

Why Businesses Must Distinguish Between Branding and Lead Generation

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A thoughtful marketing strategy is essential for most law businesses. How a business advertises can significantly affect its success.

One crucial distinction a business must understand is the difference between lead generation and branding. Many companies do not carefully consider which approach is best for them. Knowing the difference between lead generation and branding is vital. Each has pros and cons that any company should consider.

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What is lead generation in business advertising?

Lead generation is advertising that directly results in potential clients or customers contacting the business about their goods or services. Lead generation can occur with social media or search engine ads that utilize conversation tracking, remarketing to those who previously engaged with their ads, or look-a-like campaigns targeting those who look like the businesses' prior conversions. Lead generation ads may also target individuals or geographic areas based on interests, demographics, zip codes, income, keyword searches or other

advanced metrics.

Many lead generation opportunities exist, including Google, Microsoft and Facebook. Other opportunities include social media outlets like Snapchat, LinkedIn, Quora, Pinterest, Reddit, TikTok or X. Conveniently, Google, Facebook, Snapchat, LinkedIn and Quora allow lead forms to be placed directly under online advertisements.

Measuring conversions is vital with lead generation advertisements. A business can often measure conversions within the platform where they are running the advertisements. In other instances, a company may want to track conversions through an outside tracking platform like CallRail, WhatConverts, Invoca or RingCentral. These platforms are different but can help measure conversions through call tracking numbers or other integrations.

For an online advertisement to be lead generation, the customer must be able to fill out a form, email, text or call the business directly from the advertisement. Sometimes, the lead generation ad may direct the customer to a landing page where the customer can similarly reach out to the company. All companies engaging in lead generation should track conversions in some way, either directly through the platform or through an outside platform.

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What is branding in business advertising?

Branding is different from lead generation. When a company brands, it gets its name out in the community. The advertisement may inevitably result in new customers, but

branding is usually more about making a company well-known in a community in the short and long term. To brand, a business may put up billboards in its locality, put its ads on the side of a bus, or run television or radio ads in the community. These advertisements are primarily meant to get the word out about a company.

Branding might involve sponsoring sports teams or charitable causes. It also encompasses magazine or newspaper advertisements to get the business's name out to those who are not looking for its services.

Branding may also occur online, where a business runs display advertisements akin to online billboards through Google. In display advertising on Google, a company can broadly run advertisements in a given community, where those not even looking for their services see their ads. The display ads look like billboards, but they are online as individuals are on web pages online.

Which approach is better: Lead generation or branding?

Many ask whether lead generation or branding is a better approach. No one approach is necessarily better. The question is what the business's goals are. If a business wants to get its name out there and has deep pockets, branding can be effective over the long term. It can result in a company's name becoming well-known in the community.

When a company's name becomes well-known in the community, it inevitably leads to customers or clients. However, the customers or clients might take some time to come. They may come months or years later when they eventually need the company's goods or services. Branding may not result in many clients or customers in the short term and can be expensive. Branding can also work well with large businesses that engage

in volume-based industries, like large chains, restaurants, grocery stores or other well-known corporations.

Many businesses do not have deep enough pockets to make their products or services commonly known, especially in a large geographic area. Thus, lead generation can be a better way for these businesses to get customers now. Obtaining clients now can be vital for professional service industries, like lawyers, doctors, chiropractors, dentists and accountants, where one client can generate significant revenue. When well done, lead generation can also be less expensive because it targets potential customers or clients engaging in social media activity or online searches through search engines involving the goods or services their company provides.

A potential drawback of lead generation is that if a company stops running the lead generation ads, new business may cease coming. In other words, because the company has not developed its brand, new business can decrease when the lead generation ads are not running. Thus, a company may need to run lead generation advertisements regularly if it has not developed its brand.

Ultimately, it is vital that a business understands the difference between branding and lead generation and selects the best strategy for its goals. Some companies may opt for a mix of both.

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