



How Just One Marketing Hire Can Transform Your Sales

5 Essential Lead Generation Skills your Next Marketing Hire Must Have!



Foreword from Prosperity

It's been a tumultuous year for businesses of every size and, for many, the future is still unclear. But to remain relevant, we all need to push ahead with our digital transformation.

This can prove difficult when digital talent is in such short supply. But this just means that every digital marketing hire matters more.

In light of the current skills shortage, it can be tempting to snap up any qualified candidates that apply. But marketers have diverse abilities, so it makes more sense for CEOs and hiring managers to carefully figure out what they need and invest time in finding a candidate with the right mix of skills, experience and personal values.

Finding the right candidate can significantly impact a company's sales. At Prosperity, we've seen it happen time and again - particularly when new hires have a range of key skills.

Whether you're hiring digital talent for the first time or eager to expand your marketing team, with this eBook, we aim to help you understand:

- The marketing skills that can benefit your business most
- What to look out for on candidate CVs
- Questions to ask in interviews
- How flexibility can help you attract talent in the face of talent shortages



-Gary Mullan, Co-Founder at Prosperity

The Link Between Lead Generation and Business Growth

Simply put, leads lead to sales.

No matter what your official mission statement says, at the end of the day, every company's underlying goal is to make a profit. For successful businesses, lead generation is the driving force behind customer acquisition.

If you don't have any leads coming in, it doesn't matter how high your blog posts rank on Google or how many likes your Facebook posts receive.

That's why more than two-thirds of companies solely look at lead generation metrics when determining the success of their content. Website traffic and social engagement can be signals of a healthy business, but they won't boost sales on their own.

67% of businesses look at lead generation metrics to determine the success of their content - SEMRush	In the UK, 58% of business leaders say lead generation is a key challenge - Prospex.ai	Half of CEOs expect to hire staff post-pandemic to take advantage of emerging growth opportunities - PwC
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Despite the evident importance of lead generation, it is something that many businesses struggle with. A [recent survey](#) in the UK found that most business leaders see it as a key challenge, with 40% saying their sales and marketing tactics are out-of-date.

Hiring skilled talent is a key way to introduce modern marketing methods to your business, particularly if you can find passionate and driven candidates. So, when you're hiring new sales and marketing staff, lead generation should be a key concern.

Whether you're looking to fill a mid-level marketing role or a senior sales role, it should factor into [job descriptions](#), resumé reviews and interview proceedings.

Let's look at some key lead generation skills to look out for during your recruitment process for a Marketing Professional.

5 *Essential* Lead Generation Skills Every New Marketing Hire Should Have

Beyond the Basics

Lead generation is all about getting potential customers to share their details by signing up for a newsletter, an event, a product demo, a discount, a consultation - or whatever other perk your business may offer.

Now that cold calling is on its way out, these details are usually collected through online forms, landing pages and pop-ups. Creating these sign-up sheets requires some basic design skills, as well as some coding knowledge. Although, thanks to landing page templates and tools, marketers can now get by without these technical lead generation skills.

However, the real challenge lies in getting potential customers to view and fill out one of these forms. This means marketers need to build an audience and provide prospects with a compelling reason to share their details.

A wide range of skills and expertise can help with this. Although candidate requirements will always vary depending on a company's goals and target audience, there are five key talents that tend to make a huge impact on lead generation and sales growth.

Content	SEO	Automation	PPC	Analytics
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These skills are relevant to a wide range of digital marketing roles, from lead generation specialists and account executives, right through to CMOs and business development managers.

“Although the huge majority of marketing professionals have a BA degree or higher, businesses have moved beyond setting rigid criteria in terms of the subjects studied. Great marketing talent

comes from a diverse range of educational backgrounds so assessing these five skills is key to finding a new hire that can make a difference to your business' bottom line.”

- [Ana Ribeiro](#), Senior Marketing Recruiter at Prosperity

Business development and sales professionals	Digital marketing professionals	Digital content creators
92% of hires have a BA or higher	94% of hires have a BA or higher	92% of hires have a BA or higher

Source: [LinkedIn](#)

1. Content Creation Skills

Content is the key to every lead generation strategy.

Prospects need a reason to share their personal details. Usually, it's about gaining access to valuable content. They might want to get hold of an online course or an insightful report. Sometimes, they might just enjoy your blog so much that they want updates sent straight to their inbox.

For this reason, more than half of businesses say content marketing is their primary lead generation channel.

However, the standards for content are increasing as consumers become more and more reluctant to share their personal information. The number of people willing to hand over their email address is on a downward trajectory, according to a [US survey](#) undertaken in 2019 and a [European survey](#) from 2020.

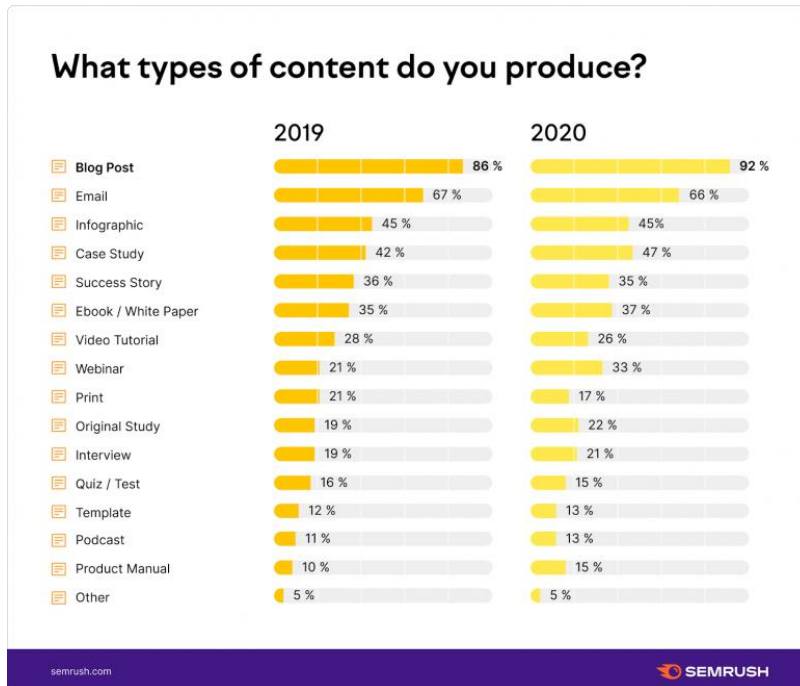
As a result, businesses are under pressure to create truly valuable and unique content. Finding talent with top-class content creation skills is key to doing this.

51.5% of marketers say content marketing is their primary lead generation channel - Databox	Just 29% of Irish consumers think the benefits of interacting with a company online outweigh data privacy concerns - Deloitte	Older audiences have greater concerns about sharing their personal data - Deloitte
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Writing and Editing

Talented writers can create everything from social posts and eBooks, through to ad copy and landing page content. They can even craft emails and newsletters to nurture leads later on. But blog posts continue to be the bread and butter of many marketing strategies.

Because so many businesses continue to place a huge emphasis on organic search rankings, blog posts are the content type most frequently created. However, this is probably because they also play a role in moving prospects through the sales funnel toward conversion. According to [a recent study](#), how-to guides are most effective at doing this.



Source: [SEMrush](#)

Visual Content Creation

Although the written word remains popular, recruiting managers should also seek out candidates with a proven record of visual content creation. As videos gain more prominence among audiences and search engines, businesses need to diversify.

Video can be used across social media, PPC ads and webpages to generate new leads. For B2B businesses, webinars are a particularly important tool. Whereas, eCommerce brands can gain a lot from posting images and videos to social media on a regular basis. In the future, Amazon livestreams and shoppable videos for TikTok, Instagram and other platforms will play a prominent role in content marketing too.

72% of marketers say how-to guides drive the most traffic to their website, followed by infographics, checklists and eBooks - SEMrush	44% of marketers also say how-to guides are most effective at generating leads. After this comes product overviews and case studies - SEMrush	62% of B2B marketers use webinars for lead generation, according to webinar tool ReadyTalk
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What This Means for Hiring Managers

Solid content creation skills will always be essential when hiring candidates for any kind of lead generation or business development role.

Although you can't expect everyone to be both a wordsmith and a master photographer, you can prioritise candidates based on the objectives and activities set out in your marketing strategy. You should also consider what skill gaps are currently impacting your marketing team's performance.

What to Watch Out for on CVs

With so many businesses growing their sales through 'how-to' guides and case studies, it makes sense to watch out for candidates who are experienced in creating these types of blog posts.

However, the likes of B2B businesses and eCommerce stores may value video production more. In this case, recruiters need to check for qualifications or experience in public speaking, video editing and visual design.

"This is the easiest way to verify a candidate's abilities is to request content samples. Although it's important to remember that these pieces were created for businesses with different motives and personas. So if you can't tell whether a candidate is a good fit based on their past work, give them a short assignment or ask how they would approach a piece of content for your brand."

- [Laia Corral](#), Lead Generation & Growth Specialist at Prosperity

Questions to Ask at an Interview

What content creation tools have you used in the past?

This will let you know if candidates are familiar with your in-house CMS, but it will also provide an insight into the variety and depth of their experience.

Can they design content? Have they created e-learning courses and long-form videos? Are they familiar with Instagram's Story Editor or TikTok's Video Editor?

What kind of content would you create to generate leads for our business?

This will discern how well a candidate understands your products. If they have done their research and are passionate about content creation, this should come through in their answer. Watch out for references to keyword research and data analysis too.

2. SEO Know-How

Content is key to generating leads. But if nobody reads your latest blog post, it won't generate any new sales. For this reason, it is necessary to promote every article and video for maximum exposure.

Although referral traffic can play a valuable role here, SEO is the best way to reach a large number of prospects.

As mentioned above, generating organic traffic is a priority for many businesses and it's easy to understand why. Consumers are more likely to click organic search results than paid ad placements.

When done right, it is also the most cost-effective way to generate traffic for your brand. Once a piece of content ranks well, it often stays there for a long time - generating traffic and leads week after week.

Recent data shows that the first five organic search results attract 68% of all clicks in Google - Zero Limit Web	Just half of consumer trust paid ads, while 92% have confidence in earned media - Cision	Research suggest that SEO drives 10x more traffic than organic social media - BrightEdge
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What This Means For Hiring Managers

Whether you're hiring talent for a B2B business or a retail store, finding candidates with both solid content creation skills and in-depth SEO expertise should be top of your to-do list. But SEO has many facets and very few people are familiar with them all.

Look for candidates with SEO expertise that are most relevant to your company. For local businesses with physical store locations, it is imperative to have team members who know the ins and outs of local SEO.

Whereas, an online business would be more concerned with the on-page optimisation of product descriptions, titles and tags. They could also look for candidates who are adept at conducting keyword research and content optimisation for Amazon too.

What to Watch Out for on CVs

Unless they've been living under a rock, most candidates will have some SEO knowledge. The key is figuring out what level their proficiency is at.

Completion of HubSpot or Google courses is a positive sign. But you should also look out for a list of metrics or highlights from past content campaigns. Marketers are always measuring their progress, so if a candidate managed to double organic traffic in a past role, you'll probably read about it on their CV.

If a candidate has provided content samples, ask a member of the marketing team to check if it corresponds with your in-house optimisation tactics. Alternatively, you could perform a basic tick box exercise, reviewing the likes of titles and meta descriptions.

Questions to Ask at an Interview

How do you stay up-to-date with SEO trends?

SEO is ever-changing and serious marketers need to stay on top of new trends and algorithm changes. Ask candidates where they get their SEO news and advice. If they provide an impressive response, delve deeper by asking about specific trends, like voice search or AI.

What SEO tools are you familiar with?

New hires will quickly adjust to your in-house SEO tools, but this question is worth asking because it indicates how deep a candidate's SEO knowledge is. Those who rely on Google's Keyword Tool won't know as much as someone who uses a tool like SEMrush or Moz.

This question is great for uncovering SEO ninjas and data geeks.

Do you think SEO can interfere with the user experience?

Some businesses base their whole content strategy around keyword research. For others, SEO is simply a way of promoting the content they create to address audience needs.

A candidate's answer to this question can tell you a lot about their approach to SEO. You can then determine if they are a good fit for your team. Ideally, candidates will have some thoughts around how user experience and SEO can benefit each other.

Do you know much about technical SEO?

The technical aspects of your website can have a big influence on search engine rankings. Lead generation specialists worth their salt will be familiar with duplicate content and linking strategies. While optimising site speed and website security should be left to a developer, familiarity with technical SEO is a positive sign.

3. Marketing Automation Expertise

While some businesses hire marketing automation specialists specifically to implement and connect their martech tools, automation should be used by every team member involved in lead generation.

Cleverly using automation removes repetitive tasks from a marketer's workload. The time saved can then be spent on more impactful tasks, like creative brainstorming, conversion rate optimisation or content creation.

Because marketing automation can improve customer targeting and staff productivity, it usually improves ROI too.

"Marketing automation can help small businesses do a lot with limited resources and a small marketing team. This allows them to stay relevant and competitive. It can also help larger companies keep up with ever-growing customer expectations."

- [Gary Mullan](#), Co-Founder at Prosperity

20% of marketers take advantage of automated email marketing campaigns - HubSpot	In 2020, 92% of marketing agencies invested more time and resources in marketing automation integration - MarketingProfs	23% of marketers automate content delivery tasks - HubSpot
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What This Means For Hiring Managers

If you want the best bang for your buck, every new hire should be familiar with a selection of marketing automation platforms. Think social media scheduling tools, email campaign software and lead generation platforms, like HubSpot.

Hiring new staff who have experienced the benefits of implementing or using automation tools is a great way to encourage the uptake of modern technology in your office. [So many companies](#) struggle to take full advantage of automation because they don't have a history of embracing new technologies. Hiring talent with automation experience and expertise is one of the best ways to combat this kind of culture.

New hires that have experienced the benefits of automation for themselves are likely to become advocates for the uptake and integration of these productive tools.

What to Watch Out for on CVs

Hiring candidates who are already familiar with your automation tools of choice will allow them to hit the ground running. But experience with new and alternative tools can be beneficial to your business too.

For example, if a candidate previously used chatbot marketing to prevent leads from slipping through the cracks, ask yourself if your business has any future plans to do the same. If so, you may have found the perfect project lead.

For senior roles, you should also look out for candidates who have used or implemented integrated tool stacks. Companies who can make their automation tools work together will save even more time and deliver more effective campaigns.

For example, linking CRM and email marketing platforms allows businesses to send targeted customer communications, create a better CX and perform accurate lead scoring. This particular example also has the added benefit of aligning sales and marketing to improve lead generation.

Experience with tag management tools that allow for the connection and management of different marketing apps is a big plus too.

Questions to Ask at an Interview

Have you ever used automation to improve performance or productivity?

This should provide an insight into how proactively candidates seek to automate various parts of their workload. It is also interesting to see whether they are more focused on saving time or improving performance.

This is a great question to ask candidates applying for both junior and senior marketing roles.

Tell me about a time you collaborated with another team member to improve a campaign.

To automate content delivery without any hiccups, it's important to collaborate and check in with other team members to see what they've scheduled. Otherwise, prospects could be bombarded with emails or social posts. For a truly great system of lead generation, there needs to be cooperation between sales and marketing teams too.

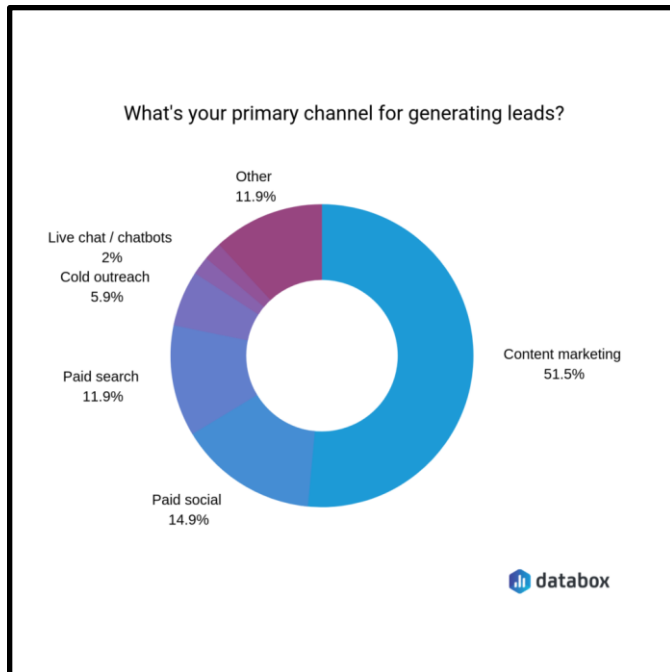
Have you ever mapped out an end-to-end automation sequence?

Whether a candidate has sequenced Facebook ad creatives, website pop-up messages or email communications, it demonstrates strategic thinking.

You should also pay attention to their mapping process. Did they refer to the customer journey? Did they target each persona individually?

4. Performance Marketing Skills

After content marketing, paid social media and search ads are the most common way for marketers to generate leads. The popularity of these PPC ads is growing quickly too.



Source: [Databox](#)

As a result of the uncertainty caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, many businesses have moved away from their long-term marketing strategies to focus on PPC advertising. In 2020, advertisers also saw the cost of PPC ads decrease while returns went up. As a result, Google and Facebook's advertising [profits increased](#) by double digits when compared to the previous year.

While this has been beneficial for many businesses, it also means that performance marketing expertise are in such high demand that they can be hard to come by.

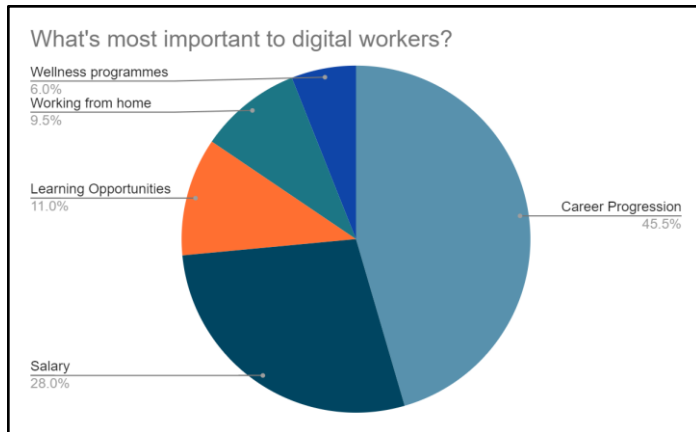
What This Means For Hiring Managers

As highlighted in Prosperity's annual [salary survey](#), PPC specialists are one of the few areas in which we expect to see salary increases in 2021.

It is such an essential marketing skill that experienced candidates are being snapped up. But recruiting managers should be open to helping new hires develop their skills in this area.

For example, you could hire someone that is highly skilled in content creation and allow them to spend some time running a PPC campaign. This way they gain experience and, eventually, you'll have a skilled PPC advertiser on your team.

According to our survey of digital workers, career progression is the only thing that is more important than salary so this is a great way to attract engaged candidates.



Source: [Prosperity Recruitment](#)

What To Watch Out For on CVs


Ideally, hiring managers want a candidate with a history of running PPC campaigns. But you can also look out for lead generation specialists who have certification from Google Ads and Facebook.

Other relevant [performance marketing skills](#) include copywriting, project management, keyword knowledge and analytics experience.

Questions to Ask at an Interview

Are you familiar with emerging performance marketing platforms?

After the success of Google and Facebook, other companies are moving to monetise their platforms. CPG brands should look out for familiarity with retail media platforms. While expertise in Amazon advertising and OTT advertising on streaming sites can be a great asset too.

<p>If you're hiring a remote lead generation specialist, check out these eight interview questions to help you find candidates that are well suited to working from home.</p>		<p>You may find our detailed guide on hiring and managing remote workers useful too.</p>
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5. Analytical Skills

To succeed and improve, every modern marketer needs to assess and analyse the outcomes of their marketing activities.

Data improves the way we make decisions, allocate budgets and target customers. This, in turn, can contribute to sales growth.

Despite this, most marketers still feel they're underusing the data that's available to them.

40% of brands are expanding their data-driven marketing budgets - Invesp	87% of marketers view their organisation's first-party data as an underutilised asset - Invesp	Two thirds of marketers say data-drive decisions are superior to gut instincts - Google
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What This Means For Hiring Managers

Data should be used to inspire and assess every lead generation campaign. If your business hasn't taken full advantage of their data yet, it may benefit from the help of incoming talent. So prioritise candidates who have analytical skills and are eager to take the lead on transforming the way you use data.

With so many analytics tools available, new marketing hires are sure to be familiar with the basics. At a minimum, they'll know Google Analytics and a couple of social media reporting tools. For this reason, hiring managers need to delve a little deeper to test their knowledge.

What to Watch Out for on CVs

You need to figure out if a candidate goes beyond generating reports. You want to hire someone that interprets the data and then implements decisions based on it. This is particularly important when looking to fill senior roles.

Familiarity with advanced analytics and reporting tools is something to keep an eye out for. While references to customer personalisation and segmentation strategies are a positive sign too.

Questions to Ask at an Interview

What KPIs do you track the most?

This question can provide a powerful insight into a candidate's past experience. It highlights the primary goals of their previous campaigns and activities. So, if your company's key KPIs differ, follow up by asking how they would change their tactics if they got the role.

Do you have experience in scoring leads?

Sales teams want to focus their efforts on pursuing leads that are likely to convert. So candidates who can leverage available data and accurately score leads could be a huge asset. While this question isn't relevant to some businesses, it will reassure others that their new hire will be able to influence sales growth.

Looking beyond *skillset*

What Else Matters?

Digital marketing is such a broad and changeable industry that it's difficult to know what traits to look for in potential new hires. But if you can find a well-rounded marketer who has a solid basis in the above skills, they are sure to drive growth for your business.

But there are other aspects of a candidate's profile to consider before making a final decision.

At Prosperity, we have noticed a subtle shift in employer's preferences. More and more businesses are placing increased importance on cultural fit than ever before.

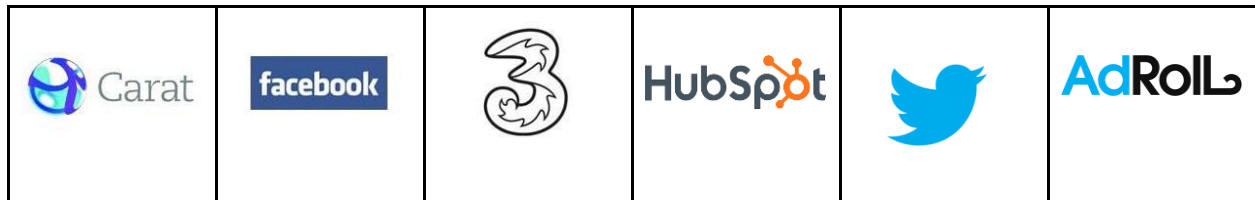
"Personal characteristics now play a big role in many hiring decisions. Some hiring managers are even looking beyond academic achievements and relevant experience to hire someone who will bring drive, passion and [diversity](#) to their teams.

"Often, this approach can result in happier clients and candidates. So don't forget to go beyond the job spec and consider each candidate's volunteer experience, hobbies, interests and hunger for [lifelong learning](#) too. It will benefit productivity and [staff retention](#) in the future."

Prosperity is Ireland's leading [digital recruitment agency](#). For 20 years, our team has helped connect companies with passionate candidates. With more than 50,000 CVs in our talent database, we're the go-to agency for expertise in digital marketing, eCommerce and sales.

If you'd like to learn more from our team, [follow our LinkedIn](#) for insights into recruitment trends, company culture, employer branding and more.

Alternatively, you can find out about how we help clients, like Facebook and HubSpot, attract influential new hires by contacting us [here](#).



If you require any further information on hiring Marketing staff, or if you would like assistance in your search for a skilled Marketing Professional, please don't hesitate to give us a call or email us at the relevant regional office –

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