

Keys to Successfully
Launch and Grow a
Lead Distribution
Program with
Technology



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Part I

Introduction

Whether you're starting a new lead distribution program or have been running one for years, choosing the best path forward can feel like a challenge. This is especially true when it comes to leveraging technology to grow your business.

Leads, leads, and more leads. Of course you, as a lead generator, want them. Yet, how do you get the most out of each one and maximize revenue potential?

The simple answer: leverage the right lead distribution software solution for collecting, validating, and distributing high-quality leads in real-time. But unfortunately, it's not always that easy or a one-size-fits-all solution.

Most agree there are benefits to automating a lead distribution program with technology. Yet, not all lead distribution solutions are created equal. The right platform empowers you with an impactful and strategic advantage that can elevate a company to greater heights.

We're here to help you achieve success by delivering guidance on how to take the guesswork out of selecting a lead distribution platform. In this guide, you'll secure the knowledge and inspiration to confidently build and grow a lead distribution program, with a technology solution that fits your needs to boost profitability.

We'll begin by laying out the basics such as the lead distribution process, then highlight the benefits and best practices for finding the best platform for your business.



Part II

How Lead Distribution Works

Lead distribution is a performance marketing process that involves capturing, validating, and distributing leads in real-time.

The name of the game for lead distribution is to get the best price for leads generated. The process starts by generating a “lead” which is a website visitor that has filled out a web form by providing contact information. The form can be simple, asking for an email address, or a more complex form requiring detailed information and additional questions.

Below illustrates how the complete lead distribution cycle works:



The importance of technology

With lead distribution, your success depends on effectively managing this process that includes a wide range of customer data as well as lead buyers who have vastly different requirements. If you're relying on inefficient tools such as spreadsheets and/or disjointed technology, chances are you're missing out on lead revenue opportunities.

This is where technology delivers key advantages and empowers you to get the most out of your program.

How lead distribution software elevates your performance program



Complete view

Scale your program by utilizing a centralized platform that provides a holistic view into the management and optimization of all traffic sources, lead buyers, and lead quality.



Need for speed

Automating lead distribution allows you to quickly capture and validate more leads in real-time. Then intelligently and quickly route these digital leads – based on a variety of factors – to lead buyers.



Quality counts

It comes down to not only the quantity of the leads, but the quality as well. Validating the quality of the leads captured before selling them reduces return rates, and increases revenue.



Smart insights

Improve transparency, actionable insights, and reporting capabilities to drive the highest revenue for your leads, leverage every revenue opportunity, and strengthen your relationship with lead buyers.



Flexible routing

To increase your lead volume and meet buyers' unique needs, flexibility is crucial to match the criteria and capabilities of every single lead buyer. Advanced routing technology automates and validates buyer delivery requirements, scheduling, bids, and budgets.



Combat fraud

Prevent fraudulent activity and ensure lead quality for your buyers, so they can focus on growing their business.

Digital marketing fraud's true impact is significant, though difficult to measure. According to eMarketer, recent estimates vary from \$6.5 billion to as high as \$19 billion.²

Part III

How to Choose a Lead Distribution Technology

The lead distribution process can be overwhelming with its numerous moving parts and huge amounts of data. However, with the right technology solution, you can sift through mounds of customer and lead buyer data, then allocate leads to the best buyers, at the best price all in real-time.

The challenge lies in finding the technology solution that best meets your needs to manage your program and ensure you're selling leads to maximize profitability.

In addition to lead capturing, validation, and distribution functionality, secure a platform that also delivers lead monetization capabilities.

Here's a checklist of what a solution should enable you to accomplish:

→ **Automate the distribution of leads**

Route leads in real-time to demand-side partners according to their requirements and respective bids and budgets.

→ **Sell every lead for the highest possible price**

Monetize lead traffic with advanced lead-selling tools (such as ping/post functionality and dynamic lead prices) to ensure every lead sold generates the highest possible price.



Glossary of Terms

- **Lead:** A pre-determined set of consumer information or qualifications that can be useful in selling products or services to a consumer.
- **Lead buyer:** Business that purchases leads generated by websites.
- **Lead capturing:** Collecting consumer information from website visitors.
- **Lead validation:** Ensuring the leads you collect or buy are legitimate and high quality before being sold to a lead buyer.
- **Lead distribution:** Distributing leads to buyers based on pre-determined criteria.
- **Lead monetization:** Maximizing the value received for leads sold by getting the best possible sales price.

→ **Perform data-driven lead routing**

Determine the perceived price of a lead sale based on recent buyer activity, ensuring a successful sale for the highest possible price.

→ **Control margins**

Ensure you can earn a percentage profit on the sale of your lead. Know the exact acquisition costs and how much to sell it for in order to make a profit.

→ **Validate and enrich leads**

Make sure the leads you sell to buyers will not be returned because of fraudulent data or low lead quality.

→ **Monitor and measure accurately**

Keep an updated record of all results, including costs and revenue generated.

→ **Remove risk and maintain credibility**

Protect data and eliminate privacy concerns to safeguard customer data.

→ **Optimize customer acquisition strategies**

Perform closed-loop measurement of the lead supply and demand chain to identify optimizations.

→ **Unify programs on a centralized platform**

Streamline lead distribution and affiliate marketing partners and campaigns within a single solution to easily manage and optimize campaign performance.

“With the API working with our CRM we have visibility into the full-loop, from when a lead enters our lead distribution solution to getting an update from our CRM after the lead has been called. This helps us achieve our goal of providing high-quality leads and maximizing profitability.”

President, Surge Logics

Part IV

Businesses that Benefit from Lead Distribution Technology

Global advertisers, networks, and publishers across numerous industry verticals maximize their lead distribution efforts by automating their programs.



Following are real-world examples from vertical industries including legal, financial, and healthcare.

TIP

All industries can benefit from using a lead distribution platform to manage both supply and demand partners. By doing so delivers an end-to-end view into the lead acquisition funnel, including:

- Where/who the lead was acquired from, and sold to
- How much it was sold for
- If it was later returned for a certain reason
- If the lead buyer sent information about the lead post-sale



Vertical industry spotlight: Legal

Surge Logics is a full-service digital advertising agency, with a call center that specializes in lead generation, inbound and outbound call intake, e-retainer services, landing-page optimization, and the development of marketing strategies.

Focusing on the legal industry in the mass tort sector, Surge Logics offers full-loop visibility into how leads perform with the end goal of providing higher quality leads for attorneys.

The company had been using two separate platforms – one to manage its affiliate program and another to handle its lead distribution program. This posed challenges. Campaign data was being gathered, but it was time-consuming and expensive to piece all the information together. Additionally, the visibility into the lead acquisition funnel was fragmented.

The company also needed to be more agile. It can get expensive with leads selling for \$60 – \$300 each and spending \$200k/week in digital spend.

After evaluating the capabilities and benefits of several solutions, Surge Logics decided to integrate its lead distribution and affiliate programs on a single platform.

Managing supply and demand partners, and unifying all data

“By streamlining our affiliate and lead distribution programs, we are armed with significantly better insights into campaign performance and the ability to maximize profitability. This empowers us to provide our clients with the best leads at the best prices, helping them drive and expand their businesses.”

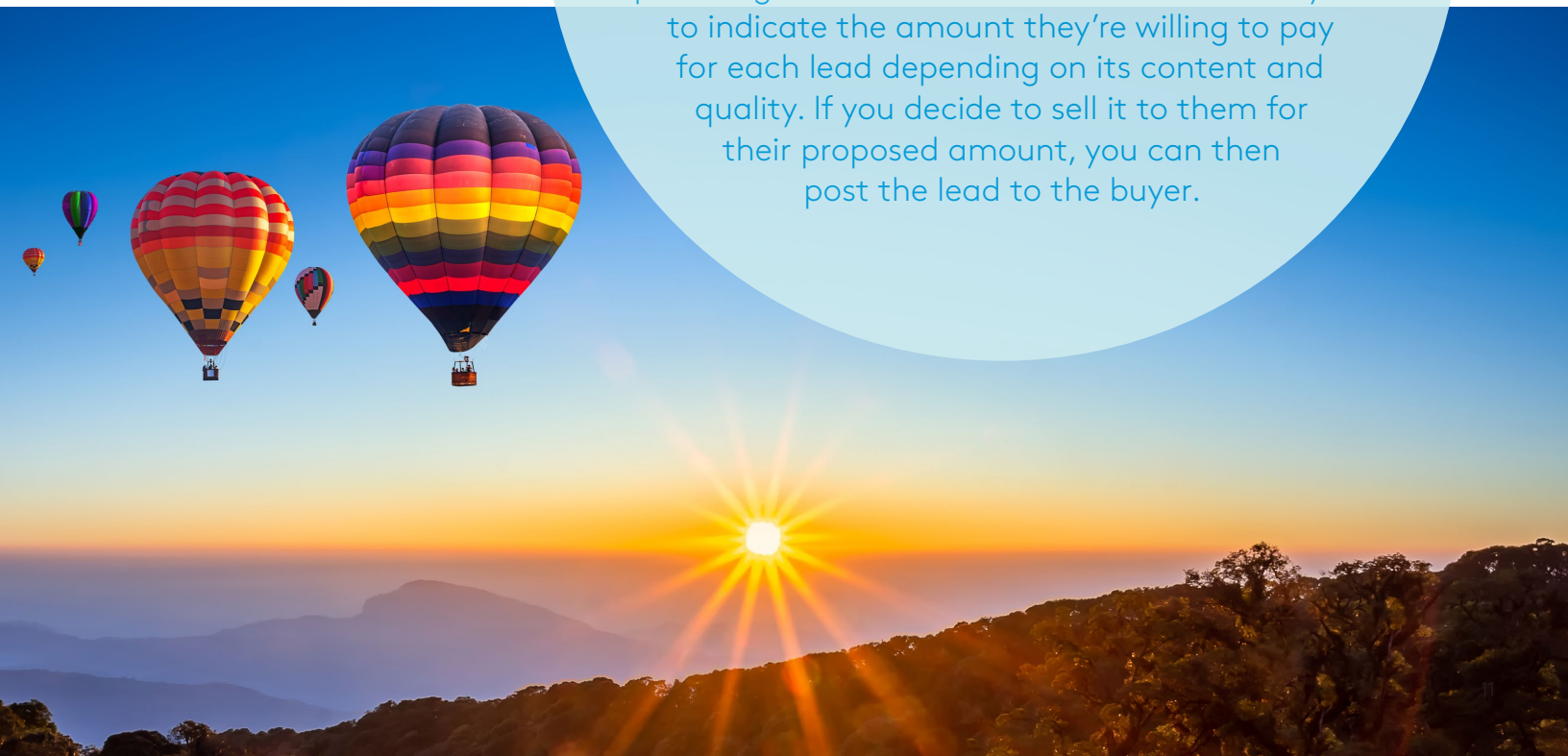
President, Surge Logics

points in one platform delivers key advantages such as improved efficiencies and insights. With these benefits, the company is empowered to sell leads at very competitive prices because they can quickly determine what's working or not with its affiliate marketing and lead generation campaigns.

The result is that attorneys receive more value by securing high-quality leads, for a competitive price, thus driving higher profitability for Surge Logics.

 TIP

To sell leads for the highest price, ping post provides a mutually beneficial situation –you make the desired profit margin, while your buyer is happy because they set the price. Here's how it works. The ping post functionality is ideally set up to give buyers a preview of the lead details from a form submission (e.g. lead's zip code, salary range, case notes, etc.) without providing contact information. This allows buyers to indicate the amount they're willing to pay for each lead depending on its content and quality. If you decide to sell it to them for their proposed amount, you can then post the lead to the buyer.





Vertical industry spotlight: Financial

LenderEDGE is a digital marketing provider that specializes in lead generation for businesses offering lending products and services. Backed by an experienced network of affiliates and in-house team, the company is focused on quality, both in terms of the leads delivered and the buyers it matches with affiliate partners.

As a performance marketing network, LenderEDGE's success depends on a reputation for providing its lender clients with high-quality leads, while simultaneously helping affiliate publishers boost the monetization of their traffic.

LenderEDGE required a more nuanced way to measure lead quality, so that its clients were capturing quality leads more likely to convert. Matching lenders with profitable leads is a detail-oriented process, requiring an ability to closely track the performance of affiliate-driven traffic across multiple campaigns. This means more than simply attributing which lead came from which source.

The company decided to power its growing business on a lead distribution platform that automated the process of collecting, validating, and optimizing lead traffic at a



“

Our clients care about quality. Our technology platform captures the metrics that matter most, so that we can deliver traffic that truly performs.”

*Operations Manager
LenderEDGE*

very granular level, across all client, affiliate, and sub-affiliate relationships.

Now, LenderEDGE runs real-time reports that instantly show the performance and status of leads being purchased by clients. These include which leads result in loan applications, as well as which applications go on to be approved for funding and which are denied.

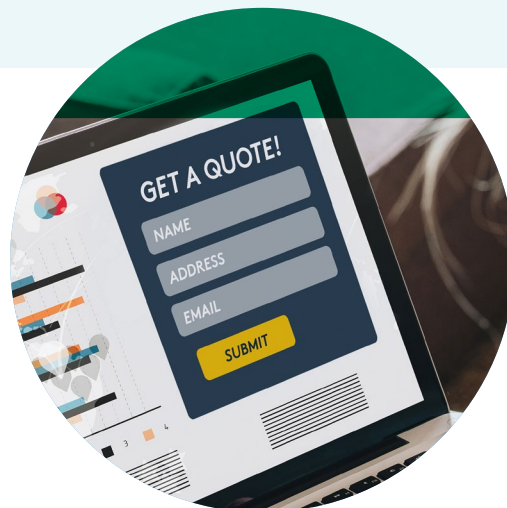
With this insight, the organization is enabled to manage and control the quality of affiliate-driven traffic running through its network and to continue delivering leads that meet the specific qualifications demanded by its clients.



TIP

To control and improve lead quality your first line of defense is a two-step process:

- **Lead Validation.** A vital step that takes place before selling leads to your buyer to mitigate returned leads and ensure they are not coming from fraudulent traffic sources. There are tools embedded within lead distribution software that can validate the lead is a real person and quickly identify fake information.
- **Lead Enrichment.** This ensures you have the highest quality leads to drive the highest revenue for your leads and maximize profitability. For most forms a maximum of 3-5 fields is ideal to avoid deterring individuals from providing their information. In some scenarios, you may not receive all of the information you need regarding the individual from the fields, so you can use third-party enrichment tools or a lead enrichment process such as a call center, that provide additional information about the lead.³





Vertical industry spotlight: Healthcare

A leading performance marketing network in healthcare. With more than two million monthly visitors and 20,000 connected patients, the organization helps medical practitioners, pharmaceutical, and medical device companies reach their ideal customers at the opportune moment.

As the company's user base continued to expand, it was imperative to have an automated lead distribution process in place to keep up as the organization continued to grow. It's program was partly programmatic, however, largely a manual process. From routing leads to accounting, this method required substantial human resources.

Since implementing a performance marketing platform, the company has been driving improvements in time to value, improving the patient and client experiences, as well as making strides to consistently match lead buyers with the sellers who deliver the best results.

Now, the process is completely automated, accelerating speeds by more than 75% and reducing client onboarding time by 400%. The organization's entire flow of business has been streamlined from the moment the lead is generated to the reporting dashboard, minimizing errors and providing great capacity to monetize each lead by over 50%.

“Leveraging lead distribution technology has allowed us to streamline our process to deliver quality leads. As a result, we can focus on other vital aspects of our business – providing better service, dedicating more time to our clients, and ultimately, increasing profitability.”

*President,
Healthcare Network*

Part V

Frequently Asked Questions

- How do I find lead buyers and leads?
- What are some best practices for managing leads?
- For partners who want to buy the same leads, how does bidding work?
- How do I track lead status after the lead has been sold?
- Is there a way to ensure that I'm not selling duplicate leads to my buyer?
- What are must-know industry terms?
- How do I control lead quality?
- How do you sell leads for the highest possible price?

How do I find lead buyers and leads?

Establishing and maintaining relationships are key for success with lead distribution. Here are a few recommended approaches for finding lead buyers and sellers. A great way to meet potential partners is for you to attend industry trade shows such as LeadsCon and Lead Generation World, premiere events with opportunities to network and learn from the top experts in performance marketing. Also consider attending events specific to your target vertical industries. Other ways to find partners is to ask for introductions from your lead distribution software provider and/or start generating leads through social and email channels.

What are some best practices for managing leads?

Here are three best practices for your partners to follow:

- Ensure data security and privacy by complying with efforts and standards including CCPA, GDPR, pass TCPA language, use Jornaya, etc.
- Contact leads quickly and qualify leads via call centers.
- Collect campaign tracking parameters so that your lead buyers know which sources are performing best.

For partners who want to buy the same leads, how does bidding work?

Of course, you want to sell your leads for the highest possible price, while keeping your lead buyers happy at the same time. Fortunately, you can accomplish both. It's a matter of determining whether to take an exclusive versus multi-sell approach. Keep in mind that buyers are typically willing to pay more for exclusive deals. However, for a multi-sell approach, bidding should go to the highest paying buyer(s) so you are maximizing your profit. A lead distribution software can allow you to monetize lead traffic through advanced selling tools such as dynamic lead prices and the setup of a ping tree in the order you want (including ranking your buyers, round robin, percentage split, and more).

How do I track lead status after the lead has been sold?

This is a two-part answer that focuses on two audiences – you and your buyers – and the lead distribution technologies leveraged by both parties. Your technology should be able to label leads and have manual or automated capabilities to update those labels (for example, with CAKE there is an Admin API if the network wants to do it or the buyer API if the buyer wants to do it). On the other side, a buyer's system should be able to report a lead sale in real-time. If not, their responses should include some sort of status. At a minimum, they should have a portal where you can see leads progress through different statuses. For those tech savvy buyers, they should have an

API that pushes out lead status updates (which you can then connect to the CAKE API to get those updates back in our system).

Is there a way to ensure that I'm not selling duplicate leads to my buyer?

A robust lead distribution software should have the option to identify a duplicate email address, or phone number within a specific time-frame. This will ensure that the leads you are selling to buyers are not duplicates and will maintain the integrity of the quality you deliver to your buyers. Additionally, it's an added bonus when your lead distribution software has built-in validation with third-party companies that focus purely on lead validation (Examples include Xverify, Neustar, and eHawk).

Part VI

Conclusion

So, there you have it.

By committing resources, especially the right technology, you're well positioned to build a program that ensures your leads are maximized to their full potential.

To learn more about CAKE's Lead Distribution software, reach out to us [here](#).

CAKE, a global provider of performance marketing software, empowers more than 500 advertisers, networks, and publishers to manage, measure, and optimize their digital marketing campaigns, in real-time. Established in 2010, the company specializes in providing solutions for affiliate marketing, lead generation, and multichannel marketing. CAKE is headquartered in Newport Beach, California with operations in London and New Delhi.

www.getCAKE.com