

Horizon Solar Power Case Study

Horizon Solar Power Increased Paid Lead Channel Revenue
by 300% in a Single Year with ActiveProspect



A portrait of Ruben Ugarte, a man with dark hair and a slight smile, wearing a blue t-shirt. He is positioned in front of a large, colorful mural of a tiger's face. The mural features bold stripes in shades of orange, yellow, and black against a blue background.

RUBEN UGARTE

Director of Business Development

HORIZON SOLAR POWER

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*The ActiveProspect team is like an in-house tech think tank.
They scaled our marketing efforts in ways not previously possible.*

About Horizon Solar Power

Horizon is a leading designer and installer of residential and commercial solar systems. Founded in 1999, Horizon has aggressively expanded from a regional provider in southern California to the fourth largest residential provider in the nation.

Ruben Ugarte, Horizon's Director of Business Development, is responsible for the paid lead channel and attributes much of their current success to their ability to efficiently scale that marketing channel.

The Challenge

Horizon found itself in a highly competitive situation in which a variety of large players were trying to establish market share in the burgeoning solar industry. Horizon's goal was to aggressively expand the business while maintaining or reducing customer acquisition costs. In order to meet these expectations, Ruben knew he had to implement major changes to their process for acquiring and converting paid leads. Delivering 10% of total company revenue, the paid lead channel showed promise but managing it was too inefficient to effectively grow.

Managing the paid lead channel was plagued by a variety of challenges:

Highly targeted lead criteria: Horizon focused on a very particular customer profile making it difficult to acquire at scale:

- Homeowner with genuine interest in solar power
- Residence in a targeted zip code list
- Must use a utility provider within their target list
- Average monthly electric bill of \$150+

Managing many lead vendors: Integrating with and managing several lead vendors without a centralized lead acquisition platform was a slow and time consuming manual process.

TCPA compliance: With TCPA litigation on the rise, Horizon needed to ensure they were protected from potentially litigious consumers as they scaled.

Junk data: Horizon found they received many leads that either didn't meet their criteria, were duplicates in their CRM, were uncontactable, or were simply comprised of fraudulent data.

Administrative overhead: They relied heavily on manual processes, including identifying quality leads, reporting on conversions, returning leads that didn't meet criteria, etc.

Inconsistent process for internet leads vs. calls: Warm call transfers and internet leads weren't processed in a consistent way, and they were unable to ensure a similar quality regardless of the lead source.

Buying leads for Horizon was like flying blind. Ruben could easily acquire thousands of leads at low cost, but to his sales team, striking a deal with one of these leads was like finding a needle in a haystack. It was time consuming for him and frustrating for his sales team. Instead of helping Horizon scale their business, their paid lead channel was holding them back.



The Solution

Ruben worked closely with the ActiveProspect Client Success team to map out the ideal process flow for leads. The solution includes both ActiveProspect products (LeadConduit, TrustedForm, and SuppressionList) and a variety of third party data services.

Automated lead flow: Using the LeadConduit platform, Horizon built custom lead flows specifically designed to identify leads that meet their criteria while blocking leads that do not.

LeadConduit flow steps include:

- **Location accuracy:** SuppressionList ensures every lead is in an approved area, and rejects any lead outside of their approved ZIP list.
- **Duplicate checking:** SuppressionList maintains a list of existing prospects and rejects any duplicate lead in real time. This list is automatically updated with every unique lead, ensuring their duplicate list is always current.
- **Utility provider look-up:** Append utility service provider based on residence address.
- **Homeowner look-up:** Confirm if a resident is a homeowner or renter.
- **Phone verification:** Verify provided phone numbers are real, working lines.
- **Email verification:** Verify email deliverability.
- **Lead certification:** TrustedForm documents proof of consent.
- **Lead scoring:** Append a predictive score of lead's potential to convert.
- **Roof image:** Append image of prospect's roof for sales consultation.

Real-time rejects: By rejecting unwanted leads in real-time, using the appended data from both ActiveProspect products and their integrations with 3rd party data service providers, Horizon reduces their spend significantly by not purchasing leads that didn't meet their minimum qualifications.

TCPA compliance: Horizon instantly checks if TCPA disclosures are present on web forms and rejects leads where these disclosures aren't present. Horizon requires lead vendors to use an independent third party for TCPA documentation, such as TrustedForm.

Automated lead returns: Even with real-time rejects, some bad leads still make it through to the call center. Horizon uses LeadConduit to automatically return these leads to the lead vendors, according to their unique delivery specifications and varied return windows.

Consistent process for calls: Using LeadConduit's Twilio integration, Horizon also tracks calls received from vendors selling warm call transfers. These calls are processed similarly to verify they meet Horizon's criteria and to ensure consistency for both web leads and warm transfers.

Reporting: Ruben monitors activity across all his lead sources on a single dashboard, giving him real-time insight into trends. All of his vendors also have access to real-time web-based reporting.



Results

With ActiveProspect in place, Horizon met their ambitious goals and established a foundation for further growth and expansion. Their paid lead channel increased revenue by more than 300% in a single year. According to Ruben, ActiveProspect “has allowed us to grow paid leads from 10% of total company revenue to 40% of total company revenue. Once we got this in place it helped me to build the business. Before it was an absolute nightmare!”

“*The lead flow we put in place has not only saved us funds, it has allowed us to think beyond our own internal capabilities and develop skills that most contractors could only dream of.*”

Horizon automated their entire lead acquisition process, from purchase to return. Ruben explains the amount of time his team spent integrating with new lead providers has been reduced by half, thanks to ActiveProspect. With four times the conversions in half the required time, the Horizon team is now free to focus on newly innovative ways to grow the business. Horizon significantly reduced administrative headaches of managing this channel, while delivering highly qualified leads to his sales team.

With the complex lead criteria and administrative overload now automated, Horizon has raised the bar. “The lead flow we put in place has not only saved us funds, it has allowed us to think beyond our own internal capabilities and develop skills that most contractors could only dream of.” says Ruben.

Moving Forward

As Horizon continues to grow, ActiveProspect’s solution adapts to their changing needs. Horizon can quickly iterate directly in the LeadConduit UI and has access to a growing library of marketplace enhancement integrations they can use at any time.

In August of 2017, Horizon announced their merger with Solar Spectrum, formerly known as Sungevity, to collectively expand their reach of the exploding residential solar market. Together they are the second largest solar provider in California and the fourth largest in the nation.

Ruben says, “ActiveProspect made our channel; without your technology we couldn’t put things into play as quickly.” The future is promising for Horizon, as their innovative team continues to push limits and find out-of-the-box approaches to scaling their business.