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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Section 1: Introduction to lead nurturing

Digital media channels are revolutionising the way that we approach marketing. Not so long ago, the B2B marketer relied on direct mail and the trade press to push their products and services. Now, we have at our disposal tools that allow us not only to push our wares but also to pull the prospective customer into a dialogue, nurture our relationship with them and be there at the right time when they are ready to buy.

With so much choice in terms of both digital channels and how we use them, how do we determine what we use to drive engagement?

Engagement is the key to success. We will have to leave behind our ad copy writing skills, and instead address needs and offer genuine solutions to business issues. We need to move out of 'selling' mode and into 'solving' mode.

A whole new marketing strategy is required; we must start by understanding who our current customer is and what they buy from us. By employing techniques such as profiling, segmentation and predictive modelling on our existing customer base, we can develop a plan for acquiring more customers that look like our best customers.

Next we will need to understand when the best time is to pass a lead to sales. Much of our good work generating leads is wasted because if the person is not ready to buy immediately it is likely that they will be deep filed by sales who will miss the genuine window of opportunity that may be six months hence. You, the marketer are the best guardian of these un-ripened leads. By offering content, events and education on an ongoing basis to your prospects, you can keep them warm and develop them towards a sale over a period of time.

In the digital world we can celebrate the measurability of everything that we do and move from post campaign analysis to 'in-campaign analysis'. That means testing new media and watching engagement levels and responses in real time, switching budgets to the most effective channels and switching off channels that are not delivering.

This degree of sophistication means that you will have to move to some form of marketing automation. You will want to move your energies in future to creating content and strategy and away from campaign implementation. The benefits of adopting marketing automation are the additional layers of information that you can suddenly capture. You may already know a prospect's company size, industry type and job title. None of this tells you whether they have any interest in your company. If, however, you are able to monitor their digital body language and see how many visits they have made to your website, which pages they view and what type of collateral they are downloading, you will have a much better informed view of their intentions and when you should be speaking to them rather than marketing to them.

The real challenge in this new world is how to move from campaigning to continuous dialogue.

By maintaining an ongoing dialogue with your potential marketplace, you will aim to be there when they develop a need and will be ready to start the process of educating and then nurturing their interest towards a sale. Your future customer will however want to choose how and when they interact with you and the challenge will be how you build demand.

“Engagement is the key to success. We will have to leave behind our ad copy writing skills, and instead address needs and offer genuine solutions to business issues. We need to move out of 'selling' mode and into 'solving' mode”

Section 2: Lead generation

Like many processes in marketing services, lead generation is only effective if approached with consistency and commitment. If you engage in a one-off campaign there is a chance that you may yield some results but that will be down to luck rather than judgement.

Lead generation comes in two guises – the short-term and the long-term. In the former variety, offers that convert a quick sell are of the paramount interest, whereas in the long-term lead generation is usually focused on a programme of nurturing which in turn usually results in a longer relationship. The key to successful lead generation lies in recognising which form you need to engage in when and that it is often a process of evolution, with contacts moving from one type to the next.

This chapter discusses the importance of a carefully thought out lead generation programme in business sales. It will examine the three key elements of a lead generation programme; message, targeting and creative and how these should be weighted to achieve the best possible result. Perry will also look at the way in which, with a lead generation programme that is truly integrated with a sales team, leads can be identified and nurtured to sales over a period of time.

“By integrating sales and marketing databases and employing lead scoring, management and development strategies, businesses will have the potential to significantly boost their ROI at a time when it is needed most”

Section 3: Lead scoring

In recent years the sales and marketing world has changed dramatically. The economic downturn has heightened the need for new marketing tactics, tools and processes to be developed that help sales teams identify, prioritise and respond to new revenue opportunities.

If they are to succeed, marketers need to be agile and adopt new strategies more attuned to customer behaviours and it is vital to understand the leads you generate so that a strategy can be established to maximise the potential of each and every sales opportunity. As a practical step, and to help marketing and sales work better together, companies need to ensure that they have a system in place that communicates relevant prospect and customer data between teams and stakeholders.

This chapter discusses why businesses should qualify and score their leads, the best techniques to do so and how companies can work to achieve coordination across all key stakeholders and departments to improve their performance. By integrating sales and marketing databases and employing lead scoring, management and development strategies, businesses will have the potential to significantly boost their ROI at a time when it is needed most. Only then will the right leads be communicated at the right time, allowing the most relevant offers to be sent to the customer.

Section 4: Lead management

Lead management may be defined as a multistage process that manages a lead's journey from generation through to conversion and sales.

But although many lead generation programmes succeed in creating a demand, most fail to manage that demand to produce genuine sales opportunities. Research shows that some 80 per cent of early-stage leads are poorly managed and often end up lost, ignored or discarded. Too much time and money is spent on generating leads only to have them neglected.

By segmenting point-scored leads into those that require further nurturing and those which may profitably be contacted immediately, it is possible to prioritise prospects and ensure they don't become lost in the pipeline.

This chapter shall explore in-depth how to develop a lead life cycle system and engage prospects in an ongoing, permission-based dialogue in which we take the trouble to understand what it is they need, while providing the right information to help them make an informed buying decision in their own time.

For simplicity's sake, we'll say that leads range from 'hot', through to 'warm' and 'cold', although in practice it can be less clear cut. You've passed on the 'hot' leads – i.e. those which are ready to be pursued by the sales team. The vast majority of leads, however, will remain in the 'warm' or research phase. Prematurely passing these leads on to sales can alienate prospects and erode sales people's time.

Rather than bombarding these prospects with ill-timed sales pitches, the answer is to send them highly targeted communications that contain useful content based on the recipient's role in the company and is applicable to their niche or industry. Finally it shall discuss ideas for developing information that is relevant to solving prospects' problems.

Section 5: Marketing automation

Over the past few years, marketing automation has emerged as a hot topic in the marketing community. Ignoring the hype, what is the truth about marketing automation?

Firstly, let's define what we mean by marketing automation. The term has been loosely adapted to encompass a wide range of solutions from rudimentary emailing marketing tools to sophisticated lead-nurturing platforms.

Next, we need to understand the business challenges and revenue and efficiency gains that can be attained through the combination of modern B2B technology and proven B2B marketing best practices. Not enough qualified leads? Are not-so-hot leads falling through the cracks? Spending more time with spreadsheets than customers? Unable to quickly and reliably build targeted lists?

Business requirements and budget often dictate your marketing automation approach, but where do you begin? What are your objectives? Are you looking to reduce administration costs? Increase conversion rates? Nurture cold leads? Tailor content and personalise communications? Strengthen the linkage between marketing and sales?

In this chapter, we'll discuss these topics and explore ways to increase process efficiency, optimise sales cycles and facilitate organisational effectiveness. Only with a strategic plan in place can you mandate a marketing automation strategy that averts marketing automation tragedy.

Section 6: The future of lead nurturing

By John Watton, CMO, Shipserv

B2B marketing has evolved dramatically over the past few years. Early on, the primary focus was on closing the deal, spending dollars on mass marketing, advertising and branding campaigns regardless of measurable ROI, and encouraging the sales team to reach out to all prospects regardless of their level of interest or qualification. With the arrival of CRM and marketing automation technologies, marketers began to embrace the idea of lead management to better identify and prioritise leads, and realise tremendous revenue through lead nurturing—building relationships with qualified prospects regardless of their timing to buy, with the goal of earning their business when they are ready.

But just when marketers thought they had the B2B buying process figured out, along came the surge in social media. B2B buyers are using social media to become informed much earlier in the buying process, obtaining information in non-traditional, yet highly influential ways, and engaging with sales only on their own terms and timelines. These days, by the time prospects provide B2B companies with their contact information, these leads are as knowledgeable about the products or services as those nurtured through drip marketing campaigns.

Keeping in mind the power of social media on today's B2B buying process, where does lead nurturing go from here?

“Rather than bombarding prospects with ill-timed sales pitches, the answer is to send them highly targeted communications that contain useful content based on the recipient's role in the company and is applicable to their niche or industry”

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In the future, the most successful marketing organisations will be those that take lead nurturing beyond the scope of marketing and the traditional sales cycle, and consider it part of the entire revenue cycle. The revenue cycle begins before prospects are even identified (while they research or follow thought leadership on social media sites), to after they become customers, (as they remain loyal customers through retention and cross- and up-sell opportunities). Throughout the revenue cycle, marketers must use social media to strengthen lead nurturing by:

- Listening to what unidentified prospects are saying through social media, in which valuable relationships are built through blogs, Twitter, and other non-traditional marketing vehicles.
- Engaging prospects with greater relevancy by using what they say on social media sites to enhance profiles, trigger more targeted nurturing flows, and enhance their conversations with sales.
- Continuing to build profitable relationships with new customers through more informed retention marketing and cross- and up-sell activities.

Only when companies recognise the power of social media on lead nurturing – and the importance of listening to and engaging with prospects along every stage of the revenue cycle – will they stay competitive in the future.

“In the future, the most successful marketing organisations will be those that take lead nurturing beyond the scope of marketing and the traditional sales cycle, and consider it part of the entire revenue cycle”

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Norman Campbell is a recognised thought leader and speaker in the field of B2B demand generation and automated marketing solutions. In addition to editing the award-winning lead generation newsletter Down2Earth (with 16,400 readers), he is author of www.b2bleadgenerationblog.com and managing director of Emarket2, an B2B outsourced sales and marketing agency, which he owns and runs with his wife Naomi Campbell.

Specialising in the B2B technology sector, eMarket2 has a multi-million pound annual turnover and has won numerous B2B demand generation campaign awards from The IDM, Clickz, Technology for Marketing and B2B Marketing Awards.

Before launching Emarket2 in 1999, Norman held several high-profile directorships, including business development director at Acxiom and sales and marketing director at Generator Database Marketing

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Zina is the director of Mardev, the database and marketing services division of Reed Business Information, one of the world's foremost business information providers. Mardev has offices in London, NY, Singapore, Hong Kong and Sydney.

Prior to joining Mardev in 1995 she spent seventeen years in media sales spanning TV, outdoor and publishing and ran a design and marketing agency.

Zina is Chair of FEDMA's List Council and a member of the FEDMA board. She also serves on the board of the Telephone Preference Service. Zina speaks regularly at events on issues relating to data protection, email marketing and demand generation.

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Jon leads strategy and execution for all aspects of corporate communications, demand generation, brand and product for Marketo (where he eats his own dog food and practices what he preaches). Jon explores best practices in demand generation, lead management, and online marketing in his popular blog, Modern B2B Marketing, and is a frequent columnist and speaker at industry events. Before co-founding Marketo, Jon was a vice president at Epiphany, a CRM strategist at Exchange Partners, and a strategic consultant for Gemini Consulting. Jon graduated Magna Cum Laude in Physics from Harvard College and has an MBA from the Stanford Graduate School of Business.

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INTRODUCTION Contributors' biographies

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As chief operating officer, Richard Perry focuses on GyroHSR's two most important assets – its people and its clients. Richard joined Gyro in 1995, having previously worked in advertising at Haymarket Publishing.

Richard's client expertise spans Europe, the Middle East, North America and Asia Pacific. He has worked with businesses across the B2B and B2C markets including T-Mobile, Orange, Virgin Atlantic, Oracle, Sun, HP, Cap Gemini, Nokia, Avaya, NXP, American Express and Hugo Boss.

Richard acts as a marketing industry adviser through his position as a director at the Marketing Communication Consultants Association (MCCA). Richard is also a published author; his second book, *Viral marketing in a week*, was published in 2001.

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John has 20 years' marketing leadership experience in the IT and telecommunications industry, spanning software, managed services and outsourcing. Before joining ShipSery, John was director of global marketing for telecoms software pioneer Cramer Systems, where he was responsible for marketing communications and demand generation worldwide. Previously, John held marketing management positions at Microsoft, Ariba, SAP and Oracle. John has received many awards in recognition of his marketing leadership and in 2009 was voted Marketer of the Year at the B2B Marketing Awards. He has a BSc in Computer Science from the University of Manchester.

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**Steven Woods, chief technology officer, Eloqua**

Steven co-founded Eloqua in 1999 and has held the position of chief technology officer since that time. He brings to Eloqua years of experience in software architecture, engineering and strategy, and is responsible for defining the product strategy and technology vision at Eloqua. Steven's insights into the application of technology to the marketing profession have been key to Eloqua's consistent record of client satisfaction. He was recently named as one of *Inside CRM's* Top CRM Influencers and recognised by Frost & Sullivan with their GIL prize for Innovation.

Steven is also a prolific writer on topics related to demand generation and the current transitions within the marketing profession. His book, *Digital Body Language*, explores these topics, and he is a regular writer on his blog of the same name. Steven is also deeply involved with the Eloqua user community, with whom he regularly interacts through the discussions on his Eloqua Artisan blog. Prior to co-founding Eloqua, Steven worked in corporate strategy at Bain & Company and engineering at Celestica. Steven holds a degree in Engineering Physics from Queen's University.

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About B2B Marketing

B2B Marketing is the comprehensive information resource for business-to-business marketers. Its mission is to provide practitioners with the information they need to perform better and achieve more, whatever sector of the B2B space they are operating in.

Launched in 2004 as B2B Marketing magazine, it has since evolved into a multi-faceted resource, delivering a broad range of content in a variety of different forms and formats.

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