THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO

Marketing Automation

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Discovering the magic of marketing automation

Meet your business's new best friend

Welcome to the Definitive Guide to Marketing Automation. In this guide, we'll show you the ropes of marketing automation and explain how putting your marketing on automatic can transform your company. You'll also learn how to select the right system for your organization and get a sense of the investments necessary for success.

Every business aims to achieve higher revenue and faster growth. But many companies struggle to combine their people, processes, and technology to actually attain these goals. Marketing automation software lets companies streamline, automate, and measure marketing tasks and workflows so you can increase operating efficiency and grow revenue faster. But getting started with marketing automation is a big step that requires research, reliable information, and good recommendations.

In this guide, you'll learn the following:

- Find out why marketing automation has grown so quickly

- Discover how marketing automation differs from other solutions, such as customer relationship management (CRM) and email marketing

- Get to know common features and advanced functions of marketing automation tools

- Build a business case around marketing automation and convince others in your organization to act

- Select the best marketing automation for your particular organization

- Know what to expect for the future of marketing automation

In addition to our thorough overview of marking automation, we've also included worksheets to help you determine whether it's right for you—and if it is, how marketing automation can help you earn ROI and reach other business goals.

We hope this guide will open up opportunities for more effective, efficient, and exciting marketing.

Understanding the marketing automation basics

The shift from manual to automatic marketing

If you're chasing leads only to find they aren't qualified or struggling to track engagement across the customer lifecycle, it's likely you're still using manual marketing methods. Not only can this be frustrating, but it can impact the success of your programs and the revenue your company earns. Only by nurturing leads likely to buy and engaging with them throughout the customer journey will you know which activities produce results and how much revenue they can contribute. That's where marketing automation comes in.

You may wonder what marketing automation can handle that you can't manage manually. Take a look at just a few of the marketing tasks it can make easier—or transform from impossible to possible:

- Send tailored marketing emails to target audiences

- Easily create new landing pages for each campaign

- Set up all emails for an event before it starts and run them automatically, with no interference

- Rank a list of potential customers on the likelihood they'll buy

- Filter leads by level of engagement and interest in your brand

- Measure the revenue contribution of each of your marketing programs

Marketing automation can help you scale programs, deliver more personal and targeted communications, partner with sales, and measure results—and that's just scratching the surface. As you read through this guide, you'll learn about the many ways marketing automation can help your organization transform the way you connect to your audience.

Marketing automation defined

Marketing automation software streamlines, automates, and measures the results of marketing tasks and workflows. It enables many modern marketing practices, including the following:

- Lead generation

- Segmentation

- Lead nurturing and lead scoring

- Relationship marketing

- Cross-sell and up-sell

- Retention

- Marketing ROI measurement

The result: You operate more efficiently and grow revenue faster. If your company has a small number of prospects and customers, you can carry out some of the practices above without marketing automation. But to scale up, technology is essential.

Marketing automation can help small-to-mid-sized businesses as well as enterprises. Large companies have long found value in marketing automation, but it's important to note that marketing automation isn't just for enterprises. In fact, small and mid- sized businesses (SMBs)—those with annual revenue between $5 million and $500 million—make up the fastest growing segment in the marketing automation space right now. Thousands of even smaller companies use marketing automation as well.

Industries of all kinds use marketing automation, whether they're B2B, B2C, or a hybrid of both. Early adopters were primarily in B2B industries such as high-tech and software, manufacturing, and business services. But increasingly, companies across all categories—including B2C industries like healthcare, financial services, media and entertainment, and retail—are adopting marketing automation for its real-time, customer-centric approach to maintaining and extending relationships with audiences.

A feature for every need

Marketing automation platforms manage a variety of features and functions, including email marketing, landing pages and forms, campaign management, lead nurturing and scoring, lead lifecycle management, customer relationship management (CRM) integration, social media marketing, and marketing analytics.

Skip ahead to *Part 4: Getting to know marketing automation features* **for in-depth information.**

Marketing automation functions

Email Marketing	Landing Pages	Campaign Management	Marketing Programs
Lead Generation	Prediction & Scoring	Lead Managment	CRM Integration
Social Marketing	Resource Managment	Marketing Analytics	

What marketing automation isn't

Before we talk more about how marketing automation can help you, let's clear up some common misconceptions. Marketing automation is not any of the following:

1. **A fancy name for email marketing.** Marketing automation is so much more than email. As the term suggests, marketing automation handles campaigns across all channels—from direct mail and phone to online and social. In addition, marketing automation combines robust capabilities from your CRM, lead management system, web analytics platform, and other systems to create a whole that's greater than the sum of the parts. The insight you gain can set you up for increased ROI.

2. **A way to send spam. Definitely not.** Marketing automation delivers results based on how you use it. Yes, it can be used for marketing practices that ignore the customer experience, like spam. But it can also be used for exceptional marketing that truly connects with customers.

3. **A solution that only benefits your marketing department.** Yes, your marketing department will benefit from marketing automation. But high-quality marketing automation is ultimately about growing revenue quickly and efficiently—and that benefits every part of your company.

4. **A solution that delivers value without effort.** Unfortunately not. Marketing automation is not magic, although it might seem like it at times. To deliver tangible results, it requires the support of a broad strategy that integrates the right processes, people, content, and data. Don't take success for granted. To find out what you need to succeed, check out *Part 6: Ensuring your success with marketing automation*.

How marketing automation can help

In addition to its timesaving and efficiency benefits, marketing automation supports business processes essential to any modern marketing department. For B2B companies, these processes include lead nurturing, lead scoring, and lead lifecycle management. For B2C companies, they include cross-sell, up-sell, and retention. And for all companies, essential processes include marketing ROI analytics.

Marketing automation nurtures relationships with leads who aren't ready to buy.

On average, only 20 percent of leads are sales-ready when they first come in. This means you need a disciplined process—known as lead nurturing—to develop qualified leads until they are sales-ready. When done well, nurturing can lead to increased sales and a lower cost per lead.

To learn about this critical process, download *The Definitive Guide to Lead Nurturing.*

Marketing automation helps marketers retain and extend customer relationships.

Your job is far from finished once someone becomes a customer. For most industries, the real value comes when you maintain and deepen the customer relationship over time. This includes selling more of the same product to the customer (up-sell), selling additional products to the customer (cross-sell), and driving customer loyalty and retention. Note that relationship marketing means more than sending a monthly newsletter. You need multiple tracks for each customer persona and buying stage that correspond to the customer's actions and adjust accordingly—as you would in any relationship.

> " Without marketing automation, you are just guessing—just hoping that people will take the bait and be ready to buy your products. Statistics show that buyers don't do that. They want to learn at their own pace and be reached when they need more information or are ready to buy. A well-constructed marketing automation strategy makes that a reality.
>
> **Ann Handley**
> Chief Content Officer, MarketingProfs

Marketing automation builds your partnership with sales.

Many of the so-called "leads" you generate are not true prospects for your products. You need demographic lead scoring to find the customers who fit your target profile. More importantly, you need behavioral lead scoring to find those whose buying behaviors show that they are ready to engage with your company and make a purchase. Once you've identified a lead as "hot," you want to make sure the sales team follows up quickly—and in a relevant way. You need to integrate with your CRM and automatically alert sales, recycle leads, and establish service level agreements (SLA).

To learn more, download *The Definitive Guide to Lead Scoring.*

Marketing automation proves— and improves—marketing ROI.

Executives need more than automation to prove which marketing programs are (or aren't) working. With marketing automation, CMOs get the metrics they need to speak confidently to other executives about the marketing department's revenue impact.

"

Marketing automation enables marketers to adopt an integrated approach to generating, nurturing, and converting leads into customers by automating various marketing techniques and processes to optimize the marketing-sales pipeline. It is rapidly becoming a standard practice, with an increasing number of organizations turning to marketing automation to solve problems, such as diminishing lead quality, proving contribution to the sales pipeline, and difficulty evaluating a lead's readiness for sale.

Econsultancy
Marketing Automation Buyer's Guide

Find out if you're ready to start with marketing automation

If you aren't sure whether your company is ready to start with marketing automation, there are three easy steps you can take to find out.

Step 1: Write down your goals

_____

_____

_____

Step 2: Determine your needs

☐   Mobile-optimized

☐   Offers A/B testing

☐   Lead nurturing

Step 3: Compare your options

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3

For in-depth guidance on whether marketing automation is right for you, follow the instructions on [this worksheet](#).

Case study: Algonquin College Highlights

Highlights

- Improved lead generation by 28 percent year over year and increased sales by 18 percent

- Lowered cost of distribution and marketing

- Enabled precise measurements to determine which campaigns were most valuable for closing new business

- Provided an understanding of what was required to move prospective students from consideration to buying

- Allowed marketing to measure ROI and take a leadership role in driving higher revenues

Challenges

With campuses in Ottawa, Canada's capital, and across the Ottawa Valley, Algonquin College has over 19,000 full-time students and more than 36,000 continuing education students.

To generate student leads, the organization used batch emails, leaving the college unable to track the effectiveness of its marketing content. In addition, due to the diverse student base, the sales cycle could range from just a few days to several years. The college needed a marketing solution flexible enough to provide detailed insight into prospect behavior and the sales pipeline.

Solution

Algonquin College considered several marketing automation products before ultimately selecting Marketo Engage based on its ease of use and Salesforce integration, which were at the top of their requirement list. However, the marketing staff were also pleased that Marketo Engage could provide first-hand insight into how customers progressed through a website, interacted with landing pages, and responded to marketing campaigns in real time.

Their marketing organization is now in a position to move from basic nurturing to "advanced nurturing"—using a set of elaborate campaigns and triggers to launch relevant, targeted content at the instant the prospect expresses interest. This capability allows Algonquin to further refine how they segment leads and ensure they always deliver the right message at the right time.

Benefits

With marketing automation, Algonquin College has gained deep, actionable insight to determine the content that has the most immediate positive impact on lead generation, open rates, conversion rates, and closed sales.

As a result, the marketing department improved workflows and moved prospects through the buying cycle faster. They have improved lead generation by 28 percent year over year and increased sales by 18 percent, all while lowering their cost of distribution and marketing. In addition, the ability to measure ROI has dramatically improved with Marketo Engage, letting the marketing team take a leadership role in driving higher revenue.

Why market across the entire lifecycle?

28% increase in lead generation year over year.

18% increase in sales year over year.
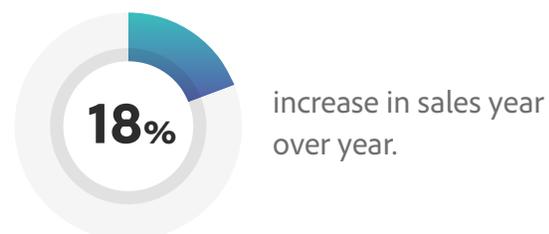
Comparing marketing automation to other solutions

A stand-alone solution that plays well with others

You probably want to know what sets marketing automation apart from solutions you've already purchased or used—and whether you need more technology to make it work. In this section, we'll walk you through exactly what marketing automation adds to your toolbox and how you can integrate it into your technology stack.

Marketing automation and its relationship to CRM

Many customer relationship management (CRM) systems already have a module for marketing. If this is your case, you might wonder whether you really need marketing automation. But if you dig into the design and capabilities, you'll find that although CRM systems provide value to sales organizations, they fall short for most marketing departments. CRM systems serve a very different purpose, which is what creates an opening for marketing automation solutions.

From a functional perspective, CRM systems typically don't let you send emails, track prospect behavior, or manage marketing programs. Many CRM systems can be customized to handle tasks like automated campaign flows, lead scoring, and de-duplication. But even that can be a challenge.

Marketing automation helps marketing departments in ways that CRM systems simply can't—and CRM systems help sales and other departments in ways marketing automation can't. Both systems are necessary to businesses. Today, CRM systems and marketing automation can work together seamlessly.

	CRM	Marketing automation
Business goal	Track opportunities and pipeline, manage contact and account information	Develop customer relationships, automate marketing programs, measure marketing ROI
Department focus	Primarily sales and sales management, some marketing	Primarily marketing and marketing management, some sales
Communication style	Individual communication (sales rep to prospect)	Communications to groups and segments (but may be personalized and triggered 1:1)
Architecture	Database-oriented, transactional queries	Workflow-oriented, highly detailed behavioral data queries

> "When it comes to marketing automation capabilities, using CRM is like building a car from a kit. All the parts are there, but you need the time and skill to put it all together. Using marketing automation is like buying the car you want or need, with all the features you want already installed and some gas in the tank, ready to drive. In either case, you still need to know how to drive and where you want to go.

Mac Mcintosh

President, AcquireB2B

Marketing automation and its relationship to email marketing

As a marketing tactic, email still has a tremendous impact. But the world is changing. With the deluge of messages customers receive every day, emails have to be more relevant and engaging than ever for a customer to take the time to read them.

Despite the prevalence of email marketing, not all companies are succeeding with it. Marketers struggle with targeting, formatting, and delivery timing. It's no surprise that engagement—the primary metric for email response rates—is falling along with open and clickthrough rates.

Other common marketing tools—such as CRM, landing pages, social media, and web analytics—only compound the problem. When tools like these don't integrate with email marketing solutions, it puts email in a silo. Plus, email creates endless administrative work for marketing teams that try to connect processes and consolidate reporting manually. Costs quickly escalate for one-off email solutions that deliver poor ROI. And revenue flounders because companies fail to segment their audiences, which leads to inconsistent, impersonal customer experiences.

The answer is to use email solutions that coordinate with other tools, start dialogues that build relationships, and engage customers—not an entire company—on their schedules. That's where marketing automation comes in.

" A marketing automation solution delivers essentially all the benefits of an email marketing solution along with integrated capabilities that would otherwise need to be cobbled together using various standalone technologies.

Gleanster Research

Seven signs you need to graduate from email marketing to marketing automation

How to tell if your company is ready to move up to a more mature solution.

1. You're sending email blasts rather than engaging in customer dialogue.

2. You're losing valuable time with manual email campaigns.

3. Your email marketing exists in a silo.

4. You can't segment or target key audiences.

5. You've got "trigger insensitivity" issues.

6. You can't tell if your email is driving pipeline or revenue.

7. Your sales team is frustrated.
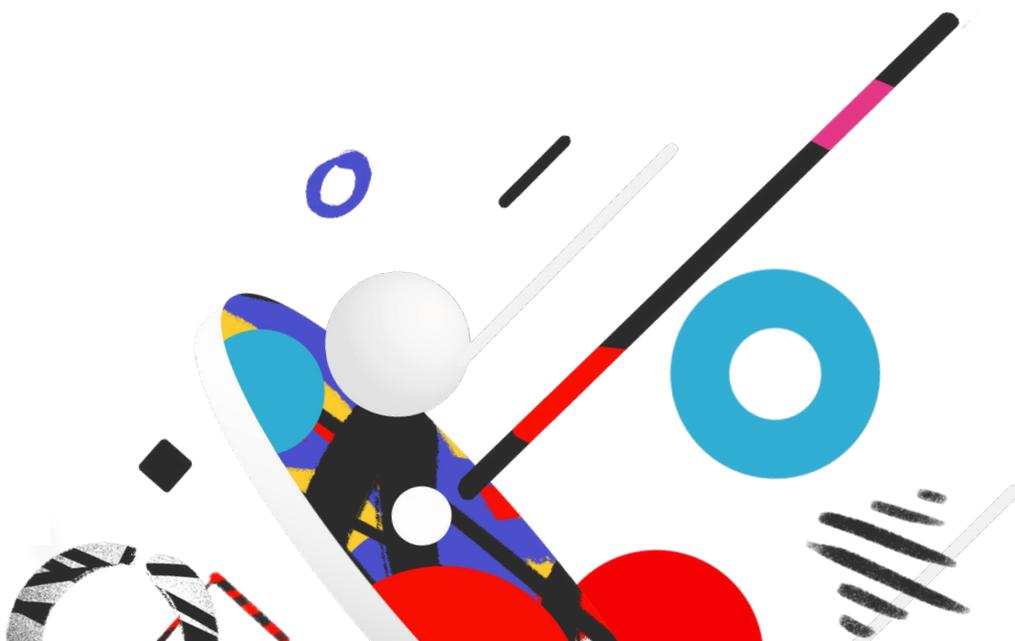
Seven signs you need to graduate from email marketing

1. **You're sending email blasts rather than engaging in customer dialogue.** Generic marketing pitches and email blasts won't capture your audience's attention. Customers are willing to engage with relevant content and build relationships with companies they like—as long as you approach them in the right way. To engage in a relevant dialogue, you need to nurture your relationships with customers patiently, over time, and move them patiently through their purchase journey.

   The first step in making your email blasts engaging is to map out adaptable workflows. In other words, you should adjust your email campaigns based on the responses and behaviors of your prospects. This is where marketing automation comes in. Without it, you are limited to batch-and-blast email campaigns that are based on your timetable, not your prospects' needs and actions. You're decreasing your chance to get relevant content to your customers when they want it.

2. **You're losing valuable time with manual email campaigns.** Many companies struggle to nurture customer relationships. These companies might see the open rate for an email campaign, but have no way to take the next step or respond to these metrics efficiently. As a result, they end up manually analyzing data, creating lists, and setting calendar notices to simulate a personalized marketing experience for each customer. Tasks done by hand limit their ability to scale their efforts. Instead of being able to clone and individually tweak similar campaigns, they lose time by building every new campaign from scratch.

3. **Your email marketing exists in a silo.** Customers notice when your emails aren't integrated with interactions on other channels. This could look like a customer receiving an email offer for a product they've already purchased, or a customer getting different, unrelated messages over email, social media, and your website—all on the same day. Marketing automation can help streamline your customer communications not just over email, but across every channel. The goal is to provide consistent, compelling experiences everywhere your customer is.

4. **You can't segment or target key audiences.** Much of your marketing campaign's success depends on your ability to segment your database and target specific leads and contacts. The more meticulously you target and the more relevant your message, the better your response rates and your ROI.

   Good targeting today means using both demographic and firmographic filters—in other words, who the person is and, if needed, what company the person works for. Key metrics also include behavioral filter—which websites customers visit, which keywords they use, and what they say on social networks. If your email channel exists in a silo, you'll won't be able to use customer behavior to target the right people in the right way at the right time.

   You also need to know where your prospect is in the buying cycle—whether they are an early-stage prospect, an active lead, or an engaged customer. Without a way to segment your customers by their stage in the buying cycle, it's nearly impossible to send them a timely, relevant message—especially at scale.

5. **You have "trigger insensitivity" issues.** Triggers are customer behaviors that you should notice and answer with a tailored response. Real-time triggers include the following:

   - A customer visits a web page

   - A customer fills out a form

   - A customer's lead score changes

   - An opportunity updates in the CRM system

   - An activity gets logged

Any of these actions should trigger a response, which often means a relevant and real-time customer email. Timeliness can make the difference between interest and indifference. For example, according to InsideSales, there is a 900 percent increase in contact rate when a sales rep calls a lead within five minutes versus ten minutes.

6. **You can't tell if your email is driving pipeline or revenue.** You can get reports from email platforms about open rates and clickthrough rates, but what you really need to know is which activities are leading to actual revenue. Without this connection, you can't determine or improve you marketing ROI.

7. **Your sales team is frustrated.** If your sales team doesn't know which leads are qualified and need follow-up, or if they can't send their own marketing emails, you're up against a big challenge. When marketing and sales don't work closely together and agree on the way to qualify leads, sales becomes frustrated and sees less value in marketing. Sales and marketing need to work closely together for success.

" Marketing automation is breaking free of email.

Eric Wittlake

Research Analyst and Advisor, Marketing and Account Based
for Leading B2B Companies

" I can explain a move from an email service provider (ESP) to a marketing automation platform with an analogy—still photographs versus video. ESPs are like still photographs—you can get great stats from using one, but each campaign is effectively a snapshot in time. Marketing automation platforms are like video—you can see the behavior of people in multiple campaigns over time, taking all the snapshots and connecting them together to make a 'flip movie' or video out of them.

Joseph Zuccaro

Founder and President, Allinio LLC

Marketing automation and its relationship to inbound marketing

Inbound marketing helps potential customers find your company—often before they are even considering a purchase—and turns early awareness into brand preference. This can produce leads and ultimately result in revenue. An inbound marketer's job is not to find leads, but to help leads find them. To do that, they create compelling content to attract attention and build their audiences.

How marketing automation makes inbound marketing more effective

Due to the limitations of inbound marketing—like difficulties targeting a specific audience and pushing customers towards action—a complete marketing strategy needs to include a range of approaches, including events, webinars, email, and advertising—plus inbound tactics.

To extract the most value from inbound marketing, companies need to combine it with relationship marketing, lead scoring, and other aspects of marketing automation. We call this the "inbound marketing multiplier." Without it, inbound marketing simply generates the names of raw prospects for your business but doesn't turn them into leads and customers.

Inbound marketing is a strategy, not a technology. Many technology solutions can help with inbound marketing, including blogging software, content management systems, search engine optimization (SEO), and social media monitoring. These can also work with a marketing automation solution. Inbound marketing solutions work better when combined with marketing automation technology, so consider implementing both.

" The best marketers are using both inbound marketing and marketing automation together, and they are getting great returns.

Greg Head
Former CMO of InfusionSoft

Common inbound marketing misconceptions about marketing automation

Some inbound marketing vendors still believe that marketing automation means robotic communications or spam. The truth is that marketing automation is what you make of it—and when used well, it can be a major asset for your company. Especially when it's paired with the right inbound marketing solutions.

Use the following table as a guide for speaking with vendors about marketing automation.

Marketing automation misconceptions:	Response
It doesn't build the list.	Marketing automation gives you many ways to generate leads. Complete solutions can generate leads from online and offline events, pay-per-click ads, and web personalization, as well as organic programs such as social and content marketing.
It's too narrow and too focused on email.	Marketing automation gives you a holistic view of your customer that extends across channels. Today's solutions combine information from your CRM, social media, website, purchase history, and more so you can trigger relevant interactions at the right time over any channel.
It's not social.	Marketing automation systems today integrate seamlessly with social media. This includes profiles, campaigns, sign-on, and promotions. You can trigger marketing actions based on interactions, such as posting or sharing content.
It ignores current customers.	Marketing automation helps build customer advocacy. You can use the same segmentaion and nurturing capabilities needed to win new business for developing and deepening relationships with current customers, not just prospects.

Marketing automation and its relationship to social media and content marketing

Social media and content marketing have become key parts of the marketing mix. Although they are both essential tactics for building awareness and generating leads, they still require marketing automation to convert those leads into revenue. Without marketing automation, you can't measure the effectiveness of these programs.

Social media marketing is the process of building relationships online on social media platforms and influencing customers even before they're identified as potential leads.

During the early days of social media marketing, everyone talked about the importance of social listening and having a presence on sites like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Today, marketers recognize that social is more than just a channel or tactic. It's a strategy that should be present in every aspect of your marketing. Going social with every campaign and developing your audience into brand ambassadors can be a huge plus for your organization.

Content marketing is the process of creating and distributing valuable content to attract, engage, and acquire prospects to drive conversions.

Content strategies operate on the belief that customers will ultimately reward companies who deliver consistent, relevant information with their business and loyalty. The ROI of your content marketing hinges on your ability to communicate with prospects and customers without pitching products or services. Then, they'll look forward to hearing from your brand. Customers may also engage with your content and amplify your message by sharing it with their networks.

The need for automation in social media and content marketing

Like inbound marketing, social media and content marketing are ways to respond to changing customer behavior in an era of information overload. All three strategies deliver results and should be part of your marketing portfolio.

Note, however, that these three tactics are top-of-funnel strategies. They build awareness and can generate new names for your database. But most of these leads will not be ready to make a purchase—particularly because good content, inbound, and social media marketing tends to entertain and inform broadly, rather than promote and sell specific products and services. Although highly effective, these three tactics are unlikely to deliver revenue on their own.

> " Marketers are beginning to realize that the quality of content is crucial to success in both lead generation and lead nurturing. Marketing automation will yield higher conversion rates and ROI because campaigns are better targeted towards the right persona and utilize consistently high quality, relevant content.
>
> **John Mctigue**
> Former Executive Vice President, Kuno Creative

Marketing automation and its relationship to event marketing

Event marketing serves as an effective way to connect with potential customers—whether in person or virtually. Events also offer the unique opportunity for prospects and customers to interact with solution providers and get a firsthand sense of the company's focus, perspective, and personality.

Participating in events helps you achieve the following:

- Generate leads

- Build brand awareness

- Increase customer and prospect engagement

- Educate your market

Although you can't automate all aspects of a great event, technology can play a big role in making events smooth and professional. For this reason, the event technology category is growing fast. This includes webinar platforms, virtual event providers, and event registration solutions.

Marketing automation complements and integrates with event technology solutions, eliminating the inefficiency of importing data manually from each platform and the risk of costly errors. Marketing automation also provides direct event capabilities. Examples include email invitations, registration landing pages, reminders and follow-ups, and event reporting and analytics. Best of all, you can clone previous events, which streamlines preparation and increases productivity and efficiency.

Marketing automation plus event marketing

Together, the two provide the ability to run— and scale—events while minimizing workloads.

Marketing automation and its relationship to revenue performance management

No matter how amazing your marketing is, it will ultimately be judged by one thing—ROI. Revenue performance management (RPM) is a strategy to make the most of interactions with prospects across the revenue cycle to accelerate predictable revenue growth.

Every company wants to improve revenue performance, but the C-suite doesn't always understand the relationship between marketing automation and revenue. RPM bridges this gap by shattering old approaches to marketing and sales, providing the blueprint for building a far more effective and efficient revenue process in companies of all sizes.

RPM transforms how sales and marketing work together by requiring companies to look at their organization's structure, pay and incentives for employees, job roles and work practices, and technology infrastructure. RPM is a business strategy that identifies what drives revenue—and what stands in the way. Although it's not a technology, you need marketing automation to produce the measurements you'll need for RPM.

Without marketing automation, RPM can be slow, error-prone, and inconsistent across an organization.
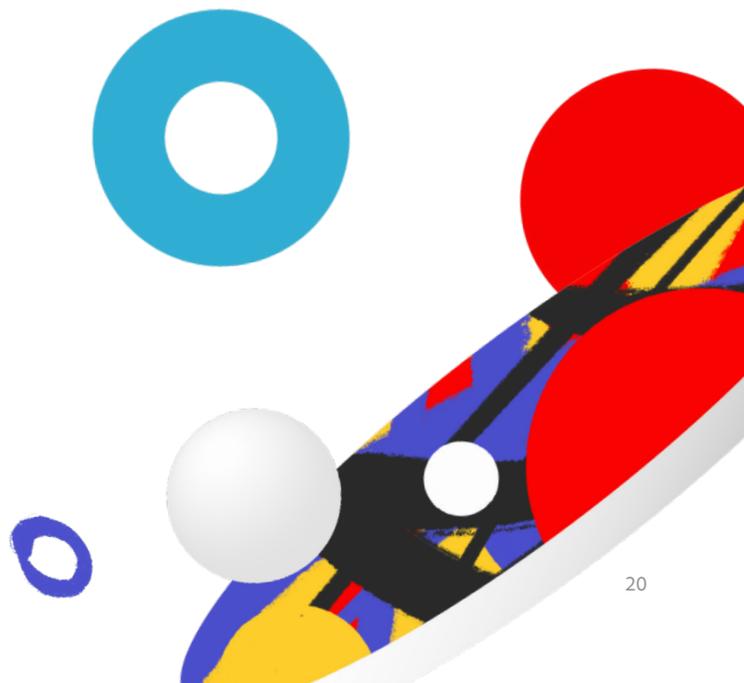
Getting to know marketing automation features

The ins and outs of marketing automation features

Marketing automation platforms provide a range of capabilities, including email marketing, landing pages and forms, campaign management, lead nurturing and scoring, lead lifecycle management, CRM integration, social marketing capabilities, and marketing analytics. In Part Four, we'll take a close look at how each of these can help you run marketing programs that generate more revenue for your brand.

Each marketing automation platform has different strengths and capabilities across these functions.

Explore common email and online marketing features

Email marketing is one of the most vital online marketing channels. It's even more powerful when you combine it in a single platform with landing pages and forms. Marketing automation systems can usually replace an email service provider (ESP), although the depth of email functionality varies across vendors.

Batch email marketing

If you send batch emails or newsletters, you need a simple way to create them. Easy-to-use design tools let you create "what-you-see-is-what-you-get" (WYSIWYG) emails and newsletters, send emails to groups of customers and prospects, and rank and report deliveries, opens, and clicks. You also get a complete view of email performance.

Email deliverability and reputation management

Sending emails can't impact revenue if the emails don't make it to the recipients' inboxes. Marketing automation typically replaces a stand-alone email service provider (ESP), so your vendor should offer ways to ensure inbox delivery. These include opt-in management, bounce handling, unsubscribe processing, and suppression lists. Higher-end services include dedicated IP addresses and capabilities like email preview, spam checking, link validation, and delivery monitoring.

Real-time triggered emails

Triggered emails let you respond to specific customer behaviors and events with an appropriate, real-time email. For example, when a prospect clicks on a specific link, a sales rep logs a call, or a lead score reaches a certain threshold, you can automatically send the right message at the right time.

Landing pages

The landing page is an essential part of many marketing campaigns. By directing clicks to a landing page customized for a specific email instead of to a generic home page, marketers can significantly improve their conversion rates. That's why many marketing automation systems include the ability to build WYSIWYG landing pages with a graphical interface, without help from IT or the web department.

Forms

You'll find registration forms on landing pages, microsites, and corporate websites. When a prospect or customer fills out the form, it captures the activity and adds contact information for new leads to the database. Some systems offer progressive profiling, which involves smart forms that recognize known visitors and ask different questions to build out the profile over time. Some systems also include social sign-on, letting users register on landing pages using their social credentials.

Testing

Split-testing strategies help you achieve the highest response rates. Updates based on testing can raise your help raise your conversions, improving your overall results. You can test many aspects of an email, including subject lines, copy, graphics, calls to action, frequency, and timing. You can also test landing pages and forms.

Dynamic content

Emails and landing pages that have been customized for specific customer segments drive much higher engagement. You can tailor text, images, and calls to action based on criteria such as location, industry, job title, and much more. For example, your message to current active opportunities should be different than the message to early-stage prospects.

Mobile formatting

Recipients open almost half of emails today on mobile devices, so your marketing automation platform should support mobile-optimized emails and landing pages.

Sales emails

Personalizing "from" addresses and signatures on behalf of individual sales reps makes it appear that automated emails are coming from a specific sales owner.

Get familiar with lead management features

Lead management helps you reach, acquire, and track prospects so you can convert them into customers. Most vendors provide at least some level of lead management functionality in their marketing automation platforms.

Marketing database

A marketing database is the system of record for your most important marketing assets—your leads and contacts. It should include more than your CRM system data and provide a rich view of all marketing interactions between each person and your company. Activity should include website visits, email clicks, scoring changes, data updates, and history.

Single view of the customer

The more powerful marketing automation solutions extend the marketing database and include data from third-party systems, social networks, and in-house applications. These solutions offer a true single view of your prospect or customer. This enables the platform to trigger right-time, right-message interactions and move beyond marketing into managing the entire customer lifecycle.

Segmentation

The success of all marketing activities depends on your ability to precisely micro-segment your database and target the just-right list of leads and contacts. These filters should include a combination of demographic, household, and firmographic (title, company size, location) attributes, as well as behavioral and CRM information. Here are some examples: high-score leads in a particular region who visited your website in the last seven days; contacts for active opportunities who registered for an upcoming webinar; or prospects who received an email offer and didn't click through but visited your website anyway.

Multi-touch campaigns and lead nurturing

Automating drip marketing campaigns let you send relevant messages over time, based on prospect behaviors and pre-defined campaign steps. This could include automated flows from email marketing but also from other channels. Marketers use drip marketing for lead nurturing workflows designed to maintain and deepen relationships with prospects over the long term.

Online behavior tracking

To respond effectively, you need to know which emails prospects open and click through, which webpages they visit, what keywords they use to search, and even what they say on social networks. Pulling this information together helps you understand who your prospects are, what they find interesting, and where they are in the buying process with your company.

Lead scoring and grading

Lead scoring automatically qualifies leads based on demographics, as well as budget, authority, need, and timeline (BANT) criteria. Lead scoring also takes into account specific prospect behaviors, such as how often and how recently they've engaged. By tracking each of these factors and assigning appropriate weights, you get a complete view of prospect interest and engagement. More advanced functions include reducing scores based on inactivity, supporting multiple scoring models that separate demographic fit from behavioral interest, and scoring for different products and divisions.

Data quality and append

CRM data is often full of duplicates and missing records. This isn't a problem for salespeople who work with one record at a time, but it's hard to use for marketing activities. Ensuring data quality is an essential foundation for any successful marketing program, including de-duplication, cleansing, and appending. De-duplication recognizes leads and contacts you already have in your database, prevents adding any duplicates, and merges any duplicates that already exist. Cleansing standardizes data, such as titles and company names, and removes bad data, including contacts who are no longer with a company. Appending means filling in missing or incomplete data by adding additional contacts to an account or filling in missing fields, such as phone number or industry.

Automated sales alerts and tasks

To respond to every prospect or customer interaction, you can create automatic tasks and provide real-time sales alerts over email or mobile device. That way, you can be confident that sales receives lead information and responds to it in a timely way.

CRM integration (data sync)

Marketing automation solutions have varying levels of integration with CRM systems. Although some require manual mapping of fields, others map automatically and maintain the connection over time. Some synchronize information in near real-time—and others, less often. Some provide access primarily to lead and contact information, but others also provide access to opportunity and custom objects. CRM integration is a particularly complex area with high variance among solutions, so it's worth taking the time to understand your needs and your vendor's capabilities.

Lead lifecycle workflows

Complete lead management workflows happen when you extend the workflow engine to integrate with your CRM. This includes automated data field updates (lead status updates based on changes to the lead score), automated list management, and lead routing/territory assignment rules.

These workflows also encourage sales follow-up by creating tasks directly in the CRM system, reassigning leads without follow-up, and converting hot leads to opportunities. For further nurturing, workflows also support lead recycling processes, where sales leads are passed back to marketing.

Sales intelligence

Sales intelligence gives account executives easy access to key prospect interactions and behaviors so they can focus on the hottest leads and opportunities—and know what the prospect wants to discuss. Some solutions provide reps with drill-in options that let them see which emails the prospect opened and clicked, which web pages the prospect visited, and how the lead score changed over time.

Sales campaigns

Some solutions let marketing create campaigns, then let sales add prospects or even run targeted campaigns of their own.

Revenue cycle modeling

Marketing and sales need to establish clear rules governing how leads transition from one stage to the next and assigning service level agreements (SLAs) for lead response and disposition. Revenue cycle modeling allows you to define stages for how leads flow through the revenue cycle, automate rules for how leads move from stage to stage, and provide an easy-to-understand framework for sales and marketing integration.

Learn the basic marketing program and lead generation features

Marketing automation did not originally provide capabilities to run broad-based marketing programs or generate leads. As a result, many marketing automation platforms don't provide deep functionality in this area. But some vendors do, so it's worth evaluating your requirements.

Program management

Marketing teams often need to manage marketing campaigns and programs across multiple channels, including online ads, video, mobile, virtual events, and social media. You can create and enhance program assets, such as landing pages, emails, campaigns, and lists. Program management also helps you track program objectives, results, and costs so you can assess program ROI.

Event marketing, including webinars

From attracting attendees to registration administration to post-event follow-up, managing the event lifecycle can take a lot of time and work. Event marketing capabilities can streamline the process by automating personalized invitations, registration reminders, and post-event follow-up. Analytics give you metrics for the number of people who registered and attended and who you should target for post-event follow-up. For online events, some marketing automation systems even integrate with tools like Cisco WebEx®, Adobe Connect, Citrix GoToWebinar, ON24, and Readytalk.

Cloning

Each event marketing program contains multiple emails, landing pages, campaigns, and lists, but many programs are similar in structure. The ability to clone an existing program can save significant time and resources, especially if your system makes it easy to edit all program parameters in one place and to automatically update all the underlying assets, like emails.

Program import and export

Some marketing automation systems provide access to a shared library of pre-built verified programs, as well as the ability to exchange marketing programs with other users. You can take advantage of their best practices to jump-start your implementation and see results faster and with less effort.

Discover important social media features

Marketing automation vendors have added social functionality, but each vendor offers different features. Take the time to evaluate your needs against the features that each vendor provides.

To learn more about all aspects of social marketing, download *The Definitive Guide to Social Marketing*.

Social media listening and tracking

Monitor what leads and contacts share on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, blogs, and online communities. You can use these social insights to segment prospects, trigger campaigns, and update lead scores.

Social media sharing and campaigns

Add intelligent share buttons to your campaigns and content so your audience can amplify your message and drive broader reach. Then, track who shares your content and drives conversions. Most tools let you customize the default share message and image for each post. Some also provide triggered capabilities to share the post at the right time.

Social media campaigns

Schedule automated posts to one or more social media accounts. Then, you can measure results, including likes, comments, replies, and shares.

Social media profiles

Incorporate social media profile data in your marketing programs to enhance segmentation and scoring. Information might include name, location, and description, as well as a history of social media sharing activity.
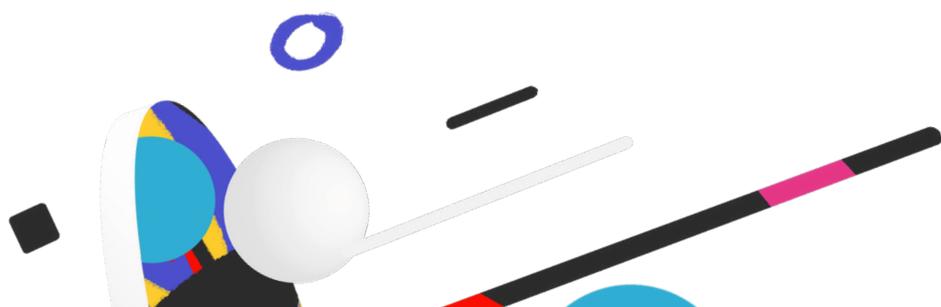
Social media engagement and promotion

Social applications like polls, sweepstakes, and referral programs can increase audience engagement and encourage people to share your message. Some tools let you easily create and include this content on your website, landing pages, social media accounts, and emails, which can help you tap into your customers' and prospects' social networks.

Social media analytics

Add tracking to social sharing applications to gain insights into your social media performance, including shares, social conversion rates, social lift, and the impact on your bottom line.

Review common analytics and reporting features

Analytics and reporting help you track and prove the impact of your marketing efforts. All vendors provide some level of marketing measurement and analytics, but the depth of functionality—especially in terms of measuring revenue impact and ROI—varies greatly, from basic to extremely deep.

Web analytics

Find out when prospects visit your web site, which pages they visit, and how often they come back. You can even identify site visitors who aren't in your database, thanks to anonymous company lookup, and send daily alerts to sales reps so they know which companies are interested. When prospects do register, you also have a complete history of their web activity as part of their record and lead score.

SEO and keyword analytics

Monitor and track how you rank for relevant keywords on major search engines. Then compare your performance against your competitors' and look for ways to improve your ranking.

Basic reporting

Access pre-built reports and dashboards, or customize your own, to measure leads by source, campaign, month, email and landing page performance, and web activity. Systems vary in the depth of their reporting. Some include custom metrics and queries, while others let you create report subscriptions that automatically send updates to your team and executives.

Multi-touch revenue attribution

Customers don't always purchase your product after only one campaign. Rather, marketing needs to make an impact multiple times to be effective. Multi-touch attributions allocate credit (pipeline, revenue) among all the marketing activities that have successfully driven a sale. Some systems also provide a graphic interface so you can see all the marketing programs and touches that influence the contacts associated with a sale as it moves through the funnel.

Program ROI analytics

Measure and compare revenue performance by channel or program across metrics like revenue, pipeline, investment, ROI, and prospects generated. You can see which marketing investments generate the greatest return and get visibility into how to allocate the marketing budget going forward.

Revenue cycle metrics

Analyze how leads flow through each stage of the revenue process, from anonymous to customer and beyond. Marketing and sales can then adjust business processes to increase pipeline and revenue. Key performance metrics for each stage include balance, flow, conversion rate, and velocity.

Don't forget about resource management features

Some marketing automation systems include marketing resource management, which helps to coordinate internal processes and increase marketing efficiency.

Budgeting

Cover all aspects of managing your marketing investments. Budgeting lets you assign top-down budgets to various groups and divisions, plan marketing spend across programs, track open-to-spend, ensure budget compliance, coordinate workflows and permissions, and reconcile plans with actual invoices.

Calendaring

Calendaring makes it easier to maintain a marketing schedule across multiple groups—and to communicate dates and activities to interested groups, such as sales. From promotions to content to PR, the entire marketing department will be able to coordinate activities.

Study up on infrastructure features

Larger enterprises and more complex organizations may need infrastructure capabilities, such as security and integration.

User roles and permissions

Assign permissions for individuals that align with specific functions or tasks. Example user roles include the ability to create but not approve landing pages and emails, or to create but not activate campaigns.

Secure partitions/workspaces

Provide access only to specific lead partitions and assets, such as campaigns, landing pages, emails, and reports. You can create views for the way your organization is structured, so different groups can use the system without risk of interfering with each other—while still supporting sharing as appropriate across functions and the demand center.

Sandbox

Test changes to the production system with less risk. A sandbox is a testing environment that isolates untested changes and outright experimentation from the production environment.

Application programming interface and integrations

Support interoperation of your marketing automation platform with other enterprise systems. An API is a specification that tells other systems how to call into the marketing automation platform to get data or perform an action. Other integrations let the marketing automation system trigger actions in other systems.

Ecosystem

Ensure that your marketing automation platform continues to meet your needs, even when you require additional capabilities. An ecosystem is a complementary set of solutions that amplify the power of the underlying platform.
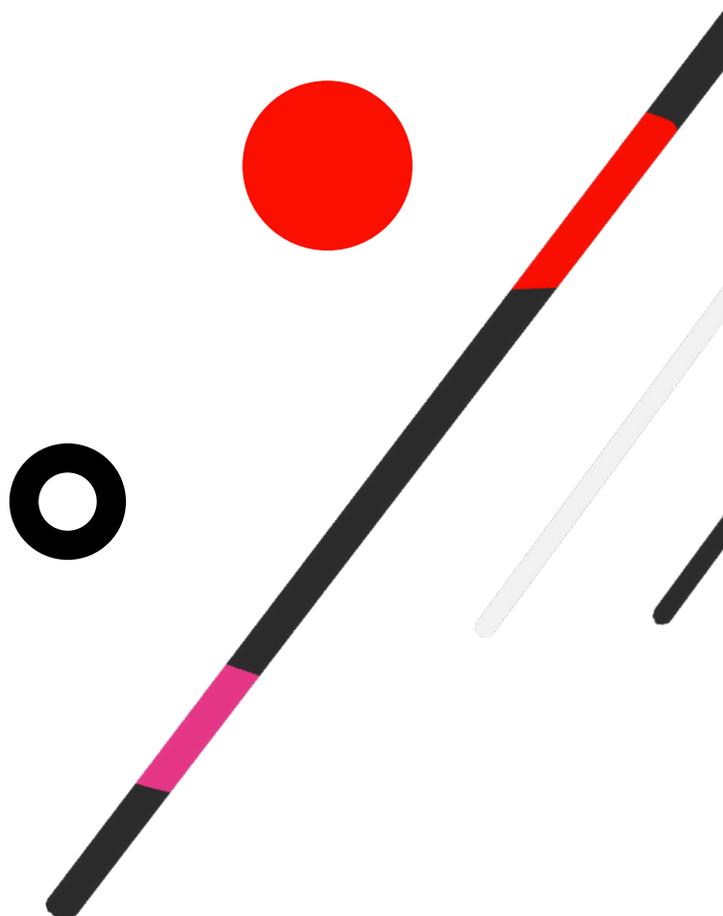
Bonus points:

Get to know advanced marketing automation functions

The capabilities that different vendors offer across marketing areas may vary significantly. For example, two vendors may have CRM integration, but differ in the level of depth and quality they offer.

To streamline your evaluation process, here are some advanced functions you might not find in all systems. Although the list isn't exhaustive, you'll get a sense of capabilities you might want in your system.

Usability and speed

- **An auto-complete** feature to suggest campaigns and field names when you enter specific values.

- **Cloning** an entire marketing program while keeping multiple emails, landing pages, links, and segments intact.

- **Tokens** that let you input your event location, date, and time once, and then auto-populate the fields into every relevant email and landing page associated with an event.

- **A pre-built library of best practice marketing programs**, including email and landing page templates, events like webinars and tradeshows, and lead scoring and nurturing workflows. This library should be included inside the application.

Email and online marketing

- **A/B testing** so you can quickly and easily compare results from different versions of emails or landing pages.

- **Dynamic content** that contains text, graphics, or HTML, and can be personalized in a landing page or email based on behavioral and demographic segmentation.

- **Progressive profiling** to easily create dynamic forms that recognize known visitors, pre- populate fields, and gather additional information to complete lead records.

- **Hidden form field population** based on a URL parameter or a cookie without custom code. For example, you might capture the lead source and search keyword as a hidden field.

Social media

- **Social campaigns** including polls and voting, referral programs, and sweepstakes. For example, you could reward people with $100 for referring three friends to an event, or you could enter a user to win an iPad if they share your content.

Lead management

- **Real-time, behavior-based trigger responses** based on real-time behaviors, not just pre-set schedules. For example, if your customer visits a key webpage twice in one week, you might send a special offer and alert the sales team immediately.

- **Advanced segmentation** to combine real-time triggers, demographic fields, and behavioral attributes in a single list.

- **IP lookup** by inferred company and geocoding by zip code, state, and region.

- **Multiple lead scoring models** to track interest and engagement for multiple products or businesses.

- **Separate lead scores for lead demographics and behaviors**, which can lead to higher revenues. According to the Marketo Engage Benchmark on Revenue Performance, companies that implement this kind of lead scoring enjoy 23 percent better sales productivity and a staggering 33 percent higher revenue growth than companies that only use demographic scoring.

- **Decay score** based on inactivity, sales recycling, or other behavioral triggers.

CRM integration

- **Sales campaigns** that empower sales reps to send trackable marketing automation emails and add contacts to campaigns from inside the CRM.

- **Advanced data sync** with the ability to immediately synchronize your marketing database with CRM opportunities, activities, campaigns, and custom object information. It also makes those fields available for segmentation, scoring, and reporting.

- **Self-healing schema** to identify and sync changes to specific CRM fields, such as new field names or values, and automatically adds new custom fields.

- **Data triggers** to activate marketing workflows in real time based on data changes in opportunities and custom objects in your CRM.

Other

- **Work groups** to define groups of leads, campaigns, and assets that are only accessible to specified users for marketing purposes.

- **Role-based access** that allows only certain functions for certain users. For example, you might require manager approval for new campaigns or limit access for customers and third-party users.

- **Technical capabilities** that ensure system uptime and email deliverability.
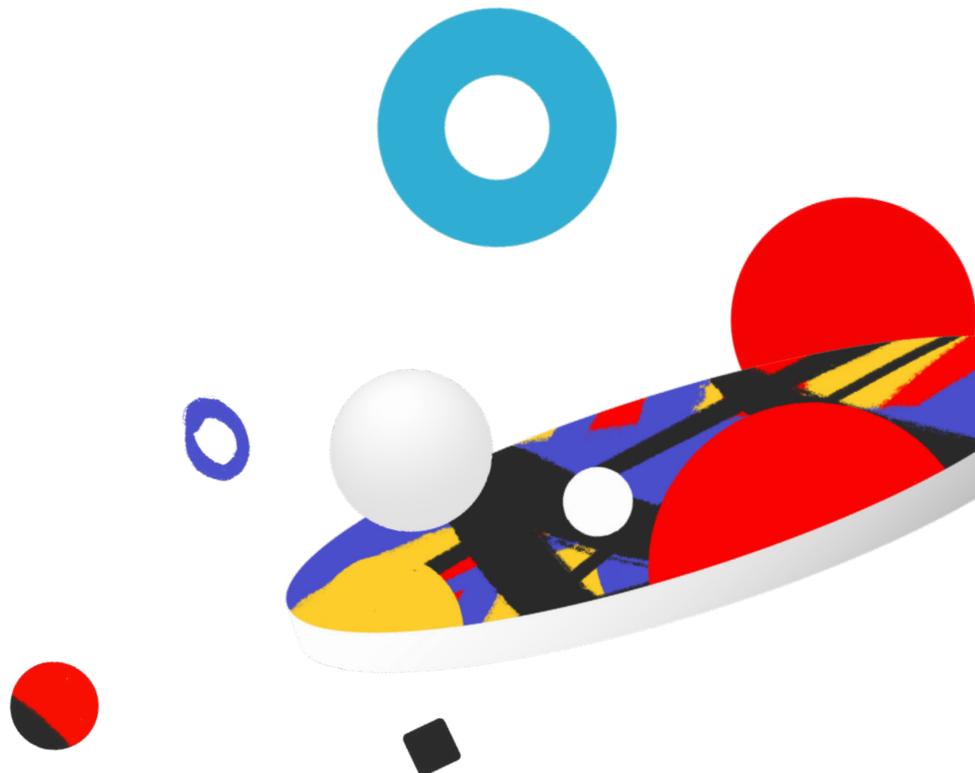
Choosing the best marketing automation system for you

Once you've decided to make marketing automation part of your business, it's time to select the appropriate vendor for your company. But choosing the right system isn't easy. That's why we've created a sample RFP to help you evaluate the quality of the platforms you are considering—and to ensure that the system you choose best fits your business needs.

Case study: Portland Trail Blazers

Highlights

- 96 percent season ticket renewal open rates

- 30 percent single game ticket sales growth

- 45 percent open rate

Challenges

Since swishing their first jump shot, the Portland Trail Blazers have been one of the most successful franchises in the National Basketball Association. Despite this success the Trail Blazers have been focused on expanding their appeal beyond Portland to the rest of Oregon and the Pacific Northwest. The team's management group also wants to entice more fans to experience the 150+ concert, family show and other sporting events that occur at Portland's Rose Quarter, a 30-acre sports and entertainment complex that includes two multi-purpose arenas in the Moda Center and the Veterans Memorial Coliseum.

As the Trail Blazers sought to develop marketing campaigns aimed at these different demographic and geographic groups, they needed to find a way to engage fans in a more targeted fashion. With an assist from Marketo Engage, they made it happen.

Solution

After a long search comparing competing alternatives, the Trail Blazers chose Marketo Engage just prior to the 2013/2014 season. That allowed them to rapidly build different types of campaigns targeting different demographics and fan types at various points in the customer journey. With the implementation of Marketo Engage Sales Insight into their Microsoft Dynamics CRM, the Trail Blazers' service team now has an accurate version of customer behavior and whether email messages to their fans are not getting opened. They can then use those insights to determine whether it warrants a follow-up phone call or email. The Trail Blazers have also implemented Marketo Engage forms throughout the team website that promptly informs sales managers when they get filled out. The information gets sent into the CRM with the designation of "extremely hot lead" for immediate phone follow-up.

Benefits

A record 96 percent of its season ticket holders renewed their subscriptions, and the Trail Blazers reported a 9 percent year-over-year increase in season ticket sales. Engagement numbers also climbed sharply—the Trail Blazers' side of the business registered a 45 percent email open rate while on the concert side, they hit nearly 25 percent. The Trail Blazers also credit Marketo Engage Sales Insight for a 75 percent open rate when the renewal email campaign went out to season ticket holders. The improved conversion rates included an added bonus—helping to foster more trust and cohesion between the Trail Blazers' marketing, analytics, and ticket sales operations. In the past, leads that got served were often not qualified. The organization says it now has a very accurate way to gauge where fans are in the customer journey and when might be the optimal times for conversion. Looking forward to the next season, Vincent Ircandia, the Vice President of Business Analytics, says that "the team is confident that our marketing and data infrastructure will help us deliver our best results to date. Marketo Engage is a huge part of this."

"The software was very easy to adopt. We were able to pick it up really quickly and start messaging to our fans, which was huge to us."
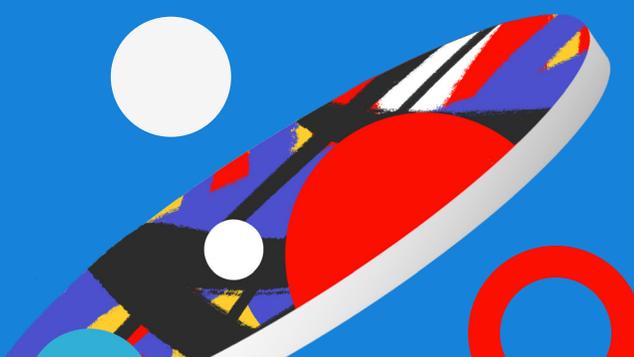
Making a winning business case for marketing automation

When evaluating the potential for ROI with marketing automation, the data speaks for itself. Funnel Overload reported the following findings on the effectiveness of using marketing automation:

- 76 percent of organizations that use marketing automation earn a return on their investment in their first year, with 12 percent earning returns in less than a month

- 80 percent of companies earn more leads with marketing automation than they can without it, with 77 percent of marketers reporting increased conversions

- 15 to 20 percent of leads convert into sales when marketers use automated lead nurturing

The data shows that marketing automation works, but you may still need to sell it to your C-suite. This section will help you learn how to get your executive team on board.

## Get the facts on marketing automation ROI

Marketing automation is no longer a nice-to-have—it's a business necessity. As Funnel Overload reports, 75 percent of organizations use at least one form of marketing automation. Which means when you start using marketing automation, you're in good company.

## Does your business currently use automation tools?
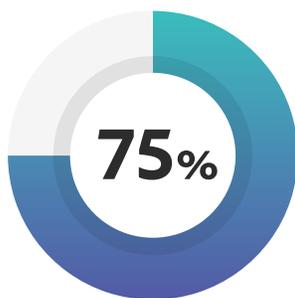
75% of businesses currently use automation tools.

For most organizations, the primary reason to use marketing automation is to increase lead generation. According to Funnel Overload, 61 percent of companies cite lead generation as "their most important strategic goal of marketing automation." With an expected 15 to 20 percent conversion rate on those leads, it's no surprise that so many companies rely on marketing automation technology.

61%
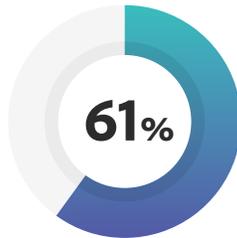
Increasing Lead
Generation

57%

Lead Nurturing

47%

Sales Revenue

36%
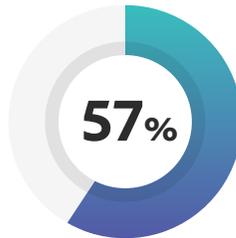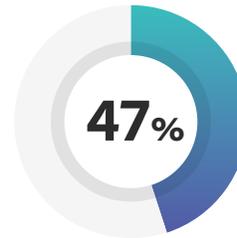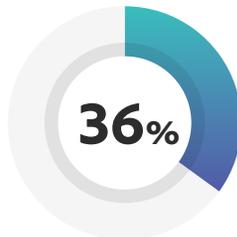
Improving Customer
Engagement

29%
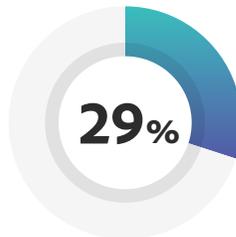
Marketing Productivity

28%
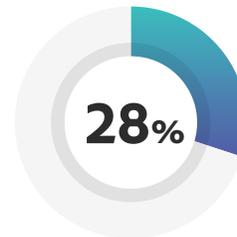
Improving Campaign
Measurability

Understand typical time to ROI

When you move forward with marketing automation, it's likely that you'll see results in a relatively short timespan. The majority of companies—a full 76 percent—see ROI from marketing automation within a year, with 12 percent earning ROI in less than a month.

Time to ROI from marketing automation

12%   **32%**   **32%**   **24%**

| < 1 month | 2-6 months | 7-12 months | 1+ months |
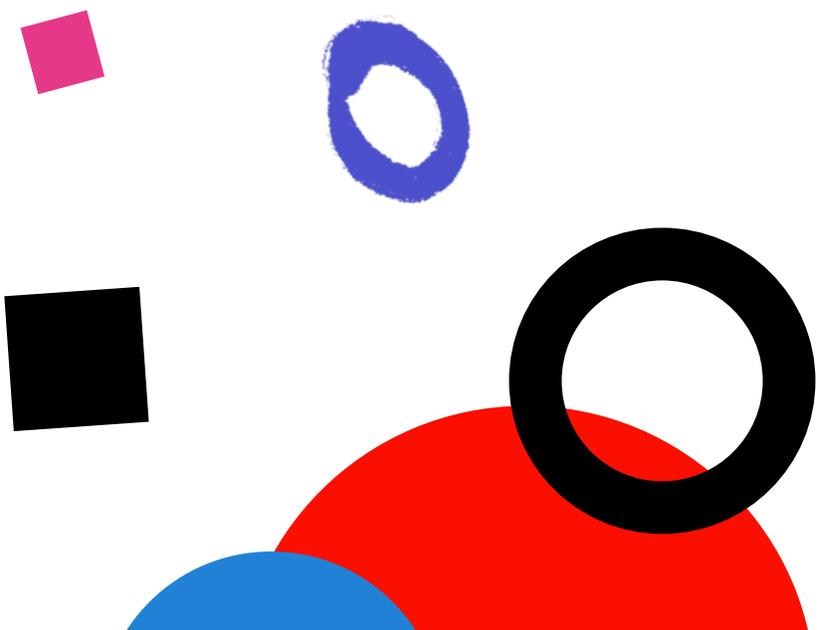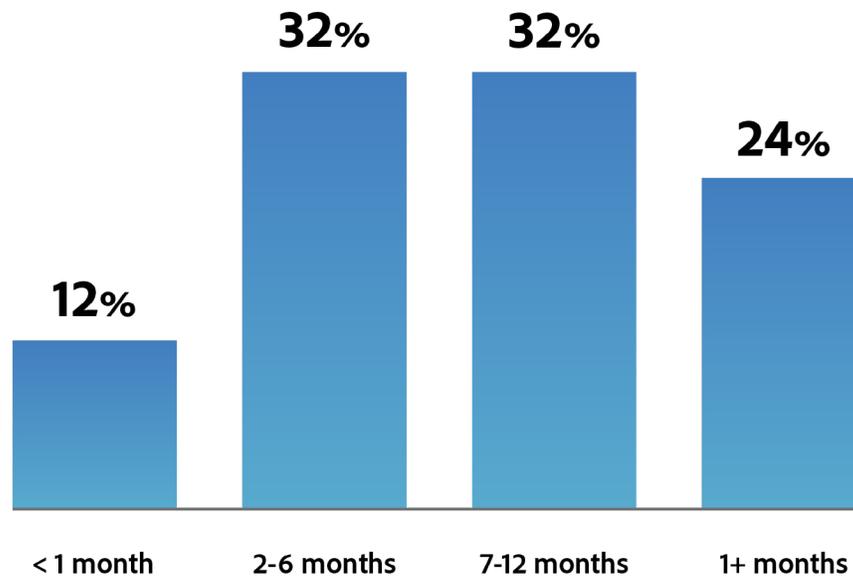
The core case for marketing automation

With marketing automation, you can achieve the following benefits:

- Save time and money

- Measure and fine-tune marketing investments

- Speed up revenue growth

Save time and money

Building your business case for marketing automation based on time and money savings could be the best way to get CFO signoff. Here are three ways to save your company money with marketing automation:

- **Decrease human resources costs.** Modern relationship marketing requires you to interact with customers in an up-to-date way. For example, you should be able to follow up on marketing emails by sending different emails to those who responded and those who didn't. Without marketing automation, that means spending the budget to hire staff who can do the work manually. By investing in the technology to automate these processes, companies can expect to reduce their campaign management budgets.

- **Handle marketing tasks in-house.** Marketing automation enables you to handle many marketing tasks in-house. Instead of outsourcing tasks like building a new landing page to an expensive design firm, you can do it yourself. Not only does this save money, but it also saves time and makes your company more agile.

- **Simplify approval and compliance.** Especially for large companies or those in highly regulated industries, a marketing campaign might require many levels of sign-off. Marketing automation simplifies and standardizes this process, which means fewer spreadsheets to track and update.

" By using advanced marketing automation and analytics software, marketers are strengthening their agility and increasing their offensive capabilities to grow revenue more consistently and profitably."

Phil Fernandez
Former CEO, Marketo

Measure and fine-tune marketing investments

Executive teams today are eager to see the results of marketing investments. Marketing automation helps you measure and report the results of your activities by helping you do the following:

- **Create a system of record:** Marketing automation provides the core system of record for all your marketing information. Without a system of record, you can't measure or improve.

- **Measure and test:** Running A/B tests that compare the response to different email subject lines, landing pages, and offers helps your company learn what works over time, ultimately giving you better optimization and more revenue.

- **Prove program ROI:** You need data on how marketing programs are performing, including results and revenue generated, so you can compare them. Marketing automation lets you see which marketing campaigns are directly affecting revenue so you can spend funds on the activities that have been proven to work best.

- **Funnel impact:** You also need to know how well your funnel works, including the conversion rates from names to leads and from opportunities to closing. Marketing automation helps you understand how leads are moving through your funnel and makes forecasts based on the impact marketing has on revenue.

Examining and discussing these points with your executive team will help them see how marketing automation can impact revenue growth.

> " Today's marketers need to speak the language that their CEO and CFO can relate to and understand. Gone are the days where marketers talk about website hits and Facebook likes. Today's marketers need to ensure that they have both pipeline and revenue targets.

Will Scully-Power

Marketing Director, Datarati

Speed up revenue growth

Marketing automation drives revenue by enabling you to do the following:

- Focus on the right customers

- Develop relationships before customers are ready to make a purchase

- Engage at the right time

- Scale personalized interactions with each customer

Post-Sale

After the purchase, marketing automation lets your brand more effectively and efficiently build long-term customer relationships in these ways:

- Engage in personalized, interactive conversations with prospects and customers across channels

- Capture and analyze data so you can respond to consumer behavior, both online and offline

- Integrate activities and data from marketing and other parts of the organization, such as sales or call centers, to create a continual experience for prospects

When done successfully, you build deep, long-lasting relationships that increase customer lifetime value.

Skip ahead to *Part Six: Ensuring your success with marketing automation explains* to learn how you can quantify those relationships.

Five key metrics to measure marketing automation success

1. Conversion rate of new names into marketing qualified leads (MQLs)

2. Number of MQLs

3. Win rate on MQLs

4. Percentage of pipeline sourced by marketing

5. Investment per marketing-sourced customer, also known as acquisition cost

Marketing agility

The challenge

Marketing executives can find it dizzying to juggle the complex array of programs and activities needed to reach target customers across a broad range of online and offline channels. Their campaigns need constant adjustment based on new insights, competitor moves, and technologies.

The solution

To succeed and win in this highly complex and lightning-fast business environment, marketers need to be agile. According to McKinsey, agile companies "achieve greater customer centricity, faster time to market, higher revenue growth, lower costs, and a more engaged workforce." They are more likely than other organizations to rate high in organizational health, which is a strong indicator of long-term performance.

Putting agility into practice

Marketers lay the foundation for marketing agility in two ways:

1. Gathering in-depth information on customer preferences and behavior

2. Quickly creating new campaigns and adapting existing ones

As such, platforms that automate marketing processes can be an essential tool for the agile marketer, because their marketing databases offer you a single view of your customer.

In the face of these complex needs, you need more than a flowchart to make sense of it all. Instead, look for modular user interfaces that are based on triggers, then listen to customers and respond with appropriate actions.

Platforms that automate marketing processes are a game-changer for the agile marketer because their marketing databases provide a unified view of the customer. Marketing automation platforms offer intuitive interfaces and are also easier to maintain and upgrade over time.
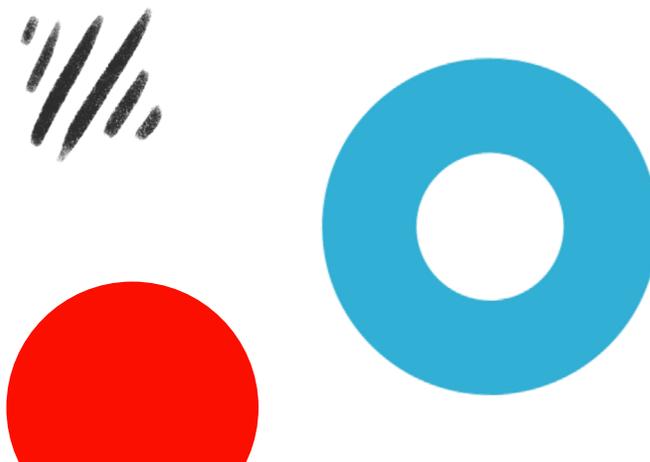
The impact of maturity on revenue growth

Creating a quantitative business case for faster revenue growth depends on how well you use marketing automation to modify your revenue-generating processes. A study from BCG divides marketing automation maturity into four steps—nascent, emerging, connected, and multimoment. The bulk of brands in their 2018 survey fell into emerging and connected categories, with only 2 percent achieving multimoment-caliber maturity.

Maturity	Nascent	Emerging	Connected	Multimoment
Assessment of participants (%)	8%	47%	42%	2%
Archetype of maturity	Simple campaign based execution	Some use of owned data in automated buying	Data integrated & activated across channels	Dynamic customer journeys toward business outcomes
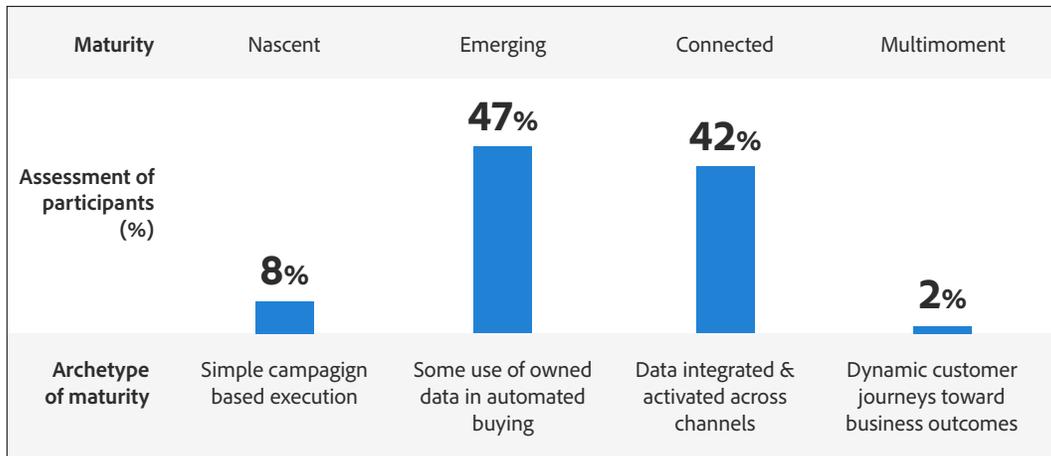
For the most mature companies—the ones that have achieved "multimoment maturity"—the impact on revenue growth is clear. The most mature companies in the BCG study achieved up to 20 percent in revenue increases. Those that employed advanced technology, like machine learning, saw a return on advertising spend (ROAS) of up to 33 percent.

But it's not just revenue growth that impacts the bottom line. The most mature companies saved up to 30 percent using marketing automation and reduced cost per action (CPA) by more than 40 percent. And adding active human supervision into marketing automation operations improved campaign performance by an additional 15 percent.

Bringing the results together

You can estimate how marketing automation will help your organization improve deal flow and revenue.

To perform your estimate, follow the four steps below:

1. Gather your baseline revenue metrics, such as annual revenue, gross margin, number of annual deals, and average deal size.

2. Establish your baseline conversion rates for Name to MQL, MQL to SQL, and SQL to win.

3. Estimate how marketing automation will improve your marketing maturity and conversion rates.

4. Calculate how improved conversion rates will translate into improved lead flow, wins, and ultimately, revenue.

For more support, contact Adobe to work with you on a detailed business case.

Investment and costs

After you estimate the gains from marketing automation, you need to develop the other side of the business case by understanding the investment required.

Most modern marketing automation platforms are provided as recurring software as a service (SaaS) subscriptions. Available on a monthly, quarterly, or annual basis, subscriptions can start as low as $50 per month for limited-capability solutions and scale up to six figures for enterprise-grade options. Many vendors provide discounts for annual commitments.

Here are the two main factors that drive the cost of subscriptions:

1. The number of leads and contacts in your marketing database. This includes the contact information you already have, like email addresses, postal addresses, or phone numbers.

2. The functionality in each edition. Many vendors provide different editions of their solutions. Vendors may offer a range from simple, low-cost entry programs to ones with more powerful, higher-level functions.

For example, Marketo Engage offers the following subscription options:

Most vendors charge a fee that covers every marketing solution user and provides access to an unlimited number of email addresses, within reason. Many vendors also have an additional per-seat charge for named sales users who need to perform tasks and gain insight within the CRM system.

Other investment factors

Most marketing automation vendors offer add-ons to their basic software subscriptions. These might include new customer enablement, premium support packages, consulting services, and instructor-led education and training. The purpose is to speed up ROI and time to value. Expenses tend not to exceed 20 percent of the software subscription cost.

The best results come from looking beyond the software. You should also look at your end-to-end processes to make sure you have all the elements you need for success.

You might ask if your marketing department generates enough leads, produces enough content, includes staff with the right skills, or needs to modify end-to-end business revenue processes or improve coordination between marketing and sales.

You may need to look at additional investments in these areas, depending on the complexity of the software you select, your marketing automation maturity, and your ROI goals. See Part Six: Ensuring your success with marketing automation for a closer look into non-technology investments required for marketing automation success.

Time to value

As a metric, time to value—the span of time between when a project begins and when the system delivers value—can be as important as ROI. No executive wants to wait long to get results. And no one wants to be forced to explain why all the promised benefits have yet to arrive.

The critical concept here is the time to payback— when cumulative benefits exceed cumulative costs. Make sure you ask your marketing automation vendor how long implementation and ramp-up will take, and how quickly you can expect to see value.

Selling marketing automation internally

Your executive team may not immediately see the value of a marketing automation investment. To convince them, you'll need to understand their priorities and their objections. Present marketing automation by focusing on challenges that your business faces across all departments. Otherwise, your executives may not see your business case as a priority right now.

Your ability to deliver a convincing case for marketing automation hinges on how well you show that the investment will solve C-suite executives' major problems and address their main priorities.

No matter which executive you want to convince, make sure to manage expectations about the time to value and effort required. You don't just flip the switch on marketing automation and see instant results. Don't overpromise and underdeliver. As you invest more, you'll start to learn how to use marketing automation to increase the impact on revenue growth. Your peers will appreciate and respect your pragmatic, level-headed approach.

" Marketing's job is never done. It's about perpetual motion. We must continue to innovate every day.

Ben Cornstock
Former CMO & Vice Chair, GE

Marketing departments often suffer from a lack of credibility within their organizations. MarketingWeek reports a correlation between company size and perceived importance of marketing, with the smallest organizations giving it the highest value and the largest enterprises valuing it the least. Per Ben Alexander, former CMO at Digital Risks and current marketing director at Usay Compare, "Over time, marketing can be perceived as less important as the business starts investing in new markets, sales processes, partnerships, technology and so on."

Many executives think of marketing as a cost center, not a revenue-driving department. Not surprisingly, most executives don't want to invest more resources in a cost center. They see no reason to automate marketing processes if it will just produce mediocre results faster. You'll need to address some of these perceptions head-on when making the case for marketing automation.

> " Marketing is a highly creative endeavor. It requires thinking and planning. And it touches people…creative marketing people, salespeople, and most importantly, customers. So marketing automation is best done in a way that doesn't stifle creativity, doesn't create a burden for your salespeople, and doesn't offend your customers."

Joe Martinico

Publisher, marketingautomation.com

Carlos Hidalgo, former CEO, ANNUITAS, offer five tips for selling marketing automation internally.

1. **Seek to understand management's objectives.** Understanding their collective and individual goals will help you present a case that meets their needs.

2. **Create a financial case that lines up with their objectives.** Work backwards from the main objectives that your executive team holds dear. For example, if revenue is the main objective, make your case based on revenue.

3. **Discuss, don't present.** Start by asking questions to identify what management wants to achieve. Then transition by saying, "If I could show you how to meet those objectives efficiently and effectively, would you be interested in learning more?"

4. **Support your case with actual case studies.** This will help you answer the potential objection, "This all sounds good in theory. How do you know it will work?"

5. **Be ready if they say yes.** Have your high-level plan ready, with an overview of the next steps, timeframes, and required resources.

How to position marketing automation for each executive

CMO

Major concerns:

- Drive customer relationships

- Measure and prove marketing ROI

- Build alignment with sales

- Improve marketing credibility in the organization

- Manage and leverage the growing complexity of changing customer behaviors, channels, and technologies

How to make your case:

- Highlight marketing automation's ability to measure the ROI of individual programs, show how marketing impacts revenue, and justify budget requests.

- Reduce the threat of greater complexity by positioning marketing automation as the way to improve marketing's ability to adapt to change and test innovative strategies.

- Discuss marketing automation as a key function for better integrating marketing and sales. Every CMO would like to hear praise, not complaints, from the head of sales.

- Rally support from the rest of the executive team so the CMO sees an investment in marketing automation as a low- risk decision. Getting C-suite agreement on the investment will help protect the credibility of marketing.

CEO

Major concerns:

- Grow and reach revenue goals

- Manage costs and meet shareholder expectations for profitability

- Attract and retain talent

- Innovate and outperform the competition

- Build the organization and enhance collaboration within it

- Manage risk

How to make your case:

- Position marketing automation as the key to business growth—a solution that will enhance sales effectiveness and help each sales representative achieve more. Instead of talking about marketing automation, refer to resource performance management (RPM). RPM requires collaboration between marketing and sales to fine-tune interactions with customers across the revenue cycle and accelerate predictable business growth. (Take a look at Part Three: Comparing marketing automation to other solutions to learn more about RPM.)

- Talk about the predicted performance improvements that you expect to gain by knowing precisely which marketing programs drive revenue, which waste it, and how to optimize marketing's spend.

Head of Sales

Major concerns:

- Make quota

- Get an accurate sales forecast

- Perform better than the competition

- Expand market share

- Make customers successful

- Develop the sales team

How to make your case:

- Show how the sales department is often the primary beneficiary of a marketing automation investment.

- Explain to the head of sales that marketing automation provides more high-quality, win-ready leads along with greater insights for sales reps, letting them focus on the right leads and opportunities.

- Discuss plans for lead scoring powered by marketing automation, which can result in fewer overall leads passed to sales—meaning fewer poor-quality or premature leads. Instead, set the expectation that marketing will nurture relationships with leads that aren't yet ready, so the sales team can focus on leads and opportunities with high potential.

"

Sixty-nine percent of marketers believe that having a strong lead nurturing strategy can lead to an increase in the number of sales opportunities in their pipeline, allowing them to generate warmer, sales-ready leads. Sixty percent of respondents also believe that their lead nurturing strategies have increased their conversion rates and driven more sales.

DemandGen 2020 Lead Nurturing Survey Report

CFO

Major concerns:

- Manage expenses

- Contain risk

- Enable profitable growth

- Plan for the future

How to make your case:

- Present your developed business case. Don't worry that you're making estimates, as long as you've labeled them and included your assumptions. You'll build credibility simply by providing a spreadsheet that shows the impact of a marketing automation investment, indicating that you speak the CFO's language.

- Explain the benefits of being better able to measure the impact of marketing investments, such as connecting marketing spend to revenue, reducing waste, and getting the most from expenditures.

CIO

Major concerns:

- Make investments that support the business

- Manage security and risk

- Innovate and evolve infrastructure for the future, including areas like mobile, social, and software as a service

- Control costs

How to make your case:

- Forecast the decrease in IT workload as marketing takes over tasks that previously required IT help, such as landing page creation.

- Highlight the value of a reporting environment that integrates data from previously disparate systems, such as CRM, email, website, and social. Explain that marketing automation can also improve data integrity and quality.

- Answer specific technical questions about security, data management, integration, and other IT requirements by partnering with your proposed vendor.
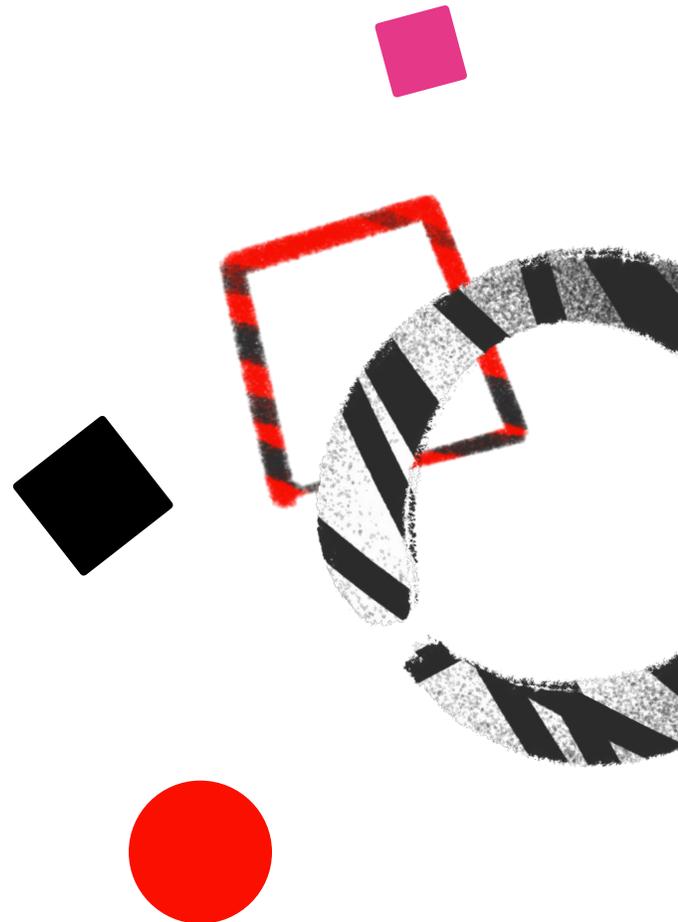
The cost of delaying

People in your organization might offer reasons to delay investing in marketing automation. Strengthen your case by explaining how it will make your organization more efficient, effective, and profitable. The timing is never exactly right to roll out new software or start a new project. The longer you wait to implement marketing automation, the longer you'll wait to see revenue growth. Don't delay too long.

Objection	Response
"We have too many important campaigns and events coming up."	Increase the ROI from every campaign with marketing automation. You can use it to effectively nurture all the new names and leads in your system. The longer you wait, the lower your chances of converting early-stage names into customers.
"We have to do something else first—like finish our website, implement CRM, fix our data, etc."	Invest now to improve the results from every initiative and get a return from marketing automation sooner. The nature of marketing is such that you're always trying something new. Marketing automation platforms are built to adapt as you evolve.
"We lack the staff to run the programs."	Hire a consultant to get up and running with marketing automation while saving on overhead. Once they get started, many companies find they need to spend only a few hours a week—to run reports and tweak campaigns and workflows—for solid ROI. With the right system, you can do more sophisticated work and reap even greater benefits later, as your staff grows in size and skill.
"We don't have enough content in place."	Plan to create the content you need. For example, if you want to send out content every three weeks and you have only four pieces at the moment, you have 12 weeks to create a new piece. You can also re-use blog posts or divide newsletters into bite-sized chunks to grow your content library more quickly.

Ensuring your success
with marketing automation

Go beyond software

Buying a marketing automation platform without a strategy or plan for using it is like buying a Ferrari and keeping it in the garage. Although each marketing automation platform offers different capabilities, three factors determine your success:

- Your strategy and process

- Your content and lead flow

- Your people

Even with limited investment in these areas, you can usually get an acceptable level of ROI from marketing automation. As Part Five: Making a winning business case for marketing automation mentions, the more time and effort you invest, the higher you move up the curve, and the better your return on investment.

The key is to think big, start small, and move quickly. In this section, you'll discover how you can get excellent results by getting started with what you have today, and then incrementally investing over time to improve.

“ I've seen over and over where a company will be unsuccessful with their marketing automation strategy and they blame the technology; they blame the platform. They say, 'Well, we need to switch to a new platform because this just isn't working out.' And in my observation, nine times out of ten, it's not the technology's fault; it's the fact that the strategy, if it exists, is flawed and is not executed well.

Matt Heinz

President, Heinz Marketing

Strategy and process

As Bill Gates famously said, "The first rule of any technology used in a business is that automation applied to an efficient operation will magnify the efficiency. The second is that automation applied to an inefficient operation will magnify the inefficiency."

Don't just automate your old processes when you are introducing marketing automation into your organization. New technology requires new ways of working. When it comes to automating marketing, you still have to do the thinking.

Some of the processes that your company should examine as you think about marketing automation include alignment of sales and marketing, measurement, and data quality.

Sales and marketing alignment

- What defines a sales-ready lead?

- How does your lead qualification team prioritize their time?

- How will you implement lead nurturing for leads that are not yet ready?

- How will you recycle sales leads that don't move forward?

- What service level agreements (SLAs) will you have for lead follow-up?

Marketing automation can drive the most results when your company uses it as an opportunity to redesign your entire revenue engine around your customers' buying cycle.

Measurement and metrics

- What key metrics do you report on a weekly, monthly, and quarterly basis?

- How do you measure campaign ROI?

- What key performance indicators (KPIs) will you use to determine if your revenue processes are on track?

With marketing automation, marketers can look beyond traditional metrics, like clicks and opens, and start measuring and forecasting what executives really care about: current and future pipeline, revenue, and profits.

Data quality

- Do you have a disorganized database full of duplicates and bad records?

- Does your database have missing or incomplete data?

- How will you cleanse and maintain your data to ensure your marketing automation doesn't suffer from "garbage in, garbage out"?

Quality data is essential for any marketing automation implementation to succeed.

"

Start with a process. Marketers typically work off of intuition, but defining processes is critical to successful marketing automation strategies and helps you achieve quality, consistency, and collaboration.

Eric Dukart

Former Executive Vice President and Chief Strategy Officer, Sundog
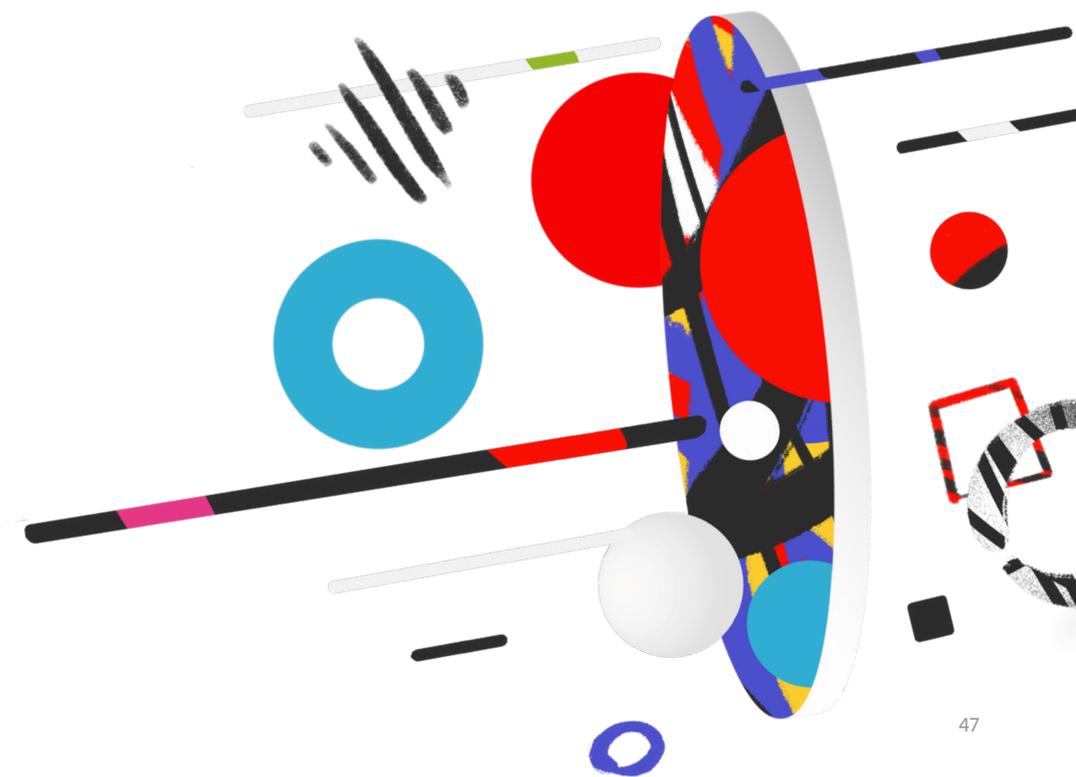
Content and lead flow

Content and leads are the fuel that drive marketing automation. You need a steady flow of content for each stage of the customer journey and a strategy to gain prospects and nurture them until you can hand off qualified leads to sales.

Content

Creating enough content is often the most underestimated challenge for successful marketing automation. Simply put, content is a must-have to consistently generate and nurture leads. Ideally you have a solid understanding of your customer personas so your content and messages resonate with your audience. Without this, even the most carefully crafted marketing automation programs can fail to deliver results.

Ask yourself if you have a defined content calendar and enough content for each persona at each stage of the buying process. If the answer is no to either of these questions, you'll need to make progress in this area or risk limiting your long-term marketing automation success.

Lead flow

Some companies have too many leads and need to score them before asking sales to handle the high-quality sales-ready leads. Other companies, especially new and small businesses, don't have enough leads. Marketing automation can help you nurture leads to make them sales-ready and flow through the marketing funnel more efficiently. But if you have no leads moving into the top of your funnel, you will have nothing to nurture.

If you don't have enough sales leads, put a plan in place to get more—with content marketing, social media, events, and promotions—and get prospects into the top of your funnel.

“ You have to remember you need capabilities to manage the marketing automation, which includes people and processes in addition to the technology. That is the key for success.

Matt Johnson

Former Chief Strategy Officer, Innoveer

People

Your internal employees and external service providers are the most critical factors in marketing automation success. You need many different skills for marketing automation, but the most essential include the following:

- **Business process design and implementation.** Your team should be able to envision demand generation and lead lifecycle processes that fit today's customers. They must also work across the functions necessary to implement marketing automation.

- **Analytics.** Your organization needs an individual who can absorb, visualize, and discuss large amounts of data and complex concepts, and make decisions to solve problems based on available information.

- **Technical aptitude.** Marketing has become a profession that increasingly requires proficiency with technology solutions. This represents a major shift in the job description of a marketer. Although today's marketing automation platforms are much easier to use than legacy systems, marketers need basic levels of technical acumen. Better still would be a marketing technologist on staff.

Evaluate your team to determine if they have the necessary skills. If not, you'll need to build your current staff through training and consider adding external consultants or additional hires.

> " Success of marketing automation is not just about the technology. That's the easy part. This is all about change management and adjusting the way the company thinks about the customer experience. It requires support and alignment by key stakeholders, a commitment to developing better processes (not doing it the way they have always done it but with automation), and defining clear use cases on what problems they want to solve and how they will use the technology to solve the problem. This all drives marketing automation adoption and success.

Jeff Pedowitz

President and CEO, The Pedowitz Group

Dream big, start small, get fast wins, and build from there

Although all the factors we've discussed are critical for marketing automation success, you don't have to have them all before you get started.

The best marketing automation implementations adhere to the saying, "think big, start small, win quickly."

If you dream big, you'll position yourself to achieve your grand—but granularly articulated—vision of success. Depending on your organization, this end goal may be modest or take the form of a full revenue performance management (RPM) transformation.

If you start small, you won't get stuck in analysis paralysis or feel the need to wait until all your content is ready. You won't need to map out every campaign or ensure your website is perfect. Slow and steady works.

If you win small victories quickly, you'll show results in a way that your organization values—whether it's a new lead generation campaign or a basic system for lead scoring. These small wins will cultivate buy-in across your organization and increase your chances for success over the short and long term.

Overall, be realistic about what resources you'll require to achieve your objectives, but don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good. Get started. See value. And then evolve.

Good ROI Less Effort			**Great ROI** More Effort
Traditional Marketing	**Demand Generation**	**Integrated Pipeline**	**Revenue Performance Management**

Investing in the right marketing automation platform

The selection process

You've decided to invest in marketing automation. Now you need to select the right solution. Follow the steps outlined below to find the marketing automation solution that's right for your company.

Step one: Set goals

Write down your goals for marketing automation. Putting your goals on paper increases your likelihood for success. Start by writing down what you want to achieve and what your success metrics are.

Examples of hard metrics include the following:

- More leads and/or better-quality leads

- Improved conversion rates

- Reduced acquisition cost per marketing-sourced lead, opportunity, or customer

Examples of soft metrics include the following:

- Improved coordination between sales and marketing

- Better visibility into marketing ROI

- Increased speed and agility to launch new campaigns and landing pages

- Reduced time to pull reports
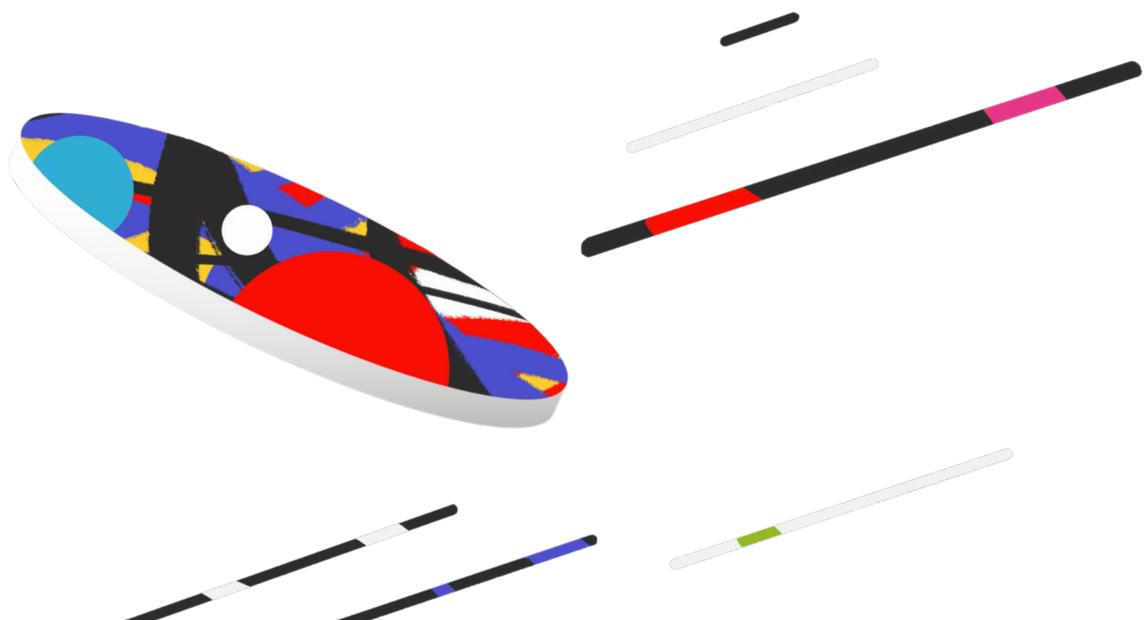
Step two: Plan your timeline

Identify the steps you'll take to get where you want to go. Remember, you aren't ever done with marketing automation. Build time into your process to evolve, adapt, and learn.

Step three: Identify your requirements

- **Review your administrative, integration, and technical requirements.** Identify what technologies you have that will need to work with the new software. Also consider the level of integration you need for your CRM—for example, leads and contacts only, or also opportunities, custom objects, and other advanced features.

- **Consult the functionality checklist in Part Four:** Getting to know marketing automation features. Verify that you'll get what you need today and also what you'll want in the future.

Determine when you want to take these steps:

- Start the selection process
- Attend detailed vendor presentations and demos
- Make your final decision
- Start implementation
- See first value

- **Isolate requirements beyond technology.** Determine who will use the system and how important ease of use will be for them. Also, establish what level of additional services, training, and support you will need. See Part Six: Ensuring your success with marketing automation for more on long-term considerations.

- **Turn the requirements into functional scenarios.** Describe real-world marketing programs and processes you want to be able to run, both initially and into the future.

> " Plan for growth. No matter how carefully you define your needs, they'll evolve in ways you don't expect. You need a vendor that is likely to support future needs, whatever they may be. So look beyond specific features for flexibility and a history of product improvement.

Ann Handley
Chief Content Officer, MarketingProfs

The importance of ease

Select a solution that's easy to buy, own, and use so you can do the following:

- **Get results quickly.** The system should be easy to get up and running, so you see initial results in days.

- **Accomplish marketing tasks faster.** Marketers shouldn't have to spend time managing the software. When a solution is easy to use, it frees time for more strategic and creative aspects of the job.

- **Eliminate the power user.** Instead, go with a modern platform that makes all your users powerful. Then, distribute use of marketing automation across all the marketers in your organization.

- **Ease of use is what drives flexibility and agility.** When the solution is easy to use, your team can quickly turn ideas into reality—which means you get great results faster.

The importance of power

It's important not to grow out of your solution, even if that means starting off with a platform that offers complex or advanced features. A solution that's too small or limited in capabilities won't benefit you in the long run because you'll need to replace it in just a few years, starting your marketing automation search all over again.

Instead, choose a platform that adds value to your marketing activities now and will continue as you move up the maturity curve. This will allow you to handle big marketing challenges whenever they arise—without getting distracted or waylaid by advanced features for your simple, everyday projects.

Step four: Build your team

Marketing automation doesn't run itself. You'll need a dedicated team to manage the solution of your choice. Make sure you cover your bases by getting sign-off from all stakeholders—including sales and IT—on goals, requirements, and potential scenarios. But don't make the selection by committee. Although everyone should be on board with your choice, marketing and the primary solution users should drive the decision.

Step five: Compare vendors

Evaluate potential vendors based on your criteria. To choose the vendor that best fits your needs, put the following recommendations into action:

- **Select vendors to evaluate.** Ask each one to demonstrate how their platform would support your specific programs and goals. Also request a free trial of the solution you're considering.

- **Scrutinize the technology.** Make sure its capabilities cover your administrative, integration, and technical needs.

- **Look beyond the technology.** Evaluate each vendor's ability to help you succeed with marketing automation through access to best practices, community, consulting, support, and training.

- **Ask tough questions.** Vendors should welcome your inquiries. Make sure they demonstrate the platform capabilities they claim.

- **Avoid a competition based on features alone.** Focus on the process and business needs you identified in Step Three. Don't get dazzled by features that don't deliver on your criteria—but don't be afraid to update your goals as you learn about new possibilities.

The right capabilities

**You may find the range of marketing automation solutions daunting.
Weigh the cost for each platform against the following capabilities:**

- Support for unique business processes based on best practices

- Ability for the organization to support system administration

- Bi-directional synchronization with the CRM platform

- Flexibility to have hosted forms on corporate domains and the vendor's own platform

- Full nurturing support from early awareness and consideration through post-sale customer loyalty

- Data management and integrity capabilities

- Customer engagement capabilities across multiple channels, including mobile, social, web, and events

- Global and regional capabilities

- Troubleshooting and technical support

- Analytics to measure marketing effectiveness, along with reporting capabilities

Source: Marketing automation thought leader Matt Heinz, President of Heinz Marketing

Step six: Talk to references

Find out if each vendor you're considering has already helped customers like you achieve their goals.

- **Ask your vendors for references.** Solicit others from your personal and social networks.

- **Look for references from organizations similar to your own.** Chances are, you'll succeed with a particular vendor to the same degree that similar companies have.

- **Go beyond asking if references are happy with the platform.** Find out if it's helping them achieve their goals across the entire marketing and sales lifecycle.

- **Ask about technical and non-technical factors.** Your questions might include how long implementation took, whether training and additional services were needed, and how the vendor handled problems the organization encountered.

Questions to ask during a reference call

Drill down and ask references about their goals for marketing automation, selection process, implementation, and results.

Success criteria and selection

- What business processes and goals did you target for this marketing automation project?

- How well has the system delivered on those goals?

- Were you the decision maker responsible for purchasing this solution?

- What made you choose the solution you selected?

Implementation and ramp-up

- How long did it take you to learn how to do basic tasks, like sending an email or creating a sales alert?

- How long did it take to implement functions like lead scoring, lead nurturing, and data quality?

- How complete is the integration with the CRM system? How hard was it to set up and maintain?

- How long did it take you to integrate the product's sales intelligence component?

- How would you describe your experience with implementation and support?

Results

- What was your sales team's reaction to the new alerts and campaign information?

- Have you seen an increase in leads?

- What is the single best thing about the system? The worst?

- When implementing the system, what costs did you incur beyond the initial cost?

- If you could make the decision over, would you buy the same system again or look for other options?

Step Seven: Make a decision

Choose the vendor who is best qualified to help you achieve the goals you set at the beginning of this process. Although this does involve comparing subscription costs and contract terms, remember that the revenue benefits you'll enjoy when you achieve your goals are usually much more significant than the initial investment. It's best to choose the solution that you feel confident will help you be the most successful—not necessarily the one with the lowest price point.

Step Eight: Get started

You should already have a complete understanding of this part of the process, based on your initial review of vendors. But just in case, plan on the following:

- Sync the platform with your CRM system or load your leads and contacts directly.

- Create email and landing page templates (or ask your vendor to vendor help with this).

- Set your email deliverability settings, including your DKIM and SPF records.

- Set up your website. Implement DNS mapping for your landing page subdomain. Add tracking codes to your content management system.

- Train your users in the system.

- Build or import your first campaigns and programs. Work with your vendor's enablement and consulting teams for best practices.

- Press go. Then measure and share the success you're having.

Step Nine: Review, optimize, and improve

To be successful with marketing automation, you need to continually re-evaluate your processes and improve on them. Here's how to approach this phase:

- Invest in the training and content you need to be successful.

- After three to six months, do a check-up and consider re-engaging with your vendor. Evaluate additional services that could make marketing and sales even more successful.

- Engage with your vendor's community to learn and share best practices. Suggest ideas for new features that would benefit all users.

Additional factors to consider

When you're buying marketing automation, you need to consider factors beyond the features and functions discussed earlier. Here's a list of additional questions to ask when selecting a vendor.

Implementation and ramp-up

- How long does it take to get live at a basic level? A medium level? An advanced level?

- Do you provide live or on-demand training?

- What skills will users need?

Service and support

- What's your service level agreement for technical support?

- How will you help introduce our users to new marketing ideas and best practices?

- How active is your online community? How quickly will I get answers if I post a question?

- Who are your key service partners? Who provides strategy and process design, change management, and technical integration support?

- What third-party products integrate with your platform? How broad is your partner ecosystem?

Likelihood for long-term success

- What kind of ongoing costs and resources should I expect?

- Is your company viable in the long run? What funding and capital do you have? What's your growth rate?

- How well does your product roadmap match my future needs?
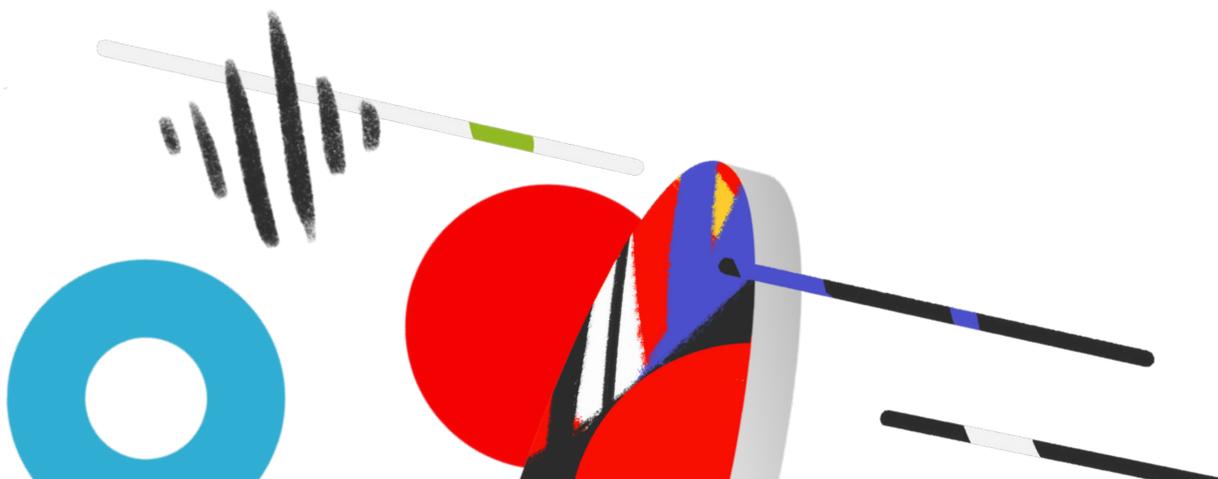
Case study: Charles Schwab

Highlights

- $1.1B asset value contribution to pipeline

- $100MM closed business via nurture programs

- 500% increase in engagement rates

Challenges

Schwab Advisor Services' network of independent investment advisors provides specialized guidance and personalized attention for people with complex wealth management needs. The Advisor Services marketing team plays a role in expanding the business. According to Paige Lubawy, Senior Manager on the data-driven communications team, the marketers were hampered in the past by an obsolete marketing platform that was cumbersome to use and provided no visibility into leads or campaign effectiveness. Marketers reinvented the way they get things done. They established demand generation expertise and implemented Marketo Engage to automate marketing efforts. The results are remarkable.

Solution

It typically takes two to three years to establish an independent financial advisory business. That means the buying cycle for bringing new advisors into the Schwab Advisor Services network is a long one that requires a continual focus on engaging prospects and advisors with relevant content and visibility into where they are in the business lifecycle. In the past, the marketing team struggled with batch-and-blast email campaigns and a lack of insight into advisors' needs at various lifecycle stages.

Since that time, marketing has undergone a major transformation that involved establishing demand generation expertise and implementing Marketo Engage to enable automation, personalization, and targeted content that helps new advisors get their businesses off the ground and current advisors run the back office efficiently and grow assets under management.

"We went from a very traditional marketing organization to a digital marketing team running an incredibly successful nine-touch nurture campaign. The immediate result was $1.1 billion in asset value contributed to the sales pipeline and help in closing deals representing more than $100 million of net new assets for Schwab. I'm convinced our success is a direct result of driving buy-in of Marketo Engage across our organization. Twelve marketers across four Schwab teams and two external agencies worked together to develop our nurture campaign," said Lubawy.

Benefits

Today, approximately 40 marketers and more than 125 salespeople at Charles Schwab use Marketo Engage. Together they are leveraging marketing automation to cultivate prospects at scale. Marketing is capturing inbound leads for the first time, which yielded a 500% improvement in engagement. Moreover, by tracking and scoring the behavior of prospective advisors during the lengthy sales cycle, marketing is helping sales identify the hottest prospects so business development can engage them directly.

> "Since the initial install, we expanded from a team of two people with no Marketo Engage experience to a Marketo Engage-certified team of six people who are using standardized processes and tools, increasing productivity by more than 900 percent. Consequently, we've realized dramatic gains in the efficiency of campaign design, execution, and list management.
>
> **Lubawy**

Envisioning the future of marketing automation

Where marketing is headed, marketing automation will follow

Marketing is a dynamic industry. Customer expectations are constantly shifting. The global economy is fluid. And advances in technology can change the status quo of business in a heartbeat.

As you continue to assess the role marketing automation will play in your organization, it's vital to understand the wider context of today's business and industry trends. The following insights and predictions about the future of marketing underscore the importance of looking to tomorrow to make better decisions about your marketing automation today.

Marketers will pair personalization with privacy protections

Jessie Berry | Director of Demand Generation, Taplytics

Successful marketers will deliver greater personalization alongside stronger privacy protections.

Data privacy has dominated industry headlines over the last few years, and it's not going away anytime soon. In fact, even more consumer privacy rights legislation will roll out in the footsteps of GDPR, the California Privacy Act of 2018, ePrivacy, and others. At the same time, consumers expect a level of personalization unlike anything we've seen before. More than 90 percent of consumers are more likely to shop with brands that provide personalized offers and recommendations. They're also willing to share their behavioral data to get them.

How can marketers meet the demands of today's (and tomorrow's) consumer who wants extreme personalization and extreme privacy protections? With data, of course.

The personalization paradox

It seems like a paradox. Marketers need to deliver a greater degree of personalization while building and securing customer trust. Today, targeting customers with the right message at the right time and place means also knowing who they are and where they are at any given moment—all while guaranteeing a level of privacy that marketers have not been held accountable for in the past.

Moving into 2020 and beyond, marketers will need to adopt a new approach to the "data-driven" strategies that might have served them in years past.

Providing a relevant and engaging customer experience is now considered table stakes, so marketing professionals will also need to leverage new tools and technologies that allow them to become more proactive when it comes to understanding user behavior and maintaining data integrity.

For example, customer experience automation will help marketers create personalized digital experiences without the risk of privacy breaches. Taplytics, a customer experience automation platform, offers single-tenant and private cloud hosting options that allow marketing teams to own and protect their customer data, avoid privacy risks, and still provide personalized customer journeys.

Marketing must embrace privacy protections

As we head into the next decade and consider emerging trends and opportunities around AI, personalization, automation, etc., the one thing that should remain the same is the marketer's focus on the customer. What do they want, and how do you keep their trust? Privacy can no longer remain a focus just for IT. Instead, it needs to be owned and managed by the team that knows their customers best: marketing.

Jessie Berry is the Director of Demand Generation at Taplytics where she owns the strategy and execution of marketing programs and operations. Prior to Taplytics, Jessie held demand gen leadership roles at three other SaaS organizations and has a cumulative ten years of experience in marketing and demand gen.
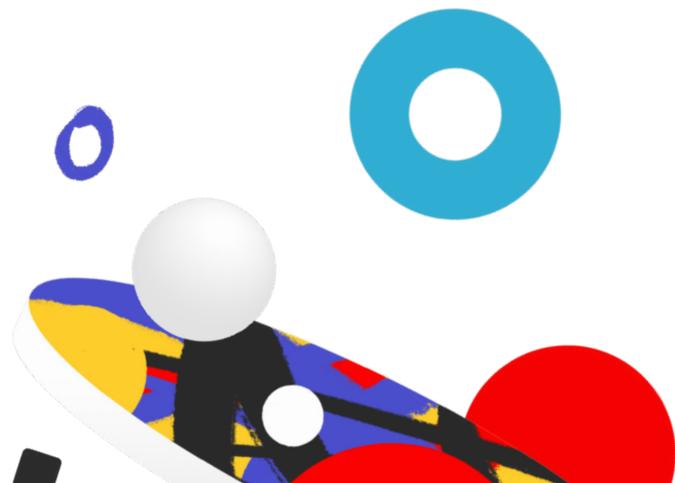
Empathy will be a key marketing differentiator

Michael Brenner | CEO, Marketing Insider Group

"Empathetic marketing" connects companies, brands, employees, and customers in a harmonious, productive, win-win way. You might be forgiven for thinking that ROI and the bottom line is all that matters to companies. While authoring my first book, I stumbled on the counterintuitive secret to ROI: Don't talk about the stuff you sell. Building customer value drives company value.

The paradox of marketing automation is that we need to be more human.

Marketers and businesses are increasingly using AI and personalization technologies to automate marketing processes as well as customer interactions. AI has been shown to help brands understand their audiences better, reach their buyers at the right times, improve the accuracy of their marketing campaigns, and enrich customer experiences, ultimately leading to cost savings and better ROI.

Marketers fail to ask one question, however: "Are consumers satisfied with the buying experience?"

Too much technology can alienate your buyers

The paradox of today's data-driven, AI-driven marketing is that despite a large number of channels that provide information and customer service, consumers are craving more human experiences.

The truth is that three out of four buyers are more loyal to businesses that give them the option to interact with a human than to those with fully automated digital experiences. That's not all—a full 37 percent question the legitimacy of the company itself if not given the option!

Connect with a culture of empathy

So how does a brand reap the benefits of marketing automation and become more "human" at the same time? The answer lies in culture. Culture is not, despite what one CMO growled at me, "HR's job." Leading brands put customer experience at the center of everything they do.

CMOs need to partner with HR and the rest of the corporate silos to build a culture of empathy for customers.

Three ways to add empathy to your marketing

So what's a modern marketer to do in a world that places little value in empathy, emotions, and considering customer and employee "feelings"?

1. Replace "always do more" with more mindful strategies. Push back on tactics focused on doing more campaigns, creating more content, pushing more promotion.

2. Ask "What's in it for the customer?" about everything your team does. This changes the entire context of marketing and starts to build a customer-centric culture.

3. Harness the passion and expertise inside your company. What are you doing to share that with your audience?

But there is a missing link in that chain: your employees! When we truly focus on customer value, it changes the way we think about marketing. It forces us to think about the engagement levels of our employees. And grounding our actions in empathy leads to bigger profits for our company and a better life for our employees and customers.

Michael Brenner is the best-selling author of *Mean People Suck and The Content Formula*. He is also a top CMO influencer, motivational speaker, and the CEO of Marketing Insider Group, where his team builds effective thought leadership, marketing strategies, and employee activation programs for leading brands and startups.

Successful marketers will harness AI, video, and digital ABM

Paulo César Freitas Martins | Global Head of Commercial Digital Marketing, Adobe Experience Cloud

Marketing strategies once considered "nice to have eventually" will become essentials for growth.

Marketers always have long to-do lists. And some of those to-do lists include tasks like "research AI," "look into video production rates," and "use digital strategies for ABM." But many of us haven't taken action, because we're too busy meeting quarterly goals and prepping for the next product launch. For anyone who wants to succeed over the next five years, that has to change.

I predict that artificial intelligence (AI), video, and digital ABM campaigns will allow marketers to drive unprecedented growth — if we embrace them.

Artificial Intelligence will deliver digital marketing superpowers.

Whenever marketers talk about the future, the discussion inevitably turns to AI. We aren't worried about cognitively advanced machines that just might replace humans. Instead, we want to know how AI could transform digital marketing—and when. After all, advertising platforms like Google and Facebook are already investing heavily on AI. For 2020–25, I expect to see the rise of AI tools that can optimize marketing campaigns across multiple channels. A couple of examples are Adobe Sensei and Metadata.io. Both use AI to dynamically manage marketing budgets. As they become increasingly popular, digital marketers will trust them to automatically allocate their funds to the campaigns and channels that drive the best return.

Over time, I can see marketers coming to resemble RoboCop—humans with AI superpowers who achieve better results with the same budget.

Video marketing will deliver more (and better) engagement data

In my view, video marketing will be the next big thing to evolve in 2020–25. The percentage of businesses using video as a marketing tool increased from 63 percent in early 2017 to 87 percent in early 2019. Plus, 88 percent of businesses plan to increase their video spending while video production costs have gone down.

Moreover, I believe the engagement data generated from videos will offer game-changing new insights, especially for B2B businesses. As video platforms become more advanced, they will offer new metrics that reveal buyer intent.

Marketers have heard of AI—but they don't understand it yet. Only **13 percent** of B2B marketers are very confident with their knowledge of AI, while **55 percent** are somewhat confident, and **33 percent** are not at all confident.
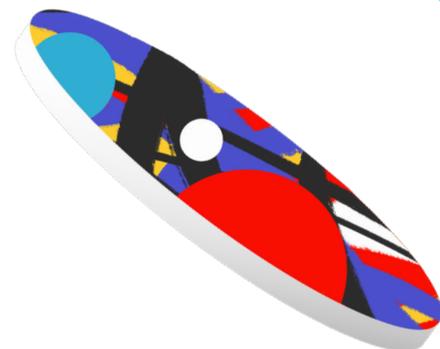
Marketers will apply digital marketing to ABM challenges

Digital marketing is most often used at the very top of the funnel as purely lead generation. In 2020–25, marketers will use digital strategies to build more effective account-based marketing (ABM) campaigns that take hyper-targeting to a new level. What will this look like?

Some examples include using digital to:

- Target open opps to close deals faster

- Push MQLs down the funnel

- Fill up the "white spaces" on accounts that are stuck in the funnel.

I predict digital marketing techniques will make ABM more effective and reduce time-to-close.
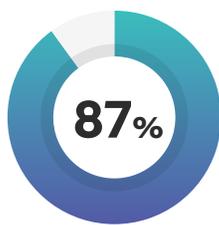
87% of businesses used video as a marketing tool in 2019.
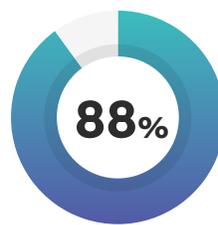
88% of businesses plan to increase their video spending while video production costs have gone down.

Paulo Martins is the Head of Commercial Global Digital Marketing at Adobe. With 15+ years of experience in the digital space (and an even lengthier fandom for Brazilian soccer), Paulo has worked in Latin America, Australia (APAC) and North America, where he is currently running global digital campaigns for Adobe DX.

Marketing automation will transform the service client experience

Ben Scott | Senior Digital Marketing Manager,
Grant Thornton Australia

Services organizations that don't adopt marketing automation—and integrate it with CRM—will be left behind.

Professional services firms are not generally on the cutting edge of marketing. Getting stakeholders to agree on a marketing strategy and to fund the investments needed to make it happen can be a big challenge. But that needs to change fast.

In a survey of professional services executives by Mavenlink, 70 percent of respondents said they experienced increased competition in the past 12 months. And 85 percent said client expectations are increasing. To win in this environment, you need to continually improve your client experience and always add more value.

That's where marketing automation comes in. It can help professional services firms support clients with resources tailored to their interests, like new content, in-person events, relevant news alerts, and webinars. When combined with CRM, it can also help firms understand what clients care about and synchronize marketing and sales, so clients are never overwhelmed.

That's certainly been my experience, which is why I predict more professional services firms will adopt marketing automation to build better and more profitable client relationships.

Competition is everywhere

Professional services firms are under siege from competition, both big and small. Big competitors are adding capacity and reducing costs through offshoring. And small competitors are using technology to reach new markets and offer personalized solutions. It's no surprise, then, that 40 percent of professional services executives say increasing revenues is their biggest challenge. To keep growing in this environment, professional services firms must invest in marketing and a superior client experience.

From one-on-one to one-to-many

One-on-one consulting is a critical part of a great client experience. But these relationships can be hard to scale. Plus, your consultants may not have time to spend on marketing. A marketing automation platform can help you add a "one-to-many" component to your client relationships. It can instantly connect your clients with value-added resources that match their interests, and make follow up quick and easy.

The importance of unified customer data

But marketing automation doesn't work in isolation. For a complete view of your client relationships, you must adopt a unified approach to customer data, and link your marketing automation platform to your CRM. This way, you can see all aspects of each client relationship and identify trends, such as which services clients use most and how marketing activities impact sales. Sure, if you're a busy professional services leader, this might sound like a lot of work. But, if you want to stay competitive, now is the time.

Ben Scott leads the digital marketing team at Grant Thornton Australia and loves the challenge of being a marketer in service industries. For the past 12 years, Ben has worked across accounting, law, insurance, and engineering on a wide range of digital marketing projects. Ben takes great pleasure in helping companies with more complex marketing funnels use digital channels to achieve their business strategies.

PREDICTION 5:

AI will make marketing smarter and better for customers

Niranjan Kumbi | Senior Manager, Product Management, Adobe

As AI evolves, marketing will be less time-consuming and more valuable for both businesses and their customers.

Marketers spend enormous amounts of their time doing repetitive tasks such as picking the right audience for every campaign, personalizing content for every segment, and timing email sends to optimize opens and clicks. Meanwhile, despite marketers' best efforts, their customers may still be bombarded with irrelevant marketing material.

I predict AI will help more marketers in more industries deliver campaigns that connect customers with better, more relevant information through meaningful contextual interactions. And that's only the beginning.

Transformation to customer-centric experience delivery

Marketing has come a long way evolving from the "spray and pray" model to today's "targeted engagement," in which marketers narrowly target prospects according to demographic and behavioral traits. The notion of delivering campaigns based on an individual's or a company's traits will be history in a few years—replaced by the "intent- and value-based experience delivery" that's made possible by AI.

With machine learning and the right data, you can predict an individual's or a buying group's intent to buy your products and services at each interaction. When done correctly, AI makes marketers more accurate and more successful in engaging the customers at their doorstep. That's why Adobe is embedding AI-powered intelligence as a core part of marketing workflows, bringing intelligent decision-making to every level.

Personalization without compromising privacy

To deliver on the promise of hyperpersonalization, AI needs vast amounts of good-quality historical data. However, emerging privacy laws such as GDPR, CCPA, etc. will make it more difficult for companies to store and process personal data. New AI and statistical techniques such as "differential privacy" and "federated learning" will allow companies to collect and process data for personalization and intelligent decision-making, while also enabling compliance with regulations and guaranteeing maximum privacy for individuals.

Why people won't talk about AI in five years

The operating cost of AI/ML workloads is still very high, and hiring data scientists is both expensive and extremely competitive. As a result, intelligent apps aren't widely available. And when they are available, they are usually positioned as premium add-ons.

In the next five years, the cost of operating AI at scale will become significantly cheaper due to competition among vendors and faster purpose-built processors for AI. At the same time, low-code developer tools and automated AI technologies will allow non-data scientists to apply AI solutions to vast range of routine problems. Intelligence will become an essential element of every digital business process. Companies and products that don't evolve to take advantage of AI will wither away into oblivion.

Marketo Engage's mission is to democratize AI for marketing organizations in businesses of every size. "Our vision," says Marketo Engages's head of product, Ajay Awatramani, "is to apply intelligence to every aspect of work marketers carry out within Marketo Engage, enabling marketers to engage at scale and shift focus from creating campaigns to crafting right marketing stories around their brand."

A glimpse into the future

Today, given enough labeled data available to train the model, AI/ML technologies can surpass human performance at cognitive tasks. But AI is still only good at identifying patterns and decision-making/ acting on repetitive tasks at scale. AI models fail severely when they encounter a completely new situation that they haven't seen before.

We humans are very different. We have the unique ability to apply learning from one situation to another related situation. For example, as children we easily learned that dropping a juice glass on the floor would break it. We didn't need to be trained on the various shapes of glasses to understand how the concept applied to them.

Emerging AI technologies such as transfer learning, reinforcement learning, and causal inferencing will enable AI to think and operate more like humans. This means that marketing automation (MA) will not only become efficient but also be able to deliver memorable and delightful experiences at scale for every individual who engages with your brand.

Niranjan actively oversees and drives product strategy, technology investments, and team execution for Adobe's AI/ML Sensei products.

For more predictions on the future of marketing, read *10 Marketing Predictions for a New Decade: Trends and Changes in 2020 and Beyond.*

Discovering Adobe Marketo Engage

Get to know Marketo Engage

If you're looking for a marketing automation solution with powerful resources for every stage of your buyer journey, Adobe can help.

Marketo Engage will help you make personal connections with customers at scale. The buyer journey can be complex, but with Marketo Engage, you'll have Adobe's best-in-class tools for marketing automation, email marketing, lead management, and revenue attribution. Take your customers from awareness to advocacy, seamlessly.

A complete solution for customer engagement

Whether you're a full-scale enterprise or a growing business, Marketo Engage helps bring your customers closer. Here's what you can expect:

Develop better buyer journeys. Marketo Engage comes with built-in tools that empower you to create more consistent, relevant experience—from awareness to advocacy. And because it gives you access to rich behavioral data, built-in intelligence, and sophisticated journey flows, you'll have an easier time knowing which opportunities to prioritize alongside your sales team.

Deliver unique customer experiences at scale. With Marketo Engage, you can go far beyond audience segmentation and deliver individual experiences to customers within any given segment. This is because Marketo Engage uses a combination of predictive content, A/B testing, and personalization to make sure the right person gets the right experience at the right time.

Engage customers across every channel. To stand out among competitors, it's essential to be everywhere your customers are—email, display, mobile, search, social, and offline—and delivering brand messaging that really resonates. Marketo Engage lets you create cohesive experiences across every channel to keep you top-of-mind for prospects and customers.

Prove and improve the impact you're making. Find out what aspects of your marketing are resonating the most with your customers. Use Marketo Engage to showcase your successes—and build on them—with comprehensive measurement and revenue attribution tools.

Marketing automation with Marketo Engage

Your time and effort are best spent strategizing and curating your customer experiences, not on manual marketing tasks. Marketing automation should make your life easier, freeing you from logistics and enabling you to focus on higher level processes. Marketo Engage does this and more—it's an easy-to-use, powerfully intelligent automation solution that goes far beyond just scheduling your emails and managing your digital ads.

Here are four things Marketo Engage can help you accomplish:

1. **Attract and convert prospects.**

Customers will start paying attention when you start using data-driven engagement tools from Marketo Engage. You'll find that you're able to increase the quality and quantity of your leads—fast—so your sales department can convert them into customers. Your leads get a great experience, and you get more customers.

2. **Grow customer relationships.**

Once leads become customers, it's your job to help keep them coming back. With Marketo Engage, you can create memorable experiences for every stage of the sales funnel. Use built-in cross-sell and up-sell tools to keep your customers interested, and with AI, automation, and analytics, you'll be able to achieve customer growth at scale.

3. **Increase the scale of your marketing.**

In order to grow your business, you need the right marketing technology. Marketo Engage is built to scale with you as you grow your customer base—and your revenue. As the heart of your lead-to-revenue process, Marketo Engage delivers the relevant, consistent experiences you need to earn and maintain customer trust.

4. **Become a master of account-based marketing.**

No matter the size of your business, Marketo Engage will meet you where you are and take you where you want to go. Start with just the basics and add on capabilities as you grow—or jump right in and start using the state-of-the-art tools right from the beginning. Companies that use Marketo Engage see a 300 percent increase in win rates, 20 percent increase in engagement, and 21 percent increase in average deal size.

Go deeper with Marketo Engage

CORE CAPABILITIES:

Marketing data environment

Enrich and segment AI-powered audiences using integrated profiles and engagement history.

Content personalization

Present best-fit content for 1:1 experiences and maintain personalization at scale using AI.

Cross-channel engagement

Coordinate engagement across human and digital channels.

Experience automation

Dynamically nurture customers and score engagement through every journey stage.

Sales partnership

Arm Sales with prioritized leads, accounts and recommended content.

Marketing impact analytics

Prove and improve impact together with Sales using multi-touch attribution across every touchpoint.

Plug and play integrations

Connect Marketo Engage to your growing tech stack with ease, speed, and confidence.

Conclusion: Propelling your marketing

Technology has changed the face of marketing, with new solutions and capabilities launching regularly to keep up with business's fast-moving evolution. It's no longer a matter of debate or opinion—companies of all sizes, from small businesses to enterprises, must keep pace to succeed.

That's why a marketing automation solution is so critical in our current and future landscape. Not only will it take care of your smaller, high-volume tasks, but it'll help you with the heavy lifting of your strategy and scale as well. Marketing automation seals the connection between your company and your customers, and keeps your business on the cutting edge of what's possible.

Whichever marketing technology you decide to invest in, remember that evolving your efforts always starts with putting your customers front and center. But when you also have an intuitive, powerful marketing automation solution helping you expand and scale your customer-centric experiences, the future of your business only grows brighter.

Find out more about Marketo Engage

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Adobe Experience Cloud

Adobe Experience Cloud is the most comprehensive suite of customer experience management tools on the market. With solutions for data, content, engagement, commerce, personalization, and more, Experience Cloud is built on the world's first platform designed explicitly for customer experience. So each product is infused with artificial intelligence and works seamlessly together, but also integrates with your existing technology and your future innovations so you can consistently deliver the right experience every time.

Adobe Marketo Engage

Adobe Marketo Engage specializes in customer engagement over complex B2B buying journeys. As a complete solution for lead management, it brings marketing and sales together to nurture leads, orchestrate personalized experiences, optimize content, and measure business impact across every channel. Marketo natively supports both demand and account-based marketing strategies, providing a single, integrated lead management platform from acquisition to advocacy. Build engaging, personalized experiences at scale and prove impact with Marketo Engage.