

5 Benefits That Make Lead Nurturing

The "Must-Try B2B
Tactic" in 2018



Many marketers focus all their efforts on generating as many leads as possible, hoping that a large pool of prospects will help produce more loyal customers. Unfortunately, this approach rarely brings success. There's a limit to the amount of leads a business can generate, no matter how broad the appeal of the product or solution it's offering is. At a certain point, most businesses realize it's more profitable to focus on converting a larger portion of existing leads rather than generating more leads that won't necessarily convert.

That's why, more and more B2B marketers are experimenting with lead nurturing to enhance the marketing operations of their brands. The combination of low setup costs, ease of use, and effectiveness, guarantees that lead nurturing can deliver a positive return on the investment put into it.

To help you understand why nurturing leads is a must for your brand, we've outlined the specific features that make this tactic so effective. However, before we get started, we should clarify what lead nurturing is and where it fits in your overall marketing strategy.



WHAT IS LEAD NURTURING?

[Up to a half](#) of all leads that businesses receive are not ready to convert after their first interaction with the brand. That’s why, for most businesses, turning a website visitor into a loyal customer requires multiple touchpoints.

Lead nurturing is a tactic that aims to help brands identify highly-qualified leads and increase meaningful engagement with those prospects. Marketers use lead nurturing to equip target audiences with the information and answers that they need to make a purchasing decision.

Many people wrongly assume that lead nurturing is simply a new name for traditional email marketing. And, while it is true that most experts in the field prefer to use this channel, lead nurturing offers significant benefits over both email and drip marketing.

Email » Drip Campaigns » Lead Nurturing

Lead nurturing takes the best features of email marketing and drip campaigns and builds upon them. This is how the three practices stack:

- Email marketing allows brands to build a captive audience and communicate with it through independent one-size-fits-all campaigns. With list segmentation, brands can tailor their messages to specific sub-groups within their audience, but their ability to engage in personal conversations is still limited.
- Drip marketing empowers marketers to target their audience with multi-message campaigns. With this tactic, marketers still have full control — they get to choose what message to send and when their audience will receive it. However, personalization efforts are largely limited to addressing the recipient of the message by name.
- Lead nurturing builds upon these practices and allows brands to deliver highly personalized messages based on their target audience’s demographic and behavioral factors. Using data and analytics, brands can create campaigns with a higher degree of relevance and deliver their messages in a individualized manner. As a result, these companies can drive deeper engagement and foster meaningful relationships with their audience.



WHY LEAD NURTURING WORKS

One of the main reasons lead nurturing has become so popular is because it drastically improves the effect of digital marketing. Statistics show that on average [up to 80% of leads never convert into customers](#), meaning that nearly every business has a large pool of interested people they can work with.

Lead nurturing is the preferred method to address those prospects because it is proven to work: [67% of marketers say they see at least 10% increase](#) in sales when they leverage lead nurturing.

Even more importantly, it also generates better customers — on average, [nurtured leads have roughly 1.5x higher spending](#).

Consumers, especially B2B buyers, have come to expect a lot more from a brand before they are ready to commit. That means brands that want to sell successfully need to invest time into developing strong relationships with their prospective customers.

Lead nurturing offers specific advantages that allow brands to achieve that.



THE 6 BENEFITS THAT MAKE LEAD NURTURING WORK

In the following sections, we will explore the specific benefits that make lead nurturing so effective and how your business can take advantage of them.

1 Lead Nurturing is Scalable

B2B marketers today understand that the challenge has shifted from generating leads to forming meaningful relationships with as many high-yield accounts as possible. Earning the trust of customers is what marketers have been doing for years, however, with lead nurturing they have the ability to connect with potential customers at scale.

A single marketer can work with 5-10 leads, to understand their needs, offer them a tailored solution, and build a strong relationship. Meanwhile, a team of professionals can expand this to about 50 leads, and still maintain a productive workflow. Beyond that number it gets extremely challenging to offer a personalized nurturing.

The rise of marketing automation has given brands the power to scale their lead nurturing efforts. There are several tools that allow marketers to plan, create, and set up campaigns based on demographic data, behavioral insights, and buyer journey stage.

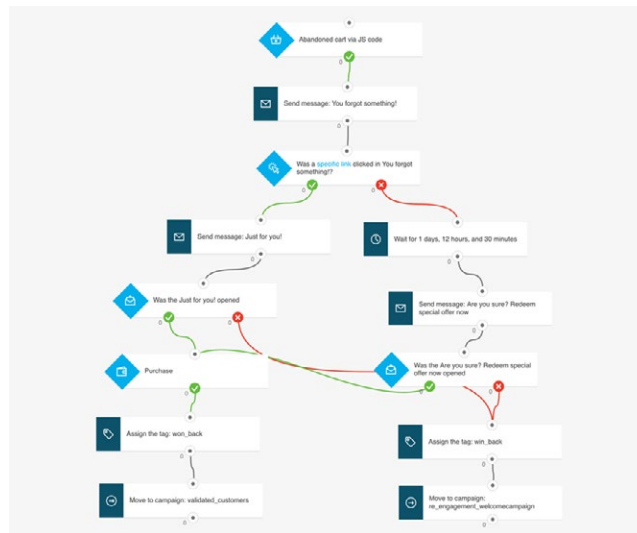


Image source: <https://www.getresponse.com/features/marketing-automation.html>

Rather than thinking of each customer as a separate case that needs to be addressed according to their specific needs, marketers can focus on creating a strategic formula to convert prospects. The aim of this model is to deliver the right content when each lead needs it, and to pitch the product once the prospect is ready to buy.

Such models use techniques like segmentation and personalization to achieve a high degree of success.

2 Better Targeting Thanks to Segmentation and Personalization

Segmentation and personalization are key features of lead nurturing that lead to higher relevance and contribute to the success of this tactic.

In addition, the marketing automation tools we discussed in the previous section also allow you to target specific groups of prospects (i.e. segments) within your audience, tailor the messages you’re sending to them, and deliver contextually-relevant campaigns.

For example, you can segment your leads according to their stage in the buying cycle — awareness, consideration, decision. Next, you can decide to create a campaign just for those prospects that work for an enterprise organization and are in the decision-making stage of the funnel. Perhaps your research has revealed that the people you’re target audience has trouble convincing their managers that your solution is the best solution. Using this knowledge, you can create a tailored strategy that addresses this issue. Empower these prospects by offering them a comparison chart that they can use to support their case. Then, follow up a few days later with a case study to demonstrate the positive impact your solution had on a similar company.

By leveraging customer insights, you can demonstrate that you have made the effort to understand their unique challenges and build the trust you need to turn them into loyal customers.

3 Lead Nurturing Helps You Make Better Use of Your Content Assets

Almost all organizations have large repositories of existing marketing assets — (digital) brochures, blog posts, white papers, educational material, price lists, cheat sheets, case studies, etc. Unfortunately, most companies fail to leverage these assets effectively — they’re spread across different mediums, not promoted accordingly, and not delivered to prospects at the right moment. Implementing a strong lead nurturing strategy will help you optimize your content marketing and ultimately increase your ROI.

The first step in this process is to perform an audit of existing assets and your content production pipeline. You will find that you may need to significantly improve some of these assets before you use them again or remove them altogether. The goal is to have a clear understanding of what your content stock looks like and what collateral gaps you need to fill.

On top of assessing your content assets, you also need to tie them to the buyer personas (i.e. your customer segments) and the stages prospects go through before they adopt your product or service. This process is also known as content mapping.

Buyer Persona	Education	Awareness of Issue	Consideration	Evaluation	Committing to a Solution	Justifying the Selection	Purchasing the Solution
Architect							
Engineer							
Product Owner/Manager							

Image source: <https://labs.openviewpartners.com/b2b-content-mapping-guide/#.Wk97md-WZPZ>

4 Develop a Meaningful Presence Across Channels

Traditionally, marketers have relied solely on email marketing to nurture leads. However, this old model doesn't effectively engage modern customers. In fact, according to a survey from Oracle, about four out of five marketers report that their [email open rates don't exceed 20%](#).

This alarming statistic suggests that the traditional models of lead nurturing, through email marketing automation, are no longer enough to help move leads further down the funnel. If marketers want to reach and nurture more leads, more effectively, they will need to think beyond the inbox.

With the help of powerful marketing automation platforms, such as [Marketo](#) and [Salesforce](#), that offer multi-channel lead nurturing capabilities, marketers can now nurture leads through multiple digital touchpoints, instead of just email. For example, if a customer reaches out on Twitter with a question, your team can quickly review your previous correspondence to make sure they respond with relevant information.

5 Lead Scoring Helps Clarify Your Ideal Customers

While lead nurturing can greatly increase your conversion rates, it remains essential to identify and focus on the best prospects in your audience. Lead scoring, which is a crucial part of the nurturing process, allows marketers to do that.

Brands leverage lead scoring to quickly determine and prioritize new prospects. By analyzing the perceived value that each lead represents and assigning scores based on that value, brands can determine which leads are most likely to convert. However, it's crucial that sales and marketing use a consistent methodology to rank leads.

Latent Behaviors (Engagement)	Active Behaviors (Buying Intent)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Stage Content: +3 • Attend Webinar: +5 • Visit any Webpage/Blog: +1 • Visit Careers Pages: -10 • Decay Inactivity: -1, -5, -10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pricing Pages: +10 • Watch Demos: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • +5 Overview • +10 Detailed • Mid-Stage Content: +8 • Late-Stage Content: +12 • Searches for Branded Keyword "Marketo": +8

Image source: <https://www.marketo.com/lead-nurturing/>

For example, you can add 5 points each time a lead opens one of your emails and 10 points for each page they visit on your website. Or, you can make your model even more precise and assign 5 points when they read a case study on your website and 10 points if they visit your pricing page.

Once they reach a predetermined number of points, leads will be *moved* to the next stage in the funnel. The most basic example of this is when a *visitor* subscribes to your blog. This action and the information you attain from the form, converts them from a visitor to a *lead*. Once they read several pieces of content and visit the pricing page (and accrue the corresponding number of points), they will become *prospects*.

LEAD SCORING VS. LEAD GRADING

In addition to scoring, you should also be using *lead grading* to limit your nurturing efforts only to those prospects that are a good fit for your product. Rather than activity, lead grading uses demographic and company data to help you identify your target customers.

Together at Last

GRADE	SCORE
<p>Threshold: B</p> <p>Criteria:</p> <p>JOB TITLE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Executive or Staff? <p>JOB FUNCTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing or HR? <p>LOCATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Country or State? <p>COMPANY SIZE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SMB, MM, Enterprise? <p>CUSTOM DATA</p>	<p>Threshold: 200 points</p> <p>Criteria:</p> <p>FORM COMPLETED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demo Request or White Paper? <p>PAGE VISITS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pricing or Careers? <p>WEBINAR / EVENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Registered or Attended? <p>EMAIL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open or Click? <p>CUSTOM DATA</p>

Image source: <https://www.pardot.com/blog/4-lead-scoring-and-grading-scenarios-explained/>

For example, if you're selling an enterprise product, you don't want to waste your resources nurturing freelancers, even if they appear highly engaged with your brand.

When used together, lead scoring and grading allows managers to quickly identify those leads who are a) the best fit to their business; and b) ready to be sent to sales for closing. This tactic helps marketing and sales to focus only on the leads with the highest potential, thus increasing ROI.

6 Lead Nurturing Leads to Better Sales and Marketing Alignment

A strong lead nurturing model will help get sales and marketing aligned towards a common goal, providing them with a shared framework to measure their cooperation. It also makes it easier to spot issues with your workflow. For example, if your marketing department is producing a high number of high-quality leads, but your sales reps have a low rate of success at closing them, it might be a signal that prospects are handed off to sales reps too early.

LEAD NURTURING HAS BECOME AN ESSENTIAL PART OF MARKETING

It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that lead nurturing takes center stage in digital marketing. Generating leads, although difficult, is no longer the main concern of marketing professionals. Forming meaningful relationships with prospective customers is a major challenge that most marketers are currently facing.

That's what makes lead nurturing is integral. By employing this tactic and reaping its benefits, marketers can utilize their time and resources more effectively. To recap, these are the benefits that make lead nurturing so popular:

- **Scalable:** Lead nurturing enables you to reach more people and effectively engage in meaningful conversation with them.
- **Targeted:** This tactic helps you focus on a defined group of high-yield accounts and produce more personalized and relevant campaigns.
- **Yields Higher Quality Leads:** Essential lead nurturing elements, such as lead scoring, allow you to better understand your audience and create models for converting visitors into customers.
- **Fosters Alignment:** Lead nurturing provides a shared framework to improve and enhance collaboration between sales and marketing. Search activity

It is important to keep these benefits in mind if you're to create an effective lead nurturing engine for your business. If putting the time to develop the expertise and set up this system to nurture leads looks intimidating, do not hesitate to contact a professional who can help you do it properly.



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