

Aly Goulet:

Hello everybody. How are we? So here's the first thing that I want you to know. This is what I almost named my presentation. Everything You Already Know About Lead Generation is Mostly True. I could have ended there. But just kidding, that's not really actually the end. But I'm kidding, but I'm kind of not kidding. The thing that I'm really tired of is seeing the way that all copywriters who know anything about anything should do their lead generation, because there's not one right way to do this. And I don't know if anyone else in this room has done this, but I've definitely bought one of those before and went, "Oh, there's no fiber of my being that wants to do that." I don't like it. So, that's what we're going to talk about today.

The real title of my presentation is From Bleak to Fully Booked, How to Reframe Your Lead Generation and Build a Consistent Pipeline. Because it's really about figuring out what's going to work for you and your business and what you're actively going to want to do.

So really quick, just wanted to touch on how we got here. So I started before I graduated college. I had zero connections and Google was my BFF because that's what was necessary. To be clear, this is not a photo from my actual college graduation. This is a photo from the Disney college program that I completed. True story. I almost quit my job that day and I didn't so that I could go take this photo and not get kicked out of the event. It wasn't worth it. So then after, as much as it breaks my heart, I love Disney world, but I didn't want to be there anymore. So I had to move on, I had to make money somehow.

I started pitching on job boards and that was really working for me. I picked up my first few clients and then I learned what cold pitching was and I got really good at it and everything changed. Within the span of a year, I was able to 5X my freelance income. And just to be transparent, that was also because that was the first year I went full time after college so that was a huge help in that but the cold pitching was still a huge part of it.

And today I work with SaaS and IT companies. I have a small team and I've tried a lot of different lead generation methods because as my business has grown and evolved, the way that I do lead gen has had to change too. And don't worry, this presentation is not about cold pitching, because I know several of you in this room would rather stick pins in your eyes than rely on that as your lead gen strategy, so that's not what we're going to talk about. But just for context, my problem was that the more my cold emails worked, the more that I struggled with consistent lead generation, because my process required me to do a lot of research and to personalize the emails.

I think it happens to a lot of us, right? We fill our plates up with client work and then we can't do that thing that we were doing before, even if it was working. And so, what do we do? There might be other situations where we need to switch up lead gen too. Maybe you want bigger clients. Maybe you're offering a new service and so you need to position yourself in a different way. Or maybe you just hate it, that's another option on the list. But then the big question is how do you actually make that happen?

Can I have a show of hands, again, in this room of who is struggling with lead generation right now? Okay, a lot of you, no pressure. Fine. Okay. So how are we going to do that?

Here's what we're going to cover. So we're going to start from the bottom and we're going to talk about what you actually have to have in place before you start lead gen. Because if you don't have that covered before the leads come in, it's all for not, right. So we're going to start there. And then we're going to talk about why common lead gen knowledge actually sets us up for failure and doesn't put us in the right place to be able to do this. Then we're going to talk about how to make leg gen effective and consistent. And then finally, I'm warning you now, part four is going to go really, really fast. But when I asked in the Facebook group, what everyone's biggest struggles were around this, they were like, "How do I start? How much research do I do? How do I even talk to people?" So we're going to talk about that at the end.

Okay. So first let's talk about before the lead gen happens. What should we be doing? What should we be thinking about? So the first thing that we need to do is we need to get clear on our people and we need to get clear on our offer. This is actually data from the copywriter club and it shows in a survey that they did that copywriters who have one niche earn 96% more than those who don't. And copywriters who work in several different niches, so they specialize in a couple of different things, they make 50% more. I don't necessarily subscribe to the belief that everyone needs to niche right away but the numbers don't lie. This is the reality of the situation. So you have to at least know what your favorite projects are, is a bare minimum. If someone says, "Hey, what do you do?" And you're like, "All of it." They're not going to refer you for anything. So, you have to have something to be able to say at the very least.

And then you want to get clear on your people. So it's who, what, when, where, why. Who are your clients? What do they need? There's a little bit of nuance to that and we'll touch on that in a bit. But when do they need you specifically? You were just seeing Ash and she was talking about pre-launch. Maybe you know someone who has a launch coming up and that's when they really need you to come in with that strategy, for example. We'd have to figure that out.

Then you have to figure out where you can reach them and why they should work with you. But just know that all of this is flexible and it can evolve over time, but you should at least have that baseline to start with before you move on.

The second thing you have to do is you have to prove that you can actually do the work. So this is data from Semrush. They actually ... this as this thing where it's like a content study, but they combined it with copywriting. If you want to take up that debate, don't take it up with me. This was their study. But 49% of people say that it's hard to find writers with hands on experience and knowledge of the subject and 41% of people say that quality is not high enough. I think sometimes for all of us in this room, we miss that because we know we're good writers. We actively invest in our skills and a lot of us are really good researchers. But at the end of the day, these are things that our clients are worried about. So we have to prove that we can do the work.

And there are a lot of ways that you can do that. These are a few ways. So you can show testimonials, if you have solid results that you can point to, you can create case studies. And then your portfolio is also a big piece of being able to show people that you can do what you say you can do. This is what my portfolio looks like right now. As you heard from Rob, I co-created a WordPress plugin because I was struggling to find something that worked for me. Not saying everyone needs to do that, it was really hard.

But the thing that I learned in building this was that not only was it important for me to give clients access to my work, it was just as important for me to have access to that catalog of work. Even if you're not a person who doesn't want to have a publicly accessible portfolio, in my experience, several times, just being able to quickly point to that piece of work is the thing that pushes the prospect over the edge when they're like, "Oh yeah, you get it. You know the thing." So that's really, really important.

And then you need a response plan because 50% or more of sales goes to the vendor that responds first and the average lead response time is 47 hours. 47 hours may sound like a long time, but I definitely know I've let leads go longer than that without replying to them. So yeah, you need to speed it up to be able to secure those clients. So here are a couple of ideas about how you can do that.

You can save templates of your common responses. You can create a services brochure or a rate sheet, because of course, one of the most common questions probably is, do you offer this and what do you charge for it? Another thing that you can do is you can configure lead notifications. I'm going to show you what that looks like in a second for me, but so that you can see leads as soon as they come in.

So here's an example of a zap that I have set up. I do my discovery calls in TidyCal. And so every time I have a lead come in that books a discovery call, I get a text message that says, "Hey, you just had someone book this call," so that I can go look at the form, see what's going on. I'm not saying that's the right solution for everyone and also this is linked to my Google voice number, not my personal phone number, so I can always turn these notifications off. But that's one way that I keep that visibility into what's happening.

Okay and that was the before. So now let's talk about why commonly gen knowledge sets all of us up for failure. And it really comes down to inbound versus outbound. I don't find this idea overly helpful. If you need a little bit of a refresher or you don't know, inbound is attracting customers by creating valuable content. Outbound is when you increase the demand by reaching out to your potential customers yourself.

Here's the thing though. We have a lot of thoughts and opinions around inbound and outbound, which is where I think that things get a little less than useful. So outbound is only for newbies and inbound is for

experts, right? Outbound opens you up to rejection, so it's really scary. But inbound gives you the power to reject others because they're coming to you. Outbound takes a lot of effort, it's a lot of work. And inbound, once you got it rolling, it lets you sit back and just chill with all your cash.

And we can debate the merits of this all day if this is what inbound is. I don't know if anyone else just sees Ducktails in their head when they're thinking about inbound, but I do. We could debate back and forth whether those perceptions are true, false. I don't think it really matters because at the end of the day, that's not how it goes. If you've ever explored inbound, outbound, how does this work you know all of it is work. So at the end of it, none of it matters. And so, one of two things happens once we come to that realization. We're aimless and we just do all of the things and nothing sticks and nothing works and then we're like, "What's happening." Or again, I was alluding to earlier, we fill up our plates with client work. We don't have time to do anything else and so we just let that pipeline dry up until we're freaking out. And then we got to start all over again.

So we have to reframe the way that we think about lead generation in order to build the consistent pipeline that we want and take a lot of that stress out of our business. So the way that I've done this is by thinking about it as active and semi passive. I do specify semi passive, because I believe that nothing is truly passive, but we can take steps to move things in that direction. So to do this, you make a list of lead generation channels and activities that you can think of. I said earlier, everything you already know about lead generation is true. You can find leads on Facebook and Instagram and Twitter, wherever. Make a list of all those places and then make a list of all the activities that you can do on those platforms in order to generate leads in that way. I just want to warn you that I'm about to show you a big giant list as an example of how I did this. Please, don't try to write everything on this slide down. For my avid note takers in the room, please don't.

So this is an example of a list that I made. So some activities that you can do on LinkedIn, optimize your profile, InMail outreach, referrals, you can join groups, you can attend events, you can have coffee chats, Instagram, optimize your profile, do stories and reels, things like that. So you go through and you make a list of these channels and all the different activities within these channels. And the purpose of this is because for me, for example, referrals were not part of my business for a long time. It's because the only activity that came up in my mind when I thought about it was attending in-person events, which seven years ago, I was absolutely not going to do. So it is hilarious that we are now here. But yeah, so this is why I say make a list of those individual activities because having coffee chats and joining communities, I was like, "Oh, I can do that" once I realized that was an option. Like, "That's a thing that I can do."

And the other thing that this helps you do is eliminate what is not for you. So I, for example, am comically bad at Instagram? I'm not on Instagram, just yeah, to be clear, no. That doesn't mean that it doesn't work for some people, but I was pretty sure that my audience wasn't there and it's not for me. That's pretty much all I can say. Just big no. Decide what you'll do. Pick two or three activities from that list that you made and make it happen for the next 30 to 90 days. I'm not just committing to being on LinkedIn. What are you doing specifically on LinkedIn? Because if you [inaudible 00:14:13] block on your calendar, you're going to end up scrolling through the feed for 30 minutes and getting nothing done.

So here's the condensed version of my list and the activities that I picked. So I decided that I was going to optimize my LinkedIn profile, add more connections, try posting content, join groups in my field and then have coffee chats with people in those groups. And then the question you want to ask yourself after period of time is, did you gain traction? Now you do have to use your judgment here because traction doesn't always mean a sale, right? If you're posting blog content, for example, you might not get a sale after 30 days. But are you getting traffic? Are you getting good comments? Are people paying attention? If you are doing cold emails and you don't get any responses or a sale or anything after 30 days, that may be where you start getting worried. So just use your judgment.

So here's examples of what worked for me. Optimizing my profile on LinkedIn, worked really well. Adding more connections, joining communities, having coffee chats. You'll notice that posting content on LinkedIn did not make it over to this new list of what worked. Again, not because it doesn't work, but because I was having a really hard time with it and I just found that in comparison to all these other things that were working at the time, I wasn't going to invest time in trying to post content too, when I was struggling with it so much.

So once you're at this stage, when you've figured out what is working for you, when you put the effort and the energy into it, you can begin to determine the passive potential for these activities that you're doing. And so here's what that looked like for me. I know these screenshots probably look really tiny. You're like, "What does that even say?" But so optimizing my profile. A lot of people think of optimizing as something, you just do it and then if you did it well, you show up in search more and then you just move on with your life. But the interesting thing was that once I optimized my profile, I actually got access to more analytics on LinkedIn and I found that I could see more and how many times I was showing up in search. On the surface, I was like, "Oh great. My searches increased a lot. A lot more people are finding me." This is what my search analytics look like now. But initially when I looked, I found out that I was showing up for the term "intern" a lot when people were searching for that.

So yeah, I had the volume but I didn't want to show up for that. I was doing something correctly, because people were finding me, but yeah, not for that. So I knew that I had to continually make tweaks. And so I will still go back and look at these analytics. Am I being found for the right things? Has that changed? Do I need to optimize my profile again? So I leverage analytics to be able to be my gauge of how do I help this continue to work for me?

And then here's another example of moving to semi passive, adding LinkedIn connections. I don't recommend that you copy down this connection message word for word, because it's about finding something that works for you first, but when I was manually sending out LinkedIn connection messages, this is the message that worked really well for me. I took it to an automation tool and then I could do searches in LinkedIn and send these connection requests automatically and it was working. I got a lot of connections on LinkedIn. Which also helped me show up higher in search, because when you're connected to more people, you show up higher.

SpeakeBut then you'll find depending on the type of lead generation that you're doing, there are some things that you just can't move to passive. For my case, I suppose you could try to outsource people or someone to find communities for you to join, but I mean, barring some crazy advancement in technology you can't make coffee chats passive, as far as I know. So I had to make this decision of, "Okay, this was working for me. Is it working enough for me to make the decision to actively invest my time in this and put this on my calendar?" It was but you have to make that decision because when you can move all these things to more passive, you have to be really intentional about where you're spending your active time.

Okay? So then we get into ... So you know all this. You know what's working for you. You understand what's happening. You've found some things that are helping you fill that pipeline, but where we still struggle is the consistency. And so to motivate ourselves to do that, we have to know what our numbers are. And so I'm going to go into a little bit of that. Warning, there's some math involved. I'm sorry.

So first you want to look into your goals. How many hours do you want to work every month? How much money do you want to make every month? And ideally out of the number of leads that you talk to, how many do you want to close? What do you want your lead close rate to be? If you say a hundred percent, that's ambitious. Wouldn't recommend it, but you could try. And so you could ... Don't write down these numbers. I have a resource that I'll give you at the end, but this is just a walkthrough, an example.

So let's say you wanted to work 80 hours a month and you wanted to make \$10,000 and you wanted to close 50% of your leads. That's the intention that you're setting for yourself. Then you go into, what is the reality in your business, right now? You know your goals, but what's actually happening. So to figure out if you're going to reach those goals, you need to know what is your average project value? What is the average time that you're spending on each project? How many leads do you currently have coming in every single month? How many leads do you close every single month and how much recurring revenue do you have? So digital product sales, retainers, anything like that? These are just, again, sample numbers.

Let's say average project value, \$2500. 20 hours per project. You have 10 leads come in. You're closing three. Your recurring revenue is zero. If you were to do that math out, these would be your results. So you would be working only 60 hours, which is great because you said that you wanted to work 80. But you'd be making less than you wanted and you'd be closing fewer leads than you wanted to. In order to meet those original intentions, you would need 14 leads and four projects. There's a reason why I didn't put the actual mathematical formula on this slide and it's because I would repeat it back to you wrong even if I was looking. So I created a spreadsheet for you, it's not an Optin, I will give it to you at the end. But yeah, just know that was not some weird, "And now go fill out the formula yourself and figure it out for your business." I will give it to you. I just wasn't going to repeat it to you.

So this is just a quick preview of what the resource looks like. You can answer eight questions. There's some sample values in the spreadsheet just to show you where things go. And then what it will spit out

at the end for you is if you're meeting your goals in those three categories, it will turn green. If you are not, it will turn red so you will know there are things for you to do.

And then lastly, as promised, we're going to talk about really quickly, four steps to low pressure lead conversations so we can stop stressing ourselves out. So here's what those steps are. The first one is creating a genuine connection. So for example, if this is cold outreach, please, please, please, don't say in the first line of your email, "Oh, I saw you just got funding." Don't, don't, don't. I've done it, so I'm not going to pretend that I am so far above it, that I've never done it, but I'm just telling you don't do it. Come up with a better reason to reach out to people, for example, than they got funding.

Okay and then you want to bring value to the conversation. That could mean a lot of things. That could mean you're educating them on something. That could just mean you're being a listening ear somehow. Be a human and show up in the way that feels the most authentic to you and bring value in the best way that you can to that conversation.

Three, might be the most important, in my opinion. You're working to understand, don't assume. So a lot of people ask me, "Well, how much research am I supposed to do? I need to know their business." And honestly, unless someone has made a social post about it, or you have an in at the company, you are never going to know for sure what they think the problem is or what they want to solve. Even if you know from your knowledge of best practices that they need to fix, whatever the thing is. So we're making our best educated guess, but we're not making an assumption.

And then lastly, make the smallest, sensible ask that you can make. So if you're doing outreach, the ask is not, "Hey, do you want to open a \$5,000 retainer with me?" Maybe instead of that it's "Hey, I'm wondering if you'd be open to working with a freelance copywriter." Or maybe it's "Hey, I would love to just discuss what I've mentioned here for 10 minutes on a quick chat. Would you be open to that?" Because if you can get that, yes, they're going to be more likely to continue the conversation with you.

And that's it. So thanks for having me. Here's where you can find all the things.