SacreBleu
MARKETING



The Leads Machine

Build a system that prospects for you

The heart of the problem

You're posting... Not converting...

61%

of businesses claim qualified lead generation as their top challenge. Not visibility... Not engagement... Leads.

You post on LinkedIn every week. Your founder speaks up, your team shares, your followers grow. And yet, demo requests aren't coming in.

The paradox is right there. You do have engagement: on LinkedIn, a post gets a median of 6.1% engagement, on Instagram 5.4%. Respectable numbers. But between the like and the signed quote, there's a gap nobody has built.

It's not a content problem. It's a structure problem.

Content grabs attention. Structure turns it into an appointment. Without it, you're filling a leaky tank: every week you fill it, and every week it all drains out.



The 5 leaks draining your pipeline

79% of marketing-generated leads never become customers.
This isn't an audience problem, it's a system not successfully setup.

1. No capture mechanism. Your followers are watching, but nothing invites them to leave their email. A page not designed to capture converts 2 to 5% of its visitors; the best structured ones exceed 10 to 15%. Same traffic, three times more contacts.

2. No funnel after the like. A "like" is not a sale. Without an intermediate step (a downloadable resource, a diagnostic, a meeting), the prospect evaporates: 79% of leads never convert, for lack of a journey to guide them.

3. Vanity metrics. You track likes and views, not leads or revenue. Only 11% of marketers rate their data as excellent. You manage what you measure: if you measure applause, you optimize for applause.

4. A generic message. Content that speaks to everyone speaks to no one. Without a clear ICP, the audience never feels addressed. Conversely, 96% of marketers find that a personalized experience increases their sales.

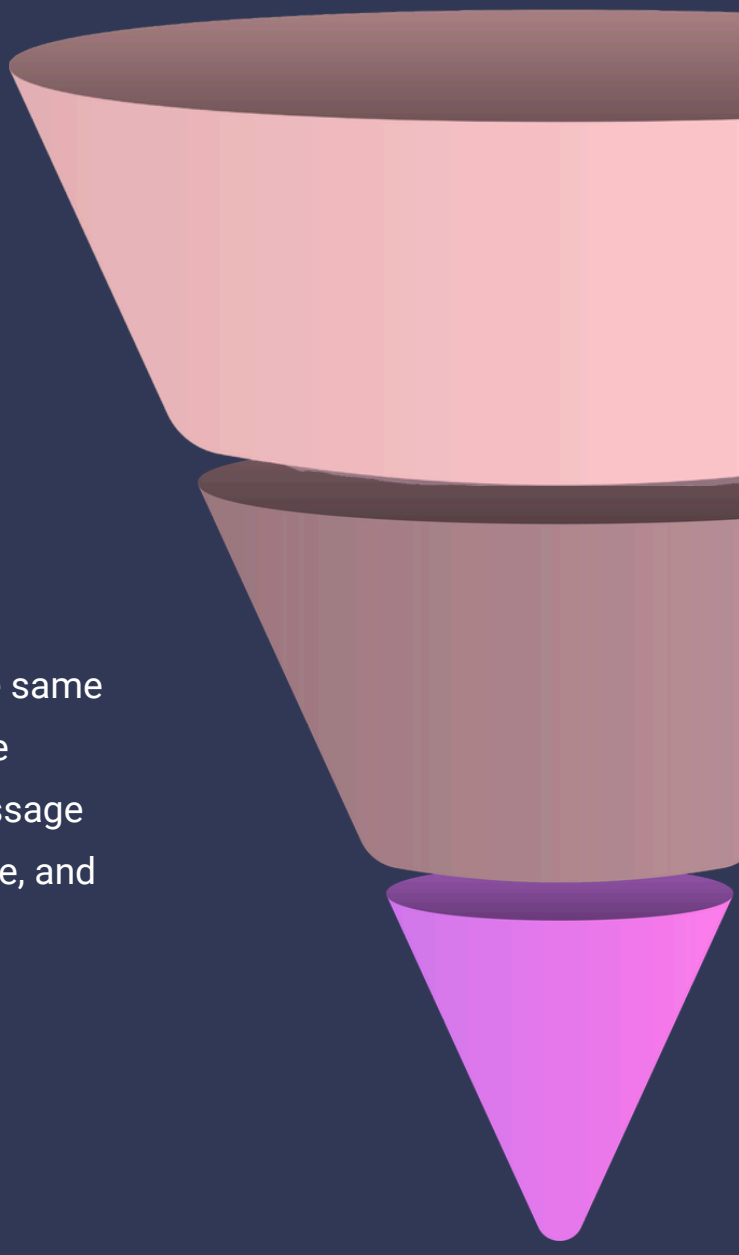


5. No structured follow-up. Without a CRM or email sequence, every prospect gets lost. Only 27% of leads are contacted, and companies that do respond take 42 hours on average, while 23% never respond at all. Yet a lead contacted within the hour is 7 times more likely to qualify (Harvard Business Review, 2011).

The good news? Every one of these leaks can be fixed with the right structure. **Companies that master nurturing generate 50% more sales-ready leads, at a 33% lower cost.**

The Sales Funnel

TOFU, MOFU, BOFU: three stages, one system



A sales funnel is the path
a stranger travels to become a customer.

We break it down into three stages:

- the top (TOFU, Top of Funnel),
- the middle (MOFU, Middle of Funnel)
- the bottom (BOFU, Bottom of Funnel).

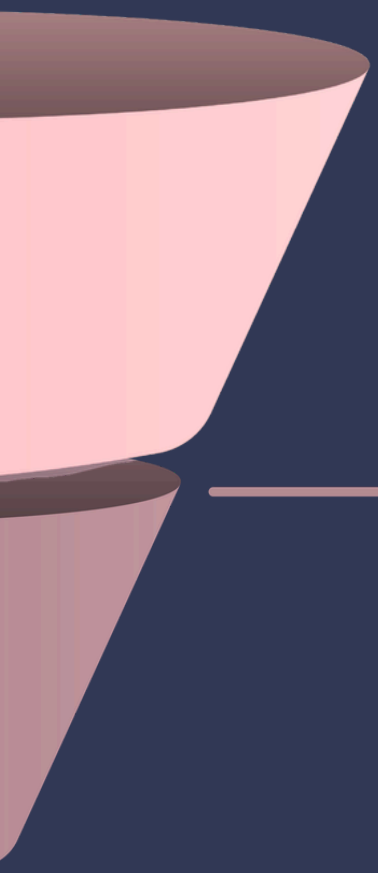
Why break it down this way? Because a prospect discovering you doesn't have the same questions as one comparing offers, or one ready to sign. Serving them the same message means talking about price too early for one, and results too late for the other.

Each stage therefore has its own goal, content, channels and metrics.

The funnel isn't marketing theory: it's the blueprint for building your lead machine.

The whole point of the funnel is moving your prospect up each stage: capture more broadly at the top, lose less in the middle, close faster at the bottom.

And the numbers show where the real leverage is: the middle and bottom of the funnel, where almost no one invests.



ToFu (Top of Funnel)

Discovery: the prospect identifies a problem.
Content: Broad, educational to capture attention.

MoFu (Middle of Funnel)

Consideration: the prospect compares solutions.
Content: targeted to demonstrate your expertise.

BoFu (Bottom of Funnel)

Decision: the prospect is ready to buy.
Content: conversion to turn interest into a sale.

Key takeaways

TOFU

Average conversion rate at the TOFU stage: 4.6% (Funnel.io). Visibility alone isn't enough.

MOFU

Conversion rate for well-executed MOFU strategies: 75% (Funnel.io). This is where qualification happens.

BOFU

Only 14% of professionals create BOFU content (Funnel.io). The bottom of the funnel is the most neglected, and the most profitable.

TOFU
attracting the right leads

The ICP (Ideal Customer Profile) is the precise portrait of the customer who buys fast, stays long, and recommends you: industry, company size, decision maker's role, top problem, buying trigger, budget. Without an ICP, you're paying to reach people who will never buy. With one, every euro of content or advertising hits its mark.

Exercise: list your 5 best current customers, note what they have in common, then write a one-page profile. That's your ICP.

Where to find your ICP?

LinkedIn

The default B2B channel. Target by job title, industry and company size. Personal profiles get 63% more engagement than company pages (Metricool 2026).

Google / YouTube

Google Ads captures intent: the prospect is already looking for a solution. YouTube educates in depth and feeds retargeting.

Instagram / Meta

Ideal for B2C and brands with a strong visual identity. Target by interests and lookalike audiences based on your best customers.

Publishing to convert

50%

of businesses produce TOFU content (Funnel.io).
Everyone publishes. Very few know for whom.

At TOFU, the goal isn't to sell, it's to exist on your ICP's radar: 80% value, 20% offer. An educated prospect arrives at MOFU already convinced of the stakes.

The most effective content is the most human: behind the scenes, team, owned mistakes create closeness.
If you post on LinkedIn, do it from your leaders' profiles, using thought leadership. A post shared by an employee gets 8 times more engagement, and its leads convert 7 times more (MSLGroup, IBM).

A good post always follows the same anatomy: a hook that speaks to the reader's problem, a body with one idea per post, and a single clear CTA toward a capture point.

The action plan

- Targeting: Your ICP defined
- Advertising: One promise + one capture page. Test budget of €10 to €20 per day for 2 weeks, 3 different hooks on the same visual. Cut what doesn't convert after 7 days.
- Formats that work: educational carousel (high save rate), short face-to-camera video (closeness), text post with a number (debate and reach).
- Rhythm: 3 to 5 posts per week on one main channel. Consistency beats perfection: one guide is worth 10 posts.
- Measurement: Not likes: clicks, captured contacts, meetings booked. A weekly dashboard: reach, engagement, leads, cost per lead.

MOFU
Sort before you sell

Lead scoring: knowing who's ready, and who isn't yet

In the middle of the funnel, the prospect knows you. They've downloaded a guide, opened your emails, visited your pricing page. But they're not ready to buy. And above all, not all your leads are equal.

Lead scoring means assigning points to each contact along two axes: who they are (do they match your ICP?) and what they do (are they showing interest?). Above a threshold, the lead becomes an MQL (Marketing Qualified Lead) and moves to the next stage.

Why it's vital: only 44% of companies use scoring, and 67% of lost sales come from poor qualification (Landbase). Without a score, your sales reps call everyone, which means no one at the right time.

A simple 4-block model

- Profile (fit): +20 if ICP industry, +15 if decision-maker role, +10 if target company size. Remove 20 points for a student, a competitor, or a generic email.
- Engagement: +5 per email opened, +10 per click, +15 per content downloaded, +25 for a pricing page visit, +40 for a demo or meeting request.
- Freshness: remove 10 points per month without interaction. A lead that's hot in January isn't anymore by June.
- Thresholds: 0 to 39, needs nurturing. 40 to 69, MQL: qualification sequence. 70 and above, SQL: passed to sales within the hour.
- Tools: HubSpot, Brevo, ActiveCampaign, or a simple Google Sheet to get started.

Nurturing by email

8x

Automated sequences generate up to 8 times more orders than mass sends (Salesgenie).

An MQL lead isn't a customer yet. They need proof, time, and reminders. The email sequence does that work for you, 24 hours a day, without anyone having to think about it.

The numbers speak for themselves: automated emails account for 37% of email-generated sales for just 2% of the volume sent, and nurtured leads place orders 47% larger (Salesgenie).

The rules: one email = one idea = one CTA. Write like a person, not a brand. Personalize at minimum the first name and the problem. And connect every open, click and reply to your score.

2026 B2B benchmarks: 32 to 44% open rate on the first email, 8 to 12 emails maximum, one send every 5 to 7 days (GrowthSpree).

The standard sequence: 6 emails over 3 weeks

Day 0, the delivery. The promised guide, no pitch. One single question: "What's your biggest obstacle today?"

Day 2, the problem. Why most people fail on this. No selling.

Day 5, the proof. A data-backed case study of a client like them.

Day 8, the method. Your 3-step approach. First soft CTA toward a diagnostic.

Day 12, the objection. Address the main reason not to act: price, time, doubt.

Day 18, the invitation. A clear offer of a 20-minute conversation.

BOFU
Closing and selling

The lead is qualified, it moves to sales or the founder. Marketing's work isn't done.

At the bottom of the funnel, the prospect has a high score: they've requested a demo or a meeting. They become an SQL (Sales Qualified Lead) and move from marketing to the SDRs (Sales Development Representatives), who handle first contact. No SDR yet? The founder plays that role.

This is the most fragile moment in the funnel. Only 13% of MQLs become SQLs on average (Landbase), and a lead contacted within the hour is 60 times more likely to qualify than one left waiting a day or more (Harvard Business Review, 2011). The handoff must be immediate and equipped.

The handoff in 3 rules: an SQL is contacted within the hour, within minutes for a demo request; the SDR receives the full history (score, content viewed, replies); marketing doesn't stop, it reinforces.

The SDR should never face the prospect alone. While they're calling, marketing keeps sending signals:

- Social proof: video testimonials, client logos, case study from the same industry.
- Objection handling: FAQ, comparison with alternatives, guarantee or trial.
- Retargeting: ads targeted only at SQLs, with a reassurance message, not a discovery one.
- Decision page: a single page summarizing the offer, price, next steps and the booking button.
- Honest urgency: limited offer or spots, only if it's true.

Reminder: only 14% of professionals create BOFU content (Funnel.io). This is where the difference is made.

The closing sequence

7x

A lead contacted within the hour is 7 times more likely to qualify (Harvard Business Review, 2011).

At BOFU, the sequence changes in nature. It's short, direct, personal. Three to five messages over ten days, no more: the prospect has already read everything, they're waiting for a decision, not a lecture.

Automated or manual? Both. The skeleton is automated to guarantee no lead falls through the cracks. But every email is signed by the SDR or the founder, with at least one personalized line: the obstacle mentioned, the company, the date of the conversation. 2026 benchmarks show 38 to 50% open rate and 3.5 to 6% reply rate for this type of sequence (GrowthSpree). Combining email and LinkedIn messages brings 40 to 60% better results.

One absolute rule: as soon as the prospect replies or signs, the sequence stops. Nothing destroys trust faster than an automated email after a "yes."

5 messages, 10 days

- Day 0, the recap: what was said, the proposal, the next step with a date.
- Day 2, the proof: a testimonial or a data-backed result from a similar client.
- Day 5, the objection: "Most of our clients hesitated on X. Here's what happened." Offer a 10-minute call.
- Day 8, the short follow-up. Three lines.
- Day 10, the close: "I'm closing the file for now, I'm still available." This message often gets the most replies.
- The lead who doesn't sign goes back into a longer MOFU sequence, with a reduced score: never abandoned.

B2B marketing that fills your calendar with meetings

I'm Sonia Barbier, founder of Sacrebleu Marketing. For 20 years, I've built demand generation for B2B tech companies, from large groups to SaaS scale-ups, most recently at a finance SaaS company.

Today, I help small B2B companies that don't have a marketing team yet set up their lead machine: a clear ICP, a funnel that captures, sequences that follow up, a pipeline you can measure.

My approach: pragmatic and done-for-you. In 6 weeks, the system is running and you know exactly where your meetings come from.

No marketing team?

I'll build it with you. Book 30 minutes to talk it through.





Sonia Barbier
sacrebleu-marketing.com

Sources

- Lead Generation Statistics for 2026 (G2)
- Average engagement rate by network (Blog du Modérateur, Buffer 2026 study)
- 90 Lead Generation Statistics for 2026 (Thunderbit)
- Semrush: ToFu, MoFu, BoFu
- Harvard Business Review: The Short Life of Online Sales Leads (2011)
- Funnel.io: TOFU, MOFU, BOFU
- Landbase : Lead Qualification Statistics
- Oktopost : Employee Advocacy Statistics 2026
- Salesgenie : Lead Nurturing Statistics
- GrowthSpree : B2B Email Nurture Benchmarks 2026
- EmailAnalytics: Lead Response Time Benchmarks and Sources