

Free Internet Resources

Use these websites for prospecting & branding

by: Kate Kingston, Kingston Training Group

It is always interesting when office technology sales executives say they sell technology, but then do not use it in their everyday work lives to reduce the time it takes to conduct prospecting research or level up their brands. There are many free websites available that will reduce the time it takes for a sales executive to identify a prospect and the size of the company he (or she) would like to sit down with to conduct a meeting to determine demos, assessments, proposals and closes. Many of these free resources focus on identifying nonprofit prospects, which makes sense in the fall because of encumbered funds. “Encumbered funds” is an accounting term for “allocated for funds” and many nonprofits that have their fiscal years aligned with the calendar year may have leftover dollars they need to use before the end of 2022. So, they make sense to put into your prospecting list this fall. The following are some great free resources.

■ **Melissa Lookups (www.melissa.com/lookups)** — This free resource allows you to look up all the nonprofits (in its database) by ZIP code and reveals pertinent information about each organization. Scroll through the website to “Nonprofit Organizations,” click and you will be asked to enter a ZIP code. The website will then provide you a list of all nonprofits located in that ZIP code.

■ **GuideStar (www.guidestar.org)** — Also free, GuideStar shares detailed information about nonprofits, including how much money they have in their programs, the executive director’s name and more. You do have to sign up for GuideStar, but they do not ask for a credit card, so it is a free resource.

Once you have created an account on the GuideStar website, you can type in the name of your nonprofit with the city and state in the search bar and it will locate information for your review. You can identify the address and the executive director’s name. You also can click on tabs (like finances) to get more detailed information about its financial assets so you can ascertain whether or not it is a large enough nonprofit for you to add to your prospecting list.



■ **Google Alerts (www.google.com/alerts)** — This service sends emails to the user when it finds new results — such as websites, newspaper articles, blogs or scientific research — that match the user’s search term from the internet. Google Alerts can be used for any industry, not just nonprofits.

To create an alert, go to Google Alerts. In the box at the top, enter a company or person you want to follow. This website

will search through anything happening on the internet: websites, newspaper articles, blogs, scientific research, etc., and will find anything that matches your search criteria. It will send you that information in an email with the content attached as links so you can open the articles, press releases, etc.

You want to ensure that it is searching just the company you want. Make sure that you put the name of the company in quotation marks. For example, Blue Technologies is a successful office technology dealership in Ohio; but if you just write Blue Technologies without putting quotes around the company name, Google will search for anything with the word “blue” or “technologies” in it. Put the initials for the state afterward to narrow the search. Using the Blue Technologies example, you would enter “Blue Technologies” OH.

Once you have your search narrowed down, click “Create Alert” and you will get email alerts whenever Google finds matching search results.

Google Alerts are particularly important because you can not only track the top prospects you want to identify, but also current information about what is happening inside those businesses. You should also be tracking your customers to know when changes are made or congratulations are in order. Many sales executives will also track top C-level prospects, as they might have an article written about them, or they might move to another company.

If one of your customers takes a job at another company, you have two opportunities that Google Alerts will help you identify. The first one is you can prospect to your customer

in his (or her) new position (at his new company) because of your successful existing relationship. You can also go back to your current customer's account and approach additional point people there to ensure you keep the account even with the new hire of its IT director, finance executive or operations executive.

■ **Google Ad Grants (www.google.com/grants)** — Google started its grant program to provide funding to nonprofits

that are not: governmental entities or organizations; hospital or health-care organizations; or schools, academic institutions or universities. Each qualifying nonprofit has access to up to \$10,000 per month in free search ads shown on Google.

When prospecting to a charitable nonprofit, you can start your pitch by stating that you were calling or writing “to be of service” to them. You can back that up by bringing the Google ad grant application to the meeting. Share with the customer that although you are not affiliated with Google, “you know that many nonprofits have applied for and received these grant dollars that will help your community (and the world) understand how your organization can be of service for free.”

For example, if a nonprofit like Autism Awareness applied and won a Google ad grant, it would receive free search engine optimization from keywords it chooses that would help people who are searching for autism signs or symptoms, how to get help if a child is autistic, etc.

All of those searches would result in finding the Autism Awareness website at the top of the results, but for free to the charity. This is a great action item to bring for that first net-new meeting with a prospect, but also for any customer partnership review with a nonprofit.

■ **ParishesOnline (www.parishesonline.com)** — For those of you who want to go after Catholic churches and schools, I came across ParishesOnline. This free website provides the dioceses by state, as well as a list of Catholic churches and schools by ZIP code, city or area code.

To use the site, type the word “church” in the first box and then the ZIP code you want to search in the second box. Click on the orange search icon and all the Catholic churches and schools within 25 miles of the ZIP code will appear. When you click on any of these churches, it will often tell you the pastor's name so you have your point person, along with the address, phone number and, sometimes, the mass schedule. This is an easy way to create a list of churches and private Catholic schools with a point person, address and phone number. October and November are great months to go after churches because it is prior to their busy season (Christmas, Lent and Easter).

When prospecting to a charitable nonprofit, you can start your pitch by stating that you were calling or writing “to be of service” to them.

■ **ChurchFinder (www.churchfinder.com)** — If you are looking to identify any type of church (regardless of the specific denomination), you can use ChurchFinder. This website requires you to enter a city and state and it will list all the churches in that particular city, whether they are Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, etc.

■ **Hunter (<https://hunter.io/chrome>)** — Office technology dealerships want to

be able to utilize email as one of their prospecting delivery methods. Problems arise when they do not have the email format for the company. The Hunter for Chrome extension is the easy, free solution. It allows you to look up 25 email addresses per month for free.

First, sign up for an account using the orange “Sign up” button at the top of the page. Hunter will then send you a confirmation email that will allow you to add Hunter as a Chrome extension. Whenever you visit any website you can now click on that extension and a drop-down box will appear that will show you the email format for that company.

It does not matter if you do not find the point person in the drop-down box because what you are looking for is the format for the emails (e.g., Firstname.Lastname@kingstontraining.com). You will know that everyone at the company uses that same format.

■ **Vidyard (www.vidyard.com)** — They say a picture is worth 1,000 words. If that is the case, a video is worth 10,000. Office technology industry professionals must use video in their prospecting and marketing efforts, as it is where our industry is moving. This free tool is very easy to sign up for and has self-explanatory directions right on the website.

Once you have added the extension to your browser (either Chrome or Microsoft Edge), select one of three types of videos to create. Vidyard provides tutorials on how to best utilize this free resource on its website. Sales executives can utilize Vidyard in their email prospecting, email thank-you notes, email signatures, reminder meeting emails, to explain proposals or on their LinkedIn profiles.

■ **LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com)** — A new way to make an impact (even in the free version of LinkedIn) is to add a video as your profile picture. This is a great tool because it will level up your profile and give you a chance at putting in a video elevator pitch. When prospects look you up after you have reached out to them, they will automatically see your video when they visit your profile.

Here is how to add a video as your LinkedIn profile picture. Note that you will have to use the LinkedIn mobile app to set this up:

(1) Open the LinkedIn app on your phone.

(2) Click on your picture to access your profile.

(3) Click on "View Profile."

(4) Click on the + button next to your picture and an option to add video to your profile picture is revealed.

(5) Click on "Add profile video."

(6) Record your video. You have about 30 seconds, so deliver your elevator pitch.

Here is one you can use: "Hi, my name is (your name) and I work at (dealership name). I work with my clients to implement cost-effective, customized technology solutions to help them become more compliant, cybersecure and profitable. Please call or email me to learn how we can do that for your company."

(7) The app will put your video online for you. If you need to replace the video, just start the process again.

Utilizing some of these free technology resources to identify prospects that need you now, to track new prospects and current customers so you know what is going on inside their businesses, and using video both in your emails and

Utilizing some of these free technology resources ... will enhance your efforts in gaining access to and scheduling meetings with the right decision makers ...

your LinkedIn profile will enhance your efforts in gaining access to and scheduling meetings with the right decision makers in the right industries, allowing you to make more net-new meetings and more money. ■

For the last 18 years, Kate Kingston has been exclusively educating office technology sales executives on every type of prospect across 60-plus industries and how they proprietarily use technology.

She is a recognized authority on lead generation, recruiting new hires from a prospecting skill-base perspective and new business development.

Sales-driven, Kingston is an energized communicator who uses humor, audience participation, proven techniques, handouts and real-time phone calls in her training sessions. She can be reached at kkingston@kingstontraining.com. Visit www.kingstontraining.com.

