

“The proven effectiveness of marketing automation”

The road to higher online conversion



Acquire new knowledge with this whitepaper

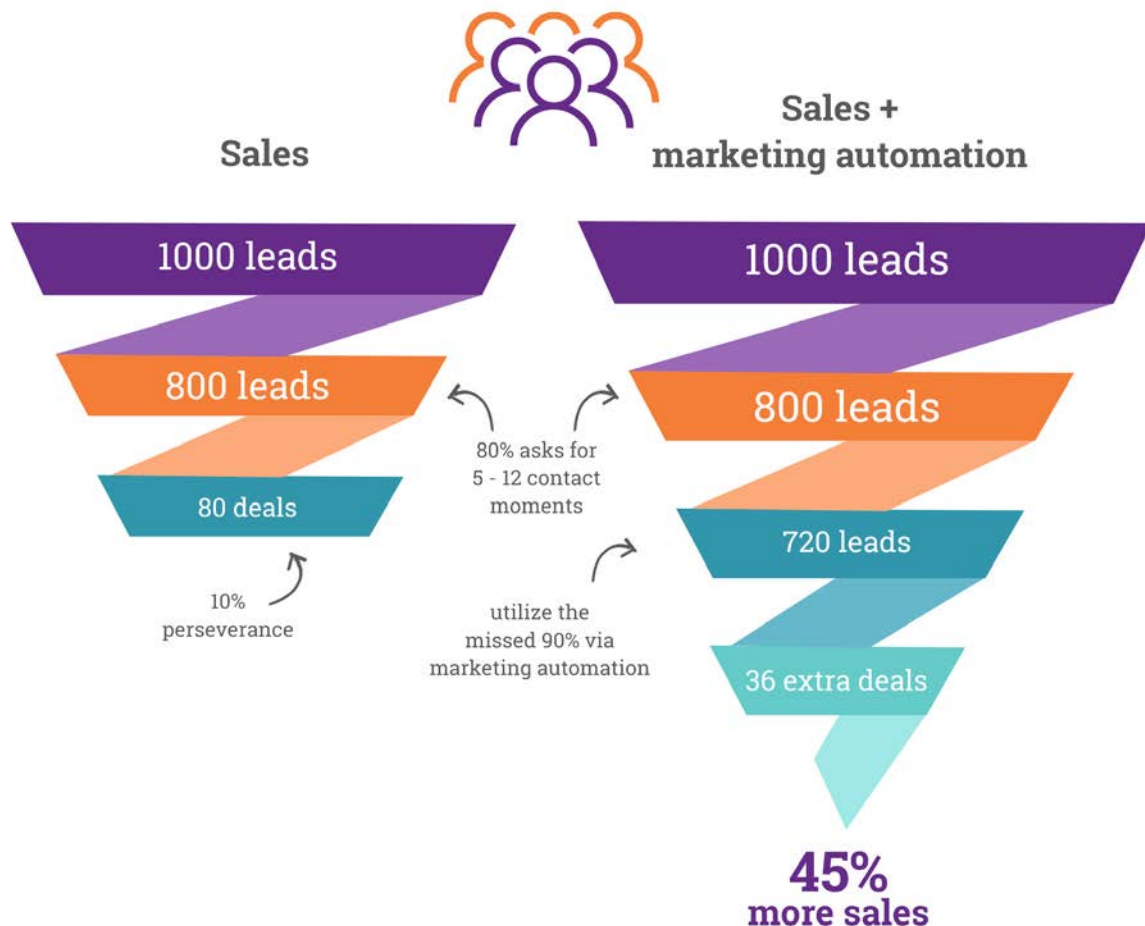
A sales increase of 45% with marketing automation

Until quite recently, it was generally the sales department's job to get to know customers at a personal level. Marketing automation has made it easier for marketers to also make a meaningful contribution.

With the right tools, marketers can find out about the personal interests of their customers and prospects and even determine which phase of the purchase process they are in. This is essential information that makes it possible to approach someone at exactly the right moment with an offer tailored to their specific needs.

Marketing automation can help organisations realise their objectives, such as increasing the number of new customers, improving the customer satisfaction and retention rates, saving time and optimising the organisation's effectiveness.

Best of all, this can all be fully automated. This does not mean that you do not have to do any work yourself, though. The use of marketing automation requires careful preparation, monitoring and finetuning. This whitepaper tells you exactly what to look out for and gives you some practical tips.



Customer profiling: get to know your customers

Everyone will surely understand the importance of a good customer relationship when it comes to B2B marketing. How well do you really know your customers, though? You probably know your audience: you know your customers' average age, which media they consume and what their average annual revenue is.

This average customer might suit your needs on a whiteboard or during a brainstorming session. In reality, however, your target audience consists of individuals, each with their own interests, behaviour and personalities.

To get to know your customer, you should therefore start with the basics: knowing who you are talking to. This includes a person's name, job title, the organisation they work for and its scope. There are several ways to gather this information online, e.g. via online forms that a person submits to sign up for a newsletter or request a whitepaper.

What to keep in mind when collecting customer data?



Collect data in a standardised manner

For example, you can use different fields for a person's first and last name, so you can store them in your database accordingly. Keep in mind that it is difficult to segment based on job title if this information is entered in an open field. The same position might e.g. be called "head of product," "product director" and "director of product." If you want to segment your communication based on this type of data, consider given people a few predefined options to choose from instead.



Make sure to acquire the correct email address

Given the importance of email for marketing automation, the entire process depends on you having the correct email address. This sounds like a no-brainer, but considering the number of databases that contain incorrect email addresses, it cannot hurt to devote some extra attention to this aspect. You could e.g. have people enter their email address twice to prevent typos and confirm their email address by sending them an email with a confirmation link (confirmed opt-in).



Do not ask for too much information at once

Especially when people have to enter the information themselves, it is imperative that you do not ask for too much all at once. Every field that someone has to fill in represents another opportunity for them to give up altogether. Limit yourself to the essentials. For example, start by acquiring someone's name and email address and only ask for additional information at a later stage.

Monitoring the recipient's purchase signals

Discovering interests and monitoring purchase signals

Collecting names, addresses and job titles is a good start. An essential one, even, if your goal is to e.g. send an email to marketing directors at organisations with at least 150 employees. Would it not make much more sense, though, to segment based on behaviour?

Remember that the average marketing director only exists on paper. It is therefore much better to discover someone's personal interests. What topics and specific products or services are they interested in? Perhaps even more relevant: what phase of the purchase process have they reached?

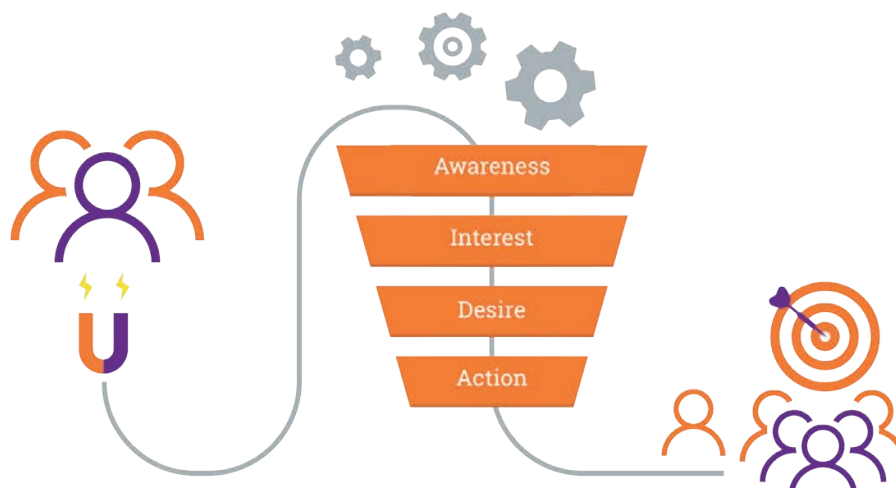
Marketing automation makes it possible to record this kind of information for each individual customer and monitor purchase signals.

This does require you to monitor your customers' interaction with your own organisation. Good email marketing software lets you track which emails a customer opens and which links they click on. There are also other forms of valuable information that you can use to learn more about someone's interests.

Six valuable pieces of information that help you discover someone's interests



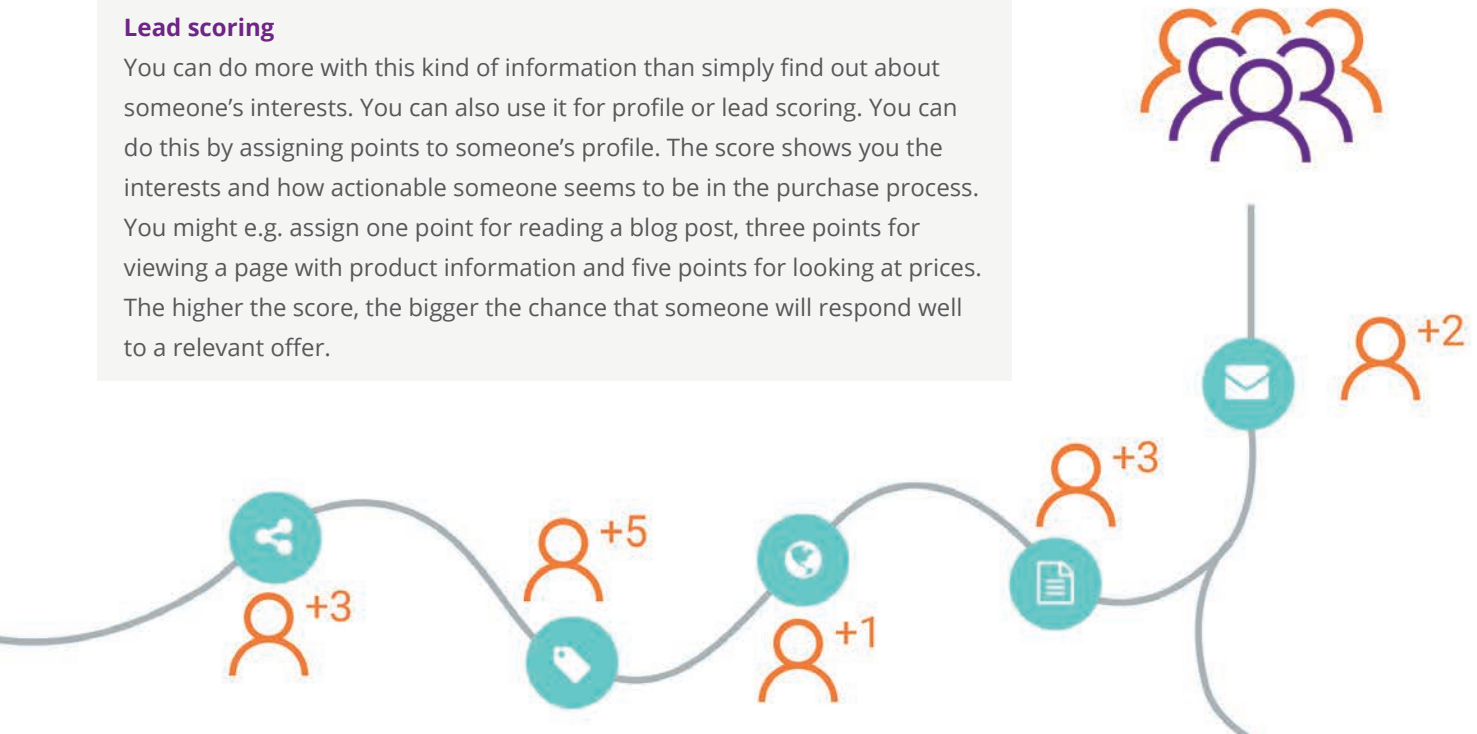
1. Which pages of your website do they visit?
2. What do they search for on your website?
3. Which whitepaper did someone download?
4. How often does someone visit certain pages?
5. Which products did a customer buy in the past?
6. What online rating did a customer give your services in the past?



Make clever use of profiling

Lead scoring

You can do more with this kind of information than simply find out about someone's interests. You can also use it for profile or lead scoring. You can do this by assigning points to someone's profile. The score shows you the interests and how actionable someone seems to be in the purchase process. You might e.g. assign one point for reading a blog post, three points for viewing a page with product information and five points for looking at prices. The higher the score, the bigger the chance that someone will respond well to a relevant offer.



Extract information from personal contact

Beside online and email interactions there are other ways to gather information about your customers and prospects. In fact, you might extract even more valuable information from a phone call or a personal conversation. It is therefore advisable to link fields from your marketing automation and/or email marketing software to those in your CRM system.

This ensures that the sales department not only uses the information gathered by the marketing department, but that it also enriches your database in return. You should be critical about which fields to link together, though. After all, sales meetings can lead to a wealth of information that is not particularly relevant to marketers and vice versa.

Engage customers with content marketing

A common argument against marketing automation is that personal contact is an important factor in B2B sales. It goes without saying that personal contact is important. Marketing automation should therefore be used in conjunction with personal contact, not as a replacement. This form of marketing gives your salespeople more insight into their prospects' interests, which allows them to engage the potential customer more effectively.

Approximately eight out of every ten B2B sales only happen after five to twelve contact moments. Marketing automation can save your salespeople time by automating some of these contact moments. Think of e.g. an email to point someone towards a new blog post about a topic they are interested in or a message to remind people to sign up for an event.



Has a prospect earned more than ten points?

Inform your sales department to contact the lead!

Mapping the customer journey

Before you start setting up automated contact moments, it is important to first map out your customer journey. What is a logical or common path that people take before purchasing a service or product? With a clear overview of this funnel, you can pinpoint the perfect moment to contact a customer. It also helps you determine which of these moments you could automate to take people through the conversion funnel

Practical tips to design your customer journey:

Offer relevant content

Use the information you have acquired about your prospects and customers and offer them relevant content. When you use a good email marketing platform, it is possible to e.g. tailor the content of your emails to the interests of your contacts. Think of, for example, a whitepaper that delves deeper into the same topic as a blog post that someone read on your website.

Make your content mobile first

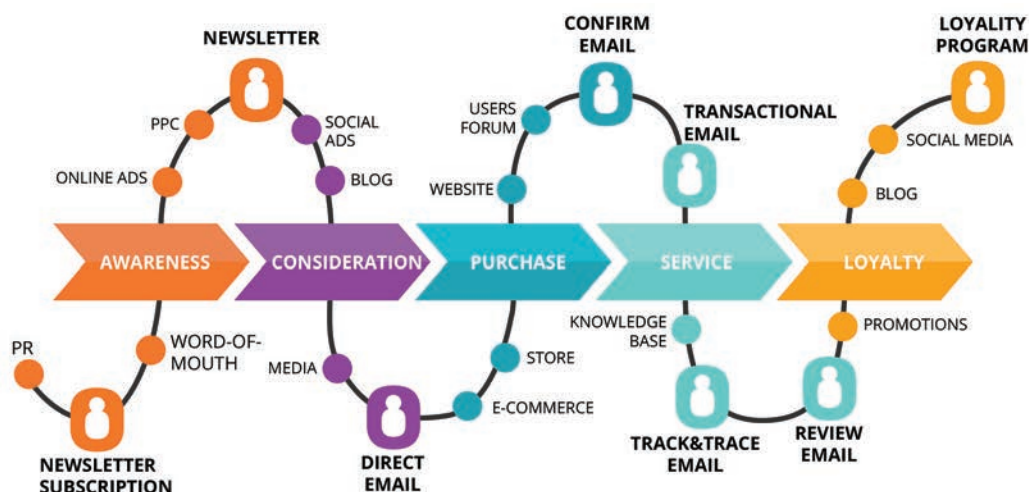
A study conducted by Zenith shows that circa seventy-five percent of all internet traffic in 2017 came from mobile devices. That means someone is just as likely to view your content on a smartphone or tablet as on a desktop computer or laptop. You should therefore offer your prospects and customers responsive content that is displayed properly on any device. Mobile first is perfect, mobile proof is a must!

Use informative content

In their efforts to maximise conversion, marketers might make the mistake of offering too much commercial content. Remember that customers often also desire background information. A good way to retain your audience is to offer them both commercial and informative content.

Use video content

Now that it has become possible to quickly stream video files on mobile devices as well, the number of videos viewed online is growing exponentially. Cisco even predicts that internet video will make up 81 percent of all internet traffic by the year 2021. Video content is also an excellent way to convey your message in a clear and effective manner. It can improve the click ratio of your emails by up to 55 percent.



One step at a time

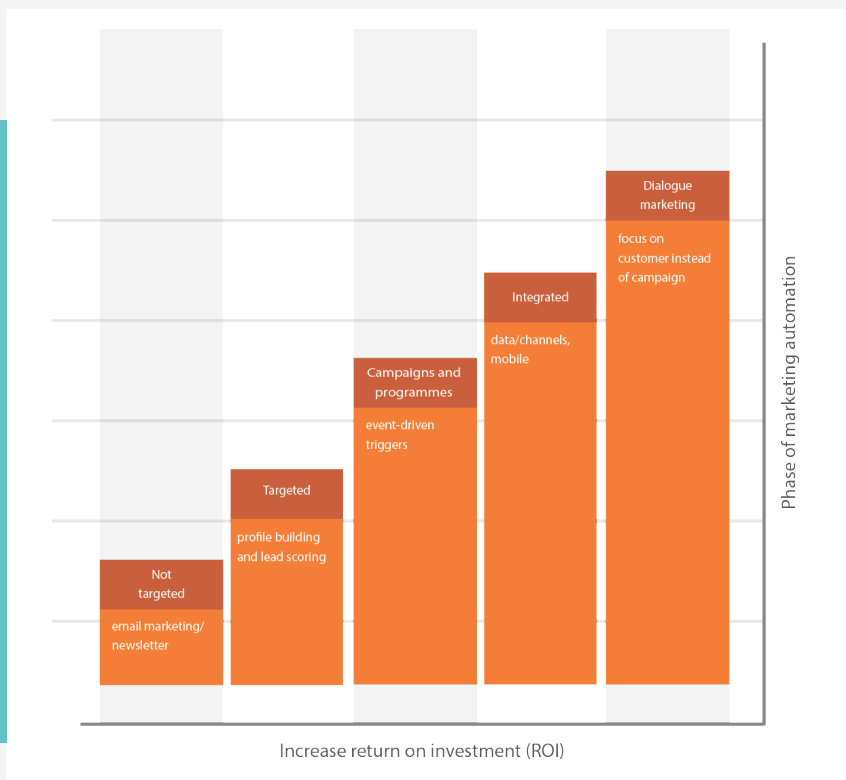
The five stages of maturity

An organisation's use of marketing automation can be divided into five distinct stages of maturity. Although it is a good idea to set goals, it is just as important to remain calm if it takes your organisation a little while to reach the next phase.

Marketing automation requires an investment of time. It is not realistic to expect to jump straight from phase one to phase five. Collecting data and insights about your customers and prospects is a time-consuming process, as are creating content and setting up the automation process. Marketing automation is not an all-or-nothing process.

Many organisations never make it past phase three, yet they still manage to achieve excellent results with their marketing automation. Remember to start small and take things one step at a time. Learn from any mistakes, celebrate successes and always remember that even the smallest steps represent progress.

The five stages of maturity for marketing automation



"The great thing about marketing automation is that you can link more and more data sources as your digital transformation continues. Start small and work towards your goal one step at a time. Every organisation that excels at marketing automation once started at step one. Marketing automation is all about learning by doing."

Jacco Bouw - Founder Webpower

Manage your conversion and make adjustments based on data

Manage your conversion

What does your sales funnel look like? What approach leads to the best results? Unfortunately, there is no one-size-fits-all solution when it comes to marketing automation. What works best for one organisation might be entirely counterproductive for another company. There is only one way to figure out which approach best suits your company: simply get to work and monitor the results.



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Monitor results and anticipate to
increase conversion”
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Changing customer needs

Be aware that your customers' interests can change, e.g. because someone has moved on to a new position, started working on a different project or reached a different phase of the sales funnel. It is therefore important to keep monitoring your relations' activities and update their profiles in your database based on the latest information.

A/B testing

An effective way to find out which approach works well for your organisation is through A/B testing. This has you testing two or more scenarios on a select number of people and determining which scenario produces the best results. By defining measurable criteria of success in advance, you can use your marketing automation platform to determine which version is most successful, before using it on the rest of your target audience.

One example is testing two subject lines to find out which version leads to the highest open rate. For this test, you could send version #1 to five percent of your mailing list and version #2 to a different five percent. You can then have your email marketing software determine which version is best, based on the open rate, before sending it to the remaining 90% of your audience.

Of course, there are countless other ways to use A/B testing, e.g. to test different versions of a landing page or a call-to-action in an email in order to achieve the maximum conversion rate.



Four tips to get more out of your email flow

Find out what someone's interests are

Gaining insight into your customers and prospects involves more than just learning their names, job titles and email addresses. You should also enrich your database with other information, such as a person's purchase history or website behaviour, and find out which phase of the purchase process they have reached.

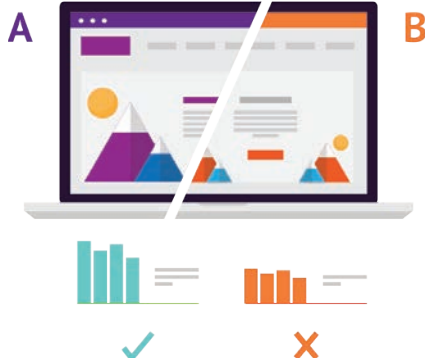


Save time with an automated workflow

Automate contact moments by setting up triggers in your email marketing software. Before doing so, you should map out your conversion funnel to pinpoint the best time to approach someone.

Communicate at a personal level

Use the insights you gained about your customers and prospects by communicating with them at a personal level. Send them personalised emails and make sure these are displayed properly on both desktop computers and mobile devices.



Monitor your results

Do not be afraid to experiment. Try out different subject lines and calls-to-action and adjust your activities based on the results. Continue to update your customer profiles based on their changing interests.



When collecting and processing personal information, be sure to do so in accordance with the new European privacy legislation, the GDPR.

Go to <https://webpower-group.com/gdpr-all-about/> for more information about how the GDPR affects (email) marketing automation. We are happy to share our knowledge!

About Webpower



Webpower is the largest international email specialist with Dutch roots and leading position in the Chinese market. Nowadays we go beyond email, even way beyond. We offer the right services and software in the field of marketing automation and efficient sales processes, realising:



Bigger reach



Time saving



Higher returns



Improved
customer loyalty

Our B2B customers



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