Category

Commercial Excellence

B2B Demand Generation & Pipeline Acceleration Playbook

A full-funnel demand waterfall with stage-by-stage SLAs and acceleration plays that get stalled pipeline moving again.

- Practitioner
- Intermediate
- Template Included

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Overview

Design the demand waterfall, fix the volume-conversion-velocity levers that actually move pipeline coverage, and deploy acceleration plays for deals that stall mid-funnel.

What's the difference between an MQL and an SQL in this model?

An MQL (Marketing Qualified Lead) meets a scoring and fit threshold that marketing has defined, indicating likely interest. An SQL (Sales Qualified Lead) has been vetted by a sales rep against real qualification criteria — budget, authority, need, timeline — and accepted as a genuine opportunity. The SAL stage in between is simply sales' acceptance that the lead is worth working, before full qualification happens.

Why prioritize conversion and velocity over just generating more leads?

Because a funnel with a leak at a specific stage wastes a proportional share of every new lead poured into it. Fixing a stage that converts at 9% instead of 20% effectively doubles the pipeline output of your existing lead volume, which is almost always cheaper than buying more top-of-funnel volume.

How fast should lead response time actually be?

Aim for under 5 minutes for hand-raise or high-intent leads during business hours, with automated routing rather than a manual queue. Response within the first five minutes converts multiples better than response even an hour later, and drops off sharply after that.

What goes in a marketing-sales SLA?

Marketing commits to a volume and quality bar for MQLs (usually tied to the ICP fit score). Sales commits to a response-time standard and to disposing of every lead (accepted, rejected with reason, or converted) within a fixed window, typically 24 hours. Both sides review actual performance against the SLA monthly.

How do acceleration plays differ from a normal follow-up cadence?

A normal follow-up cadence is generic and time-based (check in every few days). An acceleration play is diagnosis-based — it's a specific intervention matched to why a deal is actually stuck, whether that's a missing second buying-committee contact, an unaddressed price objection, or a champion who's gone dark.

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