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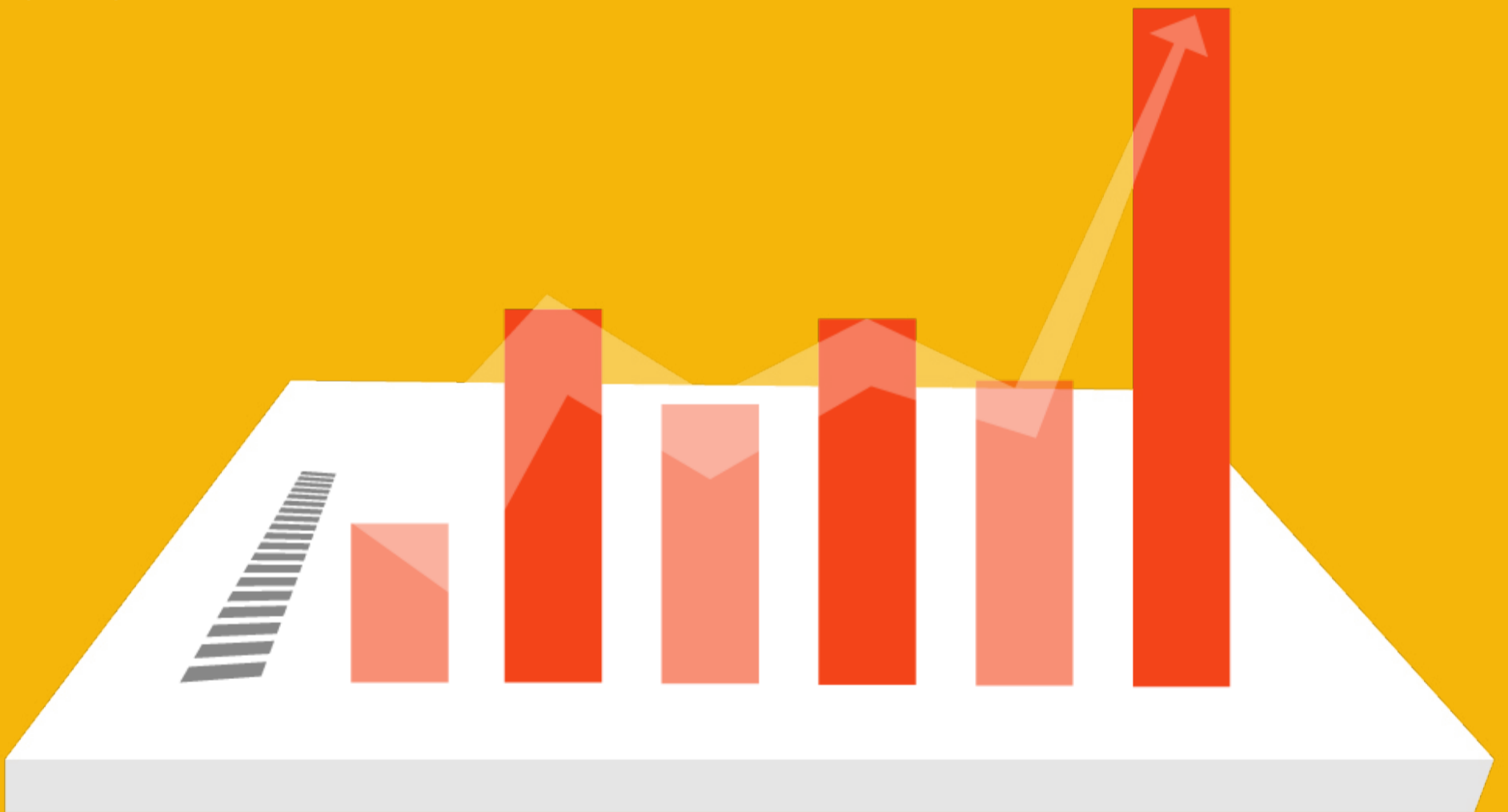
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How to Start Your Demand Generation Marketing Using Brand Positioning

By Clay Ostrom



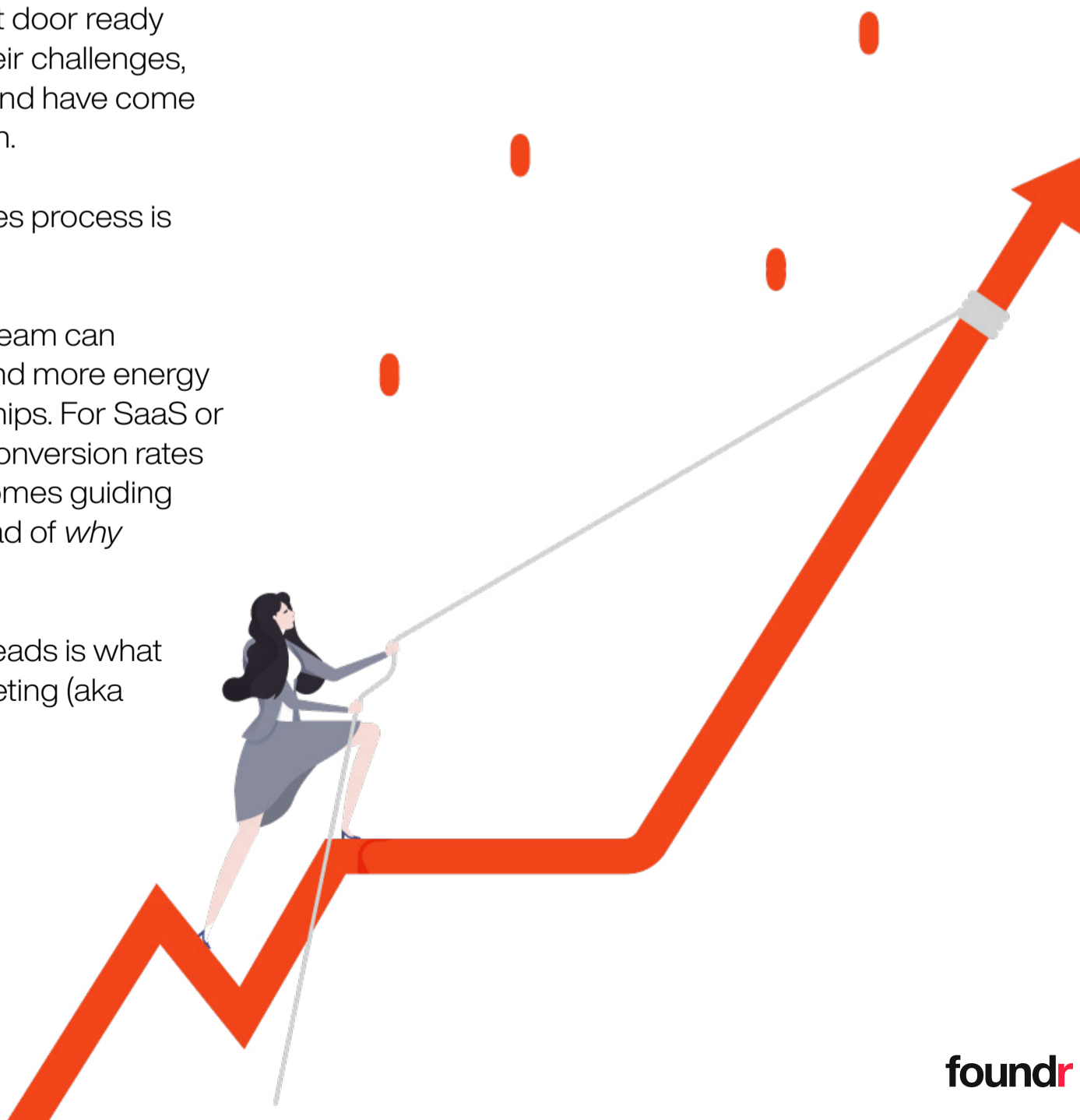
How to Start Your Demand Generation Marketing Using Brand Positioning

In today's wildly competitive landscape, nothing's better than a customer who arrives at your brand's front door ready to buy. They're aware of their challenges, understand their options, and have come specifically for *your* solution.

With leads like that, the sales process is pure bliss.

In the service space, your team can spend less time pitching and more energy building personal relationships. For SaaS or ecommerce businesses, conversion rates soar as the main task becomes guiding them on *what* to buy instead of *why* to buy.

Creating these dreamlike leads is what Demand Generation Marketing (aka demand gen) is all about.



Demand Generation vs. Lead Generation

Traditional lead generation focuses on targeting a specific type of customer and capturing their contact information (often through downloads of ebooks, white papers, or newsletter signups). After that, the lead is fed into a sales and marketing funnel.

That model can generate a high volume of leads, but it's extremely hard to know if they're qualified. The result is a lot of wasted money and resources pursuing potential customers who simply aren't ready to buy.

Demand generation, on the other hand, emphasizes educating the buyer about their challenges and providing consistent value to them. Over time, your brand builds authority around a unique approach to solving your buyers' problems.

Demand gen also utilizes multiple touch points to stay in contact with customers. This allows the brand to stay top of mind and provide valuable help along the buyer's winding buying journey.

The result is that by the time that customer is ready to pull the trigger, you've created a clear case for your brand as the best solution. And when they finally contact you, they're primed and ready to go.

However, pumping out lots of content isn't enough to make this work. It's critical that your ideas have a strategic connection to your brand and offering.

That's where your brand positioning comes into action.

Here are three steps for leveraging your brand positioning to start demand generation marketing.

1. What are your customers' biggest challenges?

To connect with your customers through demand generation marketing, you first need a clear understanding of their challenges. To do this, we can use two things:

1. Frameworks to identify your customers' needs
2. Research to gather qualitative and quantitative data to validate those needs

The frameworks we use most in our brand strategy work at Map & Fire are:

- **Jobs to Be Done:** Separate a customer's motivations and desired outcomes, along with the circumstances of when they need these things.
- **Elements of Value:** Identify the specific types of value they seek when looking for a solution to their needs.

For consumer research, we combine:

- **Customer Interviews:** Gain direct access to customers so we can hear how they talk about their challenges and dig deeper into what motivates them.
- **Customer Surveys:** Collect a larger volume of data to help spot patterns in what customers think and value.

Again, the goal is to improve your depth of understanding of your customers' problems—and get clarity on how you talk about those problems.

Demand Generation Example: Slack (Messaging App)

To highlight how this strategy can work, let's look at a brand most of us in the business world are now familiar with—Slack.

Slack is an app that provides private, real-time chat for businesses. It's designed to help teams communicate more efficiently.

Here's a quick Jobs to Be Done story around the challenges a target customer for Slack might experience:

- **Circumstance:** Our now fully remote team wastes a lot of time and resources making important business decisions
- **Motivation:** Increase the speed of back-and-forth on simple problems, improve the transparency of information between teams, and reduce the frequency of large attendance meetings that waste time
- **Outcomes:** Resolve issues in real time versus long gaps between emails, break down silos and give teams better access to important conversations, and keep people focused on their tasks and only jumping into conversations when totally necessary

Some Elements of Value that connect to this Job Story include:

- **Functional:** Time savings, cost reduction, information, transparency, connection
- **Emotional:** Reduced anxiety, growth and development
- **Aspirational:** Vision

Note that at this stage, we're not talking about Slack specifically or even chat apps in general. We're focused on understanding the relevant problems people face that Slack would want to speak to in their content. The next step would be to validate and prioritize these ideas with research. But for the sake of our example, we'll assume these are valid and top of mind for the target customer.

2. Why are the solutions your customers use broken?

Now, we need to think about competition. What common methods or tools do your customers use for these needs that are falling short?

In some cases, it may be valuable to look at direct competitors. If your brand's category has a dominant leader or if there's a brand you often go head-to-head with, you can draw a specific comparison to them.

But it's also good to think about competition more generally.

What are the *categories* of solutions your customers use? How can you highlight their weaknesses related to the Job Stories and Elements of Value that you know your customers care about?

You can almost think of these as the shared enemies you help your customers defeat.



Demand Generation Example: Slack's Shared Enemies

Going back to our Slack example, here are some of the areas where teams struggle and the tools or behaviors that are often to blame:

"Poor speed of back-and-forth on simple problems"

- **Enemies:** Email can be very slow and cumbersome for resolving problems quickly, and live conversations or meetings involve extra scheduling and logistics.

- **Weaknesses:** Wastes time, wastes money, and creates anxiety.

"Lack of transparency of information between teams"

- **Enemies:** Personal conversations and meetings create silos of information that limit access and don't produce complete records for teams to refer to later.
- **Weaknesses:** Lack of transparency, lack of connection, poor access to information, inhibits growth and development, and inhibits shared vision.



“High frequency of large attendance meetings that waste time”

- **Enemies:** Meetings often include attendees who don't need to actively contribute but would benefit from seeing quick references to discussions.
- **Weaknesses:** Wastes time and money.

Now we have a foundation of enemies and talking points to focus on with our target audience. Slack's case revolves around the inherent problems of two big categories: email and meetings.

By focusing marketing efforts on these topics, we can:

- Raise awareness and create engagement around these shared pain points
- Build authority as a brand that's knowledgeable and has expertise in this space
- Educate about problems to show their impact on growth, profitability, etc.
- Encourage customers to start considering solutions

Your brand can explore these topics via channels like:

- Podcasts speaking with guests who've experienced these issues or are working on them
- LinkedIn and other social media content targeted at your ideal customers
- Articles and blogs to reach those who are searching around these issues
- Speaking opportunities to address relevant audiences

Through reach and repetition, these start to generate demand for solutions from customers who may have experienced these issues but hadn't been considering new ways to resolve them.

3. How does your brand provide a new, better path?

In this last link of the demand generation chain, you demonstrate why your brand's offering is a solution to these shared pain points.

As you continue to raise awareness, educate, and engage your audience, they'll naturally start to look for solutions. And because your brand is the source that's consistently demonstrated expertise around the problem, you'll be at the top of their consideration list.

At this stage, the hard work is done from a demand gen perspective—this is mainly about guiding the customer over the finish line.

Demand Generation Example: Slack's New, Better Path

We're simply mapping the enemies and shared pain points we've promoted through the demand generation marketing back to the benefits of the brand's solution.

“Poor speed of back-and-forth on simple problems”

- **Slack is perfect because:** It allows teams to hash out issues with quick back-and-forth chats right in the moment
- **Strengths:** Saves time, saves money, and reduces anxiety

“Lack of transparency of information between teams”

- **Slack is perfect because:** A searchable record of chats is saved to help loop in individuals or refer to important points later
- **Strengths:** Creates transparency, improves connection, provides access to information, supports growth and development, and contributes to a shared vision

“High frequency of large attendance meetings that waste time”

- **Slack is perfect because:** It helps decrease the volume of meetings needed and allows those who only need the output of a discussion to stay focused on their work
- **Strengths:** Saves time and money

This type of offering is a no-brainer for a potential lead who's been consuming demand generation marketing from Slack over the course of weeks or months. The lead has built trust with the brand due to their authority and expertise and because the lead has already received a high level of value through Slack's content.

The last step for the lead is to resolve their issues via the brand that seems to understand their problem better than anyone else.

These Are Your Demand Generation Marketing Pillars

Demand generation can be a powerful tool to improve the efficiency of all your sales and marketing efforts and fuel new growth.

To get started, we need to look at your business through a lens of brand positioning:

1. **What** your customers' biggest challenges are
2. **Why** existing competitors' offerings and solution categories fall short
3. **How** your brand provides a new, better path

With those pillars in place, your business will have a strong set of ideas to generate content and conversations in the market to generate demand.

It will take time, but with consistent effort, you'll start to see more and more of those ideal customers showing up informed, educated, and convinced that your brand is exactly what they need.



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