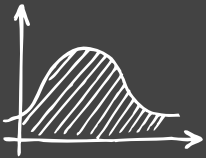AN INTRODUCTION TO

LEAD NURTURING

How to Use Lead Nurturing for Smarter Marketing
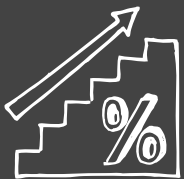
HubSpot

LEADS WHO ARE EFFECTIVELY NURTURED PRODUCE A 20% INCREASE IN SALES. (SOURCE: DEMANDGEN)

EFFECTIVE LEAD NURTURING GENERATES 50% MORE SALES-READY LEADS AT A 33% LOWER COST. (SOURCE: DEMANDGEN)

NURTURED LEADS MAKE 47% LARGER PURCHASES THAN NON-NURTURED LEADS. (SOURCE: THE ANNUITAS GROUP)

RELEVANT EMAILS DRIVE 18 TIMES MORE REVENUE THAN BROADCAST EMAILS. (SOURCE: JUNIPER RESEARCH)

" LEAD NURTURING IS A SYSTEM THAT ALLOWS YOU TO SEND AN AUTOMATED SERIES OF EMAILS TO AN EARLY-STAGE LEAD IN ORDER TO PRE-QUALIFY THEM.

"Lead Nurturing" sometimes goes by other names: marketing automation, drip marketing, auto-responders, etc. Simply put, lead nurturing is a system that allows you to send an automated series of emails to an early stage lead in order to pre-qualify them before handing them over to your sales team .

As a marketer, you definitely want to capture as much lead information for as many people on your site as you can, but not everyone is ready to talk to sales. Getting leads is awesome - but not all leads are at the point where they can be considered sales-ready. Depending on whose research you read, only 5% - 25% of the traffic on your site is actually ready to do business with you at that moment; the rest are doing research.

Studies show that 50% of leads who are qualified to buy are not ready to purchase immediately. If you call these leads up and push them into making a decision right away, you will likely lose them.

Instead, take a look at your existing sales funnel. How long does it typically take a lead to become a customer after his or her first inquiry? Does the sales cycle vary for different types of purchases? Equipped with the answers to these questions, you can build some effective lead nurturing campaigns and leverage this marketing channel to qualify leads and help your sales organization.

READY TO START NURTURING?

CONTENTS

WHY LEAD NURTURING: THE BENEFITS OF LEAD NURTURING

" LEAD NURTURING IS ALL ABOUT UNDERSTANDING THE NUANCES OF YOUR LEADS' TIMING AND NEEDS.

As an inbound marketing tactic, lead nurturing is all about understanding the nuances of your leads' timing and needs. By getting these details right, you set yourself up for success.

By definition, lead nurturing is the purposeful process of engaging a defined target group by providing relevant information at each stage of the buyer's journey, positioning your company as the best (and safest) choice to enable them to achieve their objectives.

An effective nurturing process actively moves the prospects you've created through your marketing and lead generation efforts, through a sales development process to the point where they become paying customers. Lead nurturing utilizes both marketing and sales tactics to increase the predictability and velocity of revenue growth.

" IF YOU THINK EMAIL MARKETING IS POWERFUL, YOU SHOULD SEE WHAT LEAD NURTURING CAN DO.

Many marketers worship email above other marketing channels. That is understandable to a large degree. Email enables you to establish a relationship with your prospects, stay top of mind, and offer discounts and promotions as the need arises. However, such one-time promotional emails can be a big turn off for your recipients, prompting them to form a negative opinion of your brand and unsubscribe from your list.

Lead nurturing, on the other hand, introduces a tightly connected series of emails with a coherent purpose and an abundance of useful, relevant content. In this context, lead nurturing offers more advantages than just one individual email blast.

So if you think email marketing is powerful, you should see what lead nurturing can do. In this section, we will explore some of its key benefits, especially in relation to email marketing.
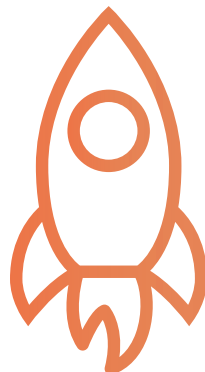
IT'S TIMELY.

One of the problems with mass email marketing is that you miss the opportunity to connect with leads as soon as they subscribe, which is when they're most interested in hearing from you.

Research shows that the odds of a lead entering the sales process, or becoming qualified, are **21 times greater when contacted within five minutes versus 30 minutes after an inbound lead converts on your website.**

The benefits of immediate follow up calls seem quite evident, but -- despite this -- most organizations still aren't acting very quickly. Consider the following stats:

- The average first response time of B2B companies to their leads is 42 hours
- Only 37% of companies respond to their leads within an hour
- 24% of companies take more than 24 hours
- 23% of the companies never respond at all

Automated lead nurturing solves for all of this. Do it well, and you'll never miss another good-fit lead again!

IT ENABLES YOU TO BUILD THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

People do business with businesses they know and trust. The first time someone converts on your website, the likelihood that they really know who you are or understand why they should do business with you is pretty slim. Lead nurturing is an opportunity to show that you are an expert in your field.

IT ENSURES YOU MAINTAIN CONSISTENT COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR AUDIENCE.

66% of buyers indicate that "consistent and relevant communication provided by both sales and marketing organizations" is a key influence in choosing a solution provider. Get off on the right foot and don't let leads slip through the cracks with an automated lead nurturing campaign.

IT HELPS YOU IDENTIFY INTEREST OR PAIN.

Lead nurturing emails are a great way to learn more about your leads - what challenges are they facing? What features or products are they interested in? By presenting different questions or types of content and seeing who responds to what, you can qualify your leads and set yourself up for warmer sales conversations.

IT CAN UNCOVER SEGMENTATION OPPORUNITIES.

Similarly, you can learn more about your leads via this email nurturing and segment your emails going forward on what you learn to have more effective communications going forward. As mentioned earlier in this ebook, segmented and targeted emails generate 58% of all revenue, so you should take any opportunity you have to segment your leads.

IT CAN HELP YOU MAINTAIN OR INCREASE ENGAGEMENT.

Automated lead nurturing is a great way to maintain engagement when a lead has already made the move to interact with you. And, if that lead has stopped visiting your site or reviewing your offerings, lead nurturing is a great way to remind them about your business.

IT CAN LEAD TO SHORTER SALES CYCLES.

Market2Lead found that nurtured leads have a 23% shorter sales cycle. Lead nurturing represents a way for the marketing team to help with the sales process and nurture more leads through the sales funnel.

IT CAN IDENTIFY CROSS- AND UP-SELL OPPORTUNITIES.

In the case of past customers, lead nurturing offers a way to broaden that customer's awareness of what you offer. The same Market2Lead study found that nurtured leads have a 9% higher average deal size, showing that there is an opportunity to not only increase the number of sales but the size of sales using lead nurturing.

IT CAN ENCOURAGE REFERRALS AND NEW LEAD GENERATION.

Even though you're emailing lists of existing leads, lead nurturing has the potential to attract new website visitors and generate new leads. Especially if you're doing a good job of sharing valuable content, your leads are likely to forward your email along to coworkers or friends, expanding your reach and attracting new people into your business.

TYPES OF LEAD NURTURING CAMPAIGNS

" WHAT TYPE OF LEAD NURTURING CAMPAIGN FITS INTO YOUR INBOUND MARKETING STRATEGY?

There are many types of nurturing programs geared to fit your prospects' situations and your objectives. Sometimes you're going to want to implement lead nurturing as a means of qualifying leads. Sometimes you'll just want educate. Once you become more sophisticated in your lead nurturing strategy, you may want to think about using it to solve for your cross- or up-sell goals.

We've identified six types of programs (based on your goal) to think about before we dig into how to build your first lead nurturing campaign.

YOUR GOAL: EDUCATION.

You could start with some general educational emails that have content demonstrating the value your company can offer (without being "salesy").

"Send emails that educate," advises David Meerman Scott. If you're a sporting goods manufacturer, for instance, don't just send emails that sell your equipment. Instead, try to teach people new techniques related to working out.

YOUR GOAL: PROMOTION.

Don't be afraid to mix in some promotional emails -- especially to segments of more qualified leads. Do you have a current offer you can advertise? The key here is to avoid being spammy or you could affect your unsubscribe rate, end up the junk folder, or just remain unread. Ensuring these emails are enticing and valuable is imperative (note: subject line is key!).

YOUR GOAL: ENGAGEMENT.

This type of lead nurturing campaign also counts as an educational content email. The key here is to create a theme around best practices that you can offer to your leads, and make sure the email series is closely connected to their initial conversion or interest. For instance, if someone expressed interest in learning about nutritional foods, send them an email with guidelines on how to maintain a healthy and nutritional diet. That will keep your recipients engaged and anticipating your next piece of communication.

YOUR GOAL: QUALIFICATION.

Did a lead click on product info in an email or on your website? Then perhaps they would be interested in checking out a demo or receiving a free trial offer in order to delve a little deeper and get a closer look on your product/service. Send them an email invitation to a demo.

YOUR GOAL: MQL->CUSTOMER.

If a lead has gone through the content map, down the funnel and is getting closer to the bottom, it may be a good idea to send a more personal and targeted email, perhaps from a sales team member. That way, they get a more personal touch, have a chance to ask specific questions, and get to talk to a real person rather than being a part of an email group. Humanizing the brand in this way can be very effective.

YOUR GOAL: HELP (TOFU, MOFU & BOFU).

Lists are always a good way to attract someone's attention. Some of the best blog articles are, in fact, lists of useful content. It's easy to weave these into your lead nurturing. For instance, if someone watched your video about ski equipment, you can follow up with a list of ski equipment blog posts that you think are going to be useful to them.

Each of these programs have various types of campaigns that should be developed to meet the various objectives you have and to align with the context of your prospects. Just remember, no campaign is perfect, and each person is different. It'll take time and tweaking to get it just right. Testing is key.

5 STEPS TO SETTING UP A LEAD NURTURING CAMPAIGN

"" THERE ARE CERTAIN STEPS YOU NEED TO FOLLOW IN ORDER TO ENSURE THE EFFICIENCY OF YOUR EMAILS.

Being a marketer, and if you're already made it this far in the ebook, you probably have some ideas about lead nurturing campaigns that you can launch to shorten the sales cycle of your leads and boost conversions. So, how do you get started?

Setting up a lead nurturing campaign is not a science. However, there are certain steps you need to follow in order to ensure the efficiency of your emails. For instance, you shouldn't be pummeling recipients with sales pitches. Instead, you should start out by sending useful, low-commitment information with content-based calls-to-action. Gradually, you will introduce a middle-of-the-funnel call-to-action that is tightly related to your initial point of contact. For example, if you are a marketing manager at a HR software company, and your lead has downloaded an ebook on people management principles, eventually you'll surface a call-to-action suggesting they demo your people management software.

In this section, we will review the step-by-step process of setting up a lead nurturing campaign and highlight some best practices along the way.

1 DETERMINE YOUR GOAL.

The first step is to determine your goal. Refer to the previous chapter to help you identify what exactly you want to achieve. This will help you carve out your entire campaign -- from audience and content, to your success metrics.

## ARE YOU TRYING TO REAWAKEN COLD LEADS? INCREASE LEAD QUALITY? GENERATE NEW LEADS?

Before you set the goal of your lead nurturing campaign, you should decide what actions make a lead sales-ready. For example, if someone downloads a whitepaper, they could just be doing research and may not be ready to speak with a sales rep. Therefore, you should add them to a lead nurturing campaign that further qualifies them. If that person comes back and requests a demo, that's a much better indication that they are ready to buy. Now you can send them to a sales rep.

2 SELECT A PERSONA.

The second step is to decide who you are trying to reach. What problem are you helping them solve?

This is key for helping you create the content for your lead nurturing campaign. Your persona should be a pretty vivid picture of who you're ideally trying to reach. Go as far as giving them a name, a job, responsibilities, and hobbies. If you haven't created your buyer persona yet, this blog post will guide you through the whys and hows of creating your buyer personas.
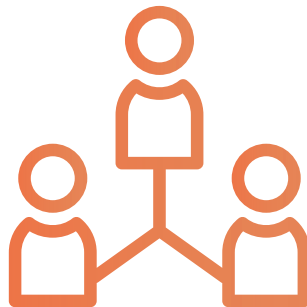
3 RE-PURPOSE EXISTING CONTENT.

Now that you've decided what makes a person sales-ready, you can choose which content you should send to your fresh leads. As you might have figured by now, content is a key piece of lead nurturing. Just because someone converts on your website, doesn't mean you should jump straight into sending them an email about requesting a quote or a demo. You need to nurture them through the sales funnel first, nurturing them to a point where the sales team can have a qualified and meaningful conversation with them.

INSTEAD OF PITCHING YOUR PRODUCT AS THE GREATEST THING EVER, YOU SHOULD FIRST OFFER VALUE.

Examples of valuable offers include videos, webinars, ebooks, blog posts, and whitepapers. You don't have to create new content for your lead nurturing emails. If you have a backlog of content, utilize those assets. If they've been successful at converting leads in the past, there's a high chance the leads you're nurturing now will find value in them, too

SET UP A TIMELINE.

Your business has a typical sales cycle, and so should your lead nurturing campaigns. Typically, it's a good idea to send two to three emails to your prospects in a lead nurturing campaign, but this will come down to the complexity of your offering and how qualified the leads that enter your nurturing flows actually are.

With lead nurturing, patience is a virtue. It won't work overnight, driving endless cash for your business. It's a longer term play that will undoubtedly need to be measured and optimised to get right.

Don't be afraid to experiment with different timelines and see what resonates with your audience best. For example, if your typical cycle runs 30 days, you may want to set up a campaign for emails to be sent out on the 1st, 10th, and 20th days after a conversion.

5 MEASURE & IMPROVE.

The last step in setting up a lead nurturing campaign is to ensure the accurate tracking of your emails. You need to make sure you know what's working and what's not so you can continue to improve. Have metrics in place that tie to your goals set in step one.

Looking to drive branding and awareness? Measure branded search or direct traffic to your website. Looking to increase lead quality? Measure quality conversions or lead ratings over time. Interested in generating new leads or email opt-ins? Measure how you're growing your database from your lead nurturing efforts. How many new customers have you won? What are your email CTRs? How many demos have you scheduled?

As your campaigns run, make sure to experiment with the offers you send, the subject lines, and the calls-to-action found within the email. There's always room to improve your campaign. We will cover more about metrics later in the last chapter of this ebook.

HOW TO OPTIMIZE YOUR LEAD NURTURING CAMPAIGNS

" IN ORDER TO MAXIMIZE THE VALUE YOU GET OUT OF LEAD NURTURING EMAILS, YOU NEED TO OPTIMIZE THEM.

By now, you have probably decided what types of lead nurturing emails you want to create, and you have a plan to get started. In order to maximize the value you get out of your lead nurturing emails, you'll need to optimize them.

The good news is that there are many email elements you can optimize: who the message is coming from, when it is getting sent out, what the subject line is. All this is very similar to the best practices in email marketing.

In this section of the ebook, we will discuss how you can go about optimizing your individual emails as well as your overall lead nurturing campaigns.

PERSONALIZE YOUR VOICE.

If possible, send your emails from a real person, not from a generic mailing list like marketing@yourcompany.com, and make sure your "reply-to" address is a real person too. This lets people know that you care about hearing from them by allowing them to reply to a real person.

- Personalize your email in any way that you can. Do you have the recipient's first name? Company name? Do you know how he/ she first found out about you?

- Including this information in your emails indicates you're paying attention to who they are and not just sending out blast emails to any email address you can get.

- Write emails that are authentic and approachable. Be human in your marketing efforts!

KEEP IT SHORT.

This is not the time to worry about fonts or adding images or custom HTML. The lead should be able to glance at your email and, within five seconds, know the value it provides to them.

Information overload happens quickly in email: marketers are often tempted to add secondary calls-to-action or unrelated links. Your messages need to be quick and to the point. Try bolding your key point to make it stand out, but anything else and you risk increasing your unsubscribe rate and subtracting from the effectiveness of your campaign.

"

THE LEAD SHOULD BE ABLE TO GLANCE AT YOUR EMAIL AND, WITHIN FIVE SECONDS, KNOW THE VALUE IT PROVIDES TO THEM.

GET THE TIMING RIGHT.

Timing is always important when nurturing your leads. You can easily upset people by emailing them too much (daily? hourly?) or too little (long after they've forgotten about your company). There is a fine balance when playing with the timing of your emails, and your best bet is to experiment to figure out what works best. Here are some tips to help get you started:

- Emailing someone every day for a month is never a good idea, and it's a certain way to encourage leads to mark your emails as SPAM or to unsubscribe. Remember that, while making the sale is your top priority, buying (right now) might not be the top priority of your lead. Helping to set an urgent tone is key in the sales process, but there is a delicate balance between setting the right tone and being annoying.

- Don't wait for six months after the lead was on your site to nurture them.

78% OF SALES THAT START WITH A WEB INQUIRY GET WON BY THE FIRST COMPANY THAT RESPONDS.

- Experiment with unconventional timing. some marketers find that weekends can actually be a great time to attract people's attention. So don't be afraid of starting your lead nurturing campaign on a Sunday, for instance.

DON'T IGNORE SOCIAL MEDIA.

Done right, social media and email can complement each other and help you stay top of mind among your target audience. Social media is a great way to stay in touch with leads over time and keep them updated on your business. So, what can you be doing from a lead nurturing perspective to leverage the power of social media?

- **Give people the chance to share your offer with their network.** If they find your offer useful and highly targeted, they will most likely be open to spreading the word about it. That will give you an opportunity to generate new leads and create buzz around your brand. Include social media sharing links in each of your lead nurturing emails and see if people click on them.

- **Make sure your emails are optimized with social media following links/icons.** Let people decide if they would like to receive updates from you via email, on social media, or both. There is an expectation that social media updates are more frequent, so if your recipients are interested in joining you on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, or Twitter, that's a great sign.

Note, however, that it's important to monitor the performance of both these strategies, ensuring that they don't take away from the overall goal of the email.

USE CLOSELY RELATED CONTENT.

Send your leads content that's closely related to why you have their email address, and which addresses their needs and interests.

• At a minimum, you should know why you have their email address. Did they convert on an ebook A or webinar B? Did they put their business card in your fish bowl at conference C? Make sure your nurturing campaign is related to this initial topic that drew them to you.

• You might have made educated guesses about which types of content your subscribers will be interested in, but you can also check if your approach was effective. Monitor clicks and see what content pieces resonate better with your recipients. This will allow you to improve the content of your lead nurturing campaigns down the road.

• Update your emails as things change. Your industry isn't static, your offers aren't static, and your lead nurturing shouldn't be static either. Make sure you update your lead nurturing campaigns on a regular basis to keep them relevant and interesting.

ALWAYS INCLUDE A CALL-TO-ACTION.

The secret to effective lead nurturing is to collect as much information as you can about your leads, and then use it to be relevant and interesting. Including calls-to-action (CTAs) is a great way to collect these types of insights. In fact, you shouldn't be sending an email without a call-to-action.

IF YOU AREN'T SURE ABOUT WHAT CTA TO INCLUDE, THEN GO BACK TO STEP ONE AND THINK ABOUT THE GOAL OF YOUR CAMPAIGN.

- Calls-to-action can help you learn more about your leads' interests. What they click on indicates what they want to learn more about. This provides valuable information to your sales team, and it also helps you understand which types of content to use in future nurturing efforts.

- Make sure your calls-to-action are clear and actionable. Tell your lead exactly what you want them to do and why they should do it.

- Try to include a call-to-action in the first paragraph of your email. People don't have time to read long, drawn-out emails, so keep it short and sweet, and tell them what to do right up front. Another option is to include it in bold font so that it stands out as your lead skims the email.

WRITE COMPELLING SUBJECT LINES.

7% of email recipients decide whether or not to open an email based on subject line alone. That's why it's so important to craft subject lines that are compelling enough to get people to click through. They're a marketer's ticket for standing out in a crowded inbox. Here are some of the fundamentals of crafting great subject lines:

Urgency. Communicating urgency and scarcity in an email subject line can help compel readers to click (or act) -- when phrased creatively and strategically.

Curiosity. If your subject line piques the recipient's natural curiosity and interest, they'll have to open the email to get more information. That can result in, well, a higher open rate.

An offer. At the end of the day, people love new things and experiences -- especially when they come free, or at least discounted. Open with that by including it in your subject line.

Personalization. Marketers have never had more ways to learn about their subscribers' preferences, jobs, or general (dis)likes. So when you send them content, make it catered toward the individual.

For more advanced tips on crafting the best subject lines, check out this blog post.

EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGNS

" IT'S DIFFICULT TO APPLY BEST PRACTICES IF YOU HAVEN'T SEEN REAL EXAMPLES OF WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE.

So far in this ebook we have reviewed some optimization best practices for lead nurturing campaigns. However, it is difficult to apply these practices if you haven't seen real examples of what successful lead nurturing campaigns can look like.

That is why we've taken examples from projects we've done ourselves here at HubSpot. These examples follow some of the best practices we have discussed so far, and represent some of our most successful lead-nurturing emails and flows. We hope they inspire you to start creating some of your own.

So let's look at these examples!

WHAT PERSONALIZATION LOOKS LIKE.

The example below is from a nurturing campaign we've run here at HubSpot. The goal here was to help the sales reps surface highly qualified and interested leads efficiently by allowing them to book a time for a demo AFTER they've shown interest in actually having a demo. Note the personalisation in the "from name," "reply-to" email address, subject line, preview text, greeting, and signature. The second sentence in the email is a call-to-action, taking leads to our Meetings app where leads can book a meeting with their rep.

HOW TO USE CLOSELY-RELATED CONTENT.

This is the first email one of HubSpot's SEO-related lead nurturing campaigns. It is a helpful email, aimed to pique the lead's interest and engagement by offering them closely-related content. Leads receive this email after downloading our SEO Planner offer. At the end of the email, we also offer them the opportunity to chat to a rep to discuss their SEO strategy.

Hey FIRSTNAME,

NURTURING_OWNER here from HubSpot. I noticed you downloaded our 30 day SEO planner and wanted to check in.

These resources may be useful to help with improving your SEO strategy:

How to search engine optimize your blog content

How we grew our organic traffic 120% in 5 months with 4 simple steps

Topics over keywords: A simple framework for more effective content creation

If you would like a free consultation on your SEO strategy, please don't hesitate to schedule time on my calendar. We're here to help!

Best,
NURTURING_OWNER (NURTURING_OWNER_PHONE_NUMBER)
Inbound Growth Specialist, HubSpot

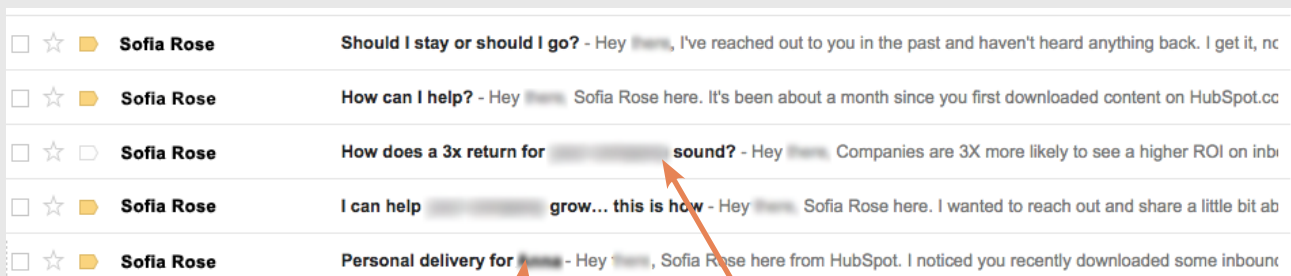HubSpot, 25 1st St. Cambridge, MA 02141, USA
manage your email preferences unsubscribe

Try without branding (plain text) for a more "personal email" feel

Helpful resources based on content they've already downloaded

Personalized email signature

WHAT COMPELLING SUBJECT LINES LOOK LIKE.

The screenshot below is a snapshot of subject lines associated with one of our most successful lead-MQL conversion nurturing flows at HubSpot. The last email on the list represents the first email in the flow. This email includes a list of resources closely aligned with what the lead downloaded (refer to the preview example to get an idea of what this email looks like). After that, we provide more resources in terms of research, which helps build a business case for software like HubSpot. As we move through the flow, we present different HubSpot product options, the opportunity to talk to a rep, as well as a "break-up" email marking one final opportunity to chat to us, as well as the end of the flow. Each subject line is crafted to be compelling, personal and helpful. They rouse the readers interest, ensuring high click-through rates, as well as those all-important MQLs.

		Sofia Rose	**Should I stay or should I go?** - Hey ▓▓▓, I've reached out to you in the past and haven't heard anything back. I get it, no
		Sofia Rose	**How can I help?** - Hey ▓▓▓ Sofia Rose here. It's been about a month since you first downloaded content on HubSpot.co
		Sofia Rose	**How does a 3x return for** ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓ **sound?** - Hey ▓▓▓ Companies are 3X more likely to see a higher ROI on inb
		Sofia Rose	**I can help** ▓▓▓▓▓▓ **grow… this is how** - Hey ▓▓▓ Sofia Rose here. I wanted to reach out and share a little bit ab
		Sofia Rose	**Personal delivery for** ▓▓▓ - Hey ▓▓▓, Sofia Rose here from HubSpot. I noticed you recently downloaded some inbound

First name
personalisation
token

Company
personalisation
token

SUCCESS STORY:

LEAD NURTURING HELPS SAAS COMPANY INCREASE REVENUE BY 3X WITH HUBSPOT.

Danish SaaS company Templafy helps large enterprises to create professional, on-brand documents in an instant and streamline workflows across any office software suite. It was looking for a way to track where its leads were coming from when it found the HubSpot Marketing Platform. Templafy soon realised that the HubSpot software would allow it to not only track its leads but also nurture them through the entire pipeline. Since signing up, the company has achieved some amazing results, including a 3X increase in revenue in 12 months.

Glen Hagensen, Templafy's head of marketing explains the results: "We've increased our overall significantly, and we've also seen an increase in our marketing qualified leads. As part of our nurturing, we ultimately ask people to sign up for a trial or a demo. 12 months ago, about 5% of them did. Now it ranges from 10% to 24%, depending on what content they have interacted with."

HOW TO MEASURE YOUR LEAD NURTURING CAMPAIGNS

" TRACKING YOUR PROGRESS WILL ALLOW YOU TO SEE WHAT IS WORKING AND WHAT ISN'T.

If you have followed the suggestions and best practices above, you are surely on the right track to creating stellar lead nurturing campaigns. However, the most precise way of knowing how you are truly performing is to keep an eye on some key metrics.

In order to improve the performance of your lead nurturing campaigns, you need to be engaged in ongoing measurement. Tracking your progress will allow you to see what is working and what isn't. What is more, you will have a chance to optimize along the way and improve performance.

So what metrics should you be paying attention to? One can easily get overwhelmed with metrics, so in this section, we will cover the most important metrics you should consider.

CLICK-THROUGH RATE.

Click-through rate is the proportion of the audience who clicked on one or more links included in your lead nurturing email message. Organizations can calculate CTR either by dividing unique clicks by the number of emails delivered, or by dividing total clicks – including multiple clicks by the same recipient – by the number of emails delivered. Either method works, as long as you use the same approach consistently.

Click-through rates can help you determine whether the content you're offering in your lead nurturing campaigns is appropriate for the audience you're segmenting or their stage in the sales process. If you're offering more product-focused content, such as a free product trial, and you find that your email recipients aren't clicking on it, this may mean they aren't ready for this type of content and may still need to be nurtured with more top-of-the-funnel content like educational ebooks, webinars, or blog posts.

Furthermore, if your recipients are no longer clicking on top-of-the-funnel offers, you might deduce that they're ready for more product-focused offers.

NEW LEADS.

If the goal of your lead nurturing campaign is to generate more leads, then that's something you need to be tracking. Are people sharing your emails through social media or forwarding them to their network? If existing contacts are spreading your content, you have a better chance of reaching new audiences.

CONVERSION RATE.

Conversion rate refers to the percentage of recipients who have clicked on a link within an email and completed a desired action, such as filling out an offer form or purchasing a product. Like click-through rates, conversion rates can also be an indication of the effectiveness of the offer you're sending or of the lead's stage in the sales process.

IF CONVERSION RATES ARE SOARING, YOU'RE PROBABLY OFFERING CONTENT THAT IS IN LINE WITH YOUR LEADS' NEEDS AT THE TIME.

If not, you might need to adjust the types of offers you're sending at different points in the nurturing process. How many of the people who converted on the action you promoted through your lead nurturing campaign turned into customers?

UNSUBSCRIBE RATE.

The unsubscribe rate is the percent of recipients who click the "unsubscribe" link at the bottom of the email (this link is included by default and required by law).

THE UNSUBSCRIBE RATE SHOULD BE LESS THAN 1% FOR A GOOD CAMPAIGN.

When subscribers are unhappy with your emails, they will unsubscribe. However, many recipients don't event bother going through the formal unsubscribe process. They'll just stop opening, reading, and clicking on your email messages. What is worse, they can mark your emails as spam. Checking your monthly unsubscribe rate is helpful for calculating your overall list growth rate, and to watch for sudden spikes after a particular email campaign.

However, if you want a metric that shows you engagement and interest, you should turn to click-through and conversion rates.

MAKE DATA ANALYSIS EASIER.

Data analysis can be one of the most challenging pieces of lead nurturing. That's not because it's hard to analyze the data, but because it can be hard to collect the data. If multiple software tools touch your lead nurturing, you could run into this problem -- you might find yourself collecting your leads in one application, your click through rate in another, and your conversion rate in an excel spreadsheet. That's a lot of work.

ANSWER THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION IN ANY OF YOUR LEAD NURTURING CAMPAIGNS: IS IT WORKING?

HubSpot's Marketing Automation software solves this problem by combining all of the pieces of inbound marketing into a single tool. This makes it easy to answer the most important question in any of your lead nurturing campaigns: Is it working?
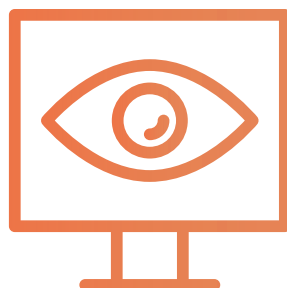
CAN ALL LEAD NURTURING BENEFITS BE TRACKED?

In the section above, we highlighted some of the key metrics you need to be tracking in order to determine whether your lead nurturing program is performing well or whether it needs some tweaking.

HOWEVER, NOT ALL OF THE BENEFITS FROM YOUR LEAD NURTURING CAMPAIGN CAN BE ASSIGNED A CLEAR MONETARY VALUE.

For instance, there is a lot of positive impact related to engagement of leads, staying top of mind, and generating buzz around your brand. In other words, lead nurturing can positively impact other marketing channels, such as social media and referrals. Stay aware of this influence, and make sure you are collecting anecdotal evidence from your sales organization in terms of lead quality. Your sales team will surely have some great stories to share!

CONCLUSION & ADDITIONAL NOTES

" ALL INDUSTRY RESEARCH SHOWS THAT NURTURING YOUR LEADS CAN BENEFIT YOUR BOTTOM LINE.

Businesses haven't adopted lead nurturing and marketing automation to the extent that they have embraced other tools, such as email marketing or social media. However, all industry research shows that nurturing your leads, keeping them engaged with your content on an ongoing basis, and gradually introducing them to more advanced stages of the sales cycle can only benefit your bottom line.

Among some of the key benefits of lead nurturing, is that it enables marketers to establish contact with their fresh leads fast and stay top of mind for potential, and even customers. In comparison to email marketing, lead nurturing is also relatively easy to set up because it is automated and doesn't need a ton of maintenance over time.

Creating the emails in a lead nurturing campaign is the most time-consuming step of the entire process. You need to first determine your goal, know who you will target, and identify which content you will use to reach the desired results.

The results you seek to achieve can vary from increasing your middle-of-the-funnel conversions and generating new leads to keeping your existing contacts engaged and interested in your brand.

If you are in the first stages of setting up your lead nurturing campaign, you might feel confused about what goal you should pursue and how you can do it most effectively. This is the tough part for many marketers, so you are definitely not alone in the struggle. Just get started, be aware of some of the best practices shared in this ebook, and learn from the results you are generating. They will point you in the direction you need to take to master lead nurturing for business.

MASTER
LEAD NURTURING

Create optimized lead nurturing campaigns, and get better at engaging your leads: Get a free demonstration of HubSpot's Marketing Automation Software.

Request A Demo