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THE
PAINS
+ GAINS OF CONTENT SYNDICATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

If you're reading this paper, you're probably either already running content syndication programs or considering doing so. This paper addresses some of the pitfalls you may encounter.

Let's start with a brief discussion of what content syndication is. Namely, you create content you wish to use for your marketing and lead generation needs, and then you start figuring out how to get that content in front of your target audience. Your website and email database will help with this, but how do you reach an audience you haven't reached before? This is where content syndication comes in.

You may already be running content syndication programs that have not yet resulted into anything successful. Let's review the common pain points that arise in content syndication campaigns, and then discuss how to resolve them.





WHAT'S PREVENTING LEAD FLOW SUCCESS?

44%

Content lacks relevance

38%

Lack of content strategy

39%

Leveraging the wrong distribution channels

48%

Content isn't developed for target audience and marketers often meet budget limitations

43%

Content isn't reaching the right decision makers

I'M NOT GETTING ENOUGH NEW LEADS FOR MY SALES TEAM.



Pain.

Leads which are not in your database are commonly referred to as “net-new” leads. Finding “net-new” prospects means you have to broaden your content reach. While some content syndication services are subscription services with an existing base of readers (narrow reach), others are more broadly focused and therefore syndicate your content on a variety of web properties. It's common for subscription-based content syndication services to offer the same leads to various companies because their readership base stays stagnant.



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What you're after is an organic, network-based model. Content syndication services that employ this model can typically deliver far more authentic, net-new leads to their clients while avoiding audience fatigue.

Beyond the acquisition of true, net-new names, organic, network-based content syndication partners offer other important benefits. By spreading their reach among hundreds (sometimes thousands) of partner web-sites, they can contact a far larger audience at the audience's point of interest. In other words, your audience encounters your content through trusted channels when researching and staying on top of changes in their industry.

In addition, a network-based content syndication provider is constantly adding new partners. Thus, their networks keep abreast of consumers' changing interests. This is especially important when it comes to the focused industry audiences you're likely targeting. New communities and thought leaders pop up constantly, and a static database provider has very little chance of reaching those groups or individuals.

'Audience Fatigue' refers to an audience that has been exposed to either a particular piece of content or a brand's content repeatedly, to the point that they no longer are interested in downloading the content, potentially resulting in negative perceptions of the content and/or brand.

I'M NOT REACHING ENOUGH OF THE RIGHT PEOPLE.

**Pain.**

One of the most common features you'll hear about from every content syndication provider is the scope of their 'reach,' which speaks to how many people they have in their audience (be it via a static database, owned sites, or network-based). Look carefully into the specifics of the reach these companies are touting, and if that reach actually aligns with your lead generation and content syndication needs. For instance, a 10-million person reach sounds impressive, but if 90% of those people are in IT, and all are based in the United States, how will that help you reach the right audience for the new SaaS HR software solution you're expanding to a global market?

Another common issue with assessing the reach of a network, particularly in static databases, is the fact that it is often targeted at a very narrow set of verticals. This can have serious consequences on your campaign's effectiveness. In the example above, we reference the IT focus of an audience. What if your company is offering an HR software solution that would be applicable to virtually every industry? Focusing on an IT-dominant audience is not going to have the level of success you're looking for.

**Gain.**

Be sure to analyze what constitutes reachable audience in a content syndication network. Also make sure to understand what proportion of the audience is comprised of unique visitors. How often do these visitors visit these pages within the network? Don't just accept the number as is—analyze the true impact of that 'reach' and assess based on your needs.

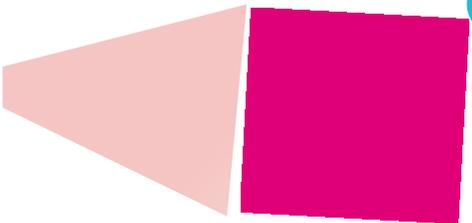
**Pain.**

A common issue within lead generation is that which affects the quality of a lead for a given organization. Because leads are often shared, you're almost guaranteed a slight disadvantage from the get-go, no matter how effective your lead generation content syndication campaign. Typically, content syndicators will generate a lead and then sell that lead to four or five different clients, putting you in the position of having to compete with four different companies for that prospect's attention. As a result, this will dramatically lower your chances of qualifying and converting that lead for your business.

**Gain.**

A good indicator of poor lead quality is when a content syndication vendor offers you a cost-per-lead price that is drastically lower than the competition. Vendors justify these low costs because they are selling the same leads multiple times over, recouping their costs, and exponentially profiting from one single contact. Therefore, make sure to ask your vendors if they sell a lead more than once—they should be able to answer that question right away, with no reservations.

MY SALES ORGANIZATION IS BATTLING COMPETITORS FOR THE LEADS WE DELIVER.



THE LEADS I DELIVER AREN'T REACHABLE.



Pain.

Poor data quality is the leading determinant of successful or unsuccessful lead generation campaigns. It doesn't matter how great your content is, how many people downloaded it, or how targeted your filters are. If the people who download your content input false information and pass your content syndication partner's filters, you're paying for useless data.



Gain.

While data is rarely 100% accurate, there are steps you can take to minimize the loss. First of all, inquire as to what steps your content syndication partner has put in place to minimize the delivery of faulty or inaccurate data. Are there algorithms to check the veracity of email addresses, phone numbers, and names?

Your content syndication program will never meet your goals if you're tossing out leads due to data quality issues. Take the necessary steps to ensure the highest level of data quality possible.

Pain.



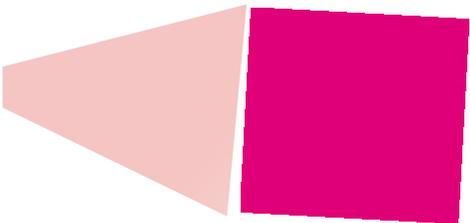
While most marketers are quite knowledgeable and adept at content marketing, the fact is that most of us are jacks-of-all-trades and masters of none. Content marketing is but one part of the overall lead generation/demand generation pie that requires attention and skill. Specifically, measuring the effectiveness of your campaigns can nearly become a full-time job. What's the best way to stay on top of every day campaign performance and ensure that you're regularly optimizing your results?

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By partnering with an organization that specializes in content marketing and lead generation via content syndication, you gain access to their specialized knowledge and resources. If you have extra budget, it is highly recommended to have a dedicated campaign manager monitoring campaign efficiency. A campaign manager's sole responsibility should be to suggest improvements to your content and filter adjustments, as well as offer targeting suggestions, and much more. Find a trusted and experienced content syndication company that can offer seasoned campaign managers who can put your concerns to rest.

I DON'T KNOW HOW MY CAMPAIGN IS DOING UNTIL THE END, AND I DON'T KNOW IF THERE ARE STEPS I CAN TAKE TO IMPROVE ITS PERFORMANCE UNTIL IT'S OVER.



MY LEADS DON'T GET TO MY SALES TEAM FAST ENOUGH.



Pain.

When running a content syndication program, you need to capitalize on the potentially fleeting interest of your prospect. A prospect downloading your content is raising his or her hand as someone who's interested in your product or service at that moment, but their interest has a time limit. We know that the longer the wait between when a prospect takes action to learn more about you (like downloading a piece of content) and when that prospect is contacted, the lower your sales conversion rate.



Gain.

How can you avoid this? With connectors. Data connectors allow for one system to pass on information to the other. A successful content syndication solution should be able to connect lead information to your CRM system directly, in as close to real-time as possible. This will enable your sales team to reach out to a prospect as soon as he or she downloaded your content. Not every content syndication partner will provide this functionality, but you should insist on it if you're striving to build pipeline and improve conversion.

Another option in addition to the connector is to quickly nurture your newly generated leads using alerts. Alerts can trigger a notification that new leads are ready to be downloaded. From there, the leads can more quickly enter a nurture track or be directed to sales.

I WANT TO REACH PEOPLE ON A VARIETY OF CHANNELS, BUT I CAN'T MANAGE (OR AFFORD) TO RUN THAT MANY PROGRAMS AT ONCE.



Pain.

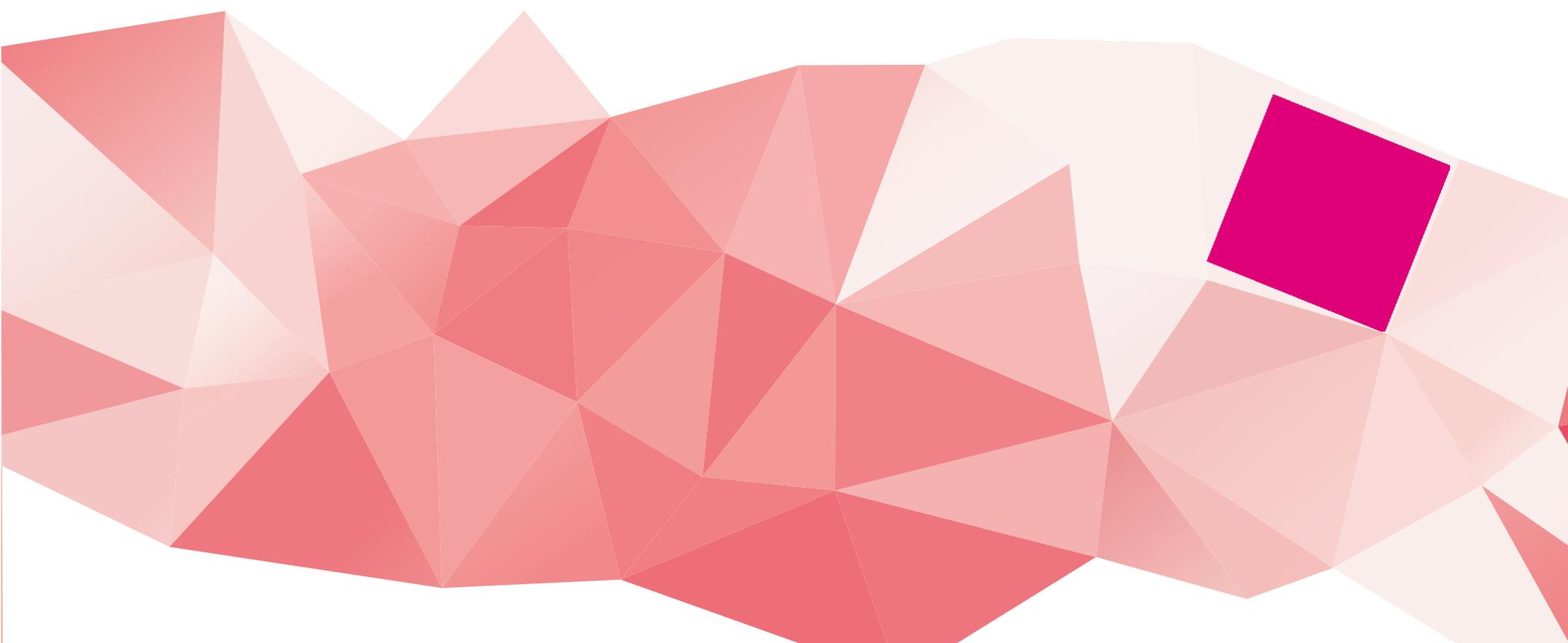
Multichannel delivery is a must in today's marketplace. Put simply, this means that your content is delivered to your target prospects through a variety of channels. A channel could be a website, an email, social media, or a display ad. It's important to insist on multiple channels of delivery because the prospects of today consume and locate content through an ever-growing array of channels. By isolating your program to a single channel (or two), you miss a vast opportunity to reach many new, relevant audiences for your content, and ultimately, your business.



Gain.

Multichannel delivery need not be prohibitively expensive. Choose a syndicator that automatically offers a large, multichannel network and partnerships. Specifically, make sure they leverage email, multiple websites, webinars, events/conferences, online professional networks, social media, mobile responsive webpages, e-newsletters, display advertising, and organizational affiliates to ensure your message gets in front of your audience when they are searching for information related to your offering.

If you'd like to learn more about how to improve your content syndication strategy, feel free to send us a note at b2bleads@netline.com, or you can also reach us at 408.340.2200.



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