

Five Points for Better Internet Lead Acquisition

Know what you are buying.

- Work with providers you trust.
- Clarify the type and quality of your lead channels; then price your leads accordingly (not all Internet leads are created equal).
- Understand your providers' lead generation processes and test them yourself.
- Make sure the Internet traffic comes from reputable channels that do not mislead your inquiries.
- Monitor that your school is presented properly.
- Ensure legal agreements (IOs) clearly define: the type of lead, how the lead is generated, return policy, data ownership and termination of services schedules.
- Explicitly detail and include all your rules for compliance in your terms with vendors:
 - Compliance with all branding and accreditation guidelines.
 - Restrictions where ads can run (no site with objectionable content, etc.).
 - If possible, explicitly list the sites or channels where leads will come from.
 - Include Keyword restrictions on use of your trademark names.
- Reserve the right to withhold payment for leads if there is a compliance issue or violation of your key terms.

Control what you accept.

- Don't waste time contacting leads that don't meet your criteria.

- Filter out bad data (missing fields, fake data, duplicates, etc.).
- Filter out leads that don't meet your criteria (volume caps, zip codes, level of education, etc.).
- Notify providers in real-time about invalid (unacceptable) leads.
- Consider third-party verification, data appending and/or scoring of data.

Contact leads immediately.

- You are competing with other schools (and other marketers) for this lead's attention.
- Call within the first 5 minutes of lead submitting the form. (You are 10 times less likely to contact them after the first hour.) If possible, automate this process so lead goes directly to call center on delivery.
- Send automatic auto-responder email to every lead (monitor if these emails bounce, opt-out, report as spam, etc.).

Get credit for returns.

- Vendors typically give credit for bad leads—take it!
- Providers need returns of individual leads so they can optimize their efforts.
- Submit returns to vendors immediately.

Track & report performance.

- Track with as much granularity as possible (vendor, site, form variation, etc.).

- Create extra fields so providers can pass additional tracking info (SubIDs and timestamps).
- Reports should be updated in real-time.
- Provide access to reports for your partners and vendors.
- Continually monitor and adjust your buys based on conversions and cost per start (be as granular as possible analyzing everything by sub-vendor and traffic channel).
- Use techniques such as adding additional questions, adjusting caps, adjusting geographical targeting by program or filtering criteria to improve the quality of poorly converting leads.
- Continually review where your leads are coming from: check placements, submit

test leads, and search for your school to see who's advertising using your brand name.

For more information on these topics or the topics covered:

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