StratMg

Results... Period

Marketing Automation Platforms:

5.3 | Content & Lead Nurturing

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| Introduction

Marketing automation platforms (MAPs) are gaining considerable attention for their ability to help marketers develop highly targeted inbound and lead-nurturing campaigns, track detailed metrics, and improve results over time. Yet most organizations adopting these solutions fail to take full advantage of their power. **It's like driving a Porsche at 15 miles per hour.**

The key to optimizing use of a marketing automation platform is to understand that it will take months to implement and to become fully operational. Maintaining executive support during this process demands that marketers deliver and communicate real results both in the near term and incrementally over time.

*This white paper, the final of three in the **Marketing Automation Platforms** series (**5.1-5.3**) explains the importance of creating a clear and strategic content plan and then how that effectively drives a strategic lead nurture initiative, including:*

‣ Develop a Good Content-Creation and Curation Process

‣ Architect Lead-Nurture Tracks

‣ The Critical Elements of Marketing Automation

| Develop a Good Content-Creation and Curation Process

Marketing automation relies on relevant and compelling content to advance prospects and customers through every stage of the buying cycle from brand awareness to brand evangelism. Therefore, every marketing automation program requires a strategy for creating or curating content.

When creating a content plan, consider the following:

‣ Define business goals for content. Goals typically include brand awareness, lead conversion and nurturing, conversion, or customer loyalty and retention.

‣ Determine the target audience: Who are they? What are their pain points? What are their informational needs at each stage of the buying cycle?

‣ Map out what to tell the audience. How does the solution address customer challenges? How should marketing address customer needs across each stage of the buying cycle?

‣ Evaluate what content already exists, and what needs refreshing or overhauling.

‣ Assign responsibility for content creation or curation and plan and schedule projects.

> **Every marketing automation program requires a strategy for creating or curating content.**

▸ Create a workflow for creating content and a plan for distributing it.

▸ Determine success metrics and measure results.

| Architect Lead-Nurture Tracks

Depending on an average sales cycle, it may be months before a prospect is ready to buy. With the high cost of generating a lead, it makes sense to stay top-of-mind with lead nurturing. A marketing automation platform eliminates the need for marketing and sales to nurture leads manually.

Marketing automation solutions allow organizations to use visual campaign builders to build nurture campaigns. These campaigns are typically a series of emails that deliver the right content to prospects at the right time based on buyer personas and where they are in the sales cycle.

Because marketing automation solutions progressively profile prospects' interactions, marketing departments can track what prospects do and how they respond to various types of content. As they learn more, they can gradually **establish a ranking system** to identify hotter prospects **based on a wide range of behaviors.** Continually fine tuning this ranking system enables organizations to more effectively nurture prospects through the pipeline over time.

Types of lead nurture programs to develop include:

▸ **Long-term Nurture** — If someone has interacted with the organization, for example, by downloading content or scanning a badge at a trade show booth, but has indicated no readiness to buy, create a long-term nurture campaign that provides educational content to establish awareness and educate buyers.

▸ **Short-term Nurture** — when someone starts to actively engage with the long-term nurture campaigns, switch them to a short-term campaign. For example, create nurture tracks that follow up with additional content after an event or webcast; tracks for active prospects that map to and move them through the buyer's journey; and tracks that sales can use to augment their own contact with the prospect and provide additional educational material about a key topic they've identified.

If an organization runs the same type of campaigns repeatedly, it should consider creating a set of templates (called a MAP Playbook) to automate the process of creating these campaigns. A typical MAP Playbook describes the strategy for the campaign, the overall process, key components of the process and where they fit into the buyer's journey, and a key sequence of interactions and forms that departments can use to build the program. A MAP Playbook allows organizations to take advantage of best practices, build programs faster because they're pre-built, and avoid building the same programs over and over again.

> **A marketing automation platform eliminates the need for marketing and sales to nurture leads manually.**

> **Consider creating a MAP Playbook if your organization runs the same type of campaigns repeatedly.**

The Critical Elements of Marketing Automation

Any plan for implementing a marketing automation platform should include these critical elements:

▸ Defining a business strategy

▸ Developing a roadmap for executing the strategy incrementally

▸ Setting appropriate expectations and communicating regularly with executives

▸ Evaluating and augmenting existing skill sets

▸ Defining metrics and tracking progress

▸ Managing and analyzing customer data

▸ Developing a good content creation/curation process

▸ Architecting lead-nurture tracks

Summary

By defining these elements, marketing organizations can ensure that they make the most of the sophisticated capabilities that a marketing automation platform is capable of delivering. They can also maintain enthusiastic support from the executive team — and the entire organization — throughout what can be a lengthy implementation process.

Any plan for implementing a marketing automation platform should include certain critical elements.

About StratMarketing Group (StratMG)

With 95%+ in customer satisfaction ratings and 100s of projects, our proven methodology has successfully generated more than $100M+ in sales for our industrial manufacturing customers. We help build deep and meaningful relationships with their prospects and customers which in turn is a catalyst to organic sales growth.

We consistently exceed objectives by leveraging complex technologies and analytic methodologies to deliver simplified sales, faster. Our methodology breaks the process into three main categories:

▸ Make Customers
▸ Manage Customers
▸ Monetize Customers

Specialties

Demand Generation | Marketing Automation | Go-to-Market Strategy | Marketing Operations
Marketing Services | Marketing Strategy | Lead Management | Lead Nurture
Database Marketing | Sales-Marketing Alignment | Lead Qualification

Let's Talk

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