



## **The Essential Art of C-Suite Sales Lead Generation.**

### **Communication Tactics with Busy Business Owners, CEOs and Senior Executives that Work.**

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SBW Ventures, Inc.  
[www.sbwventuresinc.com](http://www.sbwventuresinc.com)  
(843) 822-7664

No matter what industry you're in you've got to continue to grow your business. You're either moving forward, growing, or moving backward and writing your own corporate obituary. Growth starts with new business and every new sale, every new contract, every new business opportunity starts with a conversation.

If your product or service has an expensive, multimillion-dollar price tag, you'll probably find yourself having to pitch and communicate directly with a business owner, CEO, or senior executive to make the sale and get budget approval. Business to business C-Suite lead generation is all about making a connection and starting that very important, initial conversation. Talking. Communicating. Building a personal and professional relationship to help solve a problem, provide a much-needed service or present an opportunity such as a joint venture, merger or acquisition—that's where all new business all begins. But starting that first conversation with a busy senior executive in this day and age is a challenge.

If you're a business owner like me, I don't need to remind you how busy we are. We're besieged with junk communications of all kinds. On a daily basis we're all bombarded with e-mails, spam, pop-up ads on social media and web sites. The world is full of internet hackers, panhandlers, scam artists, robo calls and intrusive text messages. It's no wonder we're on edge and have our guard up against the next scam artist, the next telemarketer selling an extended car warranty.

I remember as a kid growing up in the mid-1960s when the phone rang at home (and this was decades before telemarketing and caller ID) that it was kind of an exciting and we couldn't wait to hear who was on the other line: grandparents, aunts, uncles, friends or neighbors. Today home phones are gone. We all carry our cell phones around like they are an additional appendage, part of our body. And when we get a call from an unknown number we're offended and irritated. We jump to the conclusion it must be a nuisance call of some sort.

All of this anti-marketing and defensive mindset makes B2B new business generation a challenge. Try cold calling a prospect at the office, for example. If you have the temerity to make a cold call and you can punch your way through the series of automated attendant answering prompts (press two for a spell by name company directory), chances are you'll find yourself leaving a voice mail message that never gets returned.

So how do you go about prospecting and getting new business leads at the C-Suite level? When you've worked each and every referral lead in your possession; after you've responded to every website inquiry, sent out a gazillion mass e-mail blasts with little no response except maybe "take me off your list," how do you get new business? After you've spent \$50,000 on a "must attend" gotta be there industry trade show and spent another \$25K on trade advertising; after you've attended the big Association social networking event and been cornered by some unemployed worker hoping for a job interview, how do you get new business? You have 1,000 LinkedIn connections (most of whom you don't have a clue who they are or how they ended up being a connection) and about the same number of Facebook followers. You're sick and tired of wishing people you don't know happy birthday or congratulating someone else on their work anniversary. There's so much mindless static and buzzing on the internet it's nauseating.

I love the quote attributed to John Wanamaker who said, "Half the money I spend on advertising is wasted; the trouble is I don't know which half". Fact is, most companies waste a ton of money on marketing and advertising and specifically new business lead generation that doesn't produce results. And it's not just wasted money but wasted *time*.

So that's enough about the problem. Now let's focus on the solution and creating a successful C-Suite business to business lead generation campaign. At the outset, I suggest you put aside the entire notion of mass marketing and quick fixes. Take on a focused, sniper shot approach. Shotgun blast marketing doesn't work for business development at the C-Suite. Delegating the task of targeting key, conquest type accounts and making important calls on a regular basis won't

work. You've got to be willing to roll up your sleeves and be an active part of the sales process. The problem is that in this age of Big Data and internet marketing, as CEOs and business owners we've been conditioned to sit back and passively wait for new business to come knocking through our website or Google ads. We're suckers for the colored graphs and pie charts presented by our own marketing team or contracted vendors that show we had a 1/10<sup>th</sup> of one percent open rate on the recent e-mail blast campaign. And some guy in Iceland spent five seconds on our website home page. Information *is* important but information alone won't get you new business! I'm not knocking internet marketing, but if that's all you do, you're probably missing a ton of new business opportunities.

The starting point to any successful lead generation campaign is to have a highly targeted and accurate list of prospects. This is pretty basic marketing 101 sort of stuff but it's worth acknowledging here and reinforcing the point that you can have a great product or service, wonderful branding and advertising, but if you have a bad list, you'll end up trying to talk and communicate with the wrong person and it will be a waste of time and money. You should know exactly what your customer profile looks like—what the corporate demographics are—the type and size of companies Who specifically at these companies are your prospect targets? Is it the CEO, CFO, Buyer, Engineer, or some other contact? Are there multiple contacts you need to make? Reviewing your current client customer base and identifying similar characteristics is critical. From there, you should seek to build a prospect list of targeted contacts with similar characteristics.

How do you build that prospect list? Are there association lists? Is there an industry directory of some sort? How current is all the data? People move around, change jobs, come, and go. Creating a targeted list of prospects with up-to-date information and contact information is essential (Prospect name, company name, mailing address, phone number and yes—e-mail address). It's a tedious job to sort out all the available lists, purge out duplicates and stay on top of updates—but it's essential. So now you have your target prospect list. What next? How are you going to get their attention, make an introduction and start a conversation?

My father, Walter Weintz, was the marketing guru behind *Reader's Digest* in the 1950s. Walt was a pioneer of direct marketing which is all about creating targeted prospect lists getting

those prospects to take action. Direct marketing is all about getting measurable results. Many of Walt's copywriting direct mail campaigns were record breaking successes.

After graduating from Vanderbilt University in 1978 (double major in English and Philosophy), I followed in my father's footsteps and worked as a copywriter at one of the largest direct marketing ad agencies in Manhattan. I too worked at *Reader's Digest* and have a career and

## Walter H. Weintz, 81, Pioneer in Direct Mail

By EDWIN McDOWELL

Walter H. Weintz, a pioneer of direct mail advertising, died on Saturday in the Laurelwood nursing home in Ridgefield, Conn. He was 81 and lived in Norwalk, Conn., with his wife of 60 years, the former Helen Bennett.

The cause was complications from a stroke, said Walter L. Weintz, a son.

In "Theirs Was the Kingdom" (Norton, 1993), a history of *Reader's Digest*, John Heidenry, the author, described Mr. Weintz as "one of the most brilliant direct-mail strategists in the country."

Robert J. Teufel, the president of Rodale's Press, described Mr. Weintz as "a giant in his field who single-handedly invented many of the strategies and techniques that transformed direct response advertising into today's multibillion-dollar industry."

As the circulation director of the *Digest* in the 1950's, Mr. Weintz mailed a record 100 million pennies as part of a subscription campaign, quoting a Persian poet, "If thou hast two pennies, spend one for bread." He added, "Keep one penny for bread. Or for luck. Send back the other penny as a down payment on a subscription to the *Reader's Digest* — a penny to seal the bargain!"

The pennies were sent from the United States Mint in Denver in open

flatbed trucks to a Long Island warehouse, the floor of which collapsed under the weight.

That mailing, along with other direct marketing campaigns that Mr. Weintz conceived, was credited in large part for raising the magazine's circulation, which had fallen by 25 percent to 4.5 million in 1948, when Mr. Weintz was hired. When he left in

### Selling *Reader's Digest* with 100 million pennies.

1959 to open his own direct marketing agency in Norwalk, monthly circulation exceeded 12 million.

Mr. Weintz also devised the direct marketing campaign for the *Reader's Digest Condensed Books*; the books' profits long accounted for the biggest percentage of the *Digest's* worldwide publishing operations.

"The mail order business is a strange combination of wild ideas and caution," Mr. Weintz wrote in his memoir, "The Solid Gold Mailbox" (Wiley, 1987). "It is fascinating and exciting because with a good idea you can make a fortune overnight

simply by mailing out a few thousand or a few million sales letters — or, with a bad idea, poorly planned and executed, you can lose that fortune with equal ease."

His direct mail campaigns for the Weintz Company helped increase the circulation of *McCall's* and helped start the Better Homes and Gardens Crafts Club.

In 1952, he began helping the Republican National Finance Committee, and in 1972 raised \$22 million for the committee, and an additional \$10 million or so to re-elect President Richard M. Nixon. In his memoir, Mr. Weintz said that about 80 percent of the Republican National Finance Committee's budget in 1972 came from small donations raised through direct mail solicitation.

Mr. Weintz was born in New York on April 12, 1915, and graduated from Duke University in 1935. He enlisted in the Navy in 1943, and later commanded a landing-craft support vessel in the Pacific.

In addition to his wife and son Walter, of Ossining, N.Y., who is the publishing director of the Random House adult trade division, Mr. Weintz is survived by two other sons, Todd, of Reading, Conn., the president of the Weintz Agency, and Steven, of Little Rock, Ark.; two daughters, Katherine Teck of White Plains and Sally Seicrist of Mount Vernon, Ohio, and eight grandchildren.

lifetime of experience and achievement adapting many of the marketing techniques my dad created decades ago. I founded SBW Ventures in 1998 to work in confidence and alongside business owners to develop new direct marketing strategies and to get new business. It's no surprise, given my history and background, that I have had tremendous success utilizing direct mail as a keystone to engage business owners: a personal letter and package with a targeted, compelling message that gets attention. When I talk about direct mail, I'm not talking about mailing out thousands or hundreds of letters. I'm not talking about junk mail that gets thrown in the trash. I'm talking about sending a personal letter, personally signed with professional, attention getting collateral materials.

When I work with a client we often start by trying to identify maybe the top one hundred prospects. Every week we hand pick five to ten new prospects. We research and talk about each prospect and what makes them unique in the industry. We then send them a personal letter and presentation in an oversize cardboard mailer, marked confidential, security sealed and mailed first class. I can tell you from experience that the letter gets a 100% open rate response. The package is so unique and different looking it doesn't get trashed.

So, we always get some calls and response from the direct mail letter itself, but what really increases the response is a personal follow-up e-mail and chase call which by themselves are a waste of time. But having sent the package and letter, now I've got a legitimate reason for the follow-up. And chances are, the presentation is sitting on the prospect's desk, and he's read the letter. So now a chase call and e-mail are far more effective. In fact, typically, I get between a 30% to 50% or more response from the combination of mail, e-mail, and chase call. So, for every 10 packages we mail and follow-up on we might get three declines and one positive response. But even the declines are often positive and beneficial. We've planted the seed and done it in a memorable, positive, professional manner that is golden advertising and may reap rewards and a response some months even years later.

Let's talk for a minute about copywriting and messaging. It's great that the package gets opened and you've got your prospects attention, but you have just a few sentences, a few *seconds* to establish credibility, a connection and interest. Words have power. With every word you write and speak you are either selling or unselling yourself, your Company, products, and services. Make every word count!

My dad was fond of saying that "sloppy writing is a reflection of sloppy thinking." There's no room for sloppy thinking or writing or talking with regard to new business lead generation. A canned, corporate, commercial, inauthentic, self-serving sales pitch is doomed to failure. Remember, meaningful new business conversations start when you can write and talk about helping solve a problem, provide a much-needed service or pitch an opportunity. I get so many e-mails, and I imagine you do as well, that start out by asking me if I have time to schedule a call. Asking a busy CEO or business owner if he has time for a call is not a solution! You're adding to his *problem* which is that he's *busy*! He doesn't need another phone call or another meeting! For example, right now, I'm not asking you to call or meet with me, we're talking about the fundamental and important topic of how to solve your problem of how to efficiently prospect for

new business! We're talking about a solution to a problem you and most other business owners have! And I've given you an overview of how I go about solving that problem and my background and credentials and methodology for doing so.

Sometimes clients ask me "Steve, this all sounds interesting, but it also sounds expensive! How much does all this cost? My answer is because every project is different the costs vary. But then I remind them about all the wasted advertising dollars that John Wannamaker referenced and about the cost of trade shows and sales reps and trade advertising and all the other type of marketing they might do they do (and you might do also), that doesn't get results! I also point out that what I help them do is *essential* to their business. The work of seeking out and starting conversations about new business is not optional. So asking about the cost (and we all need to pay attention to costs to make a profit) but it's like asking a heart surgeon who is about to perform a triple bypass to save your life about his cost. "Hey,, before you open me up—what's this going to cost?" Seriously! Another fact is that because I'm a direct marketing specialist and an independent consultant, I do all the work myself. You won't be paying to support a big staff or office overhead.

Finally, I may not know your business, but I know *business*! And in formulating the sales strategy and writing the letter copy I'll learn what I need to know to start a conversation with a prospect on your behalf. Over the years I've worked on some highly technical and sophisticated projects. I've had the privilege of working with the owner and CEO of a pharmaceutical Company and in a matter of a few months we successfully made introductions with the CEOs at some of the largest drug companies around the world. In the financial marketplace, I've contacted and started conversations with some of the top wealth advisors in the country—money managers who control billions of dollars. I've created campaigns to successfully sell medical devices, technology and IT services, and a variety of industrial products and services. For specific client references you can go to my website and read more at [www.sbwventuresinc.com](http://www.sbwventuresinc.com).

I love the entire process of cold call C-Suite prospecting. Many people would opt for multiple root canals than do what I do on a regular basis. I absolutely love the challenge of working with my clients to create unique, creative, intelligent, successful lead generation campaigns and connecting with hard-to-get business owners and senior executives. No matter what industry you happen to be in it's basically the same process but every campaign I do is unique. There is nothing cookie cutter about what I do: Concierge C-Suite lead generation and communications.

Remember, you're either moving forward, growing, or moving backward and writing your own corporate obituary. Growth starts with new business and every new sale, every new contract, every new business opportunity starts with a conversation. Hopefully I've shared a few ideas for you to think about. And I'd love to hear from you and start a conversation about helping to grow *your* business.

Steve Weintz, President  
SBW Ventures, Inc.

[www.sbwventuresinc.com](http://www.sbwventuresinc.com)  
[sweintz@sbwventuresinc.com](mailto:sweintz@sbwventuresinc.com)

(843) 822-7664 cell

