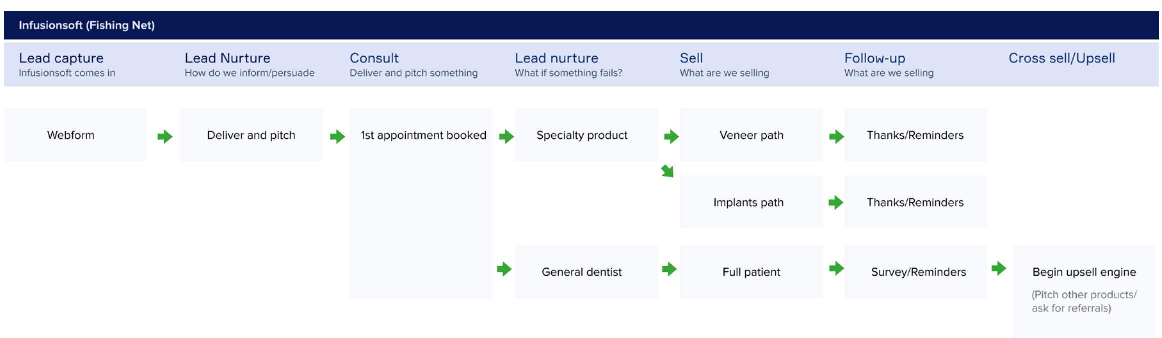
Outside Infusionsoft		
Front end marketing How do people know you exist?	Lead generation How can people find you?	Offer Lead magnets
Yellow Pages	Website	Free info on proper brushing
Word of mouth	Special landing page	You've been brushing wrong!
Facebook Ads	Facebook	Electric vs manual
Google Ads	Call in's	Whiten teeth naturally!
In-house newsletter		Free consultation X-ray
Purchased list/Direct mail		$125 Teeth whitening

Section 2:

Your lead magnets are getting you contacts, but how are they getting into your CRM? What happens now that you have a bunch of leads? Do as you did above for the following:

1. What are you using to capture the lead (from each magnet) to get the contact into the system?
2. Lead nurture (how do you inform and persuade the lead to make an appointment?)
3. Consult (deliver and pitch)
4. More nurturing (What if something fails? How do you keep trying?)
5. Sale (Which products are you selling that this process will map to?)
6. Follow up and upsell (how do you retain the client once they've purchased from you?)

Below is the example from the dentist:



Your map will be customized to your specific business, but I can't say it strongly enough: keep it simple. Once you've perfected your lead scoring for a few rounds, you can add complexities and nuances. At the front end, you'll just want it be manageable.

Once you've put together your map, you're ready to get up on that stage and lead-score like a rockstar!

The content on your map is out there, and people are interacting with it. The rockstar companies are the ones that track exactly who's interacting with their content, and they're able to respond with a smarter sales approach.

High fidelity

Lead scoring is worth all the effort you put into it because it gives you 360-degree insight into your client interactions. This level of high fidelity is what will set your business apart from the laggards.

The basic idea is that each interaction with your company has meaning, so you want to rate it with a score that puts value to it. Then, as your leads interact with you, they add points to their score.

In the Infusionsoft by Keap app, these scores are translated to flames. As their score goes up, more flames show on their dashboard. When they hit five flames, the salesperson gets notified, and they follow up. This ensures that your sales people (or person) get only the hottest leads—like a rockstar.

Turn back to your map. You've laid out how your personas interact with your marketing efforts, now you just have to score it. You may have email campaigns, gated content downloads, website views, phone calls to your company, and social media interactions. Some interactions show more interest than others, and your point system should reflect that.

How to score points

Every business uses their own scoring system because every business is unique. If you're not sure, a handy place to start is to make each flame worth 20 points of interaction, so that to reach five flames, the lead has to score one 100 points.

Think through the typical path that a lead takes and score it accordingly. If they require a lot of touches, you can rate your interactions in fives and tens. If the path is shorter, rate your interactions by 20 points, or more—it's your call. You just want to be certain that you measure to the best of your ability the interest level of your leads. You want to be sure that you aren't losing track of the hot leads or calling the cold ones who aren't ready yet.

This lead is getting pretty hot. Any further interaction, and they'll be ready for a call from sales.

Because marketing automation integrates into your online presence, the software can track user activity in a wide variety of ways, giving you a ton of insight. You can see:

- Activity on your website
- Web form completion
- Email opens
- Links clicked
- Subscriptions (email, blog)
- Email unsubscribes (negative points)
- Lead score decay (lack of interaction over time gives negative points)
- CRM tags (which is where the really complex stuff happens)

Track simple activity

If you want to add a level of visibility to your leads as they interact with you, the fastest and easiest way to do that is to track simple activity.

Infusionsoft by Keap can track these simple metrics right off the bat:

- **Web form submission:** Any time a web form is submitted, it scores that action; it doesn't track specific web forms.
- **Email opens:** This tracks all emails generally; it doesn't track specific emails.
- **Click a link:** Again, it tracks all link clicks equally; it doesn't track specific links clicked.
- **Email unsubscribe:** Negative points will be automatically assigned

If you choose to track simple activity, you will be able to see that people are interacting with your marketing efforts, and you can see in a very general way interactions are happening.

This can add useful visibility. We tell the small business owners who ask us about lead scoring but have never done it before that this is a great way to get started. The fact that people are interacting with your marketing offers a level of visibility that you didn't have if you weren't lead scoring at all, and as you begin to build on the concept, you can get more sophisticated in your approach.

The upside to tracking simple metrics is that it's the easiest way to lead-score. The downside is that you can't track specific activity, which is where you can really know just how hot each specific lead really is.

To get that level of visibility, you have to use tags.

Tags (where it gets exciting)

Tags allow you to get very specific with your lead scoring. You can tag a client essentially an unlimited number of ways, which means you can derive as granular a picture of your leads as you could want.

Pro tip: Tagging works best when you have a strong understanding of your business.

Here's the thing: We hear from a lot of small business owners, and many don't really know exactly how their business is working right now. If that applies to you, guess what? It's OK. You'll figure it out. Just keep in mind that as you figure it out, you can perfect your strategy.

Tags are appended to each client profile either through automation or through live interaction with their customer record. They can be appended in any number of ways:

- A tag can be based on demographics: age, job title, favorite rock band, etc.
- A tag can be added when a lead fills out a specific web form (which means you can track multiple forms).
- Tags can be added when emails are opened.
- You can apply multiple tags for a single instance of interaction (web form completed, told you which instrument they play, etc.).

The way to work with tags is to focus on what you need to know—don't get overzealous. Just because you can track nearly everything doesn't mean you need to.

Lead score decay (hotness fades with age)

In most cases, we can infer that heavy interaction with our marketing is an indicator of interest. Therefore, if that interaction slows down, it is logical to assume that the lead is cooling off. So, in most cases, decay should trigger negative points.

Zeppelin rocks it eloquently: “It’s been a long time since I rock and rolled. It’s been a long time since I did the stroll.” If that describes your lead, they could be cooling off. If they’re cooling, you don’t want to send them to sales. You want to nurture them. Maybe it’s time to send them a specific email to address their needs and remind them who you are.

Engagement with your brand is for you to work out. So you can use the decay functionality to your advantage.

“Decay” sounds negative, but not always so. In some cases, it may be a trigger to start your next round of nurturing. Consider our dentist friend: if their leads haven’t interacted with their brand for six months, it would be a great time to send them some marketing materials to get them thinking about their next visit. The decay is actually indicative of normal client behavior, and can be used to trigger smart campaigns.

At the end of the day, you have to make lead-scoring points work for you. Be creative, and find those flamin’ hot clients! That’s how rockstars roll.

Measure and tweak

Then of course, measure your success. Track your interactions with your leads and identify just how they journeyed through your funnel. Use the data to sharpen up your process. Is a particular marketing tactic converting higher than others? Score it higher. Conversely, if you find a tactic isn’t providing the ROI you thought it would, drop it like it’s not hot.

The best way to approach lead scoring is to see it as a discovery process. It’s not as if you’re prescribing what it means to be a hot lead. Instead, you’re learning how to describe what it means to be a hot lead based on how leads interact with you.

The secret to a face-melting lead-scoring setup

Don't be a one-hit wonder. Enter the pantheon of lead-scoring legends! Lead scoring shouldn't end when you get a client to buy. You can create intelligent, targeted, repeat business with relatively low effort.

Fact: According to Bain & Company, a 5 percent increase in client retention can generate a 75% increase in profitability. And it's six times more costly to acquire a new client than to keep an existing one.

You know what they say: Don't work harder, work smarter. Your current clients have already interacted with you, and they love you. You might even say they're your hottest leads. With lead scoring, you can keep clients wowed with solid marketing that encourages them to buy more from you.

That's the secret sauce in lead scoring—it's perfect for setting up repeat business, and believe it or not, it's the part that most small businesses miss. The process for setting up a post-sale lead-scoring strategy is the same as for presale: map it, then score it.

After a little effort to set up your post-sale lead-scoring process, BOOM! You'll be blowing minds for a living as you rock out with a full-scale leads laser show.

Encore!

Lead scoring forces you to understand how your business works. It's an exercise not only in improving your bottom line, but also can lead to improving your entire business strategy.

To get moving on lead scoring, you have to do a little soul searching for your business. Just like a rockstar, you have to dig deep to come out on top.

The great thing about lead scoring is that you can ease into it. You don't have to reach stardom overnight. You can bite off as much as you can chew, enjoy the benefits, and then improve down the road.

And who says you can't wear leather pants on casual Friday?