

# Playing the game

**Andrew Scott, managing director of Purpleplex, discusses three factors that high growth companies have in common**

Whatever industry you are in, you will always find one company that is succeeding on a massive scale, creating new opportunities and out-manoeuvring their competitors.

As others try to catch up, this company is already ahead of the game and the gap between this unstoppable machine and the competition gets continuously wider. On closer inspection you will discover that this company, and indeed all other high-performance companies, will be focusing on the three steps to business growth – generating sales leads, converting leads to customers, and retaining and developing their customers.

Creating a business growth plan requires significant research, planning and strategy. However, you will find every high growth business does the following three things consistently well:

### Generate sales leads

If your aim is to build a sustainable, profitable business, having a marketing machine that continuously generates sales leads is vital, whether business is quiet or busy. Driving leads to your door can be done in many ways.

Despite the rise in digital marketing, direct mail is experiencing something of a renaissance, with innovation and more robust measurement giving this traditional medium a new lease of life. There's much less post these days, so when we do receive something through our letterbox we are much more likely to read and engage with it – and smart businesses are taking advantage of this.

Direct mails digital cousin, email marketing, is a cost-effective way to target a large audience and generate instant responses. There is a real science to email marketing, so you need to ensure that your hard work doesn't end up in Spam and Junk folders.

Generating leads online is achieved through search engine optimisation (SEO), conversion rate optimisation (CRO) and pay per click (PPC). These tactics are designed to drive relevant traffic to your website, and then turn that traffic into a lead.

And with 2.2 billion Facebook users worldwide, 336 million users of Twitter and 4.57 million users of LinkedIn, social media platforms are now a vital lead source.

### Convert leads into customers

This may sound obvious, but very few companies really analyse sales conversion rates or understand the real reasons behind prospects that convert to customers and those that don't. This information is vital to refining and improving the sales process and can be achieved by investing in a customer relationship management (CRM) system.

A prospect that says "no" is really only saying "no for now" and having a lead nurturing system that follows up and stays in contact with prospects, long after your sales rep has moved on to the next target, will ensure more



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prospects convert to customers.

A well-trained, motivated sales team is crucial. Sales training is one of the best investments you can make to improve sales conversion rates, profit margins and average order values.

Point of sale marketing material meanwhile is also hugely important and can be the difference between making and losing a sale.

### Retain and develop customers

The easiest way to grow your customers is to not lose them, so it's all about building up that personal relationship.

Companies can invest heavily on external marketing yet miss the sales opportunities within their existing customer base. Are your customers buying all their products from you? If not, could they be? What are the opportunities to increase frequency and value of purchases?

One of the best ways to do this is to provide your customers with a quarterly newsletter which makes them aware of the other products that you offer, any special offers, and your company news.

Another thing that goes a long way to retaining your customers is positive PR. If your customers see you regularly in print, then it reinforces that you are the right company to be dealing with and there is no need to take business elsewhere.

Outstanding, high-performance companies will all have the three steps to business growth in common. If a business is struggling, one or more of these steps will have broken down.

Get each one of them right, however, and you will give your business the best possible chance of catching your competitors up. □

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