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**INBOUND MARKETING AGENTS**  
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THE MARKETING DIRECTOR'S GUIDE TO

# **THE SCIENCE OF LEAD GENERATION**

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# **Chapter 1:** **ALL ABOUT** **STRATEGY**



# The Intro

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“Leads are the metric that, as marketers, we rely on. Because leads mean money.”  
- Kipp Bodnar, Director of Marketing, HubSpot

Lead generation isn't just necessary for sales. It's necessary for educating your company's future customers. An excellent lead nurturing program can be the difference between establishing brand loyalty, and winning one-time customers who don't understand what makes your company different.

Lead generation and management educates pre-qualified leads who aren't quite ready to purchase. A marketer's role is to deliver the right content at the right time, keeping prospects engaged throughout the sales funnel. When done correctly, prospects have a strong brand preference by the time they're ready to buy. With the right technology, you're able to track qualified leads and content delivery throughout the buyers journey.

The goals of a sophisticated lead generation and nurturing program at an enterprise organization should be to:

- 1) Maintain permission-based communication with prospects.**
- 2) Establish ideas, thoughts, and comparison points throughout the buyers' journey.**
- 3) Respond to behaviorally-based triggers from your prospects when they're ready to make a purchase.**

Lead management is the most powerful way for your organization to engage with your future buyers. When the process is successfully implemented, your organization will gain the power to have comprehensive oversight and gain insights that can be used to enrich your organizational knowledge. However, the key to a successful lead nurturing program is content delivery. Your content must be valuable and interesting to your prospects' stage in research and decision-making so they'll continue to consider your company an expert resource.



**Chapter 2:**  
**MARKETING**  
**TECHNOLOGIES**



## WHY MARKETING TECHNOLOGY?

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Researchers have found that the skills and technologies needed to deliver effective, well-orchestrated omni channel customer experiences are totally lacking at most organizations. According to a study by Signal, over 90% of marketers believe that highly integrated technology platforms will help deliver more cost-effective programs, happier customers and higher ROI. However, while today's marketers are working off an average of 17 applications, only 5% believe their integration and technologies are sufficient for truly cross-channel marketing communications.

Signal's senior vice president of marketing Joe Stanhope stated. "There are...big points when I looked at all the data. The first was that technology fragmentation is a legitimate problem and that it has real consequences. Second was that there's recognition within marketing organizations that integration has business benefits. And third, marketers think their tools are only being used in the most basic ways. They underutilize these massive investments they have made."

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Why is technology so crucial to marketing programs of the future? It's because technology is a key to customer engagement. Marketing and sales operations need to understand the following aspects in order to win customers:

- > Standardized buyer persona profiles of audience
- > Intelligent management of the buyer's journey for effective sales-marketing handoffs
- > Performance analytics to implement a corporate culture of continuous improvement

The goal of your technology platform should be to manage data on your prospects and customers. It won't support lead nurturing unless your content can automatically be routed straight to the right prospects from any channel.

In a big sense, today's most effective digital marketers are information architects. They're responsible for managing their organization's information assets, and keeping content completely up-to-date. They're also responsible for engineering communication programs which ensure information assets are effectively routed, while constantly considering ways to ensure behavioral triggers are maximized.

While some organizations may have the ability to manage complex and expensive integrations of a large number of applications, this isn't a possibility for the vast majority of companies. In order to maximize use of the right technologies and integrations, today's marketing directors and CMOs must understand the key capabilities of exceptional marketing technology.

# WHAT CAPABILITIES DO YOUR MARKETING TECHNOLOGIES NEED?

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While individual needs can vary, the following technology capabilities are sufficient for most enterprise lead nurturing programs:

- >Customer Relationship Management
- >Sales Automation
- >Marketing Automation
- >Sales and Marketing Technology Integration
- >Quote and Proposal Systems
- >Content Management

These capabilities don't need to be stand-alone tools. In fact, at your organization, the right tools may include many necessary capabilities in a single, easy-to-use platform.

## **Customer Relationship Management System**

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software is used to manage interactions between your company and its' customers, and suppliers. The right system acts as a centralized repository for profiles and communications. When a CRM is fully optimized, your organization will have the information it needs to close more accounts, upsell existing customers, reactive old leads, and provide excellent customer service.

## **Sales Automation**

Sales automation, or sales force automation, are systems to make business development pros more efficient. These include prospect profiles information, which could include name, title, address, phone number, budget, and other prospect qualifiers. Sales interactions, opportunities, and other details are recorded in this system.

## **Marketing Automation**

Marketing automation softwares measure the results of marketing campaigns in web, social media, and email analytics to streamline marketing processes. For the purpose of lead nurturing campaigns, a robust marketing automation system will deliver content to prospects according to their segment and stage in the buying cycle.

## **Quote and Proposal Systems**

Avoiding lost potential revenue means your company needs the technology to ensure that no sales opportunities are neglected. A quotation and proposal system should contain accurate and complete information on your company's prices and standardized proposals to make your sales teams' quotation process as fast as possible.

## **Content Management Systems**

Your organization's Content Management System (CMS) needs to be nimble and optimized for advanced concepts like remarketing, or personalized web content. Today's marketers need their CMS to offer more features than simple web content updates. The best CMS allow a personalized browsing experience for prospects and customers, and are likely to offer cross-platform integration across social media for a total campaign experience.



# Chapter 3: **LEAD SCORING**



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Budget, authority, time and need. Commonly made into the acronym BANT, these lead scoring criteria have helped sales and marketing teams determine which leads are most qualified for decades. While these criteria certainly still matter, they're not ultimately sufficient for today's marketers.

Perhaps one of your leads with the most appropriate budget and timeline isn't opening your emails. They're not downloading or reading your content offers, and they're not visiting the pricing page on your website. Despite the fact they need your services and can afford it, they might not be ready to make the purchase. Modern lead scoring criteria should include behavioral triggers in addition to classic qualifiers, so you can determine the leads that are truly interested. With the help of advanced web analytics, it's easy to track prospect engagement with your website over time and manage sales priorities accordingly.

**HubSpot recommends using the following criteria to score your leads:**

- Budget
- Organization Size/Type
- Job Type
- Location
- Events Attended
- Pages Visited
- Downloads
- Frequency of Visits
- Engagement
- Email Activity
- Off-Site Events
- Lead Source

It's unlikely you'll get your lead scoring criteria exactly correct the moment they're established. Whether you're close to correct or not, the most effective organizations take a highly iterative approach to developing and maintaining lead scoring criteria. Use data from your best customer's profiles and buyers' journeys to continually improve your knowledge of what defines a qualified lead at your organization.

**Common Segmentation Methodologies**

Immediately after your leads are scored and passed from marketing to sales, they should be assigned to a segment according to buyer persona profile. Even if your organization has 2 or 3 profiles of ideal customers, having one segment per type of buyer isn't always efficient. The more segmentation you can apply to your email list, the more personalized the communications you'll be able to deliver to your prospects. There is virtually no limit on how much you can segment your email list.

The following types of segmentation are among the most common - and most effective, according to Marketo - ways to segment leads:

- >Geography
- >Language Preference
- >Business Unit
- >Role
- >Stage in Buyers' Journey
- >Interest
- >Verticals
- >Competitor

# COMMON SEGMENTATION METHODOLOGIES

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Role  
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Interest  
Verticals  
Competitor

Each of these segments is not necessarily exclusive. Maybe you're trying to market to the social media manager of a mid-market company, or maybe you're communicating with an individual who runs the entire marketing team for a social media organization. In either of these cases, you would need to segment by business unit and interest. How do you segment?

Effective segmentation requires you to assign priority, or default, segmentations. For global brands, language is a default segment. If you're national, your default segment might be company size or business unit. As you develop additional lead nurturing workflows, having the ability to add additional marketing customization according to segment priority will allow you to ensure you're addressing each prospect's most crucial pain points.

## **Progressive Profiling**

Progressive profiling is the use of dynamic web forms on landing pages and websites to gradually gather demographic and firmographic data and prospect preferences over time. Instead of asking a first-time website visitor to complete a form with 10 fields, you might stick to 3-4 questions initially and ask additional questions on subsequent website visits.

Progressive profiling yields the following benefits:

## PROGRESSIVE PROFILING YIELDS THE FOLLOWING BENEFITS:

### **Higher conversion rates:**

Short forms have higher conversion rates because barriers are minimized. Eloqua research has found that form conversions drop drastically if more than 7 fields are included.

### **Better Visitor Experience:**

You'll never annoy prospects by asking the same question repeatedly, which can allow you to lose out on buyer persona insights.

### **More Sales-Qualified Leads:**

Great progressive profiling allows marketers to provide the maximum volume of scored, sales-qualified leads to business development.

# EXAMPLE PROGRESSIVE PROFILING FORM

## FORM 1

- FIRST NAME
- LAST NAME
- EMAIL

## FORM 2

- INDUSTRY
- COMPANY NAME
- JOB TITLE
- NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

While it may be tempting to ask 15 questions immediately to begin qualifying your leads, your conversion rates will plummet. Be strategic about form development to maximize your conversions.

## FORM 3

- PRIMARY CHALLENGE
- BUYING AUTHORITY
- PHONE NUMBER

## FORM 4

- BUDGET
- TIMEFRAME TO BUY
- USE OF COMPETITIVE PRODUCT

## REMARKETING

Virtually all marketers have had some exposure to remarketing, typically by very large eCommerce brands. If you leave a website without purchasing anything, remarketing may remind you to complete your purchase by showing relevant ads as you visit other websites. The concept of displaying a product that a prospect has previously viewed is technically known as dynamic remarketing. The art of remarketing is in its infancy stages, but holds enormous potential for highly customized content experiences in the future.

### The Benefits of Remarketing Include the Following:

Reach people when they're ready to make a purchase, whether they're searching for your product or not.

**Tailor messaging to prospect actions:** You can create remarketing ads targeted to capture sales from individuals who have repeatedly viewed the same product or abandoned a cart.

**Reach a large audience:** Your remarketing lists can be managed via Google Display Network to target prospects on millions of websites across the web.



**Chapter 4:**  
**UNDERSTANDING**  
**YOUR BUYING**  
**CYCLE**



## THE BUYERS JOURNEY

The most sophisticated organizations provide the best customer service and prospect experiences. Many companies attempt to improve their customer experiences through research. Depending on the organization's scale, this could encompass interviews, focus groups, market trend analysts, and even studies purchased from 3rd-party organizations. All of these research methodologies can yield fantastic insights, but they're not the most important criteria.

The single most important action you can take to analyze how your buyers actually engage with your brand is understanding your own sales funnel and buyers' journey.

Regardless of your company's buyer persona profiles, service offerings, or price point, all of your prospects will pass through the following stages before they're ready to make a purchase:

**Awareness Stage:** The consumer becomes aware they're in need of a branded product or service solution in order to solve a problem or pain point.

**Consideration:** The prospect begins to engage with branded content to research various providers who can furnish the solution, and develops points of comparison between organizations.

**Decision Stage:** The consumer begins to filter potential providers through their own purchase criteria, develops a strong preference for one brand, and makes a purchase.

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The length of each of these stages can vary drastically between organization, depending on competition, buyer demographics and firmographics, and other factors like price point. Consumers are unlikely to purchase accounting services very quickly, though they could select a new provider of office supplies within the space of a week.

Mapping your buyer's journey can be performed using interviews and intuition, though that's certainly not the most effective way to develop a sufficiently data-driven model of prospect behavior. The best models are built off historical deals data pulled from your marketing automation platform and sales force automation systems.

Plot out interaction histories on a map, and understand the types of content your customers engage with:

**01 Define a “good customer.” What are the optimal budgets, demographics, or market segments for your future customers? Pull data from related deals.**

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**02 Pull full interaction histories for deals with your best customers.**

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**03 Plot interaction histories on a timeline, including content. Did your customers engage with 10-12 blog articles over a week before downloading an eBook? Did they spend 3 months reading emails, viewing your pricing page, and subscribing to your blog?**

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**04 Draw conclusions from patterns. You’ll likely begin to see patterns in your buyer’s’ journey and content needs as you analyze deals data. There will always be variation in customer behavior, but you’ll begin to develop an understanding of how long each stage of the buyer’s journey takes.**

Treat the initial output of your buyers journey model as a hypothesis. Before hypotheses can be accepted, they must be subject to stringent testing. Always make tactical adjustments to your lead nurturing strategy based on how your best buyers interact with your brand. Continue to refine your buyers’ journey by segments, because journeys can vary significantly according to buyer persona even for a single brand.

# CONTENT MARKETING AND JOURNEYS

The heart of your lead nurturing campaigns should be a content mapping, which is the process of assigning your organization's content assets to stages in the buyers journey. This requires a comprehensive understanding of your content assets, and sufficient research to understand the types of content your prospects need to receive during various stages. Known as content mapping, it's a critical action for effective lead nurturing campaigns.

Here are the questions that should guide your content mapping strategy, in order to maximize your content marketing to enhance your buyers journeys:

## **1. What is the pathway our leads take from awareness to evaluation, and then to purchase?**

What pages did your prospects visit? What was the order of the pages visited? What was their conversion pathway?

A conversion pathway for a qualified lead might start with the discovery of a blog article that's been posted on LinkedIn, or via organic search. The customer may read the article, click on related content, and then begin researching the company on the website before downloading an eBook. Understand the volume of content and types of content that play a role in each of these stages.

You're not likely to uncover a single conversion pathway. However, some pathways will emerge as common among your most profitable content. An additional benefit of this action is that you'll begin discovering holes in your strategy. Perhaps you simply don't have enough content on a popular topic, or you're not advertising the right content offers. Use this knowledge to refine your content creation strategy.

## **2. What content assets are needed along these pathways?**

Depending on a buyer's stage in the journey, they have different content needs. As your organization invests in more and more content assets and lead nurturing research, you'll begin to unpack exactly the types of content that are needed for conversion and progression through your sales funnel. Common types of content by stage include:  
Awareness: Whitepapers, eBooks, kits, tip sheets, checklists, tutorials, webinars  
Evaluation: Product webinars, case studies, samples, FAQ sheets, data sheets, demos

## **3. What Types of Content Need to be Created?**

Understand the content assets you're missing. Your organization may have plenty of awareness stage content, and tons of fact sheets for end-stage prospects. However, you may completely lack the resources necessary for prospects to effectively evaluate your brand. Content mapping is a powerful way of auditing your assets for sales.

As you master the art of content mapping, you'll gain the ability to map assets according to segment and buyer persona. With the added benefit of deep knowledge of the buyers' journey, you can create the right content to deliver the right messaging to the right types of people, at exactly the right time.

# BEHAVIORAL-BASED MARKETING

Understanding what your customer base wants and how they interact with your brand is at the heart of behavioral-based marketing. Over the past decade, as consumers have rapidly adopted social media and mobile technology, consumer behavior has changed drastically. Perhaps faster than during any other period in history. Today's marketers need to be agile and committed to understanding their customers. This understanding can't come from assumptions or gut feelings, it's got to come from data.

Once you've completed research into your buyers journey and mapped content assets, you'll begin to understand key points in your buyers' journey that are likely to precede a purchase or another major event.

According to Silverpop, behaviorally-driven marketing campaigns tend to perform far better than non-behaviorally triggered campaigns:

- Behavioral-triggered email campaigns perform 325% better than simple blast campaigns**
- Behavioral-based advertising averages 670% improvement in performance over traditional display ads.**
- Automated behavior based email had a 33% higher open rate and 37% higher click-through-rate when compared to normal mass send emails**

When people receive emails based on behavioral settings, versus mass mailings to an entire email list or segment, on average they:

- Spend 22% higher on site**
- Have a 31% higher order conversion rate**
- Have a 22% increase on amount spent per purchase**

Know your customers by analyzing data on their behavior within the context of the buyers journey. Once you understand that downloading case studies is often a trigger for the decision stage, you can develop triggered campaigns based on their preferences, location, devices, and much more. When your marketing is literally tailored to your prospects needs, your results will be much better. There's no better proof than behavior that a prospect is ready to move deeper into your sales funnel, and behaviorally-triggered marketing is a way of delivering what these prospects need.



**Chapter 5:**  
**SALES/MARKETING**  
**ALIGNMENT**





## Establishing an SLA

Marketers are often measured against lead generation goals. In some organizations, this isn't always a good thing. Marketing may launch aggressive campaigns to produce a massive volume of new contacts at the end of the month or quarter. The result is often low-quality leads that sales struggles to convert into customers. This can lead to serious tension between marketing and sales. This is one of several reasons why sales-marketing alignment is critical for success. At the core of any sales-marketing alignment strategy should be the development of a service level agreement (SLA) for sales and marketing.

## The Solution

Many enterprise organizations, including HubSpot, are ardent supporters of the sales and marketing SLA. This document should define expectations for lead quality and quantity, not just quantity. It should also define expectations for how frequently and aggressively sales should engage with genuinely qualified leads. Take the following steps to develop one in your own organization:

- Use closed loop analysis to determine your organization's most profitable customer profiles (buyer personas) and lead nurturing segments.
- Classify the concept of "workable" leads, which are fully nurtured and ready to engage productively with sales.
- Determine how many workable leads marketing needs to produce for your sales department each month.
- Establish organizational standards for sales communication with qualified, nurtured leads, based on historical data from your sales automation software.
- Monitor metrics continually, including
  - Total volume of workable leads
  - Attempts per workable lead
  - Communication conversion rate of workable leads
  - Sales conversion rate of workable leads

**By taking a metrics-driven approach to sales and marketing which involves both lead quality and quantity, organizations can significantly reduce tension between sales and marketing, and gain better control over their revenue pipelines.**

## SHARED TECHNOLOGIES BETWEEN SALES AND MARKETING

Increasingly, organizations are turning to all-in-one marketing solutions which create total transparency between sales and marketing. This can require some integration between two robust tools. By combining a marketing platform like HubSpot with a CRM system like Salesforce, teams are able to boost productivity, visibility, and better manage their contacts.

While highly robust platforms like HubSpot and Salesforce are immensely valuable on their own, the true value comes from integration. When you're able to reliably and automatically sync leads from your marketing software to your CRM, you'll move customers seamlessly through the sales cycle. The benefits include better efficiency, easier marketing-sales handoffs, and a cleaner customer experience.

An additional benefit of integrated technology is the opportunity for total oversight of your entire sales funnel. Measuring ROI becomes simple since integration allows for easy full-funnel reporting. Marketers can determine the lead conversion channels and campaigns that are resulting in the most profitable customer relationships, and track the progression of new customers from first-click to most recent purchase.

## THE FUTURE OF LEAD NURTURING

The goal of lead nurturing is to identify the right prospects, match them with the correct information to motivate purchase, and score them on an ongoing basis if they're receptive and ready-to-engage with the right information.

It's worth examining what's ultimately required to purchase leads. Any lead nurturing program in the past, present or future requires the following aspects:

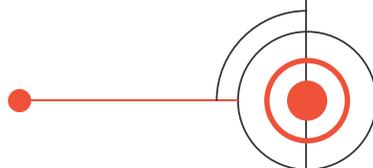
**-Likeliness to buy can be measured through lead scoring**

**-Information consumption can be controlled to educate prospects in an optimal way**

**-The more a prospect engages with your brand, the more likely they are to buy**

Marketers today have built marketing automation platforms around lead scoring. We now have the tools to measure information consumption, but marketers still say that lead management is a big challenge. Systems and measurements aren't always accurate, and some organizations struggle with getting sales to adopt the right tools.

**Improved Customization in Content**  
The advent of big data and easy-to-use big data tools has provided marketers with extraordinary new opportunities for customization in marketing. Content experiences are becoming increasingly interactive, and marketers will soon be looking for ways to move beyond personalized calls-to-action and dynamic web forms to deliver customized web experiences.



## USE OF ALGORITHMS FOR CONTENT CUSTOMIZATION

Several years ago, Amazon's product recommendation was considered the cutting-edge of data science in marketing. Prospects were shown product recommendations based on purchase history, profile, and quantitative measures of product similarity. Today, many large eCommerce retailers are investing in similar algorithms to provide highly customized content experiences to customers. The technology currently exists to provide content experiences that are fully personalized through an increased volume of behavioral triggers, demographics, and firmographic factors.

Great marketers have been taking an algorithmic approach to lead scoring and lead nurturing for decades, even though it's not always been especially automated. As technologies for complex evaluation of prospects become cheaper, more readily available, and easier to use, complex analysis of prospect needs will become the norm.

Opportunities for more automated customization in content can only mean increasingly relevant experiences for leads. Brands who invest in platforms for truly dynamic lead experiences are likely to be viewed as the best resources for products and service education. Increasingly, organizations are turning to all-in-one marketing solutions which create total transparency between sales and marketing. This can require some integration between two robust tools. By combining a marketing platform like HubSpot with a CRM system like Salesforce, teams are able to boost productivity, visibility, and better manage their contacts.



# ABOUT IMA

As a HubSpot Platinum Partner since 2012, IMA delivers a level of inbound marketing expertise unparalleled by other marketing agencies. Small enough to be nimble, but large enough to produce mighty results, the IMA team is comprised of individuals who are experts and leaders in a range of marketing areas, including inbound marketing, SEO, web development, social media, and design, to name a few.

We are trusted allies in your pursuit of marketing success and extend the capabilities and reach of your marketing efforts. We empower your marketing to be bigger and bolder so you can achieve more, be more ambitious, and produce greater results.



## Contact IMA

Visit: [www.inboundmarketingagents.com](http://www.inboundmarketingagents.com)

Email: [agent@inboundmarketingagents.com](mailto:agent@inboundmarketingagents.com)

Call: 615.600.4790

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