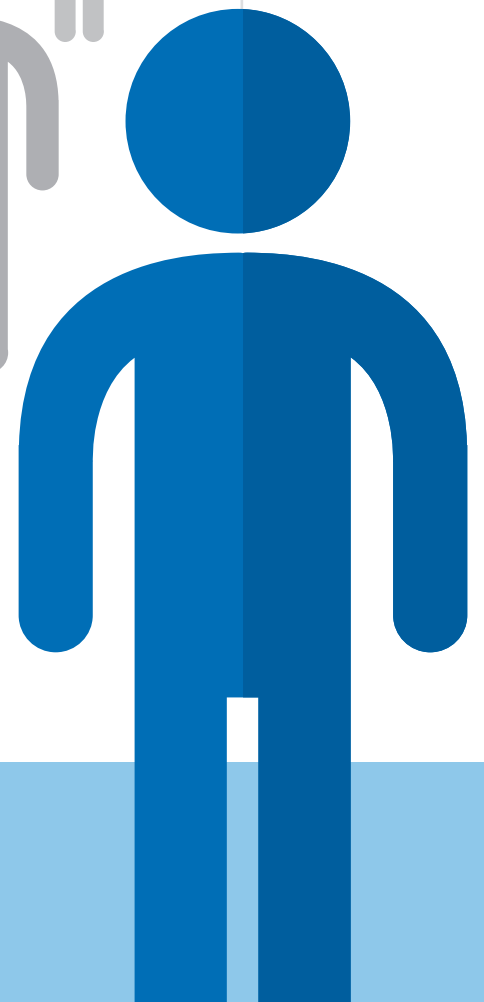



**THE**  
**Small**  
**BUSINESS** **GUIDE**  
**To** **CAPTURING**

**LEADS**



# THE SMALL BUSINESS GUIDE TO CAPTURING LEADS

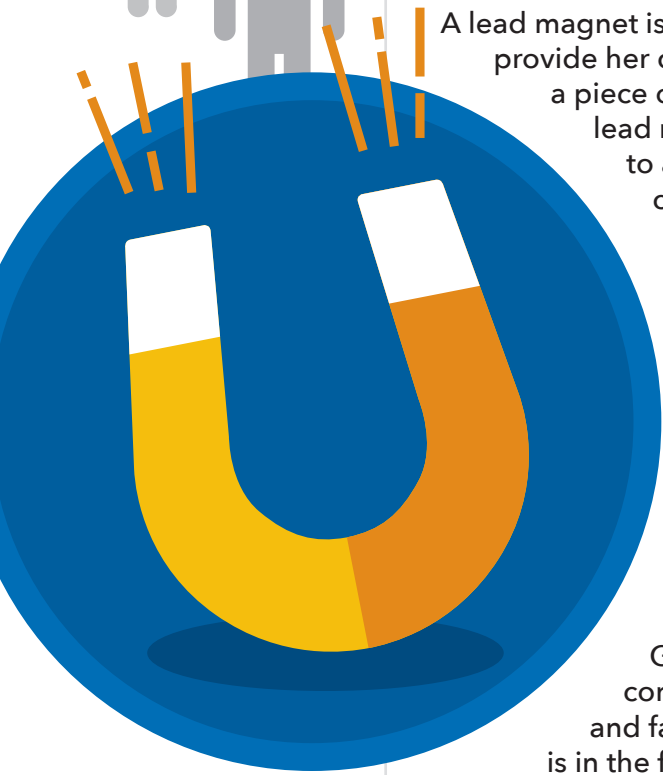
Everyday, prospective customers visit your website. You spent plenty of time and money getting them there, between your web development, design, advertising, social media, search engine optimization, and outreach efforts.



The leads you worked so hard to attract are now clicking around your website, thinking about whether to become a customer of your company.

And then, many of them vanish without a trace. If those website visitors don't turn into buyers, you may never know who they are, how to contact them, and what you could have done to follow up and earn their business.

That's why it's important not only to attract leads but also to capture them—ideally, by using a **lead magnet**.



A lead magnet is an offer compelling enough that a prospect would provide her contact information in order to receive it. It could be a piece of content (like this e-book—a lead magnet about, yes, lead magnets). Or it could be a free trial, a discount, an entry to a contest, or any other offer that your prospective customers would find valuable.

Lead magnets are a win-win for your company and your prospective customers. A lead magnet assists prospects with the problem that brought them to your business, whether it's a tutorial video that helps them develop a skill, a quiz that helps them determine what to buy, or a sample of a product they want to experience before purchasing.

And in return, your company receives a prized possession: **access to the email inbox**.

Getting contact information allows you to start the conversation that can turn a stranger into a customer and fan of your business. The real value of the lead magnet is in the follow-up, just as it is in networking. It's great to meet people at an event, but the relationship can only continue if you get their business cards—and then actually call or email.

But if you emailed the lead magnet to each prospect individually and later followed up with them one-by-one, those tasks could start to consume your day. That's why lead magnets are used most effectively and efficiently when paired with marketing automation software.

*Lead scoring, a feature in marketing automation and CRM software, helps you determine whether a prospect is ready to talk to sales. Learn more about it in this e-book, "[Score Like a Rock Star](#)."*



A tool like **Infusionsoft**, which combines marketing automation with customer relationship management (CRM), allows you to deliver and follow up on lead magnets without having to think about doing so. When a prospect completes a form on your website to request the lead magnet, the software automatically sends the asset via email—while also storing the information on the prospect's CRM contact record for future reference.

In the following days, the software can then send automated emails in which "you" ask prospect for her thoughts and questions. Meanwhile, the software tracks her behavior, recording which emails she opened and links she clicked—allowing you to evaluate her interest and determine your next move.

Any small business can use a lead magnet to capture leads, especially with the added help of automation. In this e-book, we'll explore how to choose a lead magnet offer, share twenty ideas for lead magnets, and explain how automation can help you convert those new leads into customers.

# 3 STEPS TO CHOOSING A LEAD MAGNET

Before you start writing, filming, speaking, or offering, consider these three steps to strategically creating a lead magnet that helps you convert leads into customers.

## 1 DEFINE YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

Who are you trying to attract with a lead magnet? The answer shouldn't be "everyone." Just like a real magnet, lead magnets should both attract and repel. Your lead magnet should target your ideal customer, not anyone who happens to come across it.

Attempting to sell someone who isn't qualified for your business only results in wasted time and effort for both of you. For example, a real estate agent who specializes in luxury homes could attract leads with a guide called "10 Steps to Selling Your Home"—but a guide called "10 Steps to Selling a Million-Dollar Home" would produce leads that are much more qualified for her services.

For help honing in on your ideal customer, download our worksheet, [How to Identify Your Target Market](#).

## 2 THINK OF A COMPELLING OFFER

Think about what would compel your prospect to give away his email address. The chance to get more marketing emails isn't exactly a rare opportunity. The prospect will be more likely to sign up for your lead magnet if she sees it can help solve her problems. Write down a list of common customer questions, then brainstorm ideas for various types of lead magnets that answer those questions.

## 3 PLAN YOUR FOLLOW UP

A prospect downloads your lead magnet. Then what? Don't simply hope she decides to buy. How you follow up on a lead magnet and what you offer should be part of your strategy from the beginning.

Your lead magnet should guide people toward a product or service you're selling—eventually, anyway. The nature of your lead magnet depends on your business and the buying journey of your customers, taking into consideration the time, money, and information they need to buy.

Businesses with a short buyer's journey might offer a lead magnet like a promo code or a free trial—something that quickly inspires prospects to become customers. But when the buyer's journey involves weeks or months, it's better to offer an educational lead magnet, like a piece of content, than push the prospect to make a decision.

For example, a prospect considering a yoga studio might only need to experience one free class before purchasing a package of classes. But someone considering a six-month diet and fitness program—a purchase involving more time, money, and research—might benefit from educational guides or videos that help her understand whether the program is right for her.

# 19 TYPES OF LEAD MAGNETS

Your lead magnet should do more than collect email addresses. It should also offer just as much benefit for your prospect, whether the lead magnet consists of content, a freebie, experience, or valuable information. Here are twenty ideas for lead magnets to use in your business.

## CONTENT

### 1 E-BOOK OR GUIDE

Create a guide or e-book that helps prospects understand a specific topic related to a problem your company can solve. Content helps illustrate your company's expertise while providing the information prospects need to make an educated purchase. Create it as a PDF to ensure readers can't make accidental changes and that the design and fonts remain consistent across devices.

#### HOW TO CREATE IT:

Use a tool like **Canva** to design an e-book with free photos and graphics. (If it doesn't need to look pretty? Simply convert a Microsoft Word document into a PDF.)

For help with writing, consider hiring a freelancer from services like **Upwork** or **Freelancer.com**.

### 2 CHECKLIST

Starting a new endeavor—like working with your company—might involve a to-do list for prospective customers. Help with the homework by creating a downloadable checklist that educates them on the tasks ahead. A completed checklist can help in your sales process, too. For example, a financial planner could offer a checklist that outlines documents to prepare and goals to identify before the initial consultation.

### 3 CHEAT SHEET

Got a list of tips worth saving for future reference? Compile them into a cheat sheet that can serve as a preview of your services or the downloadable companion to another content piece. For example, a nutrition specialist could offer a cheat sheet about calorie counts, meal timing, and healthy snack ideas that prospects could save and reference on a regular basis.

## 4 CASE STUDY

No matter how compelling your website and marketing materials are, some prospective customers will always wonder, "But how would you help someone like me?" Show them through a case study on one or some of your customers.

Describe in detail how the customer solved a problem by working with your company, including any pertinent statistics that illustrate her success. Create a PDF or video requiring an email address to download, then follow up to ask for questions and feedback.

## 5 WHITE PAPER

You're an expert in your field. Prove it to prospects by creating a downloadable white paper, an in-depth report on an issue facing your industry. Isn't that an e-book, you ask? A white paper is more detailed and research-oriented—the marketing equivalent of an academic paper. Use this lead magnet if your goal is presenting yourself as a subject-matter expert while helping prospects understand a complex topic.



## 6 QUIZ

A good quiz is irresistible. When asked engaging, thought-provoking questions, people can't help but click until they reach their results. That's why a quiz is also an effective lead magnet. With a hosted quiz, participants must enter an email address to see the outcome. Not only are quizzes fun, they can also be educational for you and your prospects when they help both parties learn whether your company is the right fit. The answers from quizzes can assist your sales people by providing valuable qualifying information without having to ask.

### HOW TO CREATE IT:

Use a platform like like [LeadQuizzes](#) or [Ozzr](#) to create a custom quiz that also captures email addresses.

## 7 VIDEO

If your product or service could benefit from visual learning, shoot a video showing your top tips, a tutorial, or a demonstration of what you do. Videos also introduce prospects to you and your staff, helping you build a relationship as you encourage them to become customers. To make a video into a lead magnet, use a hosting platform that captures email addresses, or send prospects a link to the video after they request it.

### HOW TO CREATE IT:

Use a tool like **Animoto** to turn photos and video clips into professional-looking videos. By uploading them to a video hosting platform like **Wistia**, you can control where your videos are watched and capture email addresses from viewers.

## 8 WEBINAR

If only you could give a real-time presentation to customers outside your local area or even on the other side of the world. With a webinar, you can. Webinars are an effective way to share a tutorial, presentation, or interview with an expert—valuable content worth trading for an email address. After learning about you and your company through a webinar, prospects may be more ready and inclined to buy—especially when you send follow-up content.

To learn webinar basics, download our "**Guide to Hosting a Webinar.**"

### HOW TO CREATE IT:

Use a platform like **join.me** or **GoToWebinar** host a webinar with audio and screen-sharing.

## 9 COURSE/CONTENT SERIES

If the information you want to share in your lead magnet would require thousands of words or hours of video, consider organizing the content into a course or series that's easier and less overwhelming for your prospect to consume. Using automation software, you can automatically email content in installments over the course of days or weeks. Each installment can cover a different topic or become increasingly advanced.

## FREE STUFF

### 10 DISCOUNT

It's the bribe that works on practically everyone: an email address in exchange for a promo code. But beware: Some consumers might immediately cash in on the discount—only to unsubscribe from the very email in which it arrived, never to be heard from again. In that email containing the discount, be sure to explain what your future emails will entail (like exclusive offers or helpful tips) so that customers understand the value of staying on your list.

Learn how to create an email campaign for a limited-time offer in this guide, "[Cash in a Flash: How to Manage a Flash Sale.](#)"

#### HOW TO CREATE IT:

Using an e-commerce platform like [Infusionsoft](#), create a promo code for a discount that can be applied to a specific product or to any product.



### 11 FREE SAMPLE

Think of the ice cream shop employee standing on the sidewalk with a tray of free samples. Some people will grab one and continue down the street, but others will be drawn inside for more. Free samples can turn into sales, especially when you collect customers' email addresses and follow up with an enticing offer when you know the sample is spent.

### 12 CONTEST ENTRY

If you can't afford to give a discount or freebie to everyone, give it to one lucky winner. Host a giveaway, entering those who provide an email address. You make the rules, so you might as well ask for more, like a social media follow or demographic information that informs your future marketing efforts. While some entrants will bail once they don't win, others will decide the giveaway offer is one worth paying for.

#### HOW TO CREATE IT:

If you don't want to draw a winner manually, a tool like [Rafflecopter](#) or [Woobox](#) can host your contest, collecting entries through social media actions in addition to entry forms.



## EXPERIENCE

### 13 FREE CONSULTATION

For service-based businesses, the relationship with a new customer might begin with a little free advice. An accountant might offer a free consultation, a personal trainer can provide a free one-on-one session, and a digital marketing firm could perform a free website audit. In each case, the prospect learns something from the company—but he'll have to become a paying customer in order to make lasting improvements.



### 14 FREE EVENT

Some products and services are best sold in person. Invite potential customers to sign up for a free event, like a class, seminar, or open house. If your business doesn't naturally lend itself to related events, host a social outing like a happy hour or dinner where you can start getting to know your prospects.

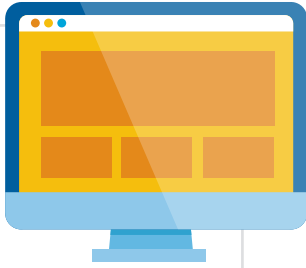
### 15 FREE TRIAL

The best way to experience something new is simply to try it. Give prospective customers a shot, whether you're a gym offering a free class or a subscription service offering the first month free. Consider following up at the end of the trial with a time-sensitive offer that encourages the prospect to commit to more.

### 16 DEMO

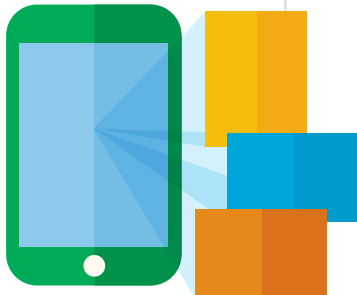
If prospective customers need to see a demonstration to understand the potential of your products or services, ask for an email address before you show them how it's done in a screen-sharing call, video, or interactive experience.

## INFORMATION



### 17 GATED INFORMATION

You likely have information all customers need to see before they buy, like pricing or a schedule. Rather than display it on your website for all to see, consider “gating” it so that prospects must enter an email address to access the information. This move might discourage casual browser from becoming buyers—but if you’re looking to weed out unqualified prospects, that’s not necessarily a bad thing.



### 18 WORK SAMPLES

In some businesses, prospects will want to check out your previous work before deciding whether to become a client. Create a collection of your best stuff—whether it involves photos, presentations, or content—combined with testimonials from former clients, and make it available for downloading in exchange for an email address.



### 19 PRINTED MATERIALS

Got a book, brochure, catalog, or other printed item best experienced offline? Ask for email addresses in addition to mailing addresses, then follow up via email to see what thoughts and questions your prospects have after receiving the materials.



## CONCLUSION

Attracting leads to your website is great; capturing their information is even better. But most prospects who visit your website won’t give you their email addresses just because you want them. Prospects are more willing to share their contact information if they receive something in return, like a piece of content, a discount, or an experience.

These lead magnets serve as the bridge between attracting leads and converting them into customers. A lead magnet allows you to further introduce yourself to your prospects and follow up with the kind of information, questions, and offers that encourage them to buy.



## AMY SAUNDERS

Amy Saunders is a content creator at Infusionsoft, where she writes content that inspires and empowers small business owners. Writing about business brings Amy's work full circle: She began her career as a business reporter at The Columbus Dispatch in Ohio before becoming a features writer. After more than six years there, she moved to Phoenix, where she was an editor at a content marketing agency before joining Infusionsoft. As a lifelong Midwesterner, Amy promises to never take Arizona weather for granted and spends her free time riding horses, playing tennis and hiking in the sun.

Follow her on Twitter [@amyksaunders](#)

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