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A Study on Digital Marketing Strategies for Lead Generation and Customer Acquisition in Professional Certification Training Services: A Case Study of Woxen Digital Pvt. Ltd.

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A B S T R A C T

This paper presents a case study of the digital marketing strategies used for lead generation and customer acquisition in the professional certification training segment of the Indian education and skilling industry, based on a nine-week On-the-Job Training (OJT) engagement at Woxen Digital Pvt. Ltd., a Ghaziabad-based digital marketing agency that also runs its own certification courses. Working as a Business Development and Digital Marketing Intern, the researcher was engaged primarily in outbound cold calling (20 to 25 calls a day), course pitching, objection handling, and follow-up, resulting in 8 to 9 personally closed course registrations, alongside content marketing, competitor SWOT analysis, and foundational SEO training. The study applies an applied, descriptive case-study methodology, combining primary data from the researcher's own sales activity and fortnightly progress reports with secondary data from published sector reports and established marketing theory, including the AIDA model, the TOFU/MOFU/BOFU funnel, and the personal selling process. The analysis, covering an estimated 900 to 1,125 outbound calls against 8 to 9 confirmed registrations, yields an estimated call-to-conversion rate of approximately 0.8 to 0.9 percent, marginally below general cold-calling benchmarks of 2 to 3 percent and the lower technology-sector benchmark of about 0.95 percent. The most consistently observed barrier to conversion was prospects' need for clarity on course outcomes and career value before deciding. The paper concludes with four practical recommendations: improved lead qualification, standardised objection handling on career outcomes, a shared follow-up tracking system, and clearer differentiation from free global certifications. The findings offer a grounded, evidence-based view of how a small private training provider generates and converts leads, situated within the wider growth of India's certification training and digital advertising markets.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Lead Generation, Customer Acquisition, AIDA Model, Marketing Funnel, Personal Selling, Professional Certification Training, Cold Calling, SEO, EdTech.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

Professional certification training has become an increasingly important part of India's broader education and skilling ecosystem, offering short, outcome-linked alternatives to formal degree education for students and working professionals seeking employable digital skills. Within this landscape, digital marketing itself has become both a subject taught by training providers and the principal means by which such providers reach, engage, and convert prospective learners. This paper examines that dual role through a first-hand case study conducted at Woxen Digital Pvt. Ltd., a company that operates simultaneously as a client-facing digital marketing agency and as a provider of professional digital marketing certification courses. The study focuses specifically on the certification training vertical and the strategies the organisation uses to generate leads and acquire customers for it.

The research was carried out as part of a nine-week On-the-Job Training (OJT) programme between 18 May 2026 and 18 July 2026, during which the researcher worked directly within the organisation's sales and marketing function. This direct involvement in cold calling, course pitching, objection handling, content creation, competitor analysis, and SEO fundamentals provides the primary evidence base for the study, supplemented by secondary data drawn from published industry reports and established marketing and sales theory.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Small, privately owned certification training providers such as Woxen Digital operate in a market characterised by low entry barriers, high buyer bargaining power, and an abundance of free or low-cost substitute certifications from global platforms such as Google, Meta, and HubSpot Academy. In this environment, converting an enquiry or a cold-called prospect into a paying, registered student is neither straightforward nor well documented in academic literature at the level of a single small provider's day-to-day sales operations. This paper addresses that gap by documenting, analysing, and drawing lessons from one such provider's actual lead generation and customer acquisition process, as observed and executed first-hand by the researcher.



1.3. Objectives of the Study

- To study the digital marketing strategies and lead generation techniques adopted by Woxen Digital for promoting its professional digital marketing certification course.
- To examine the customer acquisition process followed by the company, from generating enquiries to converting leads into course registrations.
- To identify the key challenges faced in lead generation and customer acquisition for professional certification courses.
- To suggest suitable strategies for improving lead quality, customer conversion, and overall customer acquisition effectiveness.

1.4. Scope and Limitations

The study is confined to the marketing and sales function of Woxen Digital Pvt. Ltd., with specific focus on its business-to-consumer (B2C) certification course segment; it does not extend to the company's client-facing agency work, its B2B tie-ups, or it's financial, accounting, or human resource functions. The data used are the researcher's own self-reported estimates rather than system-logged CRM figures, and the study reflects a single company observed over a single nine-week period. A fuller discussion of the study's limitations is presented in Section 7.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Cold calling and course selling can appear to be purely practical activities, but they are underpinned by well-established theories from marketing and sales. This section reviews the concepts used to interpret the primary, first-hand data presented later in the paper.

2.1. Digital Marketing, Lead Generation, and Customer Acquisition

Digital marketing refers to the promotion of products or services through digital channels, such as search engines, social media, email, content marketing, and paid advertising, with the aim of reaching and engaging a target audience. Lead generation is the process of identifying and attracting individuals who show potential interest in an organisation's offerings and capturing their contact details for further engagement. Customer acquisition is the broader process by which a generated lead is nurtured and ultimately converted into a paying customer, through follow-up, query handling, and closing. For a professional training institute such as Woxen Digital, these three concepts together describe the complete journey from an unaware prospect to an enrolled student.

2.2. The AIDA Model

AIDA is one of the oldest and most widely used models in marketing and selling, developed by Elias St. Elmo Lewis in 1898. It describes four stages a prospective customer moves through before a purchase decision: Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action (HubSpot, 2025). Attention is achieved the moment a prospect notices an advertisement or answers a cold call; Interest is sustained by explaining what the offering provides; Desire is built by making benefits and outcomes specific and credible; and Action is the conversion of that desire into a registration decision. The model has been criticised for assuming a rigid, linear sequence that does not always reflect real, often non-linear customer journeys, and for offering no account of post-purchase behaviour (dmexco, 2026); it is therefore treated here as a simplified but useful lens rather than a literal description of every interaction.

2.3. The Marketing Funnel: TOFU, MOFU, and BOFU

A closely related framework is the marketing funnel, divided into Top of Funnel (TOFU), Middle of Funnel (MOFU), and Bottom of Funnel (BOFU) stages (Funnel.io, n.d.). TOFU corresponds to broad awareness-building activity such as blog content and general advertising;

MOFU corresponds to the consideration stage, where interested prospects seek more detail through presentations and pitches; and BOFU corresponds to the decision stage, where final objections are addressed and the sale is closed.

2.4. The Personal Selling Process

Personal selling theory decomposes a single sales interaction into sequential steps: prospecting, approach, presentation, handling objections, closing, and follow-up (VCU Pressbooks, n.d.). Together with the AIDA model and the marketing funnel, this framework provides three complementary lenses on the same underlying customer journey, from a stranger noticing a course to that person becoming a paying student, and is used throughout this paper to interpret the researcher's own cold-calling and pitching activity.

2.5. Services Marketing: Service Characteristics and the Extended 7 Ps

A certification course is a service rather than a physical product, and services marketing theory identifies four defining characteristics relevant to how such a service must be sold: intangibility, inseparability, variability, and perishability (Marketing91, n.d.). Because a service cannot be inspected in advance, trust and reputation substitute for direct inspection; because quality varies by who delivers it and when, standardising sales materials and messaging becomes important; and because an unmade sale or an unfilled seat cannot be recovered later, timely follow-up matters more than it would for a storable



product. The extended "7 Ps" of services marketing, Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, and Physical Evidence (Oxford College of Marketing, 2020), provides a complementary structural lens on how such a service is marketed and delivered.

2.6. Customer Acquisition Cost and Customer Lifetime Value

Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC) is the cost of acquiring a new customer, typically calculated as total sales and marketing spend divided by the number of new customers acquired in a period, while Customer Lifetime Value (CLV) is the value a customer is expected to generate over the length of their relationship with the business (WordStream, 2019). Together, these measures indicate whether a business is spending a reasonable amount to acquire each customer relative to that customer's long-run worth, though this study, lacking access to Woxen Digital's marketing spend and financial records, uses the concepts descriptively rather than computing exact figures.

2.7. Search Engine Optimisation Fundamentals

Domain Authority (DA) and Page Authority (PA) are search engine optimisation metrics, originally developed by Moz and measured on a logarithmic scale from 1 to 100, that predict how likely a website or a single page is to rank in search results, although neither is an actual Google ranking factor (Rank Math, n.d.). Keyword research, the systematic identification of the search terms a target audience actually uses, together with on-page and off-page SEO practices, supports the awareness (TOFU) stage of the funnel by helping prospective students discover course-related content in the first place.

3. Industry and Company Context

3.1. The Indian Professional Certification Training Sector

Woxen Digital's certification vertical sits within India's wider skill development and professional certification training industry. According to the India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF, 2026), the overall Indian education market was valued at approximately US$117 billion in FY23 and is projected to reach US$313 billion by FY30. The edtech and online-learning segment specifically was valued at roughly Rs. 64,875 crore (US$7.5 billion) and is projected to grow to Rs. 2,50,850 crore (US$29 billion) by 2030 (IAMAI & Grant Thornton, via IBEF, 2025). The more specific vocational training market, covering short-duration, skill-based courses, was valued at approximately US$1,349.8 million in 2025 and is projected to reach US$2,037.8 million by 2034, growing at a CAGR of 4.51 percent (IMARC Group, 2025a).

This market comprises four broad delivery channels: government-run vocational institutions; private professional certification academies and bootcamps, the category Woxen Digital belongs to; larger, venture-funded multi-domain upskilling platforms; and global platform-issued free certifications from providers such as Google, Meta, and HubSpot Academy. Applying Porter's Five Forces to this segment indicates an industry that is, on balance, highly competitive and only moderately profitable for smaller players: entry barriers are low, buyer bargaining power is high due to abundant comparison and free alternatives, and rivalry is intensified by the 2022–2024 edtech funding winter, during which more than 35 percent of all technology-sector job losses in India were concentrated in edtech alone (Inc42, n.d.).

3.2. India's Digital Advertising Context

Since the value of any digital marketing certification depends on the strength of the digital marketing job market it feeds into, it is relevant that India's digital advertising market has grown from roughly USD 8.7 billion in 2020 to USD 13.2 billion in 2025, with growth expected to accelerate to a 12 percent CAGR between 2026 and 2029 (PayNXT360, 2026, as reported in Indiantelevision.com, 2026). This growth feeds directly into hiring demand for digitally skilled marketing professionals: one staffing-industry report found that the share of fresher marketing hiring demand specifically asking for digital skills jumped more than fivefold, to about 62 percent, in the first half of 2026 compared with the same period a year earlier (Prokerala, 2026).

3.3. About Woxen Digital Pvt. Ltd.

Woxen Digital Private Limited, incorporated on 26 October 2021 and headquartered in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh (Ministry of Corporate Affairs, n.d.), operates as a digital marketing agency for client businesses and simultaneously runs its own professional digital marketing certification courses for students and working professionals, the latter being the focus of this study. The company holds Google Partner and Meta Business status, which it uses both to run paid client campaigns and to generate leads for its own certification course. As a private limited company with a modest paid-up capital of Rs. 50,000 (InstaFinancials, n.d.), Woxen Digital relies heavily on a rotating pool of interns for day-to-day sales, content, and marketing execution, a structural feature that directly shapes the challenges and recommendations discussed later in this paper.

4. Research Methodology

4.1. Research Design

This study follows an applied, descriptive case-study methodology rather than a survey-based or experimental design. It draws on two categories of data. Primary data comprises the researcher's own first-hand sales and marketing activity at Woxen Digital and four fortnightly progress reports filed during the internship, recording activities completed, observations, and insights for each period. Secondary data comprises published sector reports, official company



records, and established marketing and sales literature, cited throughout Sections 2 and 3, which provide the wider context within which the primary findings are interpreted.

4.2. Data Collection and Study Period

Data collection ran for the full duration of the internship, from 18 May to 18 July 2026 (approximately nine weeks, or 45 working days at five days per week). The researcher, engaged as a Business Development and Digital Marketing Intern, made approximately 20 to 25 outbound calls per day to prospective students, alongside course pitching, objection handling, follow-up, blog writing, a five-company competitor SWOT analysis, design of promotional posters and presentations, and structured SEO training in the final weeks of the internship.

4.3. Analytical Approach

Analysis in this paper is primarily descriptive: aggregate call and conversion figures are summarised and compared against external cold-calling benchmarks, while qualitative observations recorded across the four progress reports are used to explain the trajectory of the acquisition process over time. Because the researcher did not have export access to Woxen Digital's own call logs or CRM records, the figures analysed are self-reported, aggregate estimates rather than exact system-logged counts, a limitation discussed further in Section 7.

5. Data Analysis and Findings

5.1. Outreach and Conversion Metrics

Over approximately 45 working days at a reported pace of 20 to 25 outbound calls per day, the internship generated an estimated total outreach of 900 to 1,125 calls (approximately 1,010 at the midpoint). Against this volume, 8 to 9 course registrations were confirmed, yielding an estimated call-to-conversion rate of approximately 0.8 to 0.9 percent. Table 1 summarises these figures against general cold-calling benchmarks reported by Cleverly (2026).

Table 1 - Estimated outreach and conversion metrics versus benchmarks (source: researcher's internship data; Cleverly, 2026).

Metric	Estimated Value
Internship duration	Approx. 9 weeks (18 May–18 July 2026)
Estimated working days	Approx. 45 days (5 days/week)
Reported daily call volume	20 to 25 calls per day
Estimated total calls	Approx. 900 to 1,125 (approx. 1,010 at midpoint)
Confirmed course registrations	8 to 9
Estimated conversion rate	Approx. 0.8% to 0.9%
General B2B cold-calling benchmark	Approx. 2% to 3% (Cleverly, 2026)
Technology/software benchmark (lowest cited)	Approx. 0.95% (Cleverly, 2026)

The internship's estimated conversion rate sits close to, but slightly below, even the harder-to-convert technology-sector benchmark. This gap is not entirely surprising given that a paid, multi-week certification course is a bigger, more considered purchase than a typical single B2B software sale, and the benchmark figures are general rather than education-specific; the comparison should therefore be read as directional rather than a precise, like-for-like match. Even so, it suggests genuine room for improvement in lead targeting and follow-up structure, addressed in Section 8.

5.2. Period-wise Qualitative Observations

The four fortnightly progress reports filed during the internship indicate that the acquisition process improved in identifiable ways over time rather than remaining static. Period 1 was largely a learning curve in foundational cold-calling and pitching. Period 2 surfaced the central recurring objection: prospects frequently sought clarity on course outcomes, certifications, and career opportunities before deciding. Period 3 added competitor insight through a five-company SWOT analysis and content marketing through blog writing. Period 4 introduced structured SEO training covering Domain Authority, Page Authority, and keyword planning, adding an analytical dimension to the marketing work in the internship's final weeks.

5.3. Key Findings

- Finding 1 (lead generation techniques): Woxen Digital relies mainly on direct outbound cold calling, supported by paid Google and Meta advertising, rather than heavy organic content marketing, consistent with the sector-wide pattern of smaller providers competing through personal outreach rather than brand-scale marketing.



- Finding 2 (acquisition process): The process closely follows the AIDA and personal-selling logic described in Section 2, moving a prospect from an initial cold call (Attention/TOFU) through presentations and objection handling (Interest and Desire/MOFU) to a registration decision (Action/BOFU), typically requiring more than one follow-up touch per prospect.
- Finding 3 (key challenge): The most consistently observed challenge was that prospects sought clarity on course outcomes, certifications, and career opportunities before deciding, making objection handling around career value the single most important skill in the acquisition process.
- Finding 4 (conversion effectiveness): The estimated conversion rate of 0.8 to 0.9 percent is below general B2B cold-calling benchmarks and close to the lower technology-sector benchmark, indicating room for improvement in lead targeting, objection handling, and follow-up structure.

Taken together, these findings suggest that Woxen Digital's lead generation and customer acquisition process is grounded in sound, recognisable marketing and sales fundamentals but is currently run in a largely informal, individually driven way rather than a standardised, measured one.

6. Challenges Encountered

Several challenges, grouped roughly in the order they would be encountered in an actual acquisition process, were observed during the study.

- Low response and conversion rate: only a small fraction of outbound calls resulted in a confirmed registration, a normal but discouraging feature of cold calling generally.
- Building trust as a lesser-known private provider: Woxen Digital's smaller scale and inconsistent public information made it harder to earn a prospect's trust quickly compared with larger, well-known platforms.
- Repeated objections about career outcomes: prospects frequently required a confident, evidence-based answer on career value before proceeding.
- Price and value pressure from free certifications: free alternatives from Google, Meta, and HubSpot Academy placed downward pressure on both price and perceived value.
- Sector-wide trust concerns following the 2022–2024 edtech funding winter and high-profile difficulties at large edtech companies.
- Limited ability to measure impact without CRM access, which made it difficult to isolate which specific actions were actually improving conversion.
- Balancing multiple concurrent responsibilities, combining cold calling and pitching with content creation, competitor research, and SEO training within the same reporting periods.

7. Limitations of the Study

- Short duration: approximately nine weeks, insufficient to observe seasonal variation in lead generation or conversion.
- Self-reported, estimated data rather than figures exported directly from a company CRM or call-logging system.
- Single company, single sector scope, limiting generalisability to larger or differently resourced training institutes.
- No access to CRM, financial, or marketing-spend data, limiting the depth of CAC/CLV analysis possible.
- Reliance on secondary sector data that occasionally disagreed across sources.
- Remote internship setting, limiting direct visibility into the company's internal team structure and dynamics.
- Possible researcher bias, since the researcher was also the salesperson carrying out the activity being analysed.
- Definition sensitivity in benchmarking, since external cold-calling benchmarks may not define "conversion" in exactly the same way as this study does.

8. Recommendations

Based on the findings and challenges above, four practical recommendations are proposed.

8.1. Improve Lead Targeting and Qualification

Woxen Digital should prioritise prospects who already show some sign of interest, such as those who filled a course enquiry form, clicked a course advertisement, or were referred, rather than treating all leads as equally cold. This can be implemented through a simple lead-scoring step, tagging each lead as "warm" or "cold" before calling, and recording lead source in the follow-up log. Since cold, unqualified numbers are inherently the hardest to convert, this measure should raise the overall conversion rate without requiring a higher volume of calls.

8.2. Standardise Objection Handling on Career Outcomes

Because career-outcome questions were the single most frequent objection, the company should compile a short, standard set of talking points and evidence on course outcomes, certification value, and career opportunities, to be included in intern onboarding and updated periodically. This should improve performance at the Desire and BOFU stage of the funnel, reducing the number of prospects lost at the final decision point.



8.3. Build a Shared Follow-up Tracking Structure

A simple, shared tracking sheet or lightweight CRM tool, updated consistently by every intern, would protect follow-up discipline from being lost each time one intern's placement ends and a new one begins, given the company's heavy reliance on a rotating pool of interns.

8.4. Differentiate More Clearly Against Free Certifications

Woxen Digital should more clearly and consistently communicate what a paid, personally-guided course offers that free alternatives do not, such as direct mentorship, personalised feedback, and support with real client-facing tasks, built directly into the standard pitch and promotional materials rather than left to come up only if a prospect raises it first.

8.5. Scope for Future Work

Future research could extend this study by systematically tracking weekly or fortnightly call and conversion data rather than relying on end-of-internship estimates, by extending the study across multiple interns and a longer time period, by directly comparing Woxen Digital's approach with named competitor academies, and by studying longer-term customer value, including referrals and repeat enrolment, to enable a company-specific Customer Lifetime Value calculation.

9. Conclusion

This paper has examined, through a first-hand, nine-week case study, how a small private training institute generates and converts leads for a professional digital marketing certification course. Woxen Digital's acquisition process is grounded in sound, recognisable marketing and sales fundamentals, moving prospects through recognisable Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action stages via direct cold calling, presentations, and follow-up. However, its estimated conversion rate of 0.8 to 0.9 percent, slightly below general and technology-sector cold-calling benchmarks, points to meaningful room for improvement through better lead qualification, standardised objection handling, structured follow-up, and clearer differentiation from free global alternatives. These findings are offered as a realistic, evidence-based basis for Woxen Digital, and for future researchers studying similar small-scale service businesses, to build on, situated within the wider context of India's fast-growing certification training and digital advertising markets.

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