

# 10 TOP OF FUNNEL LEAD NURTURING

BEST PRACTICES TO BOOST  
YOUR SALES

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Lead nurturing is integral to growing and improving the success of any marketing and sales strategy. An effective lead nurturing strategy combines the best of both marketing and communication efforts to build and maintain a solid relationship with prospects.

[80% of new leads](#) typically never make a purchase of any kind and on average only 50% of the qualified leads that companies have on record are ready to buy (Marketo). However, this can be changed by developing and applying a lead nurturing campaign to sales efforts.

[Lead nurturing](#) is essential at all stages of the sales funnel but is particularly influential at the top of funnel stage. This is when inbound leads are most unsure about buying and are more likely to fail in becoming direct sales. An effective campaign starts here, by working to establish relationships and trust that will translate into more clients moving through the funnel.

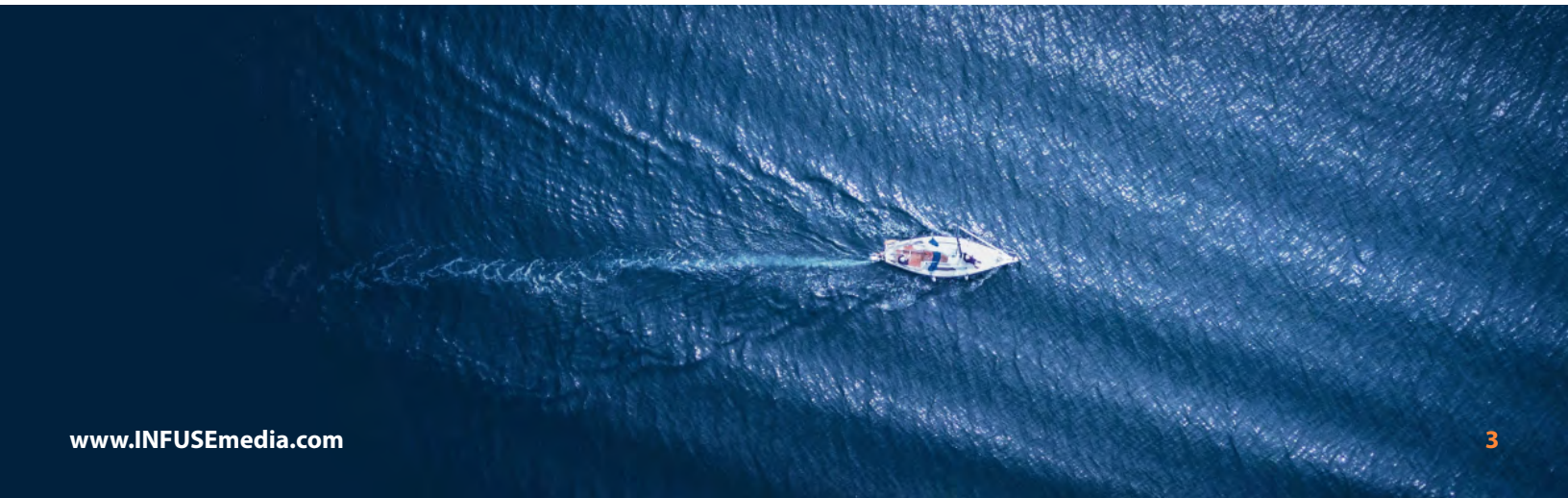
Successful lead nurturing provides relevant content and answers to prospects that encourage them to move on from the awareness stage by resolving concerns that are preventing buyers from committing to a sale.

Even though the benefits of a lead nurturing program are substantial, they often remain untapped. [65% of marketers neglect to nurture their leads](#) (MarketingSherpa) and as such, miss countless opportunities, and fail to get the most out of their marketing efforts. Investing time and effort into nurturing potential clients and making them feel valued, helps to build loyalty and [increase purchases by 47% on average](#) (Databox).

Well-implemented campaigns allow companies to interact directly with buyers whilst taking advantage of any data acquired from interactions with clients and the content provided to them. This data can later be used to implement streamlined strategies that increase return on investment (ROI).

This data is invaluable for developing the best approach, as companies and their respective strategies need to be flexible. Keeping up-to-date with new trends and changing algorithms is a constant and essential task in order to ensure successful marketing campaigns.

Whilst this can make developing a strategy seem daunting, perfecting top of funnel tactics can go a long way in guaranteeing results from lead nurturing campaigns.





## Here are 10 key practices for top of funnel lead nurturing that can be implemented to ensure success:

### 1. Understand your target client

As we become more connected through technology, clients want to be engaged in a smart, personalised way that allows them to be heard. Buyers are typically well-informed and respond best to companies that take the time to know and genuinely understand them, without overwhelming them with ads and emails.

Knowing and understanding target markets well is a continuous process, but benefits companies with the ability to identify potential leads. This means that marketing efforts can be directed accordingly to best appeal to client wants and needs. It is imperative to have a thorough knowledge of the ideal client for a product or service before starting a campaign.

In-depth information on client bases is an integral part of lead nurturing, as it allows companies to attract top of funnel prospects. Using this information, marketing and sales teams can find the correct approach to retain and effectively guide prospects through the sales funnel.



## 2. Develop an effective email strategy

Email marketing is a cost-effective and fully automated way to reach out to prospects with [successful email marketing strategies](#) being proven to [drive ROI by about 4400%](#)(Campaign Monitor). As such, emails remain one of the most efficient tactics for lead nurturing, however, personalisation is essential to yielding significant results.

As Accenture reports, [41% of consumers](#) typically switch to other businesses after a lack of personalisation. With this in mind, it is crucial to adapt email campaigns to align with their target audience's needs, by providing useful information rather than solely product promotion. This builds trust and brand authority, whilst establishing and building a lasting relationship with prospects.

Each email campaign and its content should vary depending on the recipient. Personalising content also makes it possible to establish the right strategy for specific target groups by learning from the rate of engagement and interaction timelines.

Data enrichment emails are a great source of information that can be used to inform lead nurturing and sales processes. These emails contain short surveys that help establish the reader's demographic and needs. Not only does this tactic collect useful data, but it also nurtures leads through reassurance and making them feel valued.

Perfecting the frequency of touches is essential to avoid becoming spam in the eyes of potential clients. Databox reported that [45.1% of subjects](#) in a study on the frequency of nurture emails agreed that once a week was the ideal frequency.

As emails are typically the first point of contact for a campaign, it is important to remember that they provide a first impression of your brand to prospects. As such, it is essential to consider the brand experience your communication conveys and to be consistent in your messaging to ensure top of funnel success.



Emails can be a powerful tool if strategised correctly.

Discover how to build an email marketing strategy that boosts conversions, how to craft the perfect email, and more in our [Definitive Guide to B2B Email Marketing](#). →



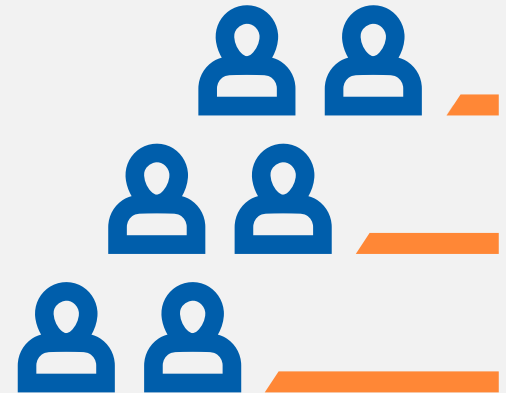
### 3. Know when to touch base with your leads

Knowing when to contact leads is an art in itself and is essential to ensure that lead nurturing efforts do not become soured by overwhelming prospects. Finding the right balance for each target client to avoid contacting them too often or reaching out to them before they are ready to be contacted is essential for lead nurturing.

Providing buyers breathing room so that they can appreciate the content you have provided them with is just as important as [follow-up messages](#). Establishing a reasonable contact cadence is key in ensuring your brand is on the top of prospects' minds without going too far.

Patience is a necessary element of outreach as prospects receive an average of ten marketing touches on their journey from awareness to making a purchase across a period of 6-8 weeks. Each client is different, so it is important to be flexible and assure them that your priority is their needs and that you are working hard to earn their trust and business.

Adapting contact cadences to best suit clients and their needs is attractive to top of funnel prospects and is an effective strategy to retain, nurture and guide buyers through the sales funnel successfully.



Determining the correct cadence for connecting with leads is a challenging process. Simplify your planning with our 6-month playbook developed by our in-house experts as featured in our [Definitive Guide to B2B Lead Nurturing](#). →





## 4. Develop a content map

In order to implement a successful lead nurturing strategy, it is important to plan each stage of the campaign. This can be facilitated by creating a [content map](#) containing all the existing and new content that can be sent out to prospects.

This map should look different for each target buyer with content categorised into each stage of the sales funnel. Dividing content into stages allows for content to be tracked and evaluated in terms of successfully moving buyers towards making a purchase.



From this feedback, nurturing tactics can be adapted, and the content being sent to the buyer can be personalised more effectively. This also helps determine which content creation is a high priority for content teams. This can also aid the synchronisation of lead nurturing content campaigns across multiple channels.

It is beneficial to employ a variety of content to nurture leads, and best promote engagement as each prospect may respond differently to types of content, depending on the platforms they use and the information they need.

As a result, it is essential to tailor a range of different content formats to meet the needs of the buyer such as social media, blog posts, whitepapers, tools, or even direct mail, rather than just email campaigns. A mix of personalised content is more effective in guiding a potential client through the buyer journey.

Content maps can be instrumental in ensuring that targets are met, and sufficient amounts of content are being shared at the right time. This can be especially effective in attracting top of funnel prospects who respond best to content given within a proper time frame.

When developed correctly, content marketing can be the key to the success of marketing strategies, especially when the goal is to connect with and nurture prospects.

Learn how to build a content marketing strategy from scratch with our [Definitive Guide to B2B Content Marketing](#). →



## 5. Implement multi-channel distribution

Increasing top of funnel awareness and engagement through email alone is difficult and campaigns suffer from contact databases diminishing before they can be converted to leads. Consumers are bombarded with emails daily, making it a challenge to stand out in a crowded inbox.

Multi-channel lead nurturing campaigns allow companies to reach out to their audiences where they are and through multiple channels at once. A successful [multi-channel program](#) is personalised and employs a variety of tactics, touch points, and tools to appeal to its target audience and promote engagement. Depending on the sales process, marketers can use a combination of different tools such as marketing automation, social media monitoring/publishing, paid retargeting, dynamic website content, or sales enablement tools.



Syndicating content either across a company's own network or through a [content syndication network](#) can also be an efficient way to promote your content. Syndication allows companies to reach and nurture more leads by providing prospects with more opportunities to interact with content on their own terms.

Developing an effective campaign that avoids prospects receiving the same message across multiple channels and considering it as spam is essential. Content should be optimised for each channel and buyer so that it guides them through the sales journey, without risking pushing them away.

Multi-channel distribution is effective at all stages of the funnel but can be particularly instrumental in encouraging top of funnel engagement by covering more bases.

Taking marketing strategies across multiple channels and in particular, the channels that prospects prefer, is crucial for the success of any campaign.

Learn about how to determine the right strategy for you with our [breakdown; Omnichannel Marketing Vs. Multichannel Marketing: What is the Difference?](#) →





## 6. Integrate SEO into your strategy

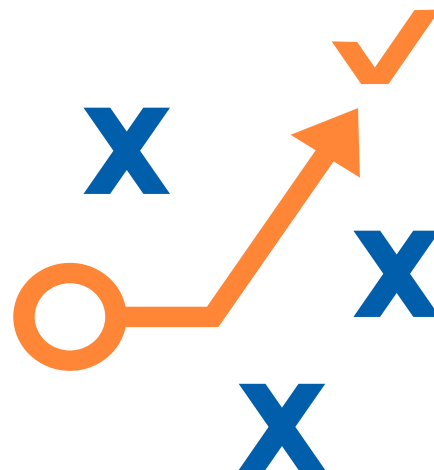
A key component for boosting top of funnel awareness and the discovery phase is an effective search engine optimisation strategy (SEO).

Identifying and including SEO keywords that align with what potential clients are searching for, effectively personalises content and optimises its reach. Integrating SEO keywords into blog posts, videos, infographics, social media posts and other lead nurturing content increases its functionality and provides another metric for measuring its success.

SEO drives more traffic to sites by helping pages appear in search results. This has the potential to snowball as improved page authority helps to grow an audience, and ultimately increase and nurture top of funnel leads.

Optimising a website is also beneficial, as it facilitates crawling for search engines (SE) and clients alike. As a result, visitors will stay on a site for longer, promoting potential buyers to find out more about services and the company in general.

This can be instrumental in assisting lead nurturing efforts, without crowding prospects.



## 7. Align your sales and marketing teams to score leads

It is essential for both the [sales and marketing teams to be aligned](#) on projects to get the best results from a lead nurturing campaign.

Teams working together to identify where each lead is in the sales funnel allows companies to identify when, and how sales representatives can approach prospects when leads require further nurturing with relevant content.

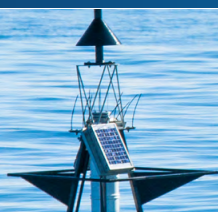
Lead scoring is the process of assigning a perceived value to each potential prospect by attributing numerical values to various types of interactions between prospects and content. Lead scoring is unique to each company and can be adapted to meet the requirements for different accounts to identify data such as demographics, BANT, lead interest, lead behaviour, or the buying stage leads are in, to name a few.

Including additional third-party data is normally less favoured but can be particularly cost-effective and beneficial in identifying the buying intent of top of funnel prospects. As clients typically carry out [60% of their research before even reaching out to a company](#) (Campaign Creators), including third-party data that indicates their preliminary searches can inform sales timelines and how companies should approach nurturing leads.

Through lead scoring, both marketing and sales efforts can be made more efficient to attract greater top of funnel leads and yield better results overall.



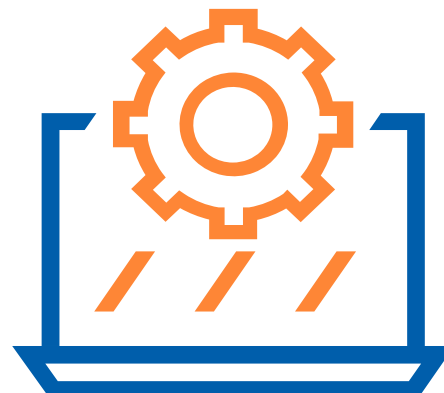
Kickstart your alignment by reading our article; [10 Sales and Marketing Alignment Best Practices](#) to learn how best to coordinate teams and maximise results. →



## 8. Install marketing automation

As technology continues to develop, companies have access to more marketing solutions that streamline their campaigns. [Marketing automation](#) is a prime example of technology that companies can employ to make outbound marketing efforts and lead nurturing more efficient (in terms of both time and budget).

[Email marketing](#) is one of the primary elements of a lead nurturing campaign that can benefit from automation. Emails such as welcome emails, onboarding, newsletters and thank you [emails can all be automated to boost efficiency](#).



Drip email campaigns can also take advantage of automation. Drip emails are triggered by specific user behaviour that companies are looking to interact with, such as a reader visiting a website through an in-mail link. These responses are prime candidates for automation and can allow teams to develop a complex and customised campaign easily.

Automating workflow can effectively nurture leads as they move through their established stages of the sales process whilst saving time and resources.

However, as mentioned in previous sections, outreach needs to be fine-tuned to avoid overwhelming prospects and losing leads. Automated responses should still focus on providing readers with useful information and content that promotes relationship building and will encourage them to continue in the buyer process.

Automation can be a powerful tool for saving time and money whilst boosting a company's outreach. If done correctly, automating lead nurturing can be an effective strategy for curating top of funnel interest.

To get started on implementing automation to optimise your outreach, read our article; [Email Marketing Automation: How to Boost Your Email Marketing for a range of insights including the best automation tools for 2022](#). →





## 9. Audit and segment your contact list

To best facilitate automation and effective lead nurturing, it is imperative to look after a company's most useful tool, its contacts. Regularly updating and auditing contacts allows companies to clean out their lists and maintain the efficiency of their lead nurturing campaigns.

Using list-building tactics and checking leads for duplicates, inactive or junk contacts is a simple way of ensuring that marketing is consistently reaching the right audience.

Managing contacts can be facilitated by contact segmentation. This is the process of dividing contacts into specific groups determined by data that indicates their needs and concerns.

[Segmenting contacts into categories](#) allows outreach to be streamlined. Emails can be shorter and more relevant for a particular audience, without having to contain content to accommodate all contacts. Groups can also be further segmented using lists and tags to divide potential clients into subcategories such as existing contacts versus new contacts.

Segmenting contacts into categories such as their buying stage and another key variable of interest is a useful tactic for determining the best strategy for prospects and planning an effective campaign.

Through this simple process, lead nurturing campaigns can be optimised for their target audience and ensure prospects are receiving the correct content and communications at the right time. As a result, segmentation is key to increasing top of funnel relevance and engagement.





## 10. Regularly adapt and refresh your strategies

As with any marketing strategy, it is impossible to set and leave a marketing campaign in its first iteration and still yield the best results possible.

Testing and optimising lead nurturing campaigns is essential, as no assumptions should be made about potential clients. Each factor of outreach must be carefully monitored to ensure a healthy campaign.

Testing, either through methods such as data enrichment emails or by measuring interaction, can help to determine the types of messages, content, and frequency of contact that are optimised for nurturing leads. Consistent testing allows companies to avoid wasting time by personalising their content effectively in a way that makes them stand out from the competition.

Lead nurturing is a constant learning process and campaigns need to be adapted to stay up to date with trends and successfully attract top of funnel leads.



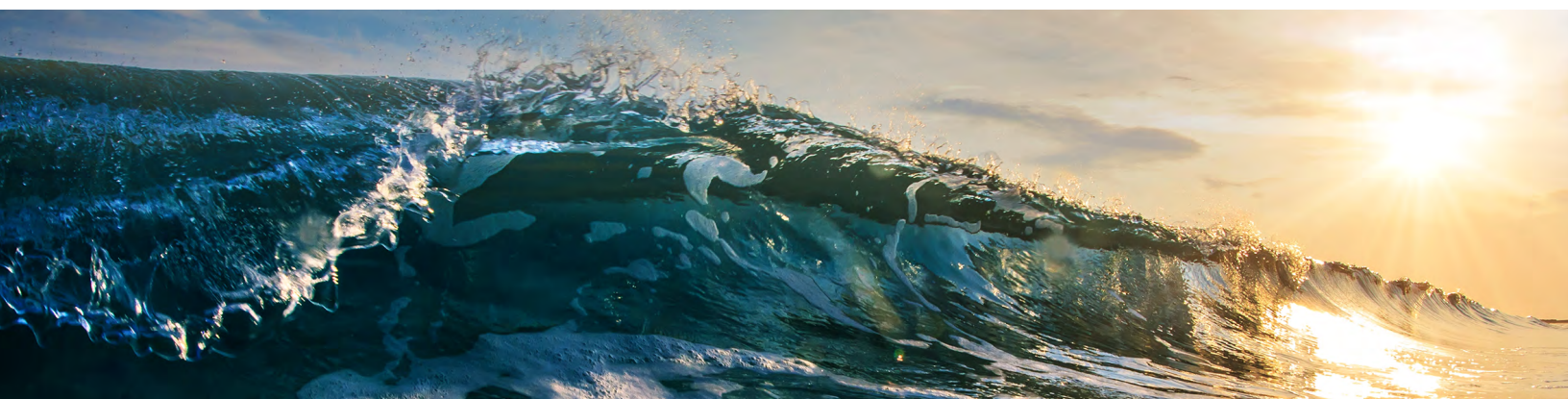
## FINAL THOUGHTS

Lead nurturing is a powerful tactic for increasing the efficiency of marketing efforts so that companies can make the most out of their potential leads and stop missing out on opportunities.

Nurturing leads effectively increases conversion rates and ROI, whilst shortening the sales cycle and improving engagement and consumer awareness of a brand. Nurtured leads are proven to make 47% larger purchases (The Annuitas Group) and companies that successfully nurture leads generate 50% more sales-ready leads on average, whilst saving 33% on costs (Marketo).

The benefits of a solid lead nurturing strategy are clear and potentially endless, making an investment into lead nurturing a must for any company hoping to meet its engagement goals.

Not one strategy will work for every potential client, but with a flexible approach, and following the best practices, lead nurturing campaigns can be extremely effective at retaining top of funnel leads.



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