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Guide To Generating B2B Leads For Landscaping Companies

How to Use this Guide

This guide is your blueprint to start growing predictable revenue for your landscape business. We're going to show you the exact lessons we've learned to generate B2B leads and how you can execute these practices in your marketing strategy.

You can skim this guide in 3 minutes or if you are serious about scaling your business past your current revenue plateau, you can take 15 minutes to read the whole thing through. We're going to show you the exact lessons we've learned to generate B2B leads and how you can apply them to your landscape business.

If you already have a team that can plan, strategize, and execute in the fast-paced digital marketing industry, they will be able to follow this guide to the letter and drive your revenue higher. If you don't, we're here to help.

So, let's dive in!

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Niching

“Try to be everything to everyone, you accomplish being nothing to anyone.” - Bonnie Gillespie

Before we get into the digital components of this approach, we must first talk about your strategy, the key to which is specificity. Of all of the pieces in this guide, **niching** and **positioning** are by far the most important.

Here’s an example.

Commercial Landscaping Business #1: Provides property maintenance for commercial and light industrial companies.

Commercial Landscaping Business #2: Provides property maintenance and pest control support for food production facilities in X State.

See the difference?

Not only is Business #2 more specific, it’s more meaningful to a specific audience. Business #1 on the other hand isn’t meaningful to any specific business type and therefore doesn’t stand out.

It may seem counterintuitive at first, but the idea that narrowing your customer base will increase profitability is incredibly powerful…and liberating. It means you get to work with the customers you’re most passionate about — the ones who pay you on time, trust your expertise, rave about your landscaping business, and refer you to other business owners. It also means spending less time and money trying to reach customers you wouldn’t want to work with in the first place, which can have a dramatic effect on your profitability.

“The riches are in the niches.” - Pat Flynn

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Niching

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Positioning

It gets better. The key to writing compelling content is to position your business as Customer-Focused and Problem-Oriented. When you're specific about who you're targeting, you can get specific about the problems you're solving for them.

What problems do commercial and light industrial companies have when it comes to property maintenance?

1. The current supplier is not showing up or getting the job done well
2. Someone may have had an injury or safety accident due to a lack of care on the property, i.e. slip and fall.

Now, what problems do food production companies have when it comes to property maintenance?

1. They have pests infiltrating their property and contaminating the food being produced.
2. Their current property maintenance company doesn't know about property design for pest control.
3. They are experiencing contamination and spoiled production batches.
4. The facility manager has never dealt with pests before.
5. Trucks are blowing tires as they pick up or deliver orders due to debris in the parking lot.

What problems do commercial landlords have when it comes to property maintenance?

1. Tenants complain about how they can't do their work/run their business
2. Tenant's customers are slipping and falling
3. There's nowhere to park
4. Tenant turnover is high due to poor tenant satisfaction
5. In the winter months, salt gets tracked inside
6. Commercial building owners deal with complaints all day

Niching

As you can see, these are very different types of problems. If you were the facilities manager of a food production company or commercial landlord, imagine visiting a website and seeing content that addresses these very specific problems. Wouldn't that be infinitely more compelling than seeing a generic property maintenance website?

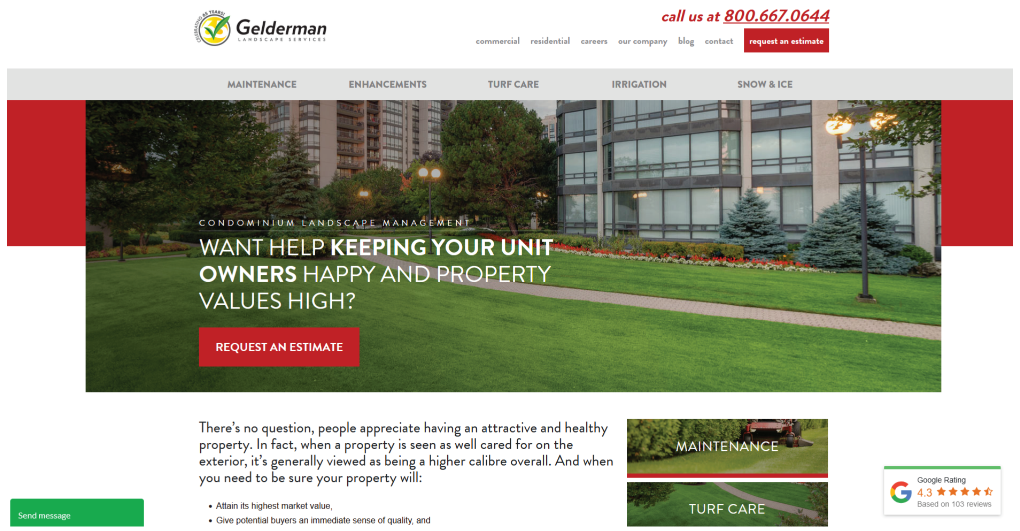
Now, you may be targeting a few customer segments, such as:

- Food Production
- Warehousing
- Condominiums
- Municipalities
- Colleges and Universities

Even if you have multiple segments, it's imperative that your website has dedicated sections, pages, and resources for each segment. The fewer, the better. There is more on why this is the case, but we'll leave that to another article on pricing and margin.

The following example is about vertical positioning, which refers to becoming specialized in one specific industry or business type.

This property maintenance company is focused on condominium owners and their board, as you can see from their copy:



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Niching

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Horizontal positioning, on the other hand, is about being THE solution for any business with a certain requirement. For example, you might be the best at property maintenance for large areas. You're the company of choice for someone with more than four hectares/acres of property that needs maintenance. This could be large sports fields, airports, large warehousing facilities, etc. The point is that you're the solution regardless of the industry.

These types of properties have their unique challenges and if you're positioned this way, you can speak to those very specific problems and become hyper-relevant to that customer.

Action Steps for Digital Marketing

Your Website

Specific pages of content about the audience you serve — and the problems you know they have — can demonstrate that you understand your B2B customer better than the average landscape company.

Use specific messaging to position yourself on your home pages.

Here's an example.

Commercial Landscaping for Food Producers in X State
Light Industrial Property Maintenance for Wholesale and Logistics Businesses in X Area

Search Engine Optimization

Prioritize your investment of time and money around your niche and dominate Google for a more narrow audience.

For example, use "Property maintenance for food production" instead of "property maintenance".

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Company-Focused vs. Customer-Focused

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It’s tempting to think that people choose to work with you because of the incredible features and benefits you offer. Many business owners fall into this trap. That’s why we’re constantly bombarded with company-focused messages about being “the greatest”, “the best”, “the top”, or “the #1”.

As harsh as it may sound, the reality is that no one cares about you. They care about two things, and two things only:

1 - Solving their own problems
2 - Accomplishing their own goals.

The quicker you come to terms with this reality, the quicker you can position your business to stand out and attract your core customer.

This is why niching is so important. It gives you the opportunity to get specific about the problems your customers are experiencing. People buy from people they like, know, and trust. People trust people that are like themselves. Have you ever travelled somewhere and met someone from your hometown, state, or province? Instant connection, instant degree of trust.

In a single glimpse, our job is to demonstrate that we understand our audience’s core customers and how we can solve their problems.

Here’s an example from Gelderman:

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Define Your Core Customer

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The first step you should take when working with a new business owner is gaining a crystal clear understanding of who their ideal customer is. We call these “Awesome Clients” (A-Client). Once an A-Client is defined, everything else falls into place. We know exactly who to market to and how to reach them. This is the foundation of generating a steady stream of qualified leads.

How to create an A-Client profile

Start by thinking of your ideal customers. You can think of one person specifically, or a combination of multiple people you’ve worked with. Give them a name and answer the following questions.

Let’s start with the B2B basics:

- What industry are they in?
- What business type are they a part of inside that industry?
- What is the size of their company in revenue, and/or staff?
- What role inside the organization do they have? What is their job title?
- Where are they located by city, region, or country?

Define Your Core Customer

Consider your core customers' interests. It's not enough to stop at the basic characteristics. You need to dig deeper. The more refined you can make your A-Client, the better you can finetune your messaging to appeal to them. Here are some things to consider:

- What problems do they experience everyday when it comes to what you deliver?
- What problems do they have that are unique to their role and industry?
- What are they trying to accomplish with their career?
- What is hard for them to do when it comes to managing your type of service?

From here you can figure out where to find them and how to reach them. You can create ads and landing pages that are targeted toward them specifically. You can write emails and social posts that describe their specific problems and appeal to their desires.

This isn't to say that you need to turn down business opportunities from customers outside of your core area of focus. It does mean that by niching, you're able to go deeper and attract more business from prospects who resemble your A-Clients.

Remember that it's better to go an inch wide and a mile deep than a mile wide and an inch deep. It will make all the difference.

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The Buyer Funnel

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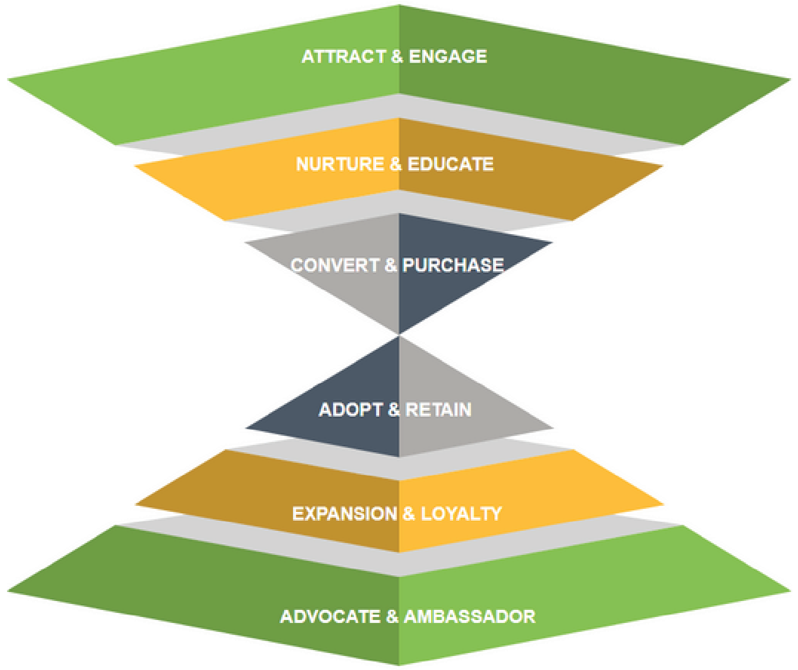
This is an important part of positioning your company for lead generation success. The vast majority of companies focus on the 3rd stage of the funnel — Convert & Purchase — while neglecting the earlier stages (see the diagram below). The issue with this approach is that it only addresses a limited part of the available market.

The goal is to line up your marketing content with every stage of the buyer funnel. The 1st and 2nd Stages are much larger than the 3rd, and therefore present a greater opportunity to capture market share.



1. **Attract & Engage:** Prospects are seeking information about their problem.
2. **Nurture & Educate:** Prospects are looking for a solution to their problem.
3. **Convert & Purchase:** Prospects are ready to make a decision and buy.
4. **Adopt & Retain:** Customers are experiencing their purchase.
5. **Expansion & Loyalty:** Customers are ready to buy more from you.
6. **Advocate & Ambassador:** Customers are telling others about you.

Become a Value-Oriented Partner

Once you become very familiar with your core customer — and you've been working with many people dealing with the same issues — you can start to help these customers in other ways. Property managers have issues with budgets — what insight can you share with them? You can start by asking these questions:

- What percentage of their budget should be put towards snow removal or garden maintenance?
- What type of insurance policy should they have or avoid?
- What else can you help them with outside of what you sell?

At Intrigue, we help our clients maximize their profitability. That means we not only help them generate more revenue, we help them keep more of what they make.

We do this by introducing our clients to a team of accountants, lawyers, and tax specialists who show them how to:
1) Utilize family trusts to maximize capital gains
2) Invest in holding companies with pre-tax money
3) Use life insurance as a long term investment vehicle

We don't get paid for facilitating these introductions, but it certainly strengthens our relationships. That's one example of how we add value outside of being their marketing partner.

Gated Content

We also offer free guides to help our clients grow — like the one you're currently reading. Guides and downloadable resources are a great way to share your expertise and offer value to your audience as a stepping stone to working with you.

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Become a Value-Oriented Partner

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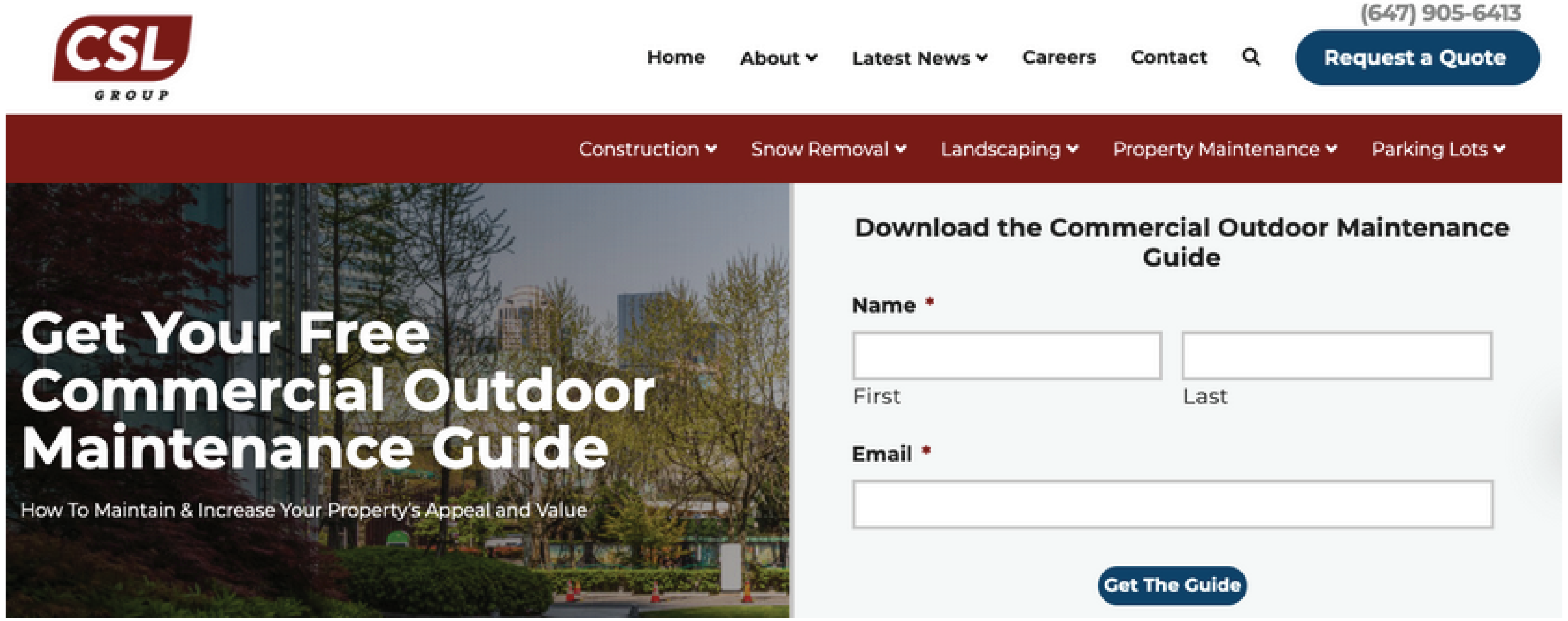
Where can you add value to the lives of the people you serve?

Once you identify these areas, you can build guides around them that act as gated content, meaning that users need to input their contact information in order to receive your offer.

Further, the guides can be broken into 5-7 articles or blog posts that live on your website and can be included in your email marketing. Each blog post can be broken down further into 2-5 LinkedIn posts. Now your guide can drive your content and lead generation strategy for the next several months.

Here is an example that we developed for a client of ours, CSL Group, on How to Maintain & Increase Your Property's Appeal & Value.



CRM
Customer Relationship Management

There are a lot of options when it comes to CRMs. Salesforce, HubSpot, Builder Trend, Zoho CRM, Jobber, LMN, Service Titan, and the list goes on!

The core reason to have one is to be able to see the interaction of each customer and prospect at every stage and in real time. The insights it provides allows you to offer an improved customer experience and make better data-driven decisions.

Clean data is at the heart of creating segmented and relevant content that can be delivered to the right person, at the right time, in the right way.

Can you see a report in less than 3 minutes of all of your active commercial clients? If yes, great! Does that report tell you:

- Who the signing contact is?
- What their job title is?
- What their email address is?
- What type of facility they manage?
- How many years they've been a customer?
- How much revenue the company generates?
- How many complaints have been logged by their organization?
- What type of work you've done for them?

Having all of this information in one place is priceless. If your key account manager has been working with an account for 5 years and then decides to move to Hawaii, it makes it easy for someone else to pick up the ball and run down the field.

Not only is this information valuable for sales and operations, it can also feed your marketing efforts.

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Let’s run a report:
Clients by revenue in descending order, highest to lowest

Include job title
Include facility type
Include years as customer
Include company revenue

Now we can see if there are any commonalities around your highest paying customers in terms of job title, facility type, and size of business. Why does this matter? Because we then use this information to build an email list, and reach out to folks via LinkedIn, using the key insights we have about our core customer’s problems and how we can help solve them!

Lead Scoring

If you have a database of contacts in your CRM, you can market to them via email, social, online advertising, and get them to your website. With systems like Hubspot and Salesforce, you can track the interactions your prospects and customers have with you and build a lead score. A lead score indicates how interested someone is in your business. You are able to assign points based on the type of interaction.

For example:

Email Open	=	1 pt
Email Click	=	5 pts
Click on an ad	=	2 pts
Visit to your contact page	=	7 pts
Registers for an event	=	25 pts
Requests a quote	=	50 pts

CRM
Customer Relationship Management

You can then set triggers to notify your sales staff once someone gets over 50 or 100 pts. Of course, there is a lot more that can be done with this information, but this guide is designed to give you an idea of what's possible.

The goal is to build your prospect database at scale and then score every interaction so when your sales team is reaching out to a list of 10,000 prospects, they can focus on the ones with the highest lead scores to start. It creates focus, and yes, it generates revenue faster!

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Email Marketing & Automation

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Email marketing is dead. Well, bad email marketing is dead. Email marketing done right can put lead generation on autopilot and generate hundreds of thousands of dollars in sales. Let's go through how!

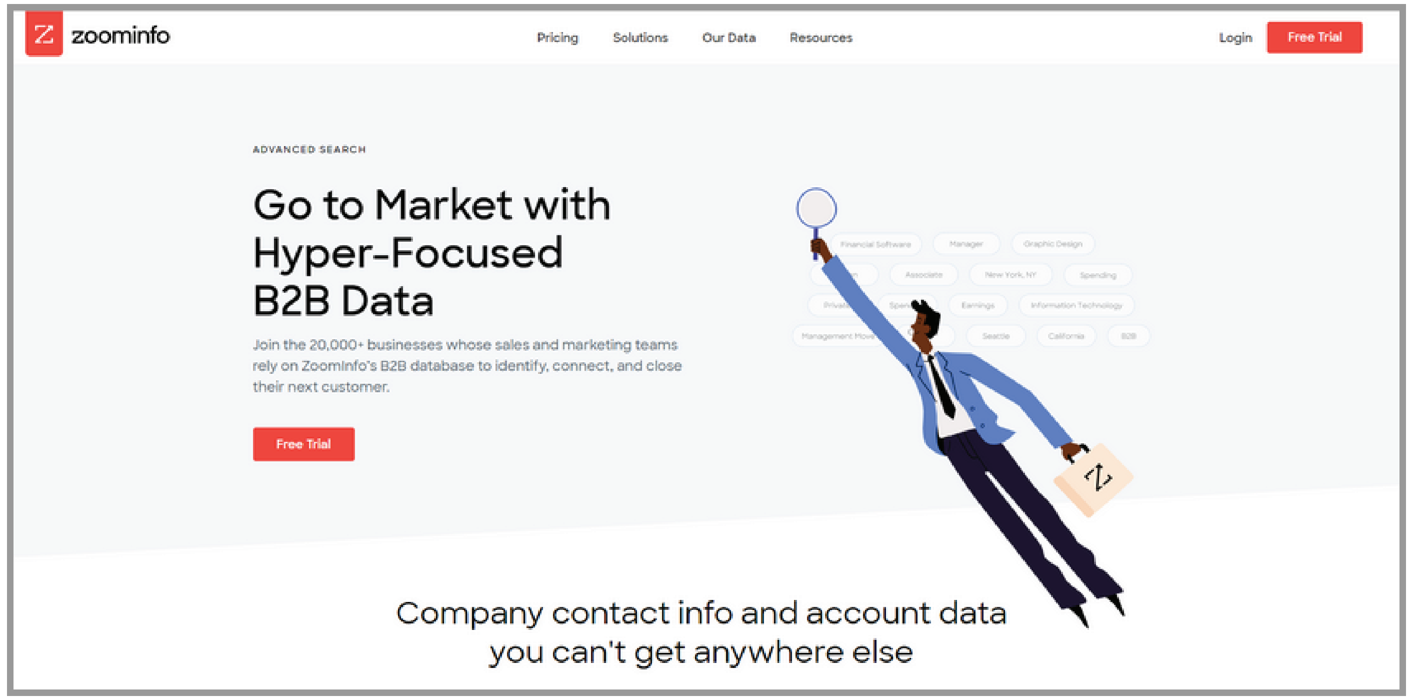
The List

Like we mentioned above, we can use job title, facility type, and annual company revenue to build a list of focused prospects.

The key to email lists is building them. We are not talking about spam here. We're talking about an ethical and scalable approach to growing your business and helping your customers.

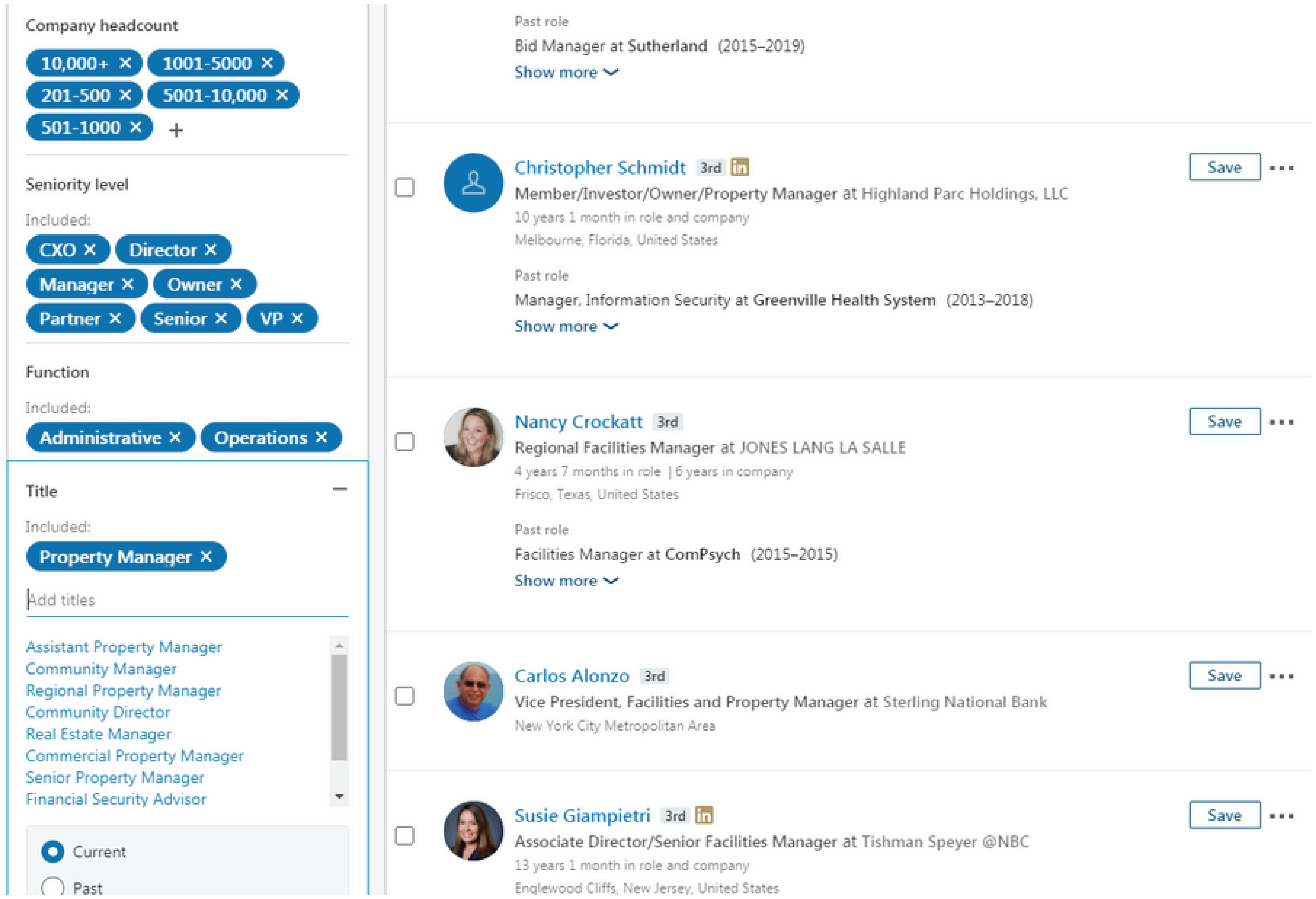
There are a number of ways to build lists, but for the purposes of this guide, we're touching on two:

1. Zoominfo - This is a database that you can pay to get access to either via subscription or via credits. It costs about $10,000 to get started, and you can usually get around 8,000 contacts for that investment.



Email Marketing & Automation

2. LinkedIn Sales Navigator - You can use industry, staff size, role, geography, function, and more filters on Linkedin Sales Navigator to build a lead list and start reaching out to targeted customers.



The idea is to build the list. If your list today is at 500 prospects, set a goal to get to 1000 by the end of next quarter and assign an owner to ensure it happens. Once you get there, set a new target. Once you've built your email list to 5000+ prospects, you only need a 1% conversion rate to acquire 5 new customers. Let's dive into what to say to these potential new clients!

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Sending Messages

Whether it's through email or directly through LinkedIn, we always need to remember that **adding value and insight is the key.**

There are a lot of great resources when it comes to copywriting. Great Leads is a classic and one of our favourites for direct response marketing. One of the key principles in this book is:

The less people know about you, the more indirect you need to be. The more they know about you, the more direct you can be.

So, if you're sending emails to people you haven't met before, this needs to be taken into consideration, and we get back to being customer-centric and problem-focused.

Sending articles, resources, or an invitation to an exclusive event that addresses the most common and painful problems your core customer experiences is going to go a lot farther than asking if someone is interested in getting a quote.

LinkedIn Outreach

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LinkedIn is without a doubt the leading social media platform for business. There are almost 130,000,000 users on LinkedIn in North America. Marketing 101: be where your customers are. They are here. The question is how to use the platform properly and effectively? Let's dive in!

Rule #1

People hate to be sold, and love to buy. LinkedIn is a social platform, it helps you connect with people. Trying to sell directly in your first interaction can be similar to meeting people at a tradeshow, giving them your business card, and telling them why they should buy from you. No one likes that, so let's keep in mind the human approach to sales remains true to LinkedIn.

Your Profile

We're not going to spend a lot of time here. Fill out your profile by taking 30 minutes to add information. Ensure you have a good headshot. Write your about section with your A-Client in mind.

Tell them why you care about serving your industry. Tell them how you do it differently than others, and why it's important to you that you do it that way.

Your profile doesn't have to be perfect — it needs to be professional.

If you have any questions, you can book a free LinkedIn learning session here.

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LinkedIn Outreach

Connection Requests

Now that your profile is good to go, you need to start building your network. There are 3 primary reasons for this:

1. You can see more information about the people your connections know.
2. More people will see your content.
3. It builds the foundation for referrals and introduction requests.

LinkedIn gives you a hand by showing you contacts that you probably know, then you send a request to connect. If you know them, great, press the button and move on. If you don't know them, you can add a note and simply write, "I saw your linkedin profile and thought it would be good to connect." You should see about 50% of the contacts you don't know accept your request with that message.

***Action: send 20 requests per week. That's almost 1000 requests every year. At 50% acceptance rate, your network will have over 2500 contacts in 5 years.

Direct Messages

We can break up this approach into 2 buckets:

1. Sending messages to people you know.
2. Sending messages to people you don't know.

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Sending messages to people you know

You can be more direct here. A good approach is to send a message looking for feedback, such as:

Hi Sue, as a leader in the manufacturing industry, your perspective would be appreciated on a new program we're rolling out for XYZ landscaping company.

We have a new approach to help solve problem 1, 2, and 3 when it comes to property management at manufacturing facilities.

My question is, do you even experience those problems?

Thank you for taking the time Sue.

If she replies, "yes we do", great! It's an opening to set up a quick call to understand her issues more.
If she replies "No, we don't" great! It's an opportunity to set up a quick call to better understand what issues she is experiencing. It's simple, and it works.

Sending messages to people you don't know

This requires a bit more tact...and resources. Going back to the marketing funnel we summarized, we have to assume that the majority of your market is not in a final, ready-to-buy stage. So, our job is to help them understand their problems better and provide insights into what they can do about them.

Here are 3 types of content you can send to someone you don't know:

1. Industry Best Practice articles.
2. Guides to Best Practices, like this one.
3. Invitations to exclusive events (the best kind).

If you want to learn more about how to bring this all to life, book a free LinkedIn Learning session here.

Peer to Peer Masterminds

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B2B relationships are meant to be meaningful, long-lasting, and profitable. The best B2B relationships are not transactional, they're consultative and partner-oriented. This approach is used to position you as an industry expert.

The approach is simple and often overlooked. Let's break it down quickly and then go over why it's so impactful.

The idea is to host groups of 8-10 prospects (with a client or two in the mix) for a 60 minute role-specific or industry-specific roundtable discussion.

Here are two examples:

1. Facilities Management Peer to Peer Mastermind
2. Food Production CFO Peer to Peer Mastermind

The description is as follows:

Join XYZ Landscaping and Property Maintenance as we bring together leading Facility Managers from across (Your Region) to share best practices, challenges, and solutions with one another in a confidential peer environment.

Topics of discussion will include:

- Best Practice Property Management Strategies
- Optimizing Budgets and Overhead Allocation
- Challenges and Opportunities for Production Utilization
- (Insert the most painful and common issues your clients are dealing with)

Peer to Peer Masterminds

You are now positioned as a curator, not as a seller. People want to hear from their peers, and you're facilitating meaningful connections. It's authentic because 90% of the content covered in the session will come from the attendees, and not a presentation from you.

Now, of course, you can present. The idea is to quickly cover what you're seeing as the most common problems in the industry and provide some insights, stories, or experiences surrounding those issues. You can then open it up to the room to introduce themselves and share their biggest challenges and wins over the last 6-12 months.

The beauty of this approach is that it also informs you and your team on the biggest issues your potential clients are dealing with! Are you positioned to help them, or do you need to shift gears to maintain relevance and a leadership position in your industry?

Using the amazing email list you've built, you can invite people to your event. These are perfect first connections and messages for Linkedin, and also provide a meaningful, low risk next step for anyone you meet at a trade show or industry conference.

If you'd like to see one first hand, you can register for Intrigue's Landscaping Peer to Peer Mastermind here.

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Conclusion

We hope this guide has been helpful in changing the way you think strategically about your business and your customers. There is a lot jammed into this resource, but we tried to keep it concise so you can find a nugget or two that you can start implementing right away, then build on that momentum.

We take all of our clients through these steps and would love to help you if you're looking for guidance on any or all of it.

If you ever want to talk to someone from our team, contact us here.

We wish you much success in scaling your landscaping business!

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***Pro Tip - The Economics to Lead Generation

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This is critical! Understanding what you are willing to pay for a qualified lead does two things:

1. Establishes a budget
2. Creates a metric of success

The idea is to build a goal of Cost per Qualified lead. Here's how it works:

What is your average revenue per year of a commercial customer? Let's use $50,000 for the sake of simplicity.

What is your average gross margin/year/customer? Let's assume 40%

So, you're making $20,000 in Gross Margin year 1 on a new client.

Now let's look at your Lead Funnel and Conversion Rate.

Let's say that out of 10 leads/prospects, 2 become clients. That means we need 5 leads to get a customer.

How much are you willing to pay to get a new customer?

If you were comfortable breaking even on a new customer in year one, because you know they'll stay with you for the next 5-7 years, then we could spend $4,000 per qualified lead.

Let's say you want to make money in your first year, then we could afford $2,000 per lead, and pay $10k to buy a new customer.

***Pro Tip - The Economics to Lead Generation

You can lower your cost per lead, but that will typically lower the quality of lead you receive, and then lower your conversion rate. This is super important. B2B clients are valuable, that means B2B leads are valuable. Therefore, they aren't cheap. Getting the attention of these types of clients isn't easy and comes with a price tag.

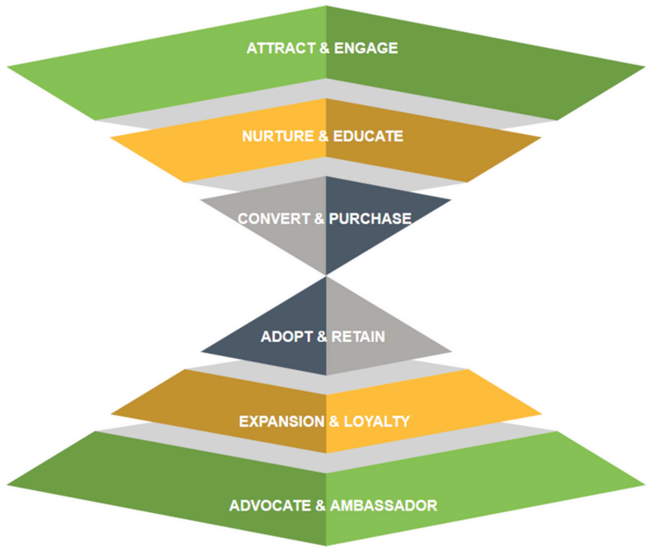
You can equate it to your sales team. Let's say you're paying someone $100k/yr to acquire new business. Their quota should be a minimum of 3:1 Gross Margin to Salary. If your Gross Margin is 40%, then you would expect a sales quota of:

$100k x 3 = $300k in GM/0.40 = $750,000
Salary Revenue Quota

So, whether you use a sales team, digital marketing, or a combination of both, you need to establish a goal for success and metrics to track progress.

We've helped dozens of landscape companies grow and scale, and hundreds of entrepreneurs do the same. This guide is designed to give you some new ways to think, along with key actions you can take to improve your ability to attract great B2B prospects.

If you ever want any help, let us know. We're always here to empower leaders like you and strengthen the community of landscape business owners.



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