

Lead Management

Cutting the Fat From Fulfillment

When was the last time you took a close look at the fulfillment packets you send to your sales leads? If it's closer to last millennium than last month, you might be surprised what you find.

Companies seem to naturally drift toward super-sized packets of information as new products are added and new brochures are printed. When starting up new lead management programs, we often see literature sets that need to be shipped in boxes rather than mailed in envelopes. And true fulfillment costs are often hidden across multiple line items in multiple cost centers — brochure production in marketing, postage in the shipping department, package preparation in sales, etc.

It is also common for companies to send this mother lode of brochures, catalogs, and data sheets to every inquiry — without regard for the nature or type of the inquiry. So the same \$.00 worth of printed material with \$.75 of postage is sent to the magazine bonus lead — someone who has not even expressed interest in your product — as to the person who visited your Web site and specifically requested information on one product.

In short, an unexamined fulfillment program in a company with a sizable lead flow can result in tens of thousands of wasted dollars every year. Here are some key things to think about when you decide it's time for a leaner, more effective fulfillment program:

- **Recognize that Less is More.** A well-crafted, personalized cover letter, along with a company capabilities brochure and one or two pieces of product literature that specifically address the prospect's inquiry, is far more effective than a folder stuffed with every brochure and data sheet you have in your warehouse. By providing your Web site address and contact information for your local sales rep, you can quickly empower your prospect to get additional materials if needed.
- **Gear It Towards Specific Interests.** Your fulfillment process should be smart enough to recognize what marketing initiative the prospect is responding to and have packets geared towards each of these areas. You can also reengineer those lead capture mechanisms that are under your control — Web site, call-ins, and trade shows — to gather this product interest information at the point of inquiry.
- **Incorporate Electronic Alternatives.** For many companies, it's important to give access to complete catalog-like information to as many potential prospects as possible. But by placing this information on your Web site and/or on a CD rather than including it in the packet, you can accomplish this goal at a much lower cost.
- **Tie in Your Reps.** Many companies choose to deliver detailed catalogs only after their local sales rep has had a chance to talk with the prospect and more fully understand their needs. This can also be an excellent way for the rep to make that first contact.
- **Add B Quality Packets.** Even if you choose to send a high quality/cost literature packet, don't do so for every lead. For example, you can send magazine bonus leads a letter and capabilities brochure along with a secondary response form that they can use to request additional literature.

In summary, be intentional about your lead fulfillment. Recognize the interests and potential of each prospect and invest your budget dollars appropriately.

