

# 15 Tips for Accelerating Sales in a Down Economy



## Doing More with Less

In a dynamic economic environment, making the most of the resources and opportunities you have is essential. Put another way, it's about finding ways to generate more qualified leads with less people and less budget to get there.

We all know downsizing has been an unfortunate result of economic fears, and working smarter is the key to survival when budgets tighten -- especially when your sales team still expects you to deliver qualified leads despite your headcount and budget woes. In fact, today you need to generate and even larger quantity of qualified leads with less resources than you had in the first place.

In a nutshell, the **"15 Tips for Accelerating Sales in a Down Economy"** are back-to-basics ideas to help accelerate lead flow and sales without breaking the budget. Many are very easy to execute, without any costs and little time. Some of the tips provided assume that your organization has gone beyond simple batch-and-blast email marketing and have implemented a marketing automation/demand-generation solution with some degree of intelligence. By far, the most cost-effective way to assure the success of your online marketing programs is to step beyond generic blasting—especially with shrinking budgets, diminishing staffs and increased competition for each sale.

And since you may have less folks to brainstorm your ideas with, we hope the following tips can provide you some insights into taking your demand generation to the next level to ensure you do much more than just survive – in fact, these tips may help you thrive during challenging times.

## 15 Tips for Accelerating Sales in a Down Economy



### 1. Targeting to Increase Accuracy

Make sure your message is customized to your target—use titles, demographics, and your web site tracking information to focus on the key needs or pain points of the reader. A c-level prospect has different care-about's vs. the Director of IT. Crafting a “targeted message” showing how your solution addresses specifically his/her pain points will generate a much higher likelihood of a response. Focusing on one audience per message is more effective than the kitchen sink method of trying to address all points to all audiences in a single message.



### 2. Personalize Communication

**FACT:** no one likes to receive junk mail. Personalize your message by name—and make sure it comes from the sales rep in charge. Generic messages scream “Junk Mail” and prevent viable prospects from taking the next step. Automated demand-generation systems personalize emails and ensure proper addresses and accurate delivery.



### 3. Focus Messaging on Value

Strongly tie every feature to value; “nice to haves” don’t sell in a down economy. Tighter budgets and lower confidence have fundamentally changed buying behavior. Budgets are being scrutinized more than ever, so if your offering doesn’t include a strong value proposition that is realizable in the near term it’s likely to be put on the back burner for the time being until things pick up.



### 4. Mix It Up – Try Variations of Content

Explore content format options for reaching potential customers—live webinars, white papers, and case studies are not the end-all answer to everything. Try mixing it up with on-demand webinars, surveys, topical articles referencing third party blogs, top-ten checklists, How-to-guides, or pod cast versions of webinars. Using a demand generation solution that tracks actual downloads, pages viewed, and actual time spent on each piece of content by individually named prospects allows you to identify content preferences. Follow up with offers tailored to the audience group in an automated fashion. Don’t be afraid to be creative.



### 5. Touch Your Prospects Regularly

Keep nurturing with a constant stream of information -- without overdoing it. Email prospects every 7-10 working days as the starting point for B2B communications. Increase your activity in relation to the activity level of each prospect. Make sure your communications are worthy of a prospect’s valuable time. Don’t forget; content relevance, quality, and frequency are the biggest influencers over a prospects decision to opt-out. If you are communicating with your prospects every week, your opt-out’s will be off the chart.



## 6. Pause to Listen

Learn from your prospects by listening to their needs. Find out what's important to them with engaging surveys, then use this valuable information to craft future communications. And be sure to include some open ended questions to capture their exact use of wording. If you are only copying what your competitors are doing, they will likely have a larger bank account to outlast you.



## 7. Expand Coverage at Good Targets

With tight budgets, companies add more layers of management to the decision-making process. Appending your prospecting lists by adding contacts at known good targets is a good use of scarce marketing dollars. By expanding titles and depth at the same company, you can improve your chances of reaching potential influencers and decision makers. In a down economy, some of your contacts may not be there as long.



## 8. Don't Forget to Test Often

Do your homework—test, test, and test again. Subject lines, email content, specific words used in your content, and landing page layouts should all be thoroughly tested to optimize conversions. Does every landing page have conversion code? Are you keeping the same navigation to other parts of your site on each landing page – if you are you may be losing prospects by distracting them from the reason they came to you in the first place. Demand-generation systems are essential to optimizing your marketing efforts. If you don't know how a prospect responded to your last campaign, it's hard to do it better next time! Having a solution that lets you create your own rules, build landing pages and messages easily without being a rocket scientist, or relying on others let's you control what you do. If budgets are cut more, you may have to do everything.



## 9. Assure Delivery – Avoid SPAM flags

Avoid using SPAM flags including, but not limited to, ALL CAPS, exclamation points, and SPAM words and phrases. There are both free and paid-services to check your emails against common SPAM mistakes prior to sending. Be sure your email solution uses advanced deliverability technologies. Developing a well crafted email isn't very useful if you can't get it to your prospects inbox. Can you get a dedicated IP to control your own reputation, vs. being grouped with others using the same solution for email?



## 10. Don't Drop the Ball

Go the extra mile and make sure “follow-ups” are part of your email program. You should be able to schedule automated emails to occur once a prospect has engaged with your content. Activity triggered emails assure timely follow-up even if your salesperson is out of the office. And you can control the message!



## 11. Feed the Monster

Over 70% of data changes each year. Your database becomes a moving target. Prospects change companies, roles, email address, and take on more responsibilities. Keep adding prospects to make sure you are covering your serviceable market. Email marketing is one of the most cost-effective tools available to marketers – in tough times, demonstrating ROI is king. Make sure you are leveraging your content by reaching your biggest potential audience.



## 12. Alter Your Schedule

Change up your outbound email schedule to see what works best for your market and individual prospects. While early in the week does tend to work best for B2B markets, and Thursday pm for consumer, different times of the day or just before a holiday or weekend may be just what it takes to make contact. Everyone else may be trying to reach your targets during the first same days of the week you are – testing times may prove an opportunity.



## 13. Forget the HARD Sell

The HARD sell is even harder in a down economy. Working to become a trusted resource of information with a continual stream of quality content helps prospects learn and works to build trust. It will also minimize opt outs.



## 14. Re-purpose Existing Content

Re-purposing content is an easy and cost effective way to stretch dollars. Take existing content and approach the same subject from a different angle, or try a new format of presenting your information. Keep your messages fresh to hold prospect interest, but there's nothing wrong with reinforcing core messages from a new perspective.



## 15. Keep One in Reserve

This is not the time to miss opportunities. Missing a scheduled message is a lost opportunity to connect with and nurture a prospect. Be sure to have a backup piece of content and message ready just in case your current project doesn't come together in time. A rewrite top 10 list, or webinar replay could work as plan b.

### Doing More with Less

Tighter budgets and fewer bodies doesn't necessarily mean less effective marketing. Automating your marketing efforts can be the great equalizer in difficult times. If you're faced with the challenge of doing more with less, the process begins with a demand generation system that efficiently customizes, tracks, nurtures, and identifies interested prospects over time, providing you and your sales team information easily to help close sales faster.

**P.S.** The time to begin focusing your sales efforts is NOW. Get the most out of these 15 tips by learning more about how eTrigue's "Intelligent Demand Generation" platform can help you market more effectively and sell faster!

**P.S.S.** Bonus Tip # 16. - Always add a PostScript (P.S.) to your outbound communications. For an average response rate increase of a tenth of one percent, it's well worth the effort.