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LEAD NURTURING

THE BASICS OF USING MULTI-CHANNEL  
NURTURING TO TURN ANONYMOUS AND  
KNOWN LEADS INTO CUSTOMERS

Email

Telephone

Display and Social Advertising

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WHAT

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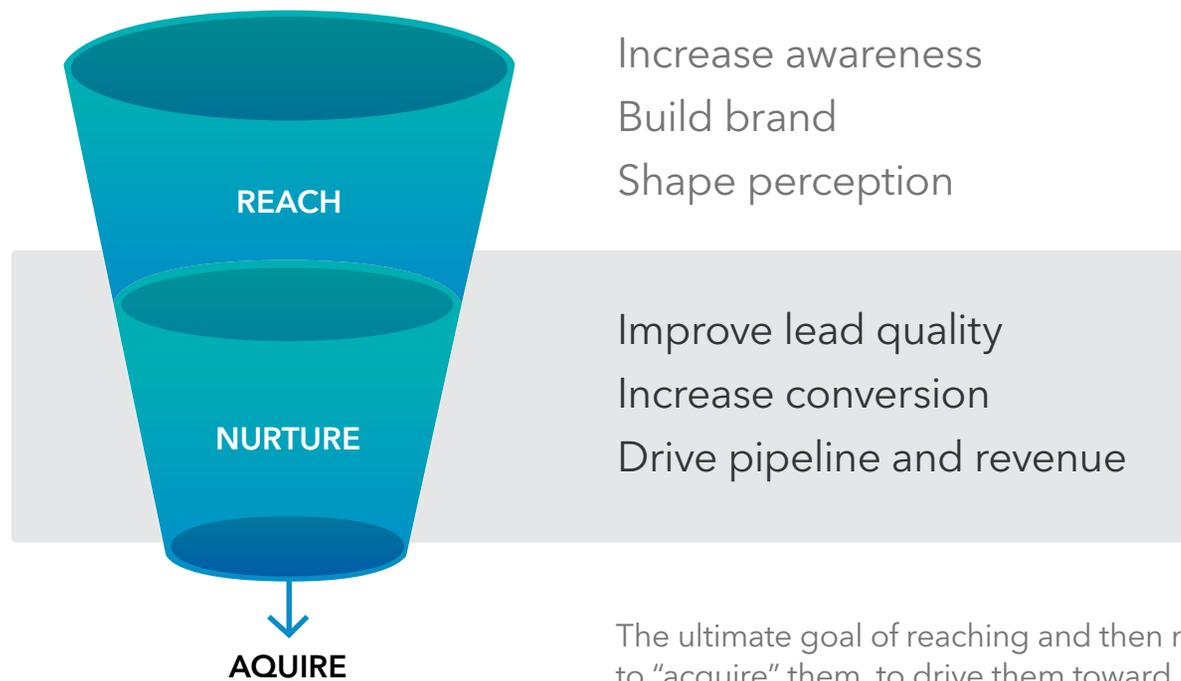
LEAD NURTURING?

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# What is Lead Nurturing?

Lead nurturing has been around a long time, as long as there have been leads. The concept of lead nurturing is simple: It's the process of building relationships with prospects who aren't yet ready to buy your product or service.



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# LEAD NURTURE'S TRANSFORMATION

*Or*

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## WHY IS LEAD NURTURING LIKE A THREE-MARTINI LUNCH?

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# Lead Nurture's Transformation, Or Why is Lead Nurturing Like a Three-Martini Lunch?

Lead nurturing has evolved over the years, and recently, it has changed rather dramatically.

Before the rise of the Internet, the sales team controlled lead nurturing. Salespeople built relationships with the leads generated by marketing, by networking, or by their own cold calling. Salespeople built relationships with prospects—that is they nurtured leads, because not everybody is ready to buy right now—by demonstrating their industry knowledge, by showing their humorous or entertaining side, and, ultimately by explaining why a prospect should buy the salesperson's product or service. Often, the salespeople did their lead nurturing over lunch—occasionally over the mythical, Don Draper-style three-martini lunch.

"The sales guy's job was to stay in touch with prospects over time—reach out by phone, maybe have a live meeting," said John McTigue of Kuno Creative. "As email developed, the salesperson would reach out by email, and so it had always been a one-to-one thing. But over the past five to seven years, marketing automation has come into the field—and it's now possible to automatically nurture the same kind of leads."

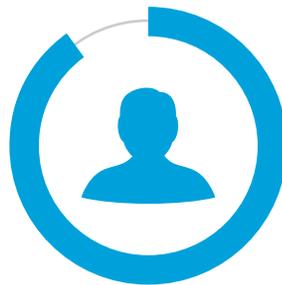
The bottom line is the buyer's journey has changed. In the past, prospects moving along the path to purchase had to identify themselves when reaching out for information that might inform a purchase. They had to provide an address for a brochure or other collateral to be mailed to them. Once prospects identified themselves, the sales team went into action to build relationships with prospects, nurture them, and, ideally, close deals.

Now, however, the Internet enables prospects to self-educate by gathering information on products and services anonymously. Prospects conduct research by visiting corporate websites, perusing review sites, and consulting with peers via social media—all while remaining anonymous or without handing over an email address. Forrester Research found that as much as 90 percent of the buyer's journey may be complete before prospects reach out to a salesperson.

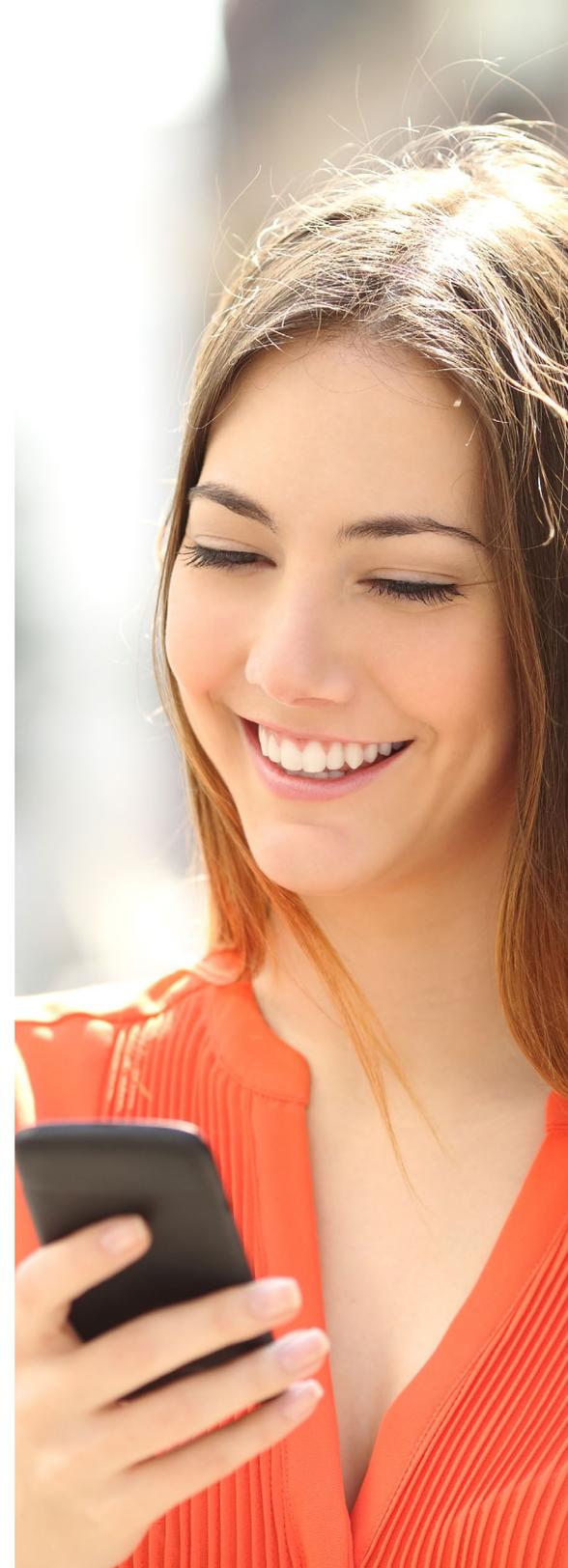
What this means is that for the first 90 percent of the buyer's journey, marketing is responsible for keeping relevant messages in front of prospects. And a large part of this task includes lead nurturing.

# 90%

of the buyer's journey may be complete before prospects reach out to a salesperson.



For the first 90 percent of the buyer's journey, marketing is responsible for keeping relevant messages in front of prospects.



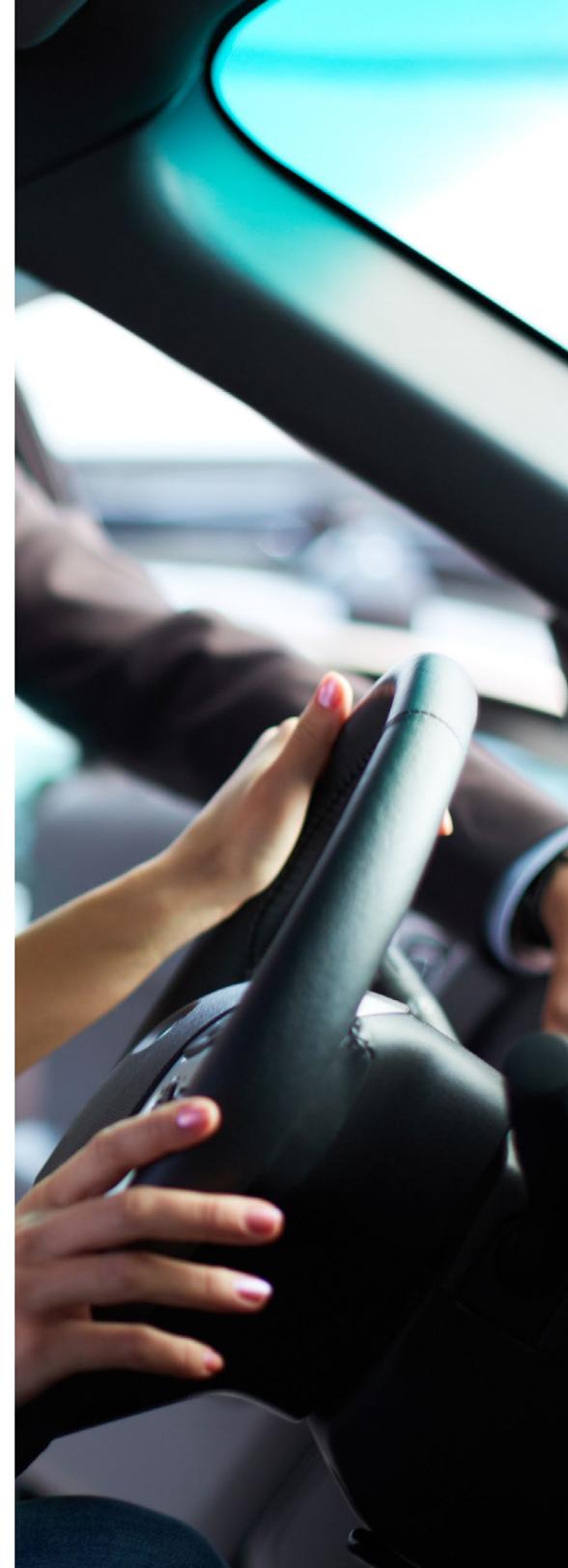
# The Car Buying Process and How It Illustrates The Transformation of the Buyer's Journey

⋮ Twenty years ago, buying a car was a daunting process for most of us.

It was filled with dread for the buyer, primarily because the car dealer had all the information. For example, he knew the dealer invoice price, and he knew how the car was performing in the market. It was asymmetrical with the advantage decidedly going to the car dealer. The buyer knew the sticker price, and that was about it.

Today, a buyer has access to almost complete information. She can research the car online on the Kelley's Blue Book site, KBB.com. She can consult with other car buyers via social media, and she can walk in the front door of the dealer knowing what a fair price is for the car she wants. Now, the car buying process is more of a fair fight.

A very similar thing has happened in the B2B buyer's journey. Buyers can research their purchase online, self-educating on the market until they're almost ready to buy. It's only when they believe they have virtually complete information that buyers reach out to a vendor and talk with a salesperson.



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EXPANDING

*Lead Nurturing*

BEYOND THE EMAIL INBOX



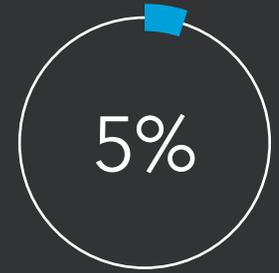
# Expanding Lead Nurturing Beyond the Email Inbox

Marketers typically have conducted lead nurturing via automated email programs aimed at carefully segmented groups of known prospects—that is, prospects who have shared their email addresses. For many marketers, in fact, lead nurturing has become synonymous with automated email marketing programs.

But email nurturing has its limitations. First, only 5 percent of a company's website visitors typically share their email address. Second, even if a company is able to secure a prospect's email, only 20 percent open emails. The funnel is leaking prospects all over the place, and 99 percent of people who have expressed interest in your company aren't regularly receiving your messages.

These drawbacks are why more marketers are embracing multi-channel nurturing, expanding lead nurturing beyond the email channel. They are

also nurturing leads via telephone and events, to name just two channels. Additionally, thanks to advances in marketing and advertising technology, marketers can nurture anonymous prospects, who haven't yet shared their email address. With these new tools, marketers can nurture anonymous prospects with automated display and social advertising, sequencing messages for these prospects based on their business demographics and on their online behavior (or digital body language).



of a company's website visitors typically share their email address.



open emails.



of people who have expressed interest in your company aren't regularly receiving your messages.

# INTERVIEW: SHANTEL SHAVE

Director-Demand Generation, HootSuite

**Q:** What is your lead nurturing philosophy?

**Shantel Shave:** We have targeted campaigns that launch when somebody enters our system. What we try to do when we structure a nurture program is to put something in place that immediately identifies those sales-ready opportunities. It's a very targeted push to see if we can get a prospect engaged with a sales person at the outset, and then failing that, we do some deep segmentation—based on region, language, industry, org size, business challenge. Then we map that to where we think they are in the customer journey. We do that by looking at what their engagement scores are, and we know what they may or may not have chosen to interact with before. Then we serve them the appropriate content. The way that our model is changing right now is that we're moving from thinking of nurture as just something that's

driven by email to something that is very multichannel. So, we're making sure that all of our channels are aligned and that all of those interactions or touch points that our users have with the brand are telling the same story, depending on where they are in that nurture cycle.

**Q:** What's your favorite metaphor for lead nurturing?

**Shave:** We definitely approach it from a relationship standpoint. We try to build a long-term relationship with the prospect. It's not going to be an immediate decision when you're selling enterprise software. You need to really position yourself as a thought leader and a trusted partner along the journey to create that relationship, so that they feel confident moving forward.



*“Lead Accelerator has allowed us to map our content so that it aligns with the customer journey and move people along that path in a very logical way. For us, the conversion rates that we’ve seen from what we were using previously—they’re dramatically different, dramatically improved.”*

—Shantel Shave

**Q:** How has lead nurturing changed over the past few years?

**Shave:** We take a much more personal approach. We have the tools now to understand what somebody needs at an individual level. So rather than speaking very broadly across these large groups, we try to serve what that particular person is looking for. We've recently integrated several tools to help us understand that. For example, for our lead scoring model, we have our accounts integrated with Google Analytics, so we can see what prospects are doing on the site. We're looking at a number of data points, and all of that is feeding where we ultimately end up choosing to place this person in our nurture cycles.

**Q:** Do your metrics show that lead nurturing is working?

**Shave:** Our sales cycle is shorter for a lead in multi-channel nurture, and we

also have a larger deal size. I think it's because oftentimes during that process, we've been able to introduce prospects to the overall solution rather than just one portion of it—so people come in with a better understanding of all of the ways that Hootsuite can help them address their business problems.

**Q:** How critical is data in lead nurturing?

**Shave:** Data is everything, and you need to understand who you're speaking to in order to have a conversation that's relevant to them. Building that data quality and data hygiene into your models at the outset is going to give you so much better results later on. That's an area that often gets forgotten. So, building it into your process every step of the way means you're going to have much more successful programs.

*“Data is everything, and you need to understand who you’re speaking to in order to have a conversation that’s relevant to them.”*

—Shantel Shave

# What's Your Favorite Metaphor for Lead Nurturing?

Companies that sell marketing automation and other tools that help marketers with their lead nurturing efforts embrace metaphors to help illuminate exactly what lead nurturing is. Here are the three most popular analogies:

## Seedling

This metaphor, which compares a prospect to a seedling, equates the process of lead nurturing to the skills needed to grow plants. Nurturing, in this metaphor, is the watering, sunlight, and perhaps even the talking to a seedling. Nurturing provides everything required to make it grow into a thriving plant—ideally, one that will deliver the sweet fruit of recurring revenue quarter after quarter, year after year.

## Romantic Relationship

In this metaphor, lead nurturing is compared to a courtship, with the marketer as the wooer and the prospect as the wooed. This metaphor emphasizes using the appropriate message at the appropriate time. For instance, just as a gentleman caller wouldn't ask a woman to marry him on the first date, neither would a marketer as for the sale the minute a prospect expresses any interest at all in the marketer's product or service. Patience, marketers, patience.

## Conversation

This analogy stresses the back and forth between the prospect and the marketer. In this metaphor, as a prospect exposes her digital body language as she, for instance, visits different parts of a website, the marketer keeps the conversation going by directing the prospect to various pieces of content that appear to interest her. This analogy of the lead nurturing process places a premium on the marketer's ability to not simply talk about a prospect—but to shut up and listen every once in a while.

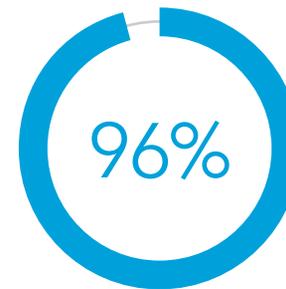
# CASE STUDY: WORKFRONT

## WORKFRONT NURTURES ANONYMOUS WEBSITE VISITORS AND GENERATES LEADS WITH LINKEDIN LEAD ACCELERATOR



Workfront is a cloud-based Enterprise Work Management solution designed to help enterprise teams—from IT to Marketing, to company leadership—eliminate the typical chaos of work and gain greater visibility company wide. Workfront covers the entire lifecycle of work, from request to report, in one easily adoptable platform.

On average, more than 96 percent of the visitors to Workfront's website leave without converting—a challenge shared by most B2B marketers with savvy products and long sales cycles. Micah Beals, the former Director of Digital Marketing at Workfront, saw this as a huge opportunity. "In B2B you can't expect most of your anonymous visitors to convert on their first visit to the website," he explained. "To combat this we've tested website retargeting with various vendors in the past, but they've always missed our cost per lead targets."



of visitors leave without converting

## Segmenting and Nurturing Anonymous Website Visitors

Workfront needed a solution that was catered to the B2B salescycle—one that would speak to the unique needs and interests of its website visitors. Using LinkedIn Lead Accelerator, Workfront nurtured prospects with waves of LinkedIn Sponsored Updates, Facebook Newsfeed, and display ads.



*“Multi-channel nurturing makes sense—the sequencing and personalization of ads aligns well with the B2B sales cycle.”*

—Micah Beals  
Former Director of Digital Marketing  
Workfront

Workfront nurtures anonymous website visitors and generates leads with LinkedIn Lead Accelerator

## Objectives

Convert more of its anonymous website visitors into leads

## Target Audience

IT professionals  
Marketers  
Other enterprise decision makers

## Results

Generated over 640 leads in just three months at a cost well below target

## || CASE STUDY: WORKFRONT

Using website navigation, anonymous visitors' business demographic data and more, Workfront developed a variety of nurture streams that were customized for different audience segments. For example, after visiting (then leaving) the solutions page on Workfront's website, IT professionals would see sequenced waves of ads over a several week period that were very specific to IT and related to its solutions, while other (non-IT) visitors would see different sets of ad creative and calls to action.

Workfront's multi-channel nurturing strategy also included nurture streams that were specific to marketers and other types of professionals who visited the home page, solutions page, pricing page, and more. Based on this criteria, each nurture stream offered a unique sequence of content and calls to action delivered via display and social advertising.

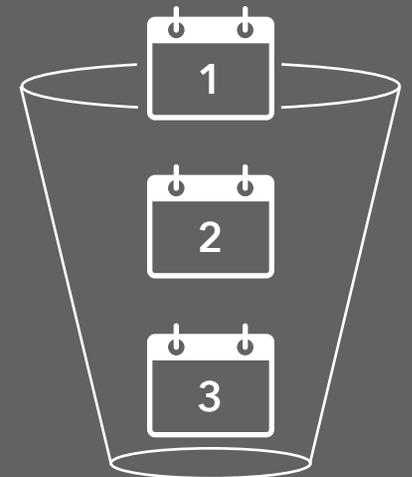
### Results and Measurement

Workfront used LinkedIn's Full Funnel Analytics to measure the performance and impact that Lead Accelerator had on its lead generation goals. It tracked key metrics such as impressions, clicks, conversions, and more, and could drill down to see performance at the creative level and optimize accordingly. In just three months, Workfront generated more than 640 leads via Lead Accelerator at a cost well below their cost per lead targets. "Conceptually, multi-channel nurturing makes sense—the sequencing and personalization of ads aligns well with the B2B sales cycle," Beals explained. "We're happy to see that the hypothesis has been confirmed by the great results it has driven."

In just three months,  
Workfront generated  
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cost per lead targets.



# INTERVIEW: JUSTIN GRAY

CEO, LeadMD

**Q:** How are changes in the buyer's journey impacting the role of lead nurturing?

**Justin Gray:** We know 70 percent of the buying process takes place online. So, ultimately information is really what has made lead nurturing become paramount. People expect—via your website, via your social profile, via anything that represents that business—to be able to get into those channels and find out what you're about, what problems you solve, how you could help them. They don't expect to call a representative or have a face-to-face conversation in order for that to happen.

**Q:** During the part of the buying process that takes place online, what should marketers be striving to

do with their lead nurturing programs?

**Gray:** Lead nurturing for me is the way that the buyer builds trust. If someone really dislikes you, if you come into their office, they're not going to like you any better if you just keep showing up. Same thing with sending someone email. You have to start by building that trust, define how you could help someone, build up that rapport and then keep that rapport. The other element that this evolution in technology has taught us is that people are more fickle than ever. It's great that you can consume messaging online, but if you're not keeping someone's attention, they've got a million other stimuli that they can focus their gaze on. It really is that what-have-you-done-for-me-lately mentality, where you need to be putting out great content all the time.



*“Lead nurturing for me is the way that the buyer builds trust. If someone really dislikes you, if you come into their office, they're not going to like you any better if you just keep showing up.”*

—Justin Gray

**Q:** What are the first steps you take in helping your clients start a lead nurturing program?

**Gray:** Our first question is always, Who is your buyer? The next question will be, Have you ever built buyer personas? Have you ever built buyer journeys based on these personas? The answer's always, Yes. The real answer is always, No. A buyer persona is not, "Yes, we sold to the CEO and the VP of IT." It is literally, "Who is this person, how do they build trust, how do they form relationships, what's important to them?"

**Q:** What metaphor best explains lead nurturing?

**Gray:** I think of lead nurturing as a conversation. At a party, when you first meet someone, you're going to have a completely different conversation. Later on that evening or maybe the next time that you see them, when you've built that rapport, you'll have a different conversation.

**Q:** How critical for a lead nurturing program's ultimate success to get sales and marketing on the same page?

**Gray:** That's absolutely key. If I'm asked, if you had to give marketers one piece of advice they can do today, I say spend the day with sales. No one has a better exposure to what the customer needs than your sales team. They hear those objections every single day, and if they know that you're taking those objections and actually creating content around it, that's a huge alignment exercise right there.

*"No one has a better exposure to what the customer needs than your sales team."*

–Justin Gray

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WHAT

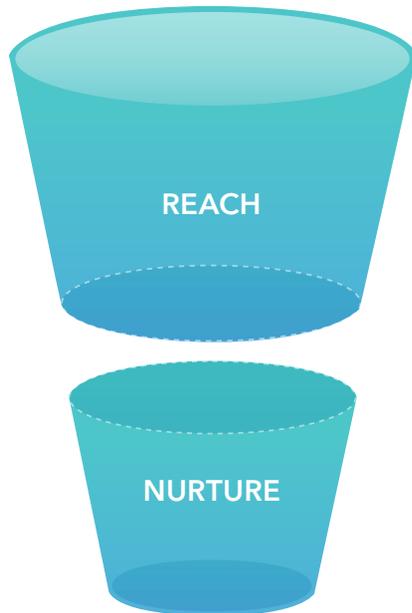
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2-STAGE FUNNEL  
SAYS ABOUT THE STATE  
OF LEAD NURTURING



# What the 2-Stage Funnel Says About the State of Lead Nurturing

In the past, marketers usually divided their funnel into three stages. In the upper funnel, they reached their target audience with branding and awareness messages. In the mid funnel, marketers strived to engage prospects with content. And in the lower funnel, they nurtured known prospects with content, such as product demos or price sheets, designed to move them toward a sale.



Now, however, marketers can begin nurturing prospects as soon as they express an interest—and even if they remain anonymous. That’s why a two-stage funnel reflects the reality of the marketing world today. There’s an upper funnel, where marketers still look to deliver branding and awareness messages to a target audience at scale. And there’s a lower funnel, where marketers nurture anonymous prospects and known prospects with a variety of communications tools, ranging from display and social advertising to email programs.

Because technology enables marketers to know a lot about even anonymous website visitors—marketers can learn a lot from the business demographics and online behavior of their website visitors—the entire lower funnel is now about lead nurturing.

# INTERVIEW: ANDREW HICKEY

Director of Digital Marketing, eCornell

**Q:** What is your philosophy of lead nurturing?

**Andrew Hickey:** We do lead nurturing primarily in two ways. On the pre-sale side of things, we are trying to start weaving our story early on and nurture folks with progressive messaging. We're putting together a sequential story that makes sense for the point where the leads are in their buying process or researching process. And then the other side is, we do fairly extensive e-mail nurturing after we know who our leads are and they've identified themselves. We have fairly intricate and extensive lead nurturing programs for every certificate program that we offer. Our philosophy is personalization, which I think is a familiar theme in nurturing—personalizing your messaging, as much as possible. We try to tread the line between being not overly familiar with people and balance that with giving them the right information.

**Q:** How do you strike that balance between providing the right information but not becoming overly familiar?

**Hickey:** We try to represent our brand and convey our proposition in a way that's not annoying. It's a line we try to tread with things like retargeting as well as with e-mail nurturing. You want to nail down a good frequency. You don't want to flood people's inboxes. If I get several e-mails from the same sales person, that's not an appealing scenario for me. So, we want to remain consistent and we want to remain relevant and top of mind, but we don't want to be annoying. We don't want folks opting out. We stay brand safe and respect our leads and our prospects and give them some really good information at the right time.



*“We want to remain consistent and we want to remain relevant and top of mind, but we don’t want to be annoying. We don’t want folks opting out.”*

—Andrew Hickey

## Q: What's the best metaphor for explaining lead nurturing?

**Hickey:** I think of nurturing as kind of a conversation. As a marketer attempting to have a conversation with an audience, with people and ultimately individuals, you think about the way that you would have conversation with somebody. Say we all are in a room at a party. There are people that you might not be familiar with, and you want to introduce yourself to them. I'm not going to go up to a group of people and just butt into their conversation and start talking about eCornell. I'm going to act like a normal member of society, walk up and introduce myself and participate in a little bit of small talk. I'll get a sense of what they're talking about and what they're interested in, and when I feel like I have enough information about

them, I'll jump into the conversation. If you're trying to nurture a conversation along in marketing, you should talk how you would act in real life and try to apply some of those principles and approaches to lead nurturing digitally.

## Q: It's generally agreed that lead nurturing has become more effective. Why do you think that is?

**Hickey:** You know it's kind of an obvious one, but it's just the ability to automate. Automation—it's just become a lot easier to do now. It's a lot easier to segment your audiences, a lot easier to personalize message and have those types of individual conversations that are meaningful to your prospects.

*“As a marketer attempting to have a conversation with an audience, with people and ultimately individuals, you think about the way that you would have conversation with somebody.”*

—Andrew Hickey

# CASE STUDY: Groupon UK

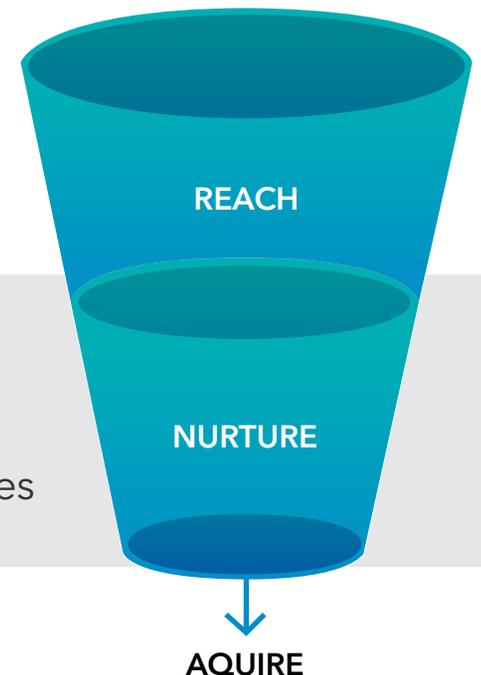
## HOW LEAD NURTURING IS HELPING Groupon BUILD A BROADER B2B BUSINESS



Up and running within days thanks to LinkedIn's LaunchPad program, Groupon UK is using LinkedIn Lead Accelerator to nurture small business leads with tailored messaging—and reinforce its credentials as an essential B2B marketing partner.

Once upon a time, Groupon's main challenge as a business was to attract enough consumers to secure the discounts its business model depended on. Today, as an established consumer brand, its marketing objectives have evolved. Groupon knows that it can deliver the volume of consumers it needs to secure deals. Its focus now is on broadening its reach among small businesses and demonstrating its credentials as a marketing partner for merchants of all sizes.

Groupon focused on broadening its reach among small businesses



In the UK, LinkedIn Lead Accelerator is now a key part of the Groupon strategy, marrying reach across online platforms with the precision targeting possible through LinkedIn data. Through LinkedIn Lead Accelerator, Groupon is delivering tailored advertising and content to reflect the concerns of merchants in different sectors, nurturing leads throughout the funnel, and maintaining engagement with the 90% of Groupon's small business visitors who fail to convert on their first visit to its site.

### **Marrying off-site reach with the power of LinkedIn data**

For Groupon, the game-changer with LinkedIn Lead Accelerator was its power to reach prospects wherever they traveled online yet still tailor content and nurture streams precisely using LinkedIn data. "LinkedIn Lead Accelerator and offsite display advertising make LinkedIn a very attractive marketing platform for us," explains Stephan Heller, Head of Merchant Marketing for Groupon

EMEA. "When marketing to SMBs, it's important to recognize that they don't see themselves as a homogenous group. LinkedIn gives us access to data for smart marketing that talks to different categories, and does so at scale."

### **Accelerating leads faster through LaunchPad**

The service and support available through the LinkedIn Lead Accelerator LaunchPad played a key role in bringing Groupon's program up to speed quickly. "LaunchPad was really good," says Heller. "It helped us get up to speed in a frictionless way, without bringing in additional headcount. It meant that we could start using these advanced nurture streams really, really quickly. To us that's a big advantage over traditional retargeting, where we would have had to go through an agency and wouldn't have direct access."

"Six weeks in and the results are really promising, which is why we are extending our Lead Accelerator program. It's fully measurable, easy to get to the numbers, and we can see that the ROI is there. At the moment, the program is UK only, but we'd like to start using it in France and Germany as well."

–Stephan Heller  
Head of Merchant Marketing  
Groupon EMEA

## The Challenge

- Reach potential merchant partners wherever they travel online
- Deliver tailored messaging to reflect the value of Groupon to different SMB sectors
- Develop parallel nurture streams for different stages of the purchase funnel

## The Solution

- LinkedIn Lead Accelerator delivering display ads to prospects anywhere on the web and using LinkedIn data for precision targeting
- Separate nurture streams to reflect different engagement levels
- Shorter data capture forms with single-click form filling
- Integration with Eloqua and Salesforce for smoother follow-up

## Why LinkedIn?

- Ability to combine LinkedIn data with reach anywhere on the web
- Insights to understand the demographics of their site traffic to begin the process of nurturing
- LaunchPad onboarding program to provide support with setup, strategy, launch and optimization
- No requirement for additional internal resource to manage the lead nurture program

## The Results

- Within the first 2 months, LinkedIn Lead Accelerator increased Groupon's leads by 23%
- Web visitors that were nurtured with LinkedIn Lead Accelerator viewed 10% more pages and visited the Groupon website 18% more frequently on average than users who did not
- LaunchPad ensured that Groupon's LinkedIn Lead Accelerator program was up and running within days. Groupon's team had direct access and control over the program and full visibility of results



increase in leads



more pages viewed



visited the website more frequently

# INTERVIEW: ARDATH ALBEE

CEO, Marketing Interactions

**Q:** Do you have a philosophy of lead nurturing?

**Ardath Albee:** Absolutely, I do. I'm on a mission to end the campaign, because in my opinion lead nurturing is really building the story from the beginning to the end of the buying process—so you need to cover the whole thing, and you need to figure out exactly what information people need at each stage. You need to construct this ongoing story building exercise across the buying process. That's what I believe a nurturing campaign should do: Keep building that engagement by sharing the knowledge prospects need to take next steps.

**Q:** Has lead nurturing moved beyond email and reliance on a database of prospects?

**Albee:** You need to think about nurturing as not being reliant your database, because in my opinion every time you touch a prospect or your prospect touches your content, you're nurturing. I don't necessarily confine the idea of nurturing to your contacts in your database. The thing about campaigns that you need realize that it's a construct that we as marketers created in order to put a box around the marketing activity, so we could measure it. But it's not our buyers' construct. They're not saying, Please give me three touches, and then you can have your sales person call me.



*“You’re just wasting a whole bunch of time and money and effort if you’d don’t get on the same page with your salespeople, you absolutely have to have sales in that conversation.”*

—Ardath Albee

**Q:** How important are personas in developing a nurturing program?

**Albee:** It's critical. I won't do a lead nurturing program unless the company has really great personas that are active or they develop them with me. The reason for that is how do you determine the questions, what the person cares about, what they're responsible for achieving: how do you know all that if you don't have personas? How do you build the story that they care about if you don't know your audience? Things that we think are interesting may not be interesting to our buyers. We need to be able to step into their mindsets to figure out how are we going to build really compelling content.

**Q:** How important is getting agreement between sales and marketing in the lead nurturing process?

**Albee:** It's huge. I involve sales in the persona development process right from the start. The reason for that is because if we create personas with marketers in a vacuum, we're just wasting a whole bunch of time and money and effort. To get on the same page with your sales people, you absolutely have to have sales in that conversation. You also need to talk to them about what kinds of questions they get asked all the time, so that you can create content that the sales team will actually use. There's this statistic out there that 70 percent of marketing content goes unused. You have to create stuff that your sales people are going to use.

*“Personas, are critical. I won't do a lead nurturing program unless the company has really great personas. We need to be able to step into the mindsets of prospects to figure out how we're going to build compelling content. I don't know how you create a content strategy without them.”*

—Ardath Albee

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WHY

*Lead Nurturing*

SHOULD BE PART OF  
AN ALWAYS-ON  
MARKETING PROGRAM



# Why Lead Nurturing Should Be Part of an Always-On Marketing Program

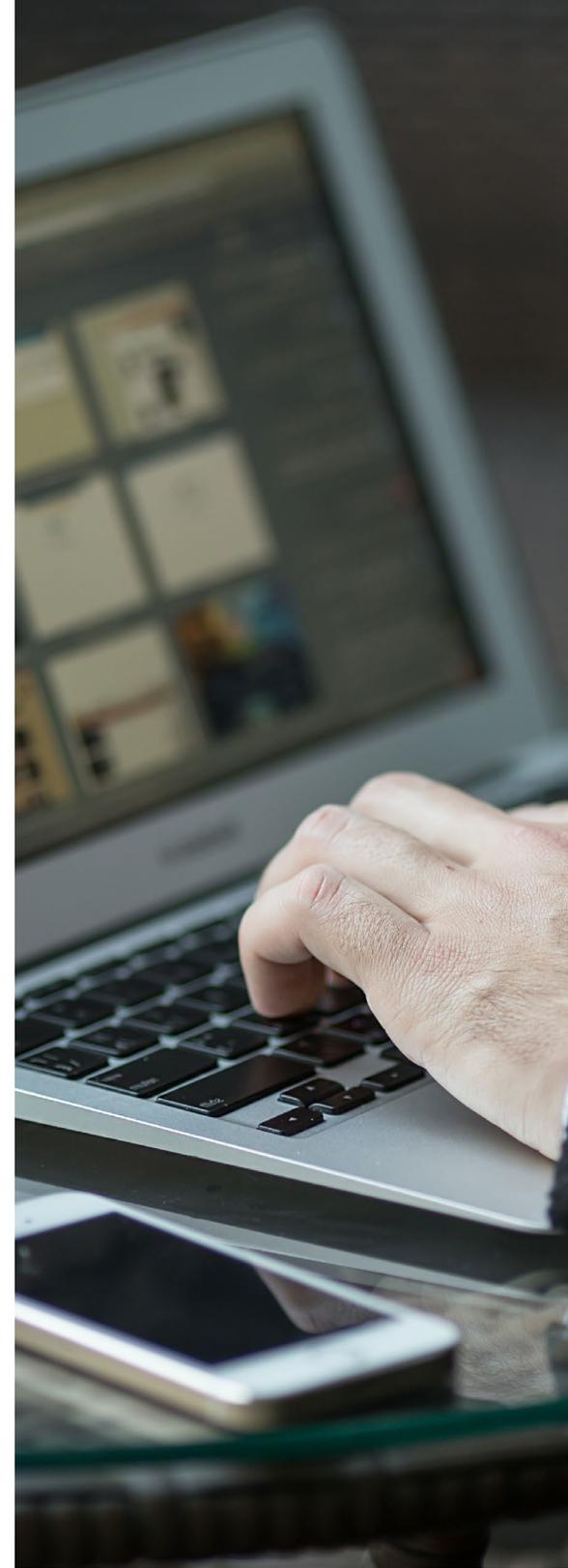
The campaign is dead. Prospects aren't waiting for you to speak or develop new messaging. They're actively reaching out—anonously—to self-educate on your products and services (as well as your competitors').

This new reality requires an always-on marketing mindset. You'd never consider turning off your website. That would be lunacy. Your website is always on.

It's the same for your search marketing efforts and your social media marketing. Those programs are always on.

Your lead nurturing programs should also be always-on efforts. Your email-based lead nurturing program—most likely deployed using a marketing automation system—is always on. Marketers should be taking that extra step and creating an always-on lead

nurturing program that expands beyond the email inbox and includes display and social advertising.



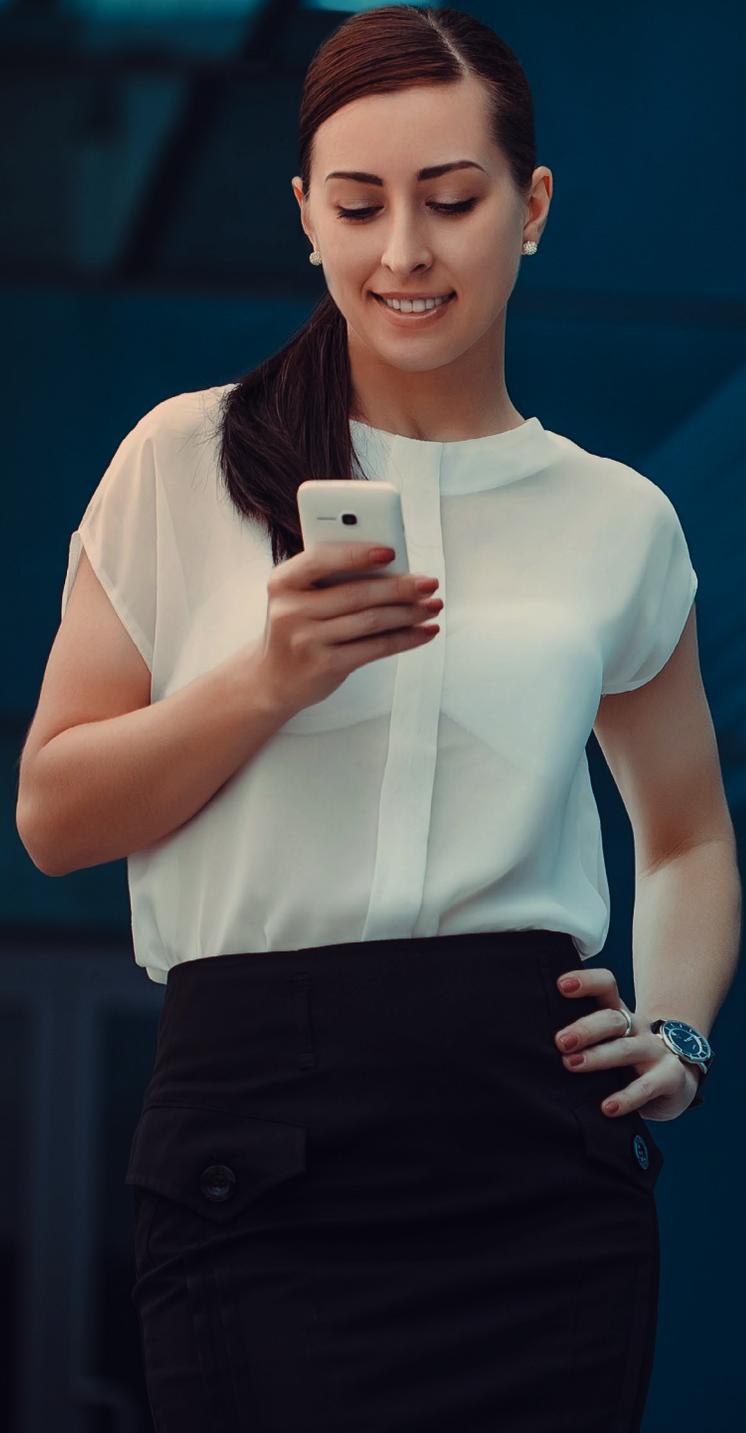
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THE

*Building Blocks*

OF A

NURTURING PROGRAM



# The Building Blocks of a Nurturing Program

## 1. Strategy

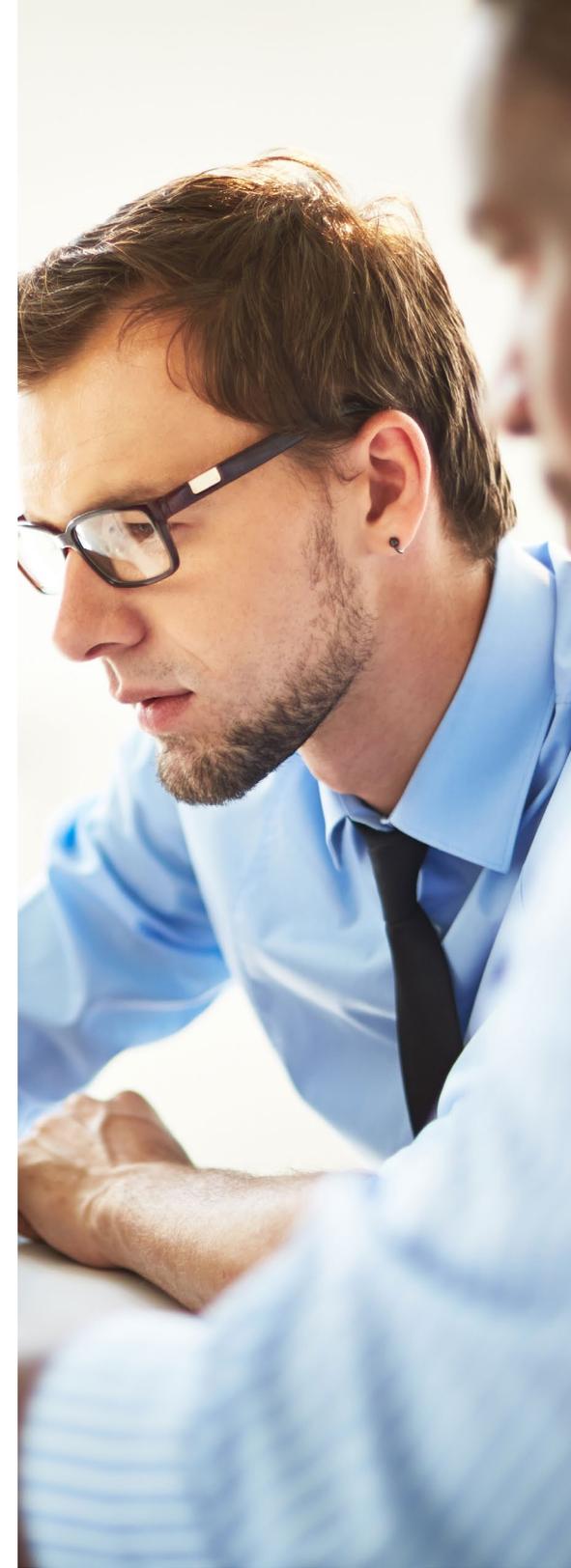
A solid lead nurturing program begins with a smart and comprehensive strategy. The strategy should determine what good leads look like. What are the business demographics—job titles, industry, geo-location, size of the company—for a good lead? What are the behaviors of prospects that indicate they're a good lead—visiting certain pages, visiting the website frequently, sharing their email address?

When defining a good lead, the marketing department should not engage in this process alone. At the very least, marketing should work closely with sales to agree upon what a good lead is. The most effective way to define a good lead is to use the past as prologue and analyze the characteristics of people who eventually bought your product and service in the past, say, 12

months. Getting buy-in from sales is critical to ensure the success of any lead nurturing program. "The ideal situation is definitely to get sales, marketing, and customer service in the room, because they all have to work together," Kuno Creative's John McTigue said. "All have to be aligned, or it's not going to work very well."

"You're just wasting a whole bunch of time and money and effort if you'd don't get on the same page with your salespeople," added Marketing Interaction's Ardath Albee. "You absolutely have to have sales in that conversation."

In addition to sales, the marketing team should also consider collaborating with IT, finance, and other departments to make sure that the lead nurturing program has the technical support and investment it needs to thrive.



# The Building Blocks of a Nurturing Program

## 2. Defining Personas

Virtually every B2B marketer has a sense of who her target audience is. She knows the job title of the key buyer and also knows the job titles of the other members of the buying team. She also knows who the key influencers can be—often the CEO, the CFO, or both.

But knowing the job titles of the target audience is not enough to build a top-flight lead nurturing program. Building an effective program requires personas, which demands that B2B marketers know more about their audience. To truly personalize a nurturing program—which is what nurturing is all about—the B2B marketer has to know the personality or the persona of each member of the target audience. Surveys of customers and prospects, visits with customers and prospects, and interviews of your salespeople can

provide the insight necessary to create these personas and gain a deeper understanding of your target market.

The marketer should be able to answer what the professional needs and wants of the target audience members are. And once this persona is established, the B2B marketer can create the relevant content for every stage of the funnel that speaks to the target audience—which is the hallmark of a great lead nurturing program.

Of her customers, a marketer should be asking some basic questions about them and their professional desires, Kuno Creative's John McTigue said. Marketers must answer these questions, he said, "Who are your customers? What do they want? What are their frustrations and pain points."

Personas, added Marketing Interaction's Ardath Albee, "are critical. I won't do a lead nurturing program unless the company has really great personas. We need to be able to step into the mindsets of prospects to figure out how we're going to build compelling content. I don't know how you create a content strategy without them."

*Building an effective program requires personas, which demands that B2B marketers know more about their audience.*

# The Building Blocks of a Nurturing Program

## 3. Segmenting Your Audience

Lead nurturing is different than a traditional “drip” marketing program. In a drip campaign, a marketer, over a predetermined period of time, sends the same messages to a prospect, no matter who that prospect is or how they’ve indicated their intentions by their digital body language.

With lead nurturing, a marketer sends a specific message or sequence of messages to prospects based specifically on their demographics and the digital footprints they leave by their online behavior. In other words, a sophisticated lead nurturing program will segment its audience. A CMO, for instance, will receive a different sequence of messages than a demand generation marketer.

Similarly, a prospect who visited the home page and bounced will receive an entirely different set of messages than a prospect who dived deep into the website and visited several product pages.

Intelligent segmenting is key to making a lead nurturing program thrive. Segmenting an audience allows a marketer to personalize and customize messages to prospects. Marketing automation software is a powerful tool that allows marketers to create literally hundreds of segments. In addition to targeted messaging, this segmentation enables marketers to reduce investment in programs that aren’t working - and double down on programs that are driving sales.

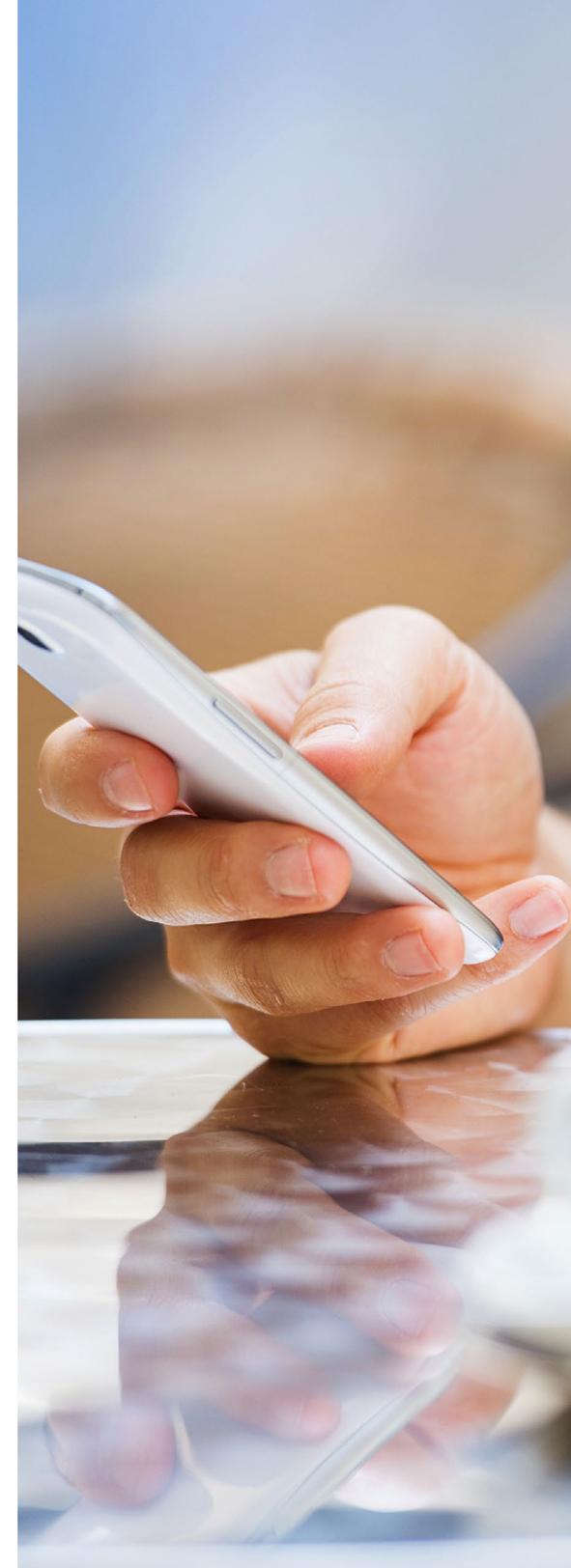


# The Building Blocks of a Nurturing Program

## 4. Create content for your segments at every stage of buying process

Because many B2B purchases involve an extensive buying team—which can include the ultimate decision maker, a host of influencers, and the person who controls the purse strings—marketing departments must create a variety of entertaining, helpful and persuasive content that speaks to the needs of every part of the buying team. This content must also speak to the buying team at every stage of the funnel, from awareness to consideration to actual purchase.

Marketers can also create nurturing content for existing customers. Content in a program like this might provide a welcome to new customers. Or it could nurture upsells or cross-sells in customer segments who have reached a certain threshold in spending or have been a customer for a year or another important timeframe.



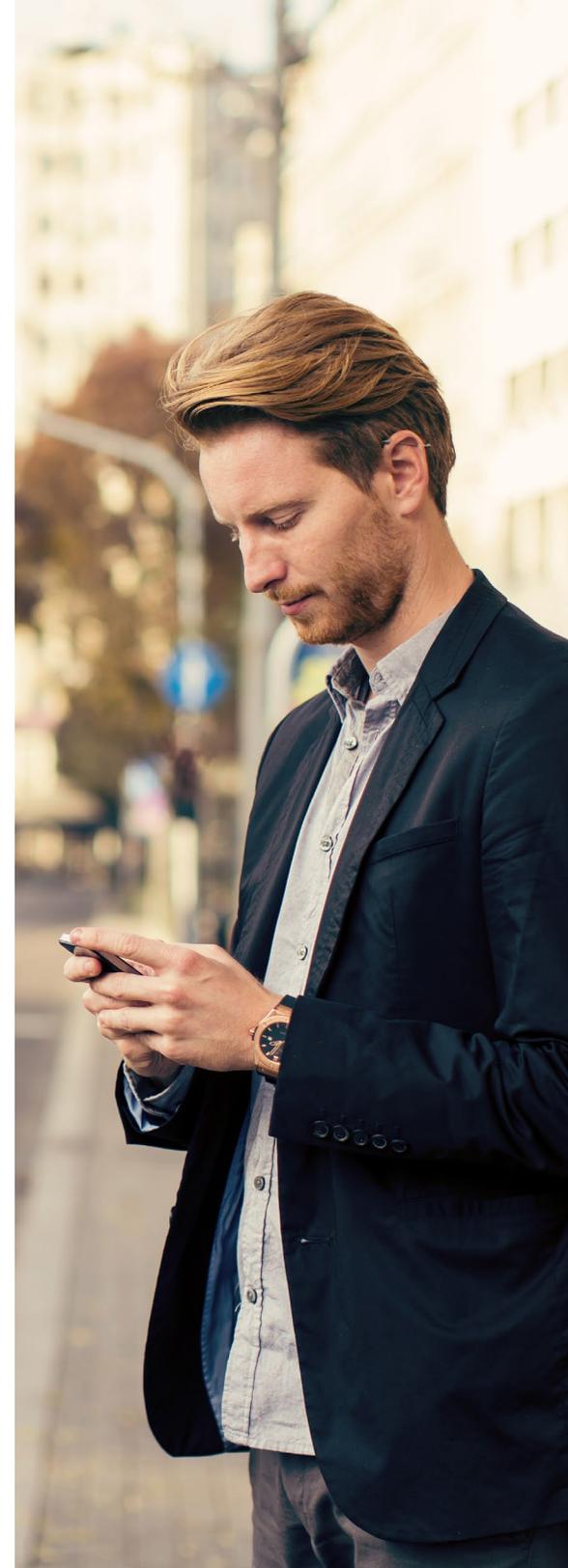
# The Building Blocks of a Nurturing Program

## 5. Measure, Test and Optimize

Lead nurturing should be a data-driven effort. Virtually every aspect of a lead nurturing program can be measured.

Whether you're nurturing via email, telephone or display and social advertising, the analytics tools exist to track your performance. With this technology, marketers can answer: Which segments are leading most often to sales? Which emails are driving engagement? Which display and social ad sequences are driving prospects through the funnel?

Marketers with sophisticated lead nurturing programs use A/B testing as a matter of course to understand which messages are resonating with particular audiences. They examine which email subject lines are generating the highest open rates. And even which content is leading to sales. With this data, marketers can optimize their programs to deliver measurable return on investment.



# The Building Blocks of a Nurturing Program

## 6. Maintain a clean, updated database

Data is good; accurate data is better. Too many marketers could be more diligent about maintaining the health of their databases. A report by Dun & Bradstreet's NetProspex found that 62 percent of companies' email deliverability ranks as "questionable" at best. Additionally, the report, "2015: The State of Marketing Data," found that 66 percent of records were missing industry and revenue data.

Email deliverability is obviously important: It's a critical path to nurturing leads. The lack of industry and revenue data is also crucial, because this information is integral to helping marketers score leads.

Without updated and accurate data, marketers will be hamstrung in their ability to nurture leads and deliver the best leads to sales. For the most effective lead nurturing, marketers should strive to commit to improving data hygiene, which can be accomplished by making it a priority for customer—and prospect-facing personnel to develop a habit of asking their contacts for updated contact information and other data.

"Data is everything," said Hootsuite's Shantel Shave. "You need to understand who you're speaking to in order to have a conversation that's relevant to them. Building that data quality and data hygiene into your models at the outset is going to give you such better results."

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# The Building Blocks of a Nurturing Program

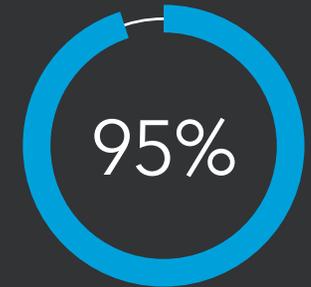
## 7. Move Your Lead Nurturing Beyond Email

Email is the foundation of most B2B marketers' lead nurturing programs. Marketers use email in a variety of forms, ranging from email newsletters to sophisticated and segmented email programs that are developed using marketing automation platforms.

Email is effective as a nurturing tool, but its drawbacks are well known. For one thing, it's impossible to email the 95 percent of website visitors who don't share their email address. Additionally, of the prospects who do share their email address, about 80 percent of them don't open your emails—on a good day!

For this reason, many B2B marketers are implementing lead nurturing programs that move beyond email. For instance, they are using sales development reps to contact prospects in order to gauge their sales readiness.

Marketers are also using multi-channel nurturing programs that reach the anonymous website visitors who expressed an interest in their companies. The main cogs in these multi-channel nurturing programs are display and social media advertising.



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# CASE STUDY: CETERA FINANCIAL GROUP

## CETERA FINANCIAL MOVES LEAD NURTURING BEYOND EMAIL



Cetera Financial Group provides award-winning wealth management and advisory platforms, comprehensive broker-dealer and registered investment adviser services, and innovative technology for more than 9,700 independent financial professionals and more than 500 financial institutions nationwide.

In its industry of financial services, it is notoriously difficult to innovate in the marketing side of business. But Cetera makes great strides to break that stereotype and employ new marketing technologies to fuel growth.

“We’re always looking for new ways to increase our exposure with financial professionals, but we didn’t want to stop there,” explained Eric Hansen, Director of Recruiting Marketing at Cetera Financial. “We wanted new and innovative ways to reach more of our target audience and drive engagement beyond email alone—to consistently personalize communication with them after they’d visited our website or given us their email information.”

*“We wanted new and innovative ways to reach more of our target audience and drive engagement beyond email alone.”*

—Eric Hansen  
Director of Recruiting Marketing  
Cetera Financial Group



## Attracting New Audiences to the Website at Scale

LinkedIn Network Display enabled Cetera to reach hundreds of thousands of finance professionals with display ads everywhere online. The use of LinkedIn's anonymous business demographic data ensured that ads were only seen by its most coveted audience—professionals in finance who worked at “micro” sized companies (less than 20 employees). “[The] impact on our visibility in the marketplace has been substantial,” Hansen shared. “It has helped give our prospects a better perspective on who we are. We have people coming to us saying ‘I feel like I have to talk to you guys because I see Cetera everywhere online.’”

LinkedIn's Full Funnel Analytics gave Cetera insight into the impact of its targeted display advertising efforts with metrics including net new visitors driven to its website, engagement levels, clicks, conversions, and more. In just three months, LinkedIn drove more than 900 new visitors in finance to the Cetera website.

## Objectives

- Drive the right audiences to its website
- Increase visits and engagement
- Drive new business

## Target Audience

- Financial professionals
- Financial institutions

## Results

- Over 900 new website visitors driven by LinkedIn
- 27% more pageviews
- Over 13% more visits per visitor on the website
- Nearly \$1 million in new business

## Nurturing Known Contacts Beyond Email

Cetera uses Oracle Eloqua's marketing automation system to nurture its known contacts via email—enabling segmentation and automation of email delivery to prospects and customers for whom Cetera has an email address. But email has its limitations. And even for prospects who did open their emails, Cetera wanted to do more to educate them about the company. LinkedIn Lead Accelerator allowed Cetera to add display and social advertising to its existing email nurture campaigns, directly from within the Eloqua Campaign Canvas. As known contacts received emails week after week, synchronized display and social ads were also delivered to them everywhere online. Hansen can attest to the positive impact display and social ads have had on his nurturing results. "We had a financial advisor complete a webinar registration over a year ago, and he began receiving our emails. One email sent 4 months ago made him click, but his subsequent web actions didn't trigger any adjustment in his lead score.

About a month after we'd implemented [LinkedIn Lead Accelerator], he received a Facebook ad from LinkedIn, clicked, indicated interest, and later closed."

## Nurturing Anonymous Website Visitors

Cetera also used LinkedIn Lead Accelerator to nurture its anonymous website visitors—those who hadn't yet submitted their email address to Cetera via a form completion. Prospects who'd previously visited the website were placed into anonymous nurture campaigns that delivered waves of different display and social ads, giving them a chance to engage with the most relevant content. As prospects spent more time on the Cetera website and indicated specific interests, that data was used to deliver ads that were personalized to their unique interests. LinkedIn's analytics showed that visitors, both anonymous and known, who had been nurtured by LinkedIn viewed more web pages and visited the site more often than visitors who hadn't been nurtured.

Anonymous Website Visitor



Deliver Relevant Content



Acquire



## It All Comes Down to Driving New Business

Cetera used LinkedIn to add value in two critical areas: increasing brand awareness by driving financial professionals to the Cetera website at scale, and seamlessly connecting display and social advertising to its marketing automation platform to not only communicate with known and anonymous audiences beyond email, but also to make the buyer's journey more personal. And of course,

measuring the impact at each stage along the path to revenue. Hansen's return-on-investment analysis revealed that LinkedIn has driven more than \$960,000 in new business to Cetera to date. "The results we're seeing right now are a product of adding display and social advertising into our overall nurturing strategy—we can reach prospects anywhere online and make every interaction with them more personal and relevant throughout the buyer's journey."

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—Eric Hansen  
Director of Recruiting Marketing  
Cetera Financial Group

# INTERVIEW: JOHN MCTIGUE

Executive VP, Kuno Creative

**Q:** What's the best metaphor for explaining lead nurturing?

**John McTigue:** The best approach is the advisor-student relationship, where the salesperson or the person responsible for the lead nurturing communications is trusted and viewed as someone who knows what they're talking about.

**Q:** How do you get marketers to understand that the buyer's journey has changed and, as a result, lead nurturing is a necessity?

**McTigue:** Two ways. I say, look at the way you buy. Look at your own situation. You throw away every email that comes across your desk. You turn your TiVo on so you don't have to watch TV ads. You

send all the phone calls to voicemail and never call them back. This is the way we all behave now. We've become really good at using those filters, and it's not the way we want to be sold to. We want to do our own research. We're going to do our homework first and figure out what the best solution is for us, and we'll contact the salesperson when we're ready. As a marketer, you have to understand that, and you have to be there when they're checking you out. You have to be on all the time, 24/7. You have to be monitoring everything that's going on, and you have to be the best team in town in terms of content. And then, if that doesn't work, I show them the data, all the statistics, all the surveys that have been made. Everybody agrees that sales has really changed, and if you don't change you're going to lose.



*“The ideal situation is definitely to get sales, marketing, and customer service in the room, because they all have to work together. All have to be aligned, or it's not going to work very well.”*

—John McTigue

**Q:** What are the first steps for implementing a lead nurturing program?

**McTigue:** I ask our customers some pointed questions like, who are your customers? What do they want? What are their frustrations and pain points? Do you know who they are and how they shop? What is their criterion for success, and what are their goals? Do you know any of that? Usually they don't, so you have to start with buyer persona interviews, and you have to put together solid profiles of who your customers are and what they want. Once that's done we start mapping out content. What's the best content that will appeal to those buyers at each stage in the buyer journey?

**Q:** What's critical to making a lead nurturing program work?

**McTigue:** Nowadays, the differentiator is personalization. The more targeted the email, the more personalized the communication is in nurturing, the better. Our data shows that you get much higher conversion rates, much higher email open rates and click-throughs than you do without personalization. The way this works is that for each campaign we run there is a champion, so it might be me. I at least help write the original eBook or host the webinars, so I'm involved in every aspect of it. And then the nurturing emails are written in my voice. They're with my style and focus on things that I'm interested in and written in the first person. Those personalized emails convert much higher than just kind of your standard email blast.

*“Marketers should be asking some basic questions about their customers and their professional desires: Who are your customers? What do they want? What are their frustrations and pain points?”*

—John McTigue

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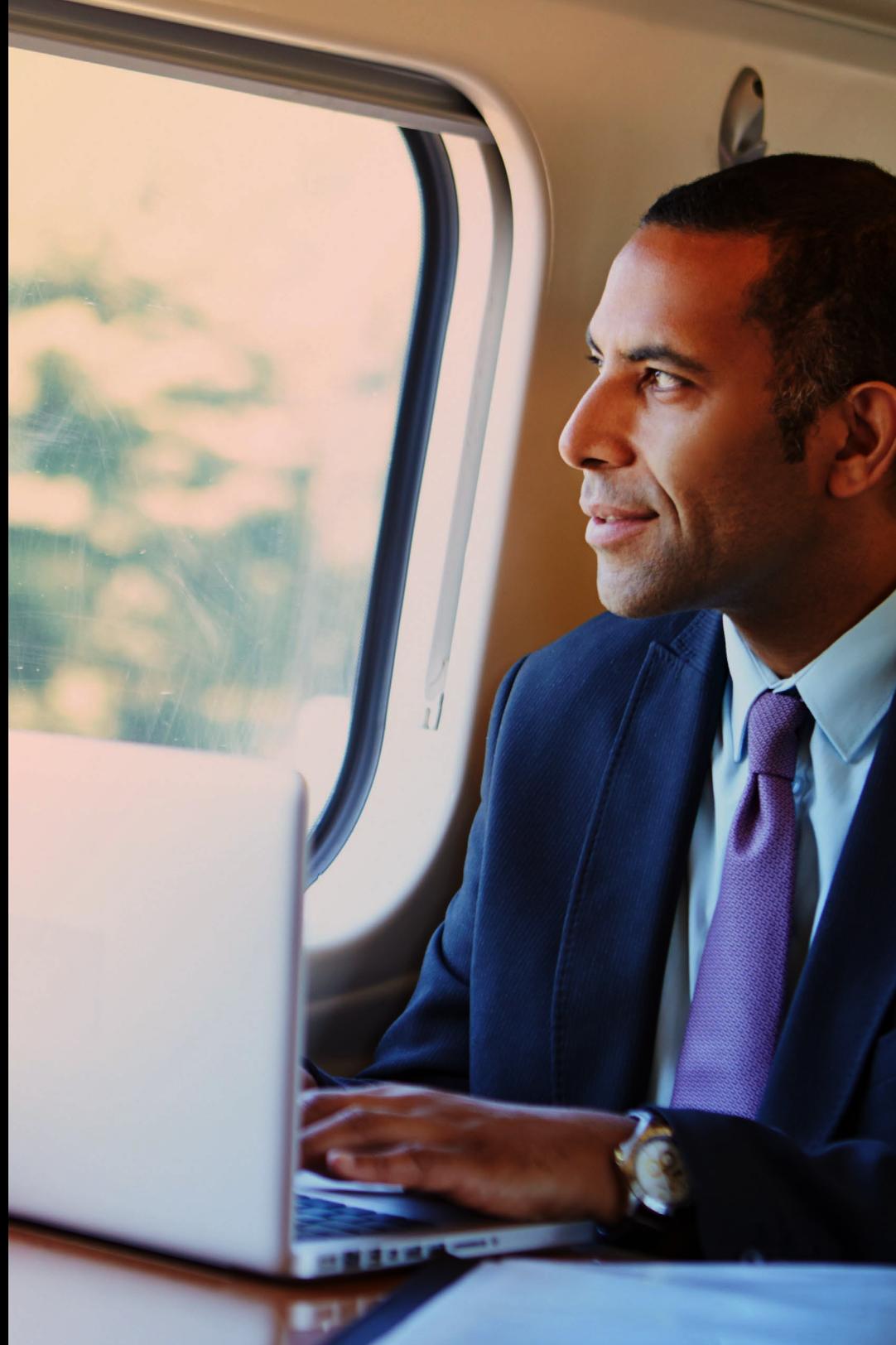
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# A GREAT LEAP

*Forward*

IN LEAD NURTURING

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# A Great Leap Forward in Lead Nurturing

For many marketers, the concept of nurturing leads begins and ends with email. With this kind of lead nurturing, B2B marketers have attempted to stay engaged with prospects who have shared their email address with e-newsletters and other email communications. Lead nurturing via email, especially when controlled with marketing automation software, can be highly effective. But there are downsides to this kind of lead nurturing.

A critical drawback is the simple fact that only about 5% of a company's website visitors ever share their email address. On top of that, only 20% of prospects who shared their email address ever open their email.

The solution is to expand a B2B marketer's capability to nurture website visitors even when they haven't shared their email address. With a new product called **LinkedIn Lead Accelerator**, B2B marketers have the capability to identify the business demographics of website visitors—the marketers can use data to discover, for instance, what industry visitors work in, what their job title is, and what their company size is. By

combining this data with what content the prospect viewed on the website, the marketer can serve targeted display and social media advertising to prospects, nurturing them toward becoming a lead or a customer.

If this sounds like retargeting, it isn't. Basic retargeting is a blunt instrument. It serves the same ads to everyone who visits a website without accounting for the website visitor's demographic information or their behavior on the website. Job seekers who visited a website are served the same ads as a hot prospect who was visiting the website to research a company's products and services. The targeted display and social

advertising enabled by LinkedIn Lead Accelerator is a surgical instrument that reaches a marketer's target audience with a precise, relevant, and personalized message.

"Lead Accelerator has allowed us to map our content so that it aligns with the customer journey and move people along that path in a very logical way," said Hootsuite's Shantel Shave. "For us, the conversion rates that we've seen from what we were using previously—they're dramatically different, dramatically improved."

# CONCLUSION

Lead nurturing has changed—dramatically. What once was the domain of the sales department is now in the hands of the marketing team. Using marketing automation tools, marketers have been able to build email nurturing programs that nurture prospects until they're qualified leads and ready to be contacted by sales.

But—by necessity—lead nurturing is moving beyond the email inbox and becoming a multichannel process that involves display and social media advertising to deliver relevant content to those prospects who haven't yet shared an email address. The most effective marketers are embracing multichannel nurturing and building always-on lead

nurturing programs that personalize their communications to deliver the right message at the right time to the right person.

# 27 Lead Nurturing Experts to Follow on Social Media

B2B marketing is changing so quickly, and keeping pace with the latest developments in lead nurturing can be daunting. Using social media to follow these B2B lead nurturing experts can help make sure you don't fall behind:

## **Ardath Albee**

CEO, Marketing Interactions  
@ardath421

## **Jay Baer**

President, Convince & Convert  
@jaybaer

## **Michael Brenner**

Head of Strategy, NewsCred  
@brennermichael

## **Jeff Bullas**

CEO, JeffBullas.com  
@jeffbullas

## **Brian Carroll**

Executive Director-Revenue  
Optimization,  
MECLABS Institute  
@brianjcarroll

## **Joe Chernov**

VP of Marketing, HubSpot  
@jchernov

## **Paul Dunay**

Financial Services  
Marketing Leader, PwC  
@pauldunay

## **Meagen Eisenberg**

CMO, MongoDB, Inc.  
@meisenberg

## **Steve Farnsworth**

CMO, The @Steveology Group  
@steveology

## **Paul Gillin**

Principal,  
Paul Gillin Communications  
@pgillin

## **Ann Handley**

Chief Content Officer,  
MarketingProfs  
@marketingprofs

## **Matt Heinz**

President, Heinz Marketing  
@heinzmarketing

## **Carlos Hidalgo**

CEO, Annuitas  
@cahidalgo

## **Doug Kessler**

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## **John McTigue**

Co-owner,  
Kuno Creative  
@jmctigue

## **Jon Miller**

Founder, Engagio  
@jonmiller

## **Margaret Molloy**

CMO, Siegel+Gale  
@margaretmolloy

## **Lee Odden**

CEO, TopRank  
Online Marketing  
@leeodden

## **Jeremiah Owyang**

Founder, Crowd Companies  
@jowyang

## **Joe Pulizzi**

Founder,  
Content Marketing Institute  
@joepulizzi

# 27 Lead Nurturing Experts to Follow on Social Media (cont.)

B2B marketing is changing so quickly, and keeping pace with the latest developments in lead nurturing can be daunting. Using social media to follow these B2B lead nurturing experts can help make sure you don't fall behind:

## **David Meerman Scott**

*Keynote Speaker,  
Freshspot Marketing  
@dmscott*

## **Ruth Stevens**

*President,  
eMarketing Strategy  
@ruthpstevens*

## **Alan See**

*CMO, Temps LLC  
@alansee*

## **Mike Volpe**

*CMO, HubSpot  
@mvolpe*

## **Shantel Shave**

*Director-Demand Generation,  
Hootsuite  
@mendicity*

## **Brian Solis**

*Principal Analyst,  
Altimeter Group  
@briansolis*



Today, LinkedIn members number more than 347+ million professionals. That's over one-half of the 600 million professionals on the planet, representing the largest group anywhere of influential, affluent and educated people.

For more information, visit [marketing.linkedin.com](https://marketing.linkedin.com)