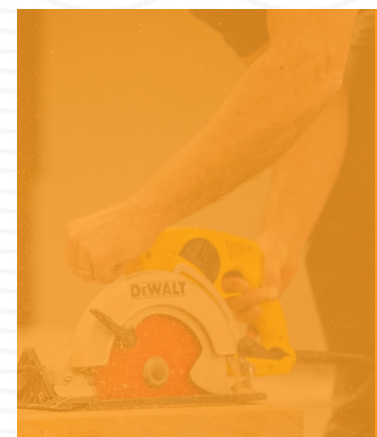




SIX TIPS BUILDING PRODUCT MANUFACTURERS SHOULD KNOW TO DEVELOP LEADS



Creating relationships with home builders is a standard part of the job for building product manufacturers and their sales reps. We know this well at HomeSphere because we're right in the middle of it. And as a partner to both product manufacturers and home builders, we've seen firsthand the power of a strong relationship.

We've also seen the frustration that results when these relationships don't develop, and the reality is it can be for a lot of reasons.

But we're here to help you avoid one reason: letting a lead languish due to easy-to-fix missteps along the way. That's why we're pulling from our 20 years of expertise to offer six tips for developing leads and selling to home builders (and we promise not to use the word nurture at any point).



1. Start with a process

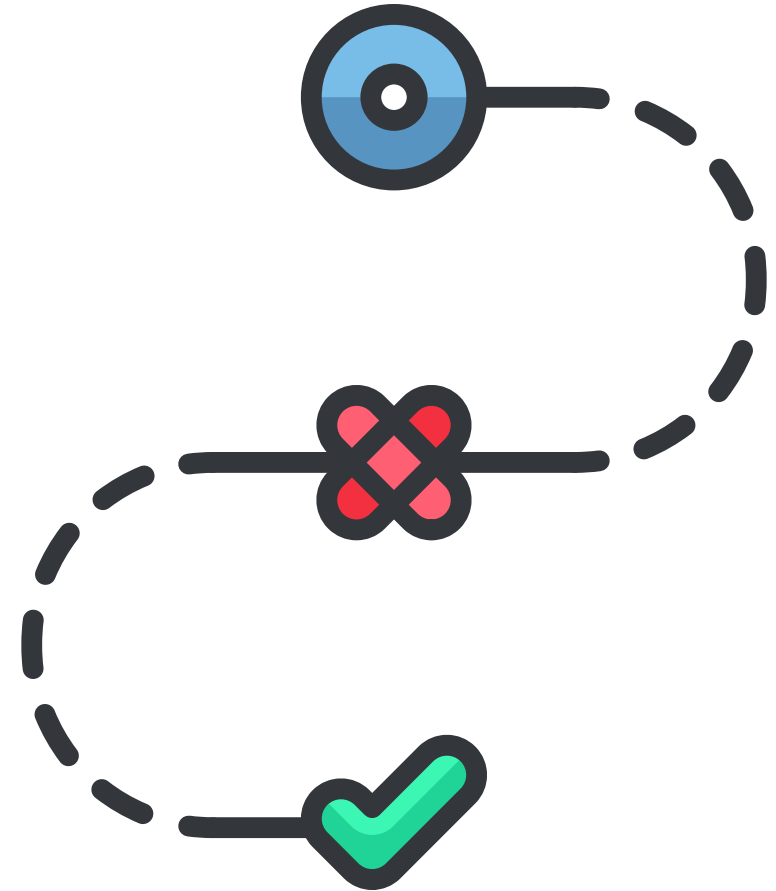
How you handle leads is highly individual, even if your company has corporate measures in place. If you don't have your own system for what to do when a lead comes in besides "call them," take 30 minutes to sit down and write one out.

Set goals for the maximum amount of time you have to reach out to a new lead and create a visual map of what to do based on the responses you receive.

For instance, if you reach out to a builder and you don't hear back in three days, then you reach out again with message [x]. If you do hear back, then you reach back out with message [y] and set a meeting, and so forth.

These activities, or triggers, help you advance the lead forward and allow you to build a library of messages for future use.

Processes aren't exactly fun, but they do keep things organized, and once they're in place, it makes following up with leads that much easier.



2. Prioritize your leads

Gathering leads is a process unto itself and we know they're coming from lots of directions — including marketing, partner programs, paid services and your own sales initiatives. And, not all leads are equal — in fact, some are a complete waste of time. But it's hard to know that when you don't have a rating system in place.

Depending on the customer relationship management tool you use, the sophistication in scoring may vary, but there should be a baseline ability to rank a lead as hot, warm or cold, and it'll take a collaborative team effort to define those different stages.

Common CRM tools include Salesforce, Hubspot and Pipedrive. But you did make it to HomeSphere, so we'd be remiss not to mention that our award-winning platform HomeSphere-IQ also incorporates CRM, while our API integrates with Salesforce.

Did you know? "CRM software can improve customer retention by 27%." - Salesforce

What if I don't have CRM software?

If you don't use CRM software, seriously consider subscribing to one, but in the meantime, Google Sheets or Microsoft Excel can be an organized way to manually track leads. In addition to tracking pertinent contact info, set up a column to identify whether a lead is hot, warm or cold and another column to keep notes on all contact attempts, both successful and unsuccessful.

And as you reach out to your leads, take notes of any characteristics other team members should know. For instance, if you notice certain qualities are always present in builders that go cold, share that information with your marketing team and partners you work with. That way, everyone is chasing qualified leads and you're not wasting your time going after builders who aren't interested.



A note on HomeSphere

We work with our manufacturer partners to provide qualified leads to their sales teams, and we don't send those leads until they're ready and interested to speak to a specific manufacturer. Using our platform, our team can leave notes and start a two-way conversation with sales reps about why we think the builder lead is qualified, the steps to closing and where the lead is at in their purchasing process.

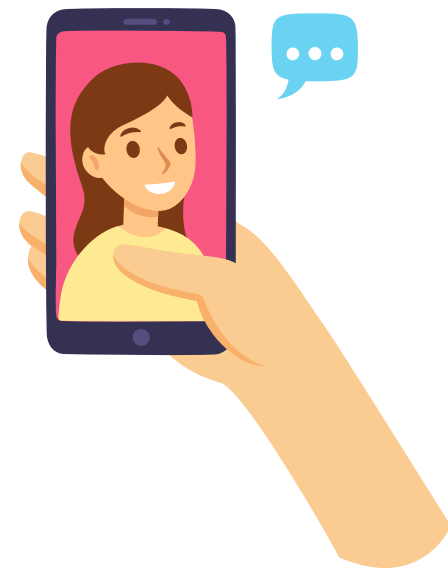
We also offer a tool within our platform called **Builder Discovery** that puts manufacturers in the driver's seat to create and pursue their own sales opportunities using our 2,600+ builder base.

3. Communicate on their terms

It's easy to get busy, not hear back from a builder and cross them off as a dead lead. But before you delete them permanently, take a moment to assess. If you've been told they're a qualified lead, but they aren't answering your calls, it's likely not about you or your product. So, breathe and:

- Give them a break between your call, then try an email, or even a simple text message. Take the opportunity to explicitly ask how they like to communicate and what days are best for them. Or ask their administrative staff what's best for the builder.
- Try to get this information from the source of the lead, whether it's your marketing team, or a partner like HomeSphere.
- Get creative and schedule a Skype meeting (unless you know the builder in question isn't tech savvy).

The main point being, you're not always going to get responses when you want them, but it doesn't mean there's a lack of interest. Work with them on a communication style they like, and if you need to downgrade them to a cold lead because they won't respond, then do so — but keep their contact info and follow up with them a month down the road.



4. Do your research

Know where your lead is at in their buying process before you sit down with them. A common mistake is to meet with the builder and treat them like they know nothing about your product. What you don't know is that the builder already researched you, arrived with very specific questions and now is bored by your start-from-scratch presentation.

This pre-work can be accomplished through strategic introductory questions sent prior to the meeting or through exploratory phone calls with the person or department who provided the lead.

“ A common mistake is to meet with the builder and treat them like they know nothing about your product. ”

If it's your marketing team and they can't give you any background info to use, suggest they start adding a few "need to know" questions to communications and forms going forward (just know they'll push back on a questionnaire that's five pages long).

But keep in mind that a lot of the disconnect we see in our role as a go-between is that manufacturers will start at the beginning when builders are already ten steps forward.



5. Always have a follow-up action item and "test close"

Don't end a meeting with a builder before you've both agreed to a next step, whether that's sending pricing info, providing follow-up answers to highly specific questions or setting up a second meeting with other people in the company.

If the timing feels right, you can also try a "test close," which is a technique to determine whether a person is ready to close. Ask "if" questions or questions that already assume they like your product (i.e. "Would our [Product A] or [B] work better for the homes you build?"), and then sit back quietly and gauge their reaction.

Above all, don't add a month to the sales process when you can keep it moving through a quick follow-up and the opportunity to show the builder:

- A) You're prompt**
- B) You stick to your word**
- C) You give them the info they want**



6. Think about value adds

Even when you have a great product to sell, there's still competition out there, and builders who have all kinds of different needs. **Value adds are a great way to differentiate yourself.**

What do you provide beyond the product? Maybe a builder could use some flashy marketing collateral around your brand. Or maybe it's trainings for their sales team so they know how to talk up your product and the value it adds to the property.

While good value adds will depend on the builder, it's an opportunity to gauge what matters to them and how you can continue to forge a good relationship moving forward.



Another note on HomeSphere

As part of our partnerships with manufacturers, we happily help to provide and identify these value-added services. (We'd also add that becoming a HomeSphere manufacturer creates its own value add: We bundle rebates, offering higher incentives to builders when manufacturers join forces with other manufacturers instead of going it alone.)

About HomeSphere

HomeSphere connects home builders and building product manufacturers in one marketplace. Powered by our platform, we help you consistently outpace the market together. Our 2,600+ builder base drives \$600 million in yearly sales to our manufacturers, and they stay loyal to our program and our manufacturers' products for 5+ years.

Curious how you could fit in? Contact our Partner Success Team today.

[Contact Us](#)