



Connect Once:

Four ways to make your lead generation marketing simple and effective *now*.

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Introduction

Online lead generation is the fastest growing segment in online advertising. In a cautious post dot com era, marketers are focused on deploying campaigns that can deliver high volumes of new customers and drive revenue. Online lead generation offers great potential for publishers and advertisers to fulfill the promise of response driven marketing.

However, setting up and maintaining a lead generation campaign can be a difficult, time consuming and expensive process. Below, we will take a look at the problems faced by lead generation marketers and offer four tangible solutions publishers, advertisers and agencies can implement now to make their lead generation marketing simple, secure and efficient.

Lead Generation: Exploding... and Chaotic

In the 2006- 2007 time frame, the online lead generation market grew at 71% YTY - more than twice as fast as the online advertising market.¹ Marketers spent \$1.3 billion on lead generation in 2006--more than doubling the \$753 million spent in 2005, and making up 8% of all online ad dollars spent last year.

A 2006 b2b industry survey² reveals that 63% of marketers placed customer acquisition at the top of their agenda. "Branding" was a distant second. (19.5%).

However, marketers haven't warmed up to online lead generation to the degree they have with other new forms of advertising such as search engine marketing. In yet another industry study, 47% of b2c marketers surveyed³ said that their businesses are not effectively exploiting online lead generation as a way of growing their business.

Why this gap between promise and reality? This might be because deploying lead generation campaigns present publishers, advertisers and advertising agencies with serious difficulties on a number of fronts:

- Cumbersome campaign setups
- Disparate lead data formats
- Inefficient reporting and follow up marketing mechanisms
- Lack of campaign transparency

In this white paper, we will examine four ways that publishers, advertisers and agencies can leverage new technologies to make lead generation simple and efficient. First, we will take a closer look at the most common problems faced by lead generation marketers today.

¹ IDC 2006

² BtoB Magazine Marketing Priorities and Plans Survey, 2007

³ IAB/PWC Internet Ad Revenue Report

1. Cumbersome campaign setups

Leads generated on a publisher's web site have to be transmitted to the advertiser. However, there exist no common standards for transmitting lead data in the marketplace. Some advertisers want lead data delivered by email, others prefer HTTP Post, while still others label FTP as their delivery of choice.

As a result, publishers have to set up each and every lead generation campaign from scratch – a process that can take up to two days or more. (Contrast this with search engine marketing where campaigns can be set up in as little as fifteen minutes!) This causes problems for advertisers and agencies that consequently have a longer time-to-market.

“It can get to be an extremely time consuming process,” says Doug Colbeck, General Manager of Hillclimb Media. “And considering that my best technical resources are involved in setting up these campaigns, it can get to be a very expensive one. My technical staff should really be spending their time in producing billable work.”

Mr. Colbeck's problem can be represented graphically as below:

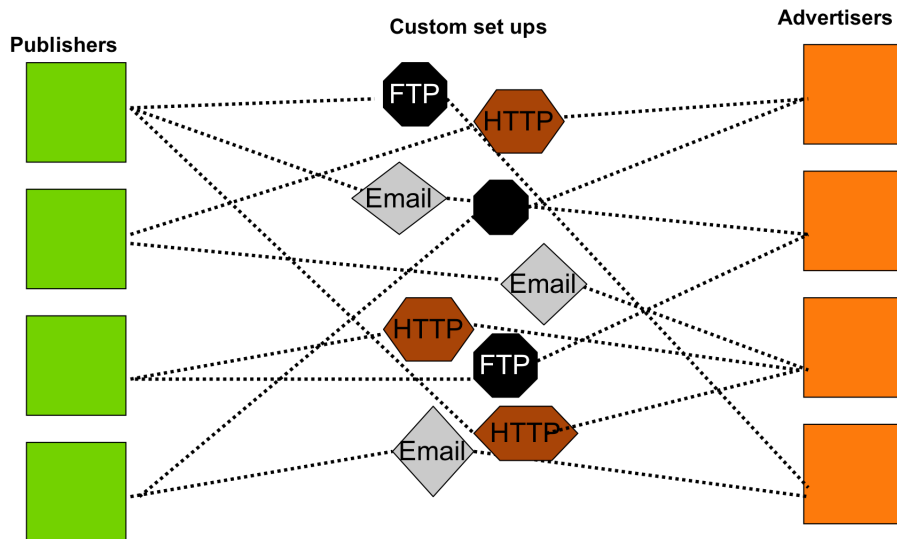


Figure 1: Lead Generation Campaign Set Ups

It's a confusing picture, to say the least. It is worth noting that many publishers have to set up and maintain dozens of campaigns or more at a given point in time. Maintaining a large number of lead generation campaigns at one time can rapidly degenerate into a highly error prone process.

If the lead generation campaign set up process was simplified, publishers would be able to save on overhead costs and generate more revenue from lead generation campaigns. Advertisers would be able to get to market faster and benefit from error free campaigns.

2. Disparate lead data transfer formats

In the course of a lead generation campaign, a publisher collects user data and sends it to the advertiser. The user typically submits her/his information via a form containing data fields on the publisher’s web site.

Each of the fields on the form is designated by a name (<fname>, <lname>, etc). However, there are no common formats for naming these fields. Inconsistencies in data field naming conventions are a major bottleneck in lead generation campaign management.

Consider a common lead generation campaign scenario:

Information required	Publisher Naming Convention	Advertiser 1 Naming Convention	Advertiser 2 Naming Convention
First Name	<first_name>	<FName>	Firstname
Last Name	<last_name>	<Lname>	Lastname
Company Name	<company_name>	<CName>	Companyname

For the campaigns above, each of the advertisers has a different naming convention. The publisher has to set up a campaign for Advertiser 1 with one set of naming conventions, and another campaign with Advertiser 2 using a completely different set of conventions. When you consider that an average lead generation campaign has 10 fields⁴, the problem gets even more complicated.

Different naming conventions for data transfer fields cause delays in lead generation campaign setup. More importantly, they necessitate a manual matching of advertiser and publisher fields, which introduces an additional point for error in the lead generation campaign setup.

3. Inefficient mechanisms for reporting and follow-up marketing.

Imagine a wine collector who has the world’s largest collection of wines, but who has never tasted a single sip from the cellar. Does such a scenario appear sad, even tragic?

Well, then how about a lead generation campaign where the advertiser collects a large number of leads, but can’t act on them in a timely manner and close business?

Sam Doherty can identify with this situation. As opposed to most people, Ms. Doherty dreads Fridays. Ms. Doherty is a Media Director at a leading advertising agency in New

⁴ Pontiflex Market research

York City. Every Friday, she has to submit a lead generation campaign performance report to her client, one of the largest wireless networking companies in the industry.

“My client runs lead generation campaigns across three verticals,” she says. “At any given point in time, we are working with four media vendors in each vertical.”

Ms. Doherty has to collect all of these twelve reports and send it to the client for follow-up. She also has to compile top line information from each of these reports for an overall campaign performance analysis, which has to be sent out to senior management at her agency and at the client.

“On many occasions, the sales representatives from the publishers don’t send the reports in a timely manner. On such days, I spend a lot of time making frantic phone calls to their sales and technical departments. I usually end up sending incomplete reports.”

As a senior agency decision maker, Ms. Doherty should be utilizing her time providing recommendations to her client on campaign optimization. However, she spends so much time collecting the leads that she doesn’t have enough time to analyze and act on them.

What’s worse, a delayed delivery of leads results in a delayed follow-up. In a highly competitive lead generation market, where a large number of sellers are competing for a concentrated universe of buyers, a delay in lead follow up could mean the difference between a sales win and a lost opportunity.

The above situation occurs frequently in the lead generation industry. Take the example of the enterprise technology segment. In a study conducted by the Center for Media Research, only 65% percent of technology buyers said they receive follow-up from vendors half of the time or less when they submitted registration information. Of those buyers who did receive follow-up, a mere 54% of them received it within two days.

Poor reporting and lead delivery mechanisms are a major cause driving unacceptable follow-up and conversion rates in the lead generation marketing industry.

4. Lack of campaign transparency

We have all seen the annoying free iPod or iPhone offer that pop up unexpectedly during our Internet surfing. These offers exemplify a lot of what is wrong with the online lead generation industry.

The lead generation industry has been in the news for the wrong reasons. With so much revenue to be made, and few barriers to entry, a large number of less than scrupulous vendors have entered the industry. These vendors often run advertising on sites that, to make a huge understatement, are not entirely in keeping with the brand and campaign objectives of the advertiser.

Advertisers are never sure as to where their advertisements appear. Consumers are inundated with a flood of offers deploying technologies that threaten their privacy. The reputation of the industry has taken such a beating that Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has now stepped in to take a deeper look into the state of the lead generation industry at large.

In certain segments such as the co-registration market, the shroud of secrecy seems to be even more pronounced. A directory listing legitimate lead generation publishers is not readily available. In fact, even the very parameters that define legitimacy are not entirely clear.

There is an urgent need for more transparency in the market and for advertisers to be able to take control of their lead generation campaigns.

Four Ways to Make Lead Generation Marketing Simple & Effective Now

1. Simplify Campaign set-up

As illustrated earlier, there is an urgent need to eliminate the need for each campaign to be set up from scratch.

We have to look no further than the email world for a solution. Users register themselves only once with an email provider. They do not have to register themselves each and every time before sending an email.

Similarly, an ideal lead generation marketing solution would necessitate that publishers, advertisers and agencies set up their profile only once and be able to communicate seamlessly with each other.

What's more they wouldn't have to talk to each other through a babel of confusing standards. They would be able to communicate through a translator that would send data seamlessly from one lead generation partner to another, irrespective of the standards being deployed at either end.

An approach that some publishers are taking is to use Pontiflex, an open data transfer network. Publishers, advertisers and agencies register once on Pontiflex. They can then set up lead generations campaigns in as little as fifteen minutes and send data to each other real time. Irrespective of the data delivery preferences, publishers can send data to all their advertisers seamlessly.

Hillclimb Media is realizing the benefits of the Pontiflex approach today. "Now, Hillclimb Media can send data to any and all of our advertisers on Pontiflex," says Colbeck. "Registering Hillclimb on Pontiflex was simple and free. We have migrated all of our campaigns to Pontiflex."



2. Simplify & secure the lead data transfer process

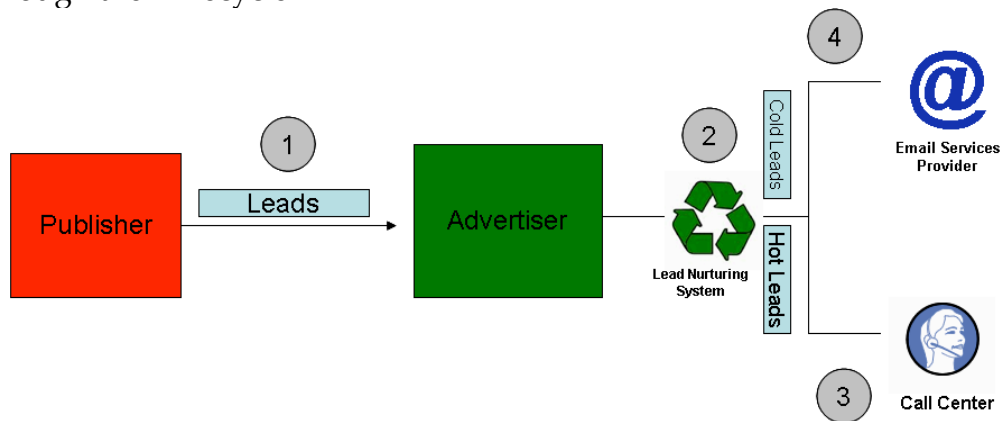
Concerned with the inefficiencies caused by the lack of commonalities in the data naming process, the Internet Advertising Bureau (IAB) has issued a set of guidelines whereby publishers, advertisers and agencies are encouraged to adhere to a common set of data transfer field naming conventions.

If all publishers, advertisers and agencies moved to the IAB conventions, then the complex campaign represented above would be simplified as below.

Information required	Publisher Naming Convention	Advertiser 1 Naming Convention	Advertiser 2 Naming Convention
First Name	<first_name>	<first_name>	<first_name>
Last Name	<last_name>	<last_name>	<last_name>
Company Name	<company_name>	<company_name>	<company_name>

Now, the publisher can set up campaigns seamlessly with a number of advertisers. All s/he would have to do is change the campaign ID number for each advertiser, along with a minimal number of campaign unique identifiers. The IAB's suggestions regarding data format naming conventions will go a long way towards increasing campaign efficiencies.

The lead generation process is usually just one step in the entire lead nurturing cycle. Consider the following example, where an advertiser is collecting leads and shepherding them through their lifecycle.



In such a case, if the advertiser has to change the lead data naming convention at point 1, then s/he would also have to make that change at points 2, 3 and 4.

However, the advertiser might not be able to change the data field naming conventions at 3 and 4, as these systems could be very well be proprietary to the email services provider and call center.

In such cases, the publisher and advertiser could avail of a technology that automatically matches up publisher and advertiser fields. Pontiflex’s patent pending Automatch technology helps match publisher and advertiser fields automatically, thereby solving the data format naming convention problem and providing one-stop compliance with the new IAB standards.

Assume that the publisher and advertiser have named their fields as below:

Information required	Publisher Naming Convention	Advertiser 1 Naming Convention
First Name	firstName	<first_name>
Last Name	lastName	<last_name>
Company Name	Email	<email>

Normally, the difference in data field naming conventions would necessitate setting up this part of the campaign manually, thereby introducing an additional point of error. However, leveraging Automatch, the publisher can match the fields up automatically with those of the advertiser - even though the fields are named differently.

3. Implement solutions to facilitate timely reporting and follow-up marketing

It is all very well to expect advertisers and agencies to follow-up on leads real time. However, the truth of the matter is that faced with scenarios that involve following up with multiple lead generation partners for lead data, this is more easily said than done.

The ideal solution is one that enables real time transmission of lead data and reports between the publisher and the advertiser/agency. While there exist many solutions in the market, there are two important factors to consider before making a selection:

- *Cost:* Expensive solutions drive up the cost/lead metric, which would run counter to the goals of lead generation marketing.
- *Openness:* There exist several proprietary and custom built solutions in the marketplace. However, an ideal solution has to be open allowing *any* publisher, advertiser and agency to connect in the lead generation marketplace.

Lead generation agency The North Road Group uses Pontiflex to automate reporting and follow up marketing with all of their advertisers and publishers. Pontiflex automates the data delivery process as per the advertiser preferences.

In addition, Pontiflex enables timely follow-up marketing. Using Pontiflex, The North Road Group can have their lead data sent real time to a Salesforce® account, email services provider or a call center database. All they have to do is enter the unique destination URL in Pontiflex. Pontiflex will transmit lead data directly from the publisher to the advertiser “leads follow-up” database.

Real time reporting enables timely campaign optimization allowing the advertiser to maximize return on investment. Real time delivery of leads to the Salesforce® account, email services provider or call center database allows the advertiser to follow up on leads in a timely manner and close business.

4. Improve campaign transparency

The Online Lead Generation Association (OLGA) has issued a checklist to advertisers to improve campaign transparency that include:

- Always knowing exactly where your offer is being shown
- Being clear about whether you are buying opt-ins or opt-outs
- Making sure there isn't a forced selection of offers
- Checking to see if the offers are easy to bypass
- Ensuring the focus of the site is about the intended content
- Checking for relevant incentives
- Managing campaigns in a timely manner
- Demanding 48 hour out clauses

To run credible campaigns that garner quality leads, advertisers should improve campaign transparency in accordance with the OLGA checklist. Advertisers should establish transparency benchmarks with publishers prior to the launch of the campaign. In addition, they can take the following steps to ensure that they have complete control over a campaign.

- Set up campaigns on networks that list a complete directory of publishers thereby cutting through the shroud of secrecy under which some lead generation marketers operate.
- Ability to receive real time information about campaign placements. They can then check the placements for the manner in which they are deployed, and the publisher environments in which they are presented.
- Ability to turn campaigns on and off with a click.

An open network such as Pontiflex places control of the lead generation campaign back in the hands of the advertiser. Advertisers can view their placements real time. They can turn campaigns off instantly if they don't like something that they see.

Conclusion

On account of its inherent ability to deliver a high return on investment, online lead generation marketing is growing rapidly. However, online lead generation marketing has failed to deliver on its promise due to practical problems in campaign set up and maintenance, which include:

- Cumbersome campaign setups
- Disparate data lead data formats
- Poor reporting and follow up marketing mechanisms
- Lack of campaign transparency

Using a technology like Pontiflex, lead generation campaign partners can:

- Set up campaigns automatically irrespective of the data formats
- Match advertiser and publisher naming conventions automatically
- Access real time reporting and Send lead data real time to a Salesforce account, email services provider or call center database for follow up marketing
- Make lead generation campaigns transparent by placing control in the hands of the advertiser.

In a networked age, publishers, advertisers and agencies can leverage Pontiflex to connect with each other to improve campaign efficiencies and drive revenue. This ultimately will allow the lead generation industry to deliver on its promise.

About Pontiflex

With Pontiflex, lead generation marketing has finally become simple and efficient.

Connect Once™ to Pontiflex... and get connected to the entire lead generation market. We are the first open data transfer network connecting publishers, advertisers and agencies. Pontiflex works via a patent-pending system that automatically sends lead data between you and your partners in the formats you specify.

For more information on Pontiflex, please email us at sales@pontiflex.com or call (800) 708-9290.

