

# How To Be “Ride” on Time With Buyer Intent

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How Using Buyer Intent will Help You Align with the  
Your Prospect's Timetable

## HANDLE WITH CARE

*Minding those timing gaps when considering and on-boarding buyer intent technology and data. Best practices for maximizing the value of intent data.*

New business selling has always been hard. Physical activities are "off," and when you combine "Covid caution" with the savings that CFO's are contemplating from "remote selling," you realize that the "normal" train has already left the station. Demand generation's contribution to new business sales continues to defy easy categorization, and proving attribution remains elusive. Companies and marketing leaders will continue to re-define demand generation as the new business landscape continues to re-form. Will the "gap" between sales, marketing, and revenue get wider and deeper? We think the smart use of buyer intent data will help you overcome some of these gaps, thereby enabling you to be *on* the train of demand gen change, rather than being *under* it.

## MIND THE GAP(S)

Over the next few weeks, we'll discuss this challenge. We hope to help you avoid those sales and marketing gaps. You know the ones we mean. These gaps emerge where we claim to be focused yet continue to drown anyone in our target market with emails, phone calls, and ads.

They become apparent when we try to engage our suspect prematurely and become condemned by our irrelevance and their disinterest. It's the one where we rely on sellers to create demand, where for a myriad of reasons, they never will. They surface where we continue to apply the wrong resources to the wrong tasks at the wrong time, or what Adam Needles over at Annuitas refers to as cadences resulting in "wrong place, wrong time." These are the gaps that ensure that marketing and sales remain a house divided, and force CEOs to throw up their hands in understandable frustration.

## WHAT IS THE BIG DEAL?

To kick things off, let's re-group and ensure we are all clear about what we're talking about here. As best we can, we will limit ourselves to discussing the advantages that buyer intent unleashes, but to do that, let's define our landscape. We'll restrict ourselves to "demand generation." The first order of the day is to understand what demand generation is and isn't, these days. Then we'll re-frame the core issue that demand generation tries to address.

## WHAT IS DEMAND GENERATION?

Demand Generation means different things to different people and different companies. We always argue that academic or "best practice" definitions are secondary to the importance of establishing a definition of your own choice, driving agreement, and then moving on. While we have opinions on the best components of demand generation, that's a conversation for another day.

**There is no shortage of definitions out there. A quick search of the internet reveals the following examples:**



*"Demand generation is the focus of targeted marketing programs to drive awareness and interest in a company's products and/or services."*



*"Put simply; demand generation is the process of getting people interested in what you have to sell."*



*"Demand generation refers to any activity that drives awareness and interest in your product or service with the ultimate goal to create a predictable pipeline that will grow your business."*

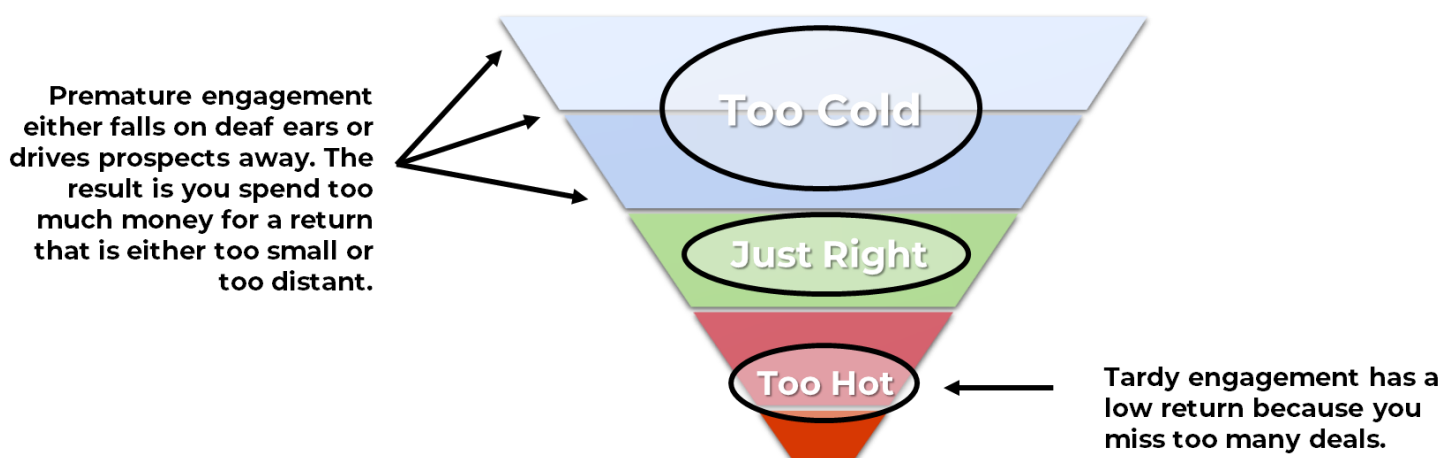
We prefer the following – “Demand generation is a process (or set of systematic efforts) to provoke meaningful preference in your target market.”

Demand generation needs to be operationalized, buyer-centric, and allow for a buyer's "natural" behavior.

## WHERE DOES BUYER INTENT DATA PLAY A ROLE?

Buyer Intent Data goes to the heart of the perpetual problem in modern demand generation regarding those decisions enabling you to commit minimal resources for maximum return. There's a bounty of technology available to us to use these days, allowing us to do this. As a reminder, Buyer Intent Data is sometimes known as Behavioral Intent Data, Purchase Intent Data, or Customer Insights. Put simply; it is information collected on a company or person's digital engagement activities with different sources of online information. This data is gathered by “technology” that “listens” to the internet for the terms and types of engagements you specify because they indicate activity by your target suspects in subjects implying preliminary buying behavior. We call this group "people of interest."

Truly valuable buyer intent data comes from signals generated by activities happening away from your web properties., particularly if you accept that "67% of the buyer's journey is now done digitally" and that "B2B buyers are typically 57% of the way to a buying decision before actively engaging with sales."



**Buyer Intent data helps you engage during the *most fruitful phase* ... where the prospect has convinced *themselves* that they need to make a change but remains unsure *how and who to do it with*.**



Using this data and the associated insights help you determine where a prospect is in their own "journey," such that you can avoid being in the wrong place at the wrong time. You can use this information to find the balance, avoiding premature engagement (typified by generic content, and outbound cadences) and tardy engagement where the prospect's train has already left the station.

## WHAT NOW?

Sometimes we wonder if we're destined to deal with the same problems over and over. In B2B sales and marketing, demand generation debates continue to rage with no shortage of different ideas, approaches, and solutions. Open source, offshoring, and mainstreaming have led to an abundance of technologies and created a marketplace resembling an ancient bazaar, where we are deafened and confused by the exaggerated shouts and claims of would-be providers. Buyer or Behavioral Intent data is a piece of this confusing looking puzzle. It helps us better understand the disposition of some of the members of our target market, such that we might be more relevant to them. If we incorporate this data thoughtfully, we can be more successful in our demand generation efforts.

In the next article, we'll look at alternative forms of demand generation. In other words, what we see companies doing in place of using intent data, why they're skeptical (even fearful) of behavioral intent data, and some of the gaps people fall into when they are using intent data.

## MINDING THE GAPS IN B2B SALES AND MARKETING INVOLVES FINDING THEM FIRST

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We're Verto, the only agency that understands B2B sales AND marketing. We think that demand generation, digital marketing, and sales enablement should work together, be simpler, cost less, and produce more. We make it happen.

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