

Is Demand Generation Ethical: Here's The Truth!

In this highly competitive and data driven world, demand generation is a useful proactive marketing strategy that creates demand for a client's product before potential consumers even enter the purchasing [funnel](#). With that in mind, you might wonder, is it an ethical marketing strategy or is it an unscrupulous practice?

Demand generation marketing strategies can be ethical as long as your business does not mislead or hurt possible consumers with campaigns. Demand generation campaigns must also operate with transparency when working with clients to remain ethical and not face legal ramifications.

If you want to make sure your company remains ethical and in good standing with consumers and clients read on.

The Ethical Demand Generation Consumer Strategy Playbook

The demand generation campaigns you manage for your clients will affect real people in the world, so you'll want to make sure you're setting them up ethically. The things you'll want to be cognizant about when crafting campaigns are:

- How you source your leads
- How you present your information
- How your content affects consumers

When you get leads, you're responsible for what happens to them. You'll want to make sure the potential consumer's personal information is safe and secured before and after a campaign.

If you generate leads yourself, you can be more in control of this by:

- Protecting the [information](#) with regular system updates
- Creating strong passwords for your systems
- Using single sign on tools for employees
- Not opening spam e-mail
- Keeping your business's antivirus up to date
- Testing your system for possible weak spots
- Reading up on emerging virus and security technology
- Using consumer information responsibly

If you buy leads, that's when things can get sketchy. You don't know what another business is doing behind closed doors with people's data.

With regards to how you present your campaign to audiences, you want to create demand for a client's product and not aggravate potential consumers.

You need to make sure your campaigns are concise and don't come across as "spammy." People don't like being sold to especially if it's aggressive and redundant. Show them there's a problem they didn't know they had, but don't push them too hard.

Lastly, to use demand generation ethically you'll want to do no harm to your audience. Make sure your campaigns:

- Add value to consumers and don't waste their time
- Don't use hyperbole or fear tactics to engage people
- Don't put consumers at risk for viruses (if your content includes downloads)

If you keep all these points in mind, you will be in good standing with your leads!

Red Flags of Unethical Demand Generation Consumer Strategies

If you don't align with the above, you'll want to be careful and clean up your act. If you:

- Create fraudulent campaigns
- Engage in [design](#) duplicity
- Use marketing tactics that stereotype or [disenfranchise people](#)

Your brand as well as your client's company could become tainted in the eyes of the public.

Red flags to consumers that you run an unethical business and that your campaign is fraudulent is using tactics like:

- Bait and switch
- Overselling products
- Using fake comments/reviews

People are smart and if someone finds out they've been duped they will scream like mad on social media.

Another strategy that can turn consumers against you is utilizing design to force them into something. This comes in the form of:

- Too many pop-ups
- False content gates

If you trick a consumer into clicking something they don't want to or convince them they have to give out information that's not needed you will create user resentment.

Lastly, none of the content you create for a campaign should play into stereotypes or exclude people. Not only is it unethical, but it will leave a bad taste in a potential consumer's mouth.

The Ethical Demand Generation Client Strategy Playbook

One thing people forget to keep in mind is there are not only ethics in play when dealing with the public at large, but also in the planning stages of a campaign with [clients](#). If you're not ethical at the roots of a campaign, there's little chance you'll be more ethical with consumers.

To be on the ethical side of using demand generation strategies with B2C clients you'll need to keep these three questions in mind:

- What does your client want?
- What is your product or service?
- What can you teach your client?

First, know all there is to know about what your client wants to achieve with their campaign. When planning a campaign you will want to:

- Actively listen
- Distinguish needs vs. wants
- Ask follow up questions

You should also be aware of their business's:

- Image in the marketplace
- Mission statement
- Stage of the funnel they're in

All of this information will help you determine if your product is right for the client, which leads us into the next point. You must know everything your product can and can't do.

If your product isn't right for the client or if in their conversation with you about their campaign you find they're mistaken about something regarding:

- What your product can do
- The state of the marketplace at large
- Certain metrics or KPI's

You'll need to be honest with them. You can't sell client something that doesn't exist. Don't be afraid that this will be an immediate lost client however, you can still secure their dollars now or in the future.

If you can teach clients something or clarify things for them it will help your relationship in the long run. They can make a more informed decision and possibly come around to your strategies.

Or if clients pass on your product initially, they may still come around to you after dealing with less straight-forward companies. You will stand out as the company that set them straight and don't mislead your customers.

Red Flags of Unethical Demand Generation Client Strategies

If you aren't aligned with the above, you'll want to be careful because you'll start to fall into unethical business practices. If you:

- Say what the client wants to hear/oversell your product
- Lie by omission
- Distract clients with [vanity metrics](#)

In advertising, it's hard not to fall into a yes-man line of thinking because you want to book as much business as you can, but if you tell your client only what they want to hear you'll get a lot of short term clients that won't come back.

You can't oversell your product, it is what it is, by the end of the campaign you'll be scrambling to hit goals and create a not so great relationship with your in house teams.

Another thing that can be a red flag for clients is lying by omission. Lying by omissions will not fly with clients because no one wants to be told they weren't "actually" lied to. It creates a bad working relationship with clients as it paints your company as sneaky.

Finally, vanity metrics can seem impressive, but they don't accurately measure the pulse of how well a campaign is doing. They are important to take note of, but they shouldn't be the focus of a campaign since demand generation isn't as concrete as getting a certain amount of something, it's about creating brand awareness with potential for [consumers](#).

The Dangers of Being in the Grey Zone

Finding out your business is not being as straightforward as it should is not only disheartening, but it can cost you dearly. If clients and consumers find out that your company is actively engaging in shady business strategies, they can lose faith in your company, costing you future business dealings.

Not only can your business's reputation be tarnished by playing with the unethical, but it can also lead to legal ramifications as well. Your business can be sued by angry clients for selling false products. You can also get in further trouble with both the [FTC](#) and [ABA](#) which set up rules on how businesses are allowed to advertise.

Overall, if you find that your business is dipping its toes into dark waters, you'll want to revise how you run things, before it's too late.

Conclusion

Like everything in this multifaceted and ever-changing marketplace, demand generation is a tool that can be used by the ethical and unethical alike. It is not an ethical or unethical strategy on its own, so observe your company's codes of conduct and its actual practices regularly to see if you're aligned with what a high-quality business is expected to do.

Sources

[How to Build and Measure Successful Demand Generation Campaigns](#)

[8 Ways to Protect your B2B Company from Data Breach](#)

[The 'Ethics' You Didn't Know Existed in Design](#)

[Ethics in Marketing](#)

[Demand Generation Marketing: A Catalyst for Professional Services High Growth](#)

[Here's the Difference Between Metrics and KPIs](#)

[Introduction to Demand Generation](#)

[Avoid Unlawful Advertising: Seven Rules for Your Business](#)

[Marketing and Advertising](#)