ORACLE

Essential Strategies
for Marketing Automation

Ignite Guide

Streamline and simplify digital marketing

Digital marketing leverages online channels like email, SMS, websites, social media, and display advertising to deliver content that influences opinions and sells products and services. Effectively executing a digital marketing strategy requires a marketing automation system that can interpret customer signals across channels to deliver relevant and consistent experiences. Marketing automation helps:

Add personalization and relevance to campaigns An automation platform allows you to account for customer behaviors, preferences, and interests to craft experiences that speak directly to prospects and customer needs and pain points.

Improve the quality of leads Make good use of customer data to improve audience engagement and generate, manage, and score leads more effectively.

Increase revenue Consistent, high-quality engagement generates stronger sales opportunities and allows brands to close more deals faster.

Reduce costs With less wasted time and duplication of efforts (and more resource efficiency), marketing costs shrink.

This guide will help marketing leaders understand how to run effective demand generation and lead management programs by targeting and personalizing how they engage prospects in the buying process.

What's inside?
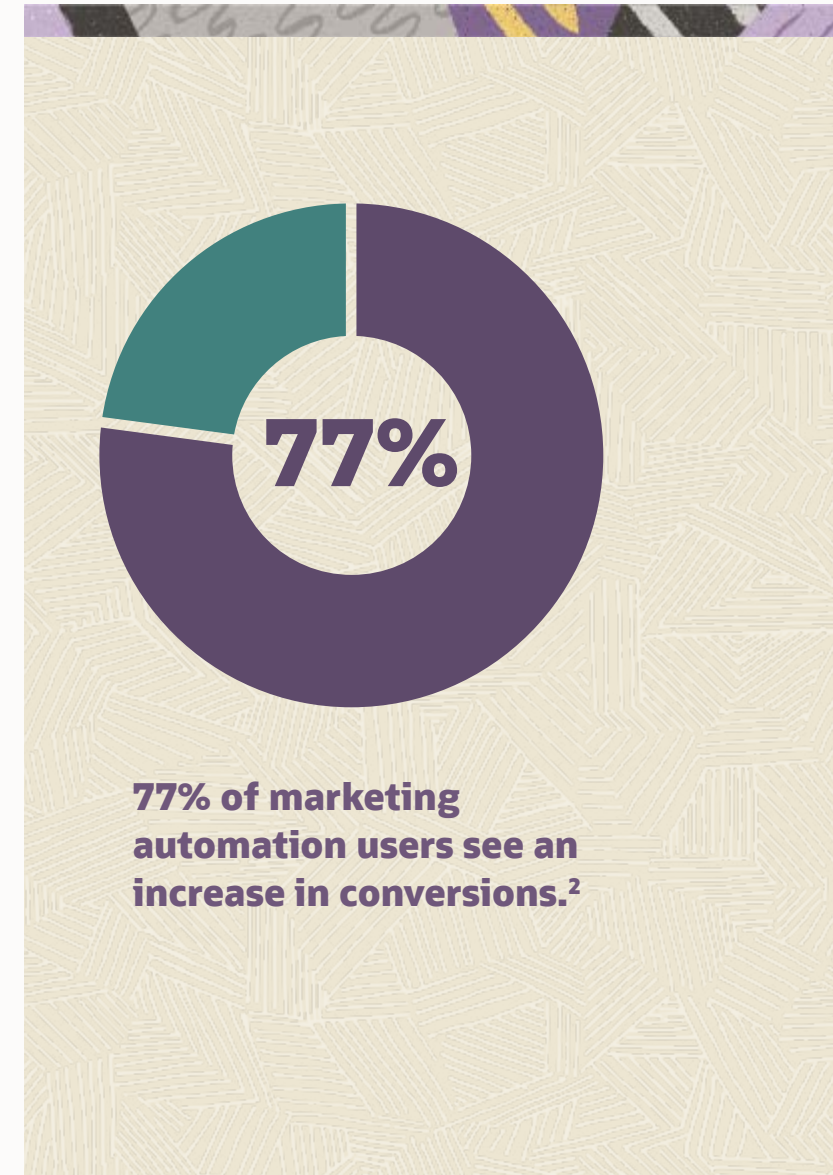
Marketing automation, defined

Marketing automation helps you streamline processes and tasks within digital campaigns, such as email marketing, social media marketing, live chats, targeting website visitors, and prioritizing leads.

Marketing automation platforms measure campaign performance so you can improve personalization and drive efficiency across your marketing programs. By leveraging customer data, automation platforms allow you to:

- **Keep in touch with customers and prospects** with relevant offers and announcements

- **Send messages at the most appropriate times** and on the channels your audiences prefer

- **Track customer engagement and fatigue** so you can determine the optimal frequency for outreach and ensure your messaging resonates

Marketing automation drives success for businesses across all verticals, and more companies are investing. 78% of B2B marketers use marketing automation platforms, according to The State of B2B Marketing 2021 report.[1] Forrester predicts global spending on marketing automation tools to surpass $25 billion by 2023.[2] In addition, conversion rate optimization firm Invesp[3] found that:

- **80%** of marketing automation users see an increase in leads

- **77%** of marketing automation users see an increase in conversions

- **Automation** drives a 14.2% increase in sales productivity and a 12.2% decrease in marketing overhead

77%

77% of marketing automation users see an increase in conversions.[2]

Marketing automation, defined

Types of marketing automation

- **Customer relationship management (CRM)** automates sales processes and manages customer, order, and product data, which can be used for marketing automation

- **Sales force automation** handles sales processes, manages data, and offers analytics

- **Email marketing** facilitates the setting up of web-based forms and auto-responses, as well as a variety of reports (click-through rates, open rates, nonsubscriber, and more)

- **Social media** automates many aspects of social media marketing, including content publishing, scheduling, monitoring, and analytics

- **Campaign workflows** make marketing more efficient and effective with automated customer triggered responses and data activation based on digital behavior

- **Lead management** automates the generation, scoring, and routing of leads to the next best experience, be it a campaign or contact from sales

- **Analytics** visualizes and identifies patterns in campaigns, web assets, and customer engagement

- **Digital advertising and promotion** refine and automate much of the ad creation process and bidding strategies across digital channels

- **Loyalty** automates key components in the promotion and administration of loyalty programs

As you can see, digital marketing campaigns are complex and dependent on business needs and objectives. There are various marketing automation options available, from point solutions that need to be integrated into your broader tech stack, to all-in-one platforms that support several (if not all) of the capabilities listed above.

Build your foundation

To get the most value from your marketing automation solution,
start building your strategy with these foundational elements in mind.

1. Align marketing, sales, and product teams

It is important that marketing teams get the input of sales and product to agree on the target markets that will be prioritized. Next, your team will need to agree on the personas that will be targeted. Having an understanding of which titles have a buyer role in the purchasing process is critical.

Once you have your ideal target customers and personas, marketing automation helps break down prospect and customer lists into segments according to demographic, behavioral, psychographic, firmographic, and geographic information. To maximize the effectiveness of your marketing automation tool, first, determine your ideal customer accounts and establish which buyer personas you will be targeting.

2. Agree on lead qualification

This is a critical step for B2B organizations to take before implementing a marketing automation solution. Marketing and sales need to agree on the funnel stages and lead definitions. Determine what:

- **A marketing-qualified lead is** and when it should be passed to sales

- **A sales-qualified lead is** and when it should be passed to sales

- **Your organization defines as an opportunity**, and what the stages of a deal look like

3. Map content to the customer journey

A successful marketing automation strategy enables you to reach target audiences with relevant content at an appropriate time. 74% of B2B marketers craft content based on specific stages of the customer journey, according to the 2020 B2B Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends report by The Content Marketing Institute[4]. Once your marketing automation tool is up and running, create a triggered workflow or series of emails to move leads through the sales funnel. This content will fuel the nurturing process and help track a prospect's responsiveness and how strong a lead they are.

The following are types of content that are most effective for each stage of the b2b buying journey according to Forrester.[5]

Build your foundation, defined

- **Discovery and consideration stages:** These first two buying stages are about the buyer gathering information and understanding their options for changing from what they are currently doing. The goal in these two stages is to help your buyer explore potential ways to change and then commit to an approach. Content that works here includes brochures, analyst reports, case studies, sales presentations, and conversations with sales reps.

- **Decision-making stage:** In this last stage of the purchase, the buyer and their committee select the vendor they will buy from. Here, you want to help your buyer compare the value your brand provides with that of your competitors and provide enough information that a champion can use to convince other members of the buying committee. Content that works here includes analyst reports, articles, and sales presentations, and conversations with partners.

4. **Set marketing automation goals and track performance**

Before launching your marketing automation campaigns, determine how to measure results and how often. Consider tracking:

- **Activity metrics**, such as emails click-throughs, web asset click-throughs, web page bounces, form-fills, new leads, and sales won

- **Engagement metrics**, such as social media likes and shares, email click-throughs.

- **Metrics that directly tie back to ROI**, such as conversion rates, marketing qualified leads (MQLs), revenue generated, and cost per lead

Five steps to get started with marketing automation

After making the decision to invest in marketing automation, take these five steps to launch successful campaigns.

01 Collect customer data

Collect data about potential customers through website visits, app usage, newsletters, and other digital marketing interactions. Good quality data enables demographic and behavioral segmentation and real-time messaging that increase conversions and revenue. Beyond data hygiene best practices, improve the quality of your data further by connecting your marketing automation and customer relationship management (CRM) systems. This helps standardize data across systems and enhances current and future usability by providing extra visibility into customer behavior.

02 Create relevant content

Based on the data from Step 1, create relevant, helpful content for your personas to help them navigate the discovery, consideration, and decision-making stages of the buying journey. Personalize to their needs and make efforts to address common questions. The more prospects or customers interact with a brand, the higher their lead score will be, which may qualify them to be passed to sales or indicate interest in an upsell or cross-sell opportunity.

03 Identify, target, and segment your prospects

Identify, target, and segment your prospect base. Segmenting audiences helps in the creation of marketing personas, stand-ins that represent different portions of those audiences. Segmenting and creating personas makes it easier to target prospects and customers with relevant and valuable content. They inform what channel, content, and offers to use and the frequency with which to reach out.

Five steps to get started with marketing automation

04 Create personalized experiences

Design and launch marketing campaigns using prospect segments to deliver personalized experiences across various digital marketing channels (like email, social, mobile, and chat). Engage prospects with relevant content based on where they are in the sales funnel and nurture them until they become marketing-qualified leads.

05 Track and optimize campaign performance

Track performance regularly and optimize campaigns accordingly. Evaluate how customers and prospects respond to your content at every stage of the sales cycle. In your analysis, include metrics from all marketing channels, campaigns, and ads to gain a holistic view of performance. Make the necessary adjustments to your campaigns to achieve greater results and ROI.

The power of marketing automation

Marketing automation helps businesses of every size improve prospecting, lead nurturing, customer acquisition, cross-selling and upselling, and many other aspects of digital marketing and selling. These are the key benefits of marketing automation

1. Increased conversion rates

When using marketing automation, clean customer data makes it easy to identify and target prospects with relevant information and offers in lead generation campaigns. Relevant and real-time data provides insights into a prospect's behaviors and boosts the possibility of making a sale.

2. Higher performing campaigns

Pull in opportunity and revenue data from your CRM system to gain visibility into what needs improvement and what doesn't. Use data to make informed decisions and allocate marketing budgets to the campaigns that reap the biggest financial gains.

3. Team alignment and greater productivity

Marketing automation streamlines transactions and aligns activities and internal teams to achieve goals. It makes everything run smoother and allows your employees to leave repetitive, manual tasks behind to focus on strategic issues, all while making them more productive and engaged.

4. Increased revenue and customer retention

The unified customer data in a marketing automation system helps you respond to buyer signals with orchestrated campaigns that engage and convert. Marketing automation also supports loyalty programs and provides upsell and cross-sell opportunities that build strong and lasting customer relationships.
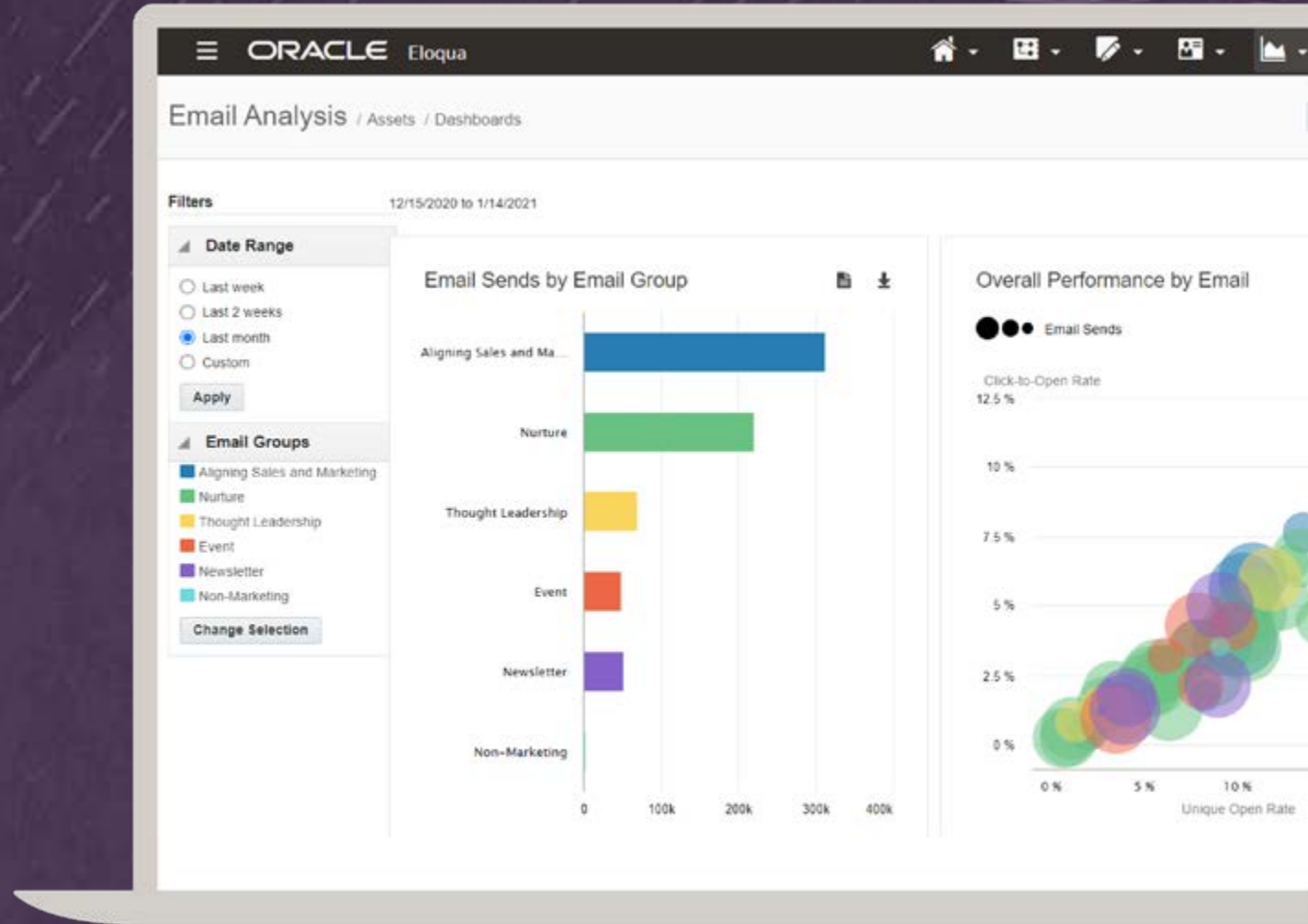
57%

Dow Jones's B2B marketing team has been able to grow its marketing-originated revenue by 14% year over year, and improve marketing-influenced campaign revenue by 57% housing Oracle Eloqua Marketing Automation.[6]

Use Oracle Eloqua Marketing Automation to create high-performing emails, campaigns, and experiences that convert leads into loyalists

Manage sophisticated cross-channel B2B marketing campaigns that nurture leads across channels and the entire buying process. Oracle Eloqua offers campaign design, advanced lead scoring, real-time firmographic data, and integrated sales tools.

Learn more here.

To the experience-maker who's always moving forward

As modern customers seem to shape-shift from one moment to the next, it's critical to maintain pace with their expectations. To help, we created the Ignite series to fuel your continuous pursuit of customer experiences that always hit the mark.

Guides like this one, *Essential Strategies for Marketing Automation,* aim to advance your expertise and help you craft foundational strategies in less time. So you can get back out there to captivate customers and drive revenue.

What will you discover next?

- Demo: Oracle Eloqua Marketing Automation

- Blog: 5 Marketing Automation Best Practices That Will Improve Your Marketing, Sales, and CX

- Analyst Report: Oracle Named a Leader Once Again in Gartner's Magic Quadrant for CRM Lead Management 2020

About Oracle Advertising and CX

Make every customer interaction matter by connecting all your business data across advertising, marketing, sales, commerce, and service. Oracle Advertising and Customer Experience (CX) is a connected suite of applications that goes beyond traditional CRM to help you create and nurture lasting customer relationships. Build a complete view of every interaction and every customer, no matter how and when they engage. Empower your entire business to deliver exceptional customer experiences—from acquisition to retention—and everything in between.

Sources

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2. "Forrester Data: Marketing Automation Technology Forecast, 2017 To 2023 (Global), "Forrester, Accessed August 12, 2021 (Client login required)

3. "The Rise of Marketing Automation – Statistics and Trends [Infographic]." Invesp, Accessed August 9, 2021

4. 2020 B2B Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends, The Content Marketing Institute

5. The SiriusDecisions B2B Buying Decision Process Framework, Forrester (Client login required)

6. "Dow Jones's B2B Marketing Team Drives More Revenue Using Oracle," Oracle

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