Are Solar Leads Still Worth It In 2026? ROI In A Slower Market

Description

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By James Schulze

This article discusses changes in the solar industry and how solar leads can still be effective with the right lead strategy. It also touches on how installers can use aged solar leads and adjust their lead strategy to drive up ROI.

It is a question on the top of most solar installersâ?? minds, â??Are solar leads still worth it in 2026?â?• The solar market is not as easy as it was earlier in the decade. The market has slowed. Interest rates and costs increased. Homeowners are more cautious, leading to lower conversion rates. Tax incentives and net metering changes are more the norm than the exception at this point. Several solar companies are still trying to use the same playbook but that has led to frustration, leaving many installers unsure if they should keep buying solar leads, or change their strategy.

Are solar leads still worth it?

The short answer is yes, but you will likely need to adjust your lead strategy. Some installers still get a strong ROI, while others lose money. Why? The difference really comes down to four things:

1. Lead type
2. Follow-up speed
3. Sales process
4. Scripting

Getting the right mix of lead types to drive ROI

Solar installers have many different lead types available to them, all at different price points (read our blog, â??How Much Do Solar Leads Cost In 2026?â?•). One option is door-to-door sales leads developed using an in-home sales approach. Other options include inbound solar calls, real-time solar leads, and aged solar leads that are worked through a phone-based sales approach.

Traditionally, door knocking has been a big part of solar installersâ?? lead strategies, but in a slower market with fewer closes, it is becoming more difficult to achieve an acceptable ROI with the most expensive lead type alone. Phone sales have become more popular due to their relatively lower cost. Many installers are excited about the immediate conversations that inbound calls and real-time leads bring with homeowners who have already expressed an interest in solar. Higher-intent, quick-closing leads are an essential component of any effective lead strategy. But these leads can also get expensive with a price from $40 to $300 or more, suggesting these alone might make it challenging to get to the desired ROI. This is where lower-cost aged leads can help. More and more installers are incorporating aged solar leads into their lead strategies to achieve ROIs that make sense.

The case for aged solar leads in driving ROI

If you want a better ROI, solar aged leads can be one of the best options. When you buy an aged solar lead, you cost-effectively gain access to a homeowner who has already warmed up to the concept of solar energy and has shown interest in speaking with a solar installer. This gives installers more room to work the lead. Some key benefits of using aged leads include:

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- **Lower cost per lead â??** The price of aged leads is 80% lower than real-time solar leads. Consider this example of ROI for real-time versus aged leads. With an $800 budget, an installer can buy 10 real-time leads at $80 per lead. At typical close rates of 3% to 10% for real-time leads, the installer can expect to close one deal. Thatâ??s a cost per acquisition (CPA) of $800. That same $800 budget could be spent on 534 aged leads at $1.50 per lead, resulting in two sales for a CPA of $400. Same budget, half the CPA. Not a bad boost to ROI.
- **High volume â??** A huge volume of aged leads is available, making it easier for companies to scale.
- **Solid conversion rates with strong follow-up â??** There is better ROI on aged leads, provided your follow-up is strong.
- **Fits every budget â??** There is less pressure on your ad budget.

And, aged leads are often fresher than many people realize. These homeowners asked about solar before, but they may not have closed because they needed more time, didnâ??t trust the first company, or were simply too busy. A relatively unknown stat is that 30% to 40% of real-time leads end up opting in again within a year, so there are several opportunities to close in aged leads. But, solar installers need to know how to close them.

How can agents convert aged solar leads to achieve a strong ROI?

How solar installers work aged solar leads can make the difference between achieving a target ROI or falling short. Aged leads can convert well, but you need a system that includes:

- **Calling the lead quickly â??** Every lead converts better with speed, even aged leads. Call within minutes of receiving the lead.
- **Using a strong opener â??** Avoid leading with â??Hey, you filled out a form months ago.â?• That shifts the conversation to how the lead was created rather than engaging the homeowner in a discussion about solar options. A better opener is, â??Hi, weâ??re reaching out about solar options in your area. Are you still open to saving on your power bill?â?•

- **Using multiple communication channels â??** Given the long sales cycle of solar sales, most deals will happen after multiple touches. In fact, over 50% of solar deals close 90 days post lead origination. It can take 10 or more attempts to even reach a homeowner. Solar installers achieve higher connection rates when they vary the communication channels they use, including phone calls, text messages, and emails.
- **Focusing on value â??** From the opening onward, solar salespeople need to keep touching on the value that a solar solution can offer homeowners. Homeowners care about lower bills, stable energy costs, and incentives. Donâ??t just dive into a sales pitch; lead with value.
- **Knowing your tech â??** Solar installers sometimes lose sight of just how important it is to ensure their tech can effectively work with the leads they choose. Calling and messaging today requires clean caller IDs, 10DLC registrations for texting, and domain authority inboxing emails. Half the battle is getting through to the homeowner, and you canâ??t do this without the right technology.

For more tips on closing additional types of solar leads, read our blog, â??How To Close Solar Leads â?? In-Home vs Phone Sales Conversion Strategy.â?•

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How can installers adjust their solar lead strategy to maximize ROI?

Forward-looking solar installers are doubling down on their marketing efforts to weather the storm during this challenging time. They are adjusting their lead strategy to:

1. **Use a hybrid sales approach â??** Both in-home and phone-based sales approaches have strengths (read our blog, â??Best Solar Lead Generation Strategies For Installers â?? In-Home vs. Call-Based Modelsâ?•). In-home selling has higher close rates, while phone-based selling has faster closes, scalability, and works well with aged leads. The most successful solar installers today are qualifying homeowners over the phone and are then sending salespeople out to homes to close deals.
2. **Use a mix of real-time and aged solar leads â??** Use real-time solar leads to gain higher-intent, quick closes. Use aged solar leads to build your pipeline, raise ROI, and test different scripts.
3. **Follow up more aggressively â??** So many solar salespeople quit calling leads after two or three attempts. Top performers will call a lead 6-10 times, and will also send text messages and emails. And will keep following up over weeks. The sales cycle is longer now, so installers need a longer cadence.
4. **Use smarter scripts â??** Different lead types require different scripting. Make sure your scripts reflect the type of lead youâ??re using and focus on the value you can bring to the homeowner.
5. **Keep your tech on point â??**The wrong or insufficient tech means your messaging cannot reach your target homeowners. Make sure you are familiar with the tech required to effectively use each lead type.
6. **Choose a trusted lead provider â??**There are many lead providers but not all are reputable. When you buy leads, look for suppliers who offer first-party data (owned and operated sources), fast delivery, clean data and suppression capabilities, and experience in the solar industry. Trusted providers will give you higher-quality leads and more consistent volume, which in the end, can matter more than price alone.

Conclusion

Slowed growth and changes in the solar industry have left many installers questioning if they should continue to buy solar leads. Solar leads can still be highly effective, but installers will need to adjust their lead strategy. Used in combination with in-home sales and real-time telemarketing leads, aged solar leads have helped installers realize their target ROIs even in this slower time. Are you ready to talk about how you can close more solar deals?

About the author

James Schulze is the President and CEO of The Leads Warehouse, a marketing data company with over 20 years of experience in bringing lead generation solutions to companies selling into the home, automotive, financial, insurance, health and life, and legal sectors. He works directly with clients to optimize conversion strategies and ROI across multiple verticals.

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If you are serious about improving your solar leads strategy, a strong mix of leads is important. Our team works with solar installers to maximize their ROI on solar sales leads. Call **1-800-884-8371** or visit The Leads Warehouse to get started.

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