



The 5-Minute Multi-Channel Nurturing Primer

Using Display and Social Advertising to Nurture Leads through the Funnel

What is multi-channel nurturing?

When it comes to nurturing, many B2B marketers have traditionally focused most of their efforts on email marketing. And while email is a viable channel, it's just one small piece of the larger nurturing puzzle.

If you want to reach prospects where they're spending time online, you have to nurture via multiple channels — not just email. An effective, multi-channel prospect nurturing program also encompasses display and social advertising, as well as compelling content marketing.

Marketing technologies available today enable you to develop nurture programs that carefully align to your prospects' demographic profile and interests, and continue to reach and educate them with relevant messaging and content wherever they travel on the web, and on their device of choice. This means that, in addition to nurturing the known prospects within your email database, you can keep your brand, messaging, and content offers in front of them through other channels including display and social advertising.

Why use multi-channel nurturing?

While email marketing is a powerful vehicle for nurturing prospects, it has its limitations. For example, the average email open rate for most B2B marketers does not exceed 20 percent.

Also, marketers who rely on email exclusively fail to reach the vast majority of their website visitors. That's because as many as 95 percent of the people who visit your website never fill out a web form. We call these visitors "anonymous" prospects because you don't have their contact information—yet. But just because you don't know their name, doesn't mean you don't know anything about them. How they behave online (how long they linger on your site or sponsored content sites, the pages they visit while they're there, etc.) along with their business demographics combine to form a precise profile that you can and should use to inform your nurture efforts on multiple channels and devices, including mobile.

Why? Multi-channel nurturing dramatically extends your reach. Channels like social and display enable you to engage existing prospects earlier in the buying process, by helping you reach them beyond the email inbox. In short, it's an efficient and scalable way to reach both known and anonymous prospects with timely, targeted messages—no matter where or how they choose to consume information online.



FACT

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How to get started with multi-channel nurturing

Step 1: Explore new channels and untapped opportunities.

You very likely already have a marketing automation system in place.

If you're among the majority of marketers who have embraced automation, you already have the powerful ability to synchronize display and social ads and social content with your email nurture programs. This technology enables you to serve up the same messaging, creative, and offers that your prospects may have missed in their inboxes.

What's more, in the event that you don't yet have a marketing automation platform in place, turning to new channels gives you a great way to kick-start your nurturing effort against those anonymous audiences visiting your website or blog.

Step 2: Identify and segment your audiences.

In order to develop compelling ad creative and implement content marketing that will engage prospects and generate conversions, it's important to first identify the different audiences you want to target. Start by segmenting your prospect audiences according to:

- Engagement level – how often are they visiting the website, and how many pages are they viewing?
- Interests – where are they spending time on your website?
- Demographic profile – are they marketers or IT professionals? Do they work for an SMB or Fortune 500 company? Are they managers or executives?

Moreover, you'll want to further segment your audiences based on whether they're known prospects (meaning you've already captured their information in your marketing automation system)



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or anonymous prospects (meaning they haven't yet converted on your website).

Step 3: Develop waves of targeted display and social ads.

Once you identify your audience segments, you can develop nurture paths and select content that caters to each group's unique interests and demographics. Create multiple combinations of ads and content designed to target each prospect group at every stage of the marketing funnel. For instance, top-of-funnel prospects that view only the business homepage of your site might initially receive high-level messaging to raise brand awareness, shape perception, and build trust. More engaged mid-funnel prospects who venture further on the site to explore product pages, might receive more targeted offers like case studies, white papers, and other benefit-oriented content that primes them for a sales conversation down the road. For known prospects, you can incorporate these nurturing offers with your existing email marketing campaigns.

Step 4: Define your metrics of success.

Rather than simply tracking click-through rates, it's important to analyze metrics that measure engagement across the entire marketing funnel. Ultimately, these metrics will help you to justify your marketing spend and prove the value of your campaigns. Track and trend key performance indicators including actions and conversions, pageviews and visits per visitor, and more. Drill down to analyze performance of specific display and social ad creative and calls to action, and track which content and messaging resonates with different audience segments so you can better engage prospects on their preferred channels and devices. Comparing these statistics to a control group will illustrate the impact your multi-channel lead nurturing strategy is having on prospects at every stage of the sales cycle.



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Step 5: Launch, test, and repeat.

Once you identify your audience segments, develop your ads and content, and define your metrics, you're ready to launch your program. Keep in mind that multi-channel nurturing is not a "set it and forget it" approach. To ensure success, you'll need to continually analyze, iterate, and improve your campaign creative and content strategy.

As with your email nurturing programs, it's important to measure your audience's engagement levels within each segment. Measure your prospects' response rate to each of your predefined metrics, and use A/B testing to optimize ad campaigns with slight variations in copy or design, so that you can maximize your ad spend. Likewise, when it comes to content marketing you'll want track downstream actions, test variations, and promote only your best-performing content. Your lead nurturing campaigns are always a work in progress: Continually tweak your nurture streams in order to reach the highest engagement levels with each of your target segments.



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