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For most B2B companies sales leads are the lifeblood of new business development. Many of these businesses require a steady and consistent stream of business leads. The most popular options are outsourcing the lead development process to a lead generation company, developing a lead generation department within the organization, or requiring sales staff to develop their own leads.

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The two “in-house” options can create their own headaches because lead generation lies outside of the core competencies of most organizations. For the purposes of this article we will explore the outsourcing option.

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To help you decode the lead generation industry, this article will help outline the two types of lead generation companies that are most commonly found and give you pointers to decide which one is right for your business needs.

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There are two types of lead generation companies:

>> Major account

>> Small sale lead

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Major account lead generation companies target clients who sell “complex” B2B products or services. The target audiences from which leads are generated include upper management, VPs, and C-level contacts “the decision makers” in an organization. The sales cycle on these leads are typically long and require multiple sales calls over several weeks and months. The style of selling is professional, “solution-oriented”, and usually focused on return on investment (ROI) and the potential value to the business. As you can imagine, the price tag on items purchased by this target market for their businesses is significant. Here are some tests to apply to your product or service to determine if your average deal size puts you in the major account bucket; If you answer “yes” to any of these questions then your lead generation program will require a major account process;

>> Does your typical client spends \$20,000 + per year?

>> Do you have recurring revenue of at least 1,500.00 per month?

>> When you sell one time projects or packages do they total at least \$20,000 per sale?

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Major account lead generation companies have the following characteristics;

1) Mature staffs with 5 + years of sales experience

2) Program management team with 10+ years of experience

3) Full array of calling center technology including such as collaborative client dashboards, electronic scripting and advanced data management

4) Use a structured multi-step lead generation process that is built on a platform that includes multiple marketing touches with your decision maker.

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Most lead generation companies in the marketplace are small sale lead generators. This is because the major account lead generation model is a "process" and not just a phone call. This process contains multiple marketing touches with your decision maker and thus is more complex to implement and operate.

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