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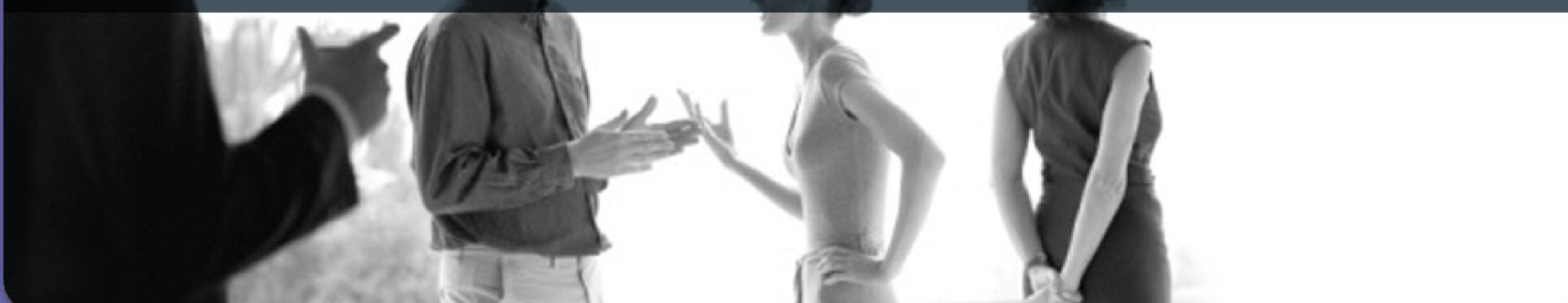
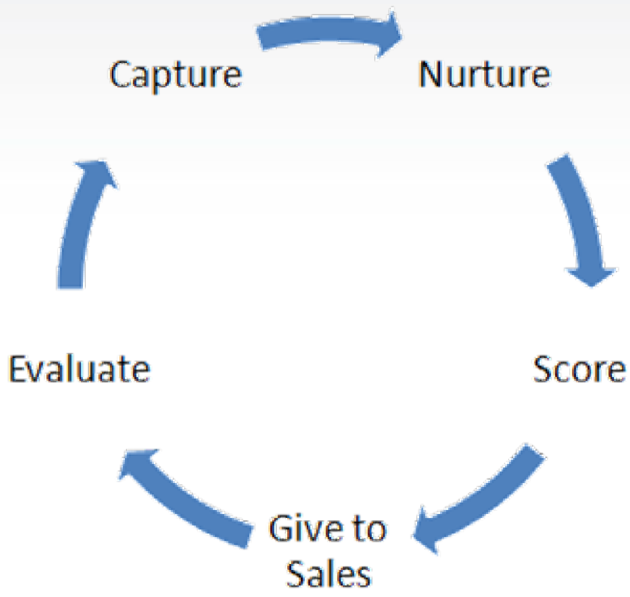
Ten Tips for Best Practice Lead Management

- Only 25% of new leads are sales-ready.
- 25% are disqualified.
- How do you handle the remaining 50%?



The Answer: Lead Management



Lead management is the ability to:

- **Capture** leads when they're searching
- **Nurture** leads that aren't yet ready
- **Score** leads so you know who's ready for sales
- **Give** leads to sales at the right time
- **Evaluate** leads to close the loop on lead quality

Done right, lead management creates more educated buyers, helps you better understand their needs, and ultimately means more revenue.

So how do you do it right? Consider these Top 10 Tips for Best Practice Lead Management.

1. Nurture leads before sending them to sales

> *"Lead nurturing is about matching the prospect's expectations with the sales rep's expectations; you want the prospect to be ready and willing to speak to the sales rep when that lead gets handed to sales."*
> *– Modern B2B Marketing*

Lead nurturing is the process of using the Web, e-mail, phone, social media, and other online and offline channels to **build relationships with qualified prospects who are not yet sales ready**.

Many leads are still in research mode, so emails and offers should provide best practices, statistics, research, etc. to help the customer frame their research.

Lead nurturing:

- Builds relationships with prospects
- Creates understanding of needs
- Facilitates lead scoring

2. Use thought leadership to influence buying criteria

Lead nurturing is not just sending a monthly email newsletter to your entire database, or calling prospects every few weeks to see if they are ready to buy yet.

B2B purchases are, by their nature, complex. Buyers need help to see possibilities and issues they wouldn't think about on their own. If you can help frame the discussion, you will be seen as a trusted advisor and thought leader. This will help buyers believe that your company understands their problems and knows how to solve them.

Lead nurturing is your opportunity to demonstrate the value you can provide and to position yourself as a resource.

3. Work with sales to determine when a lead is "sales-ready"

Start your lead scoring process by working with your sales team to build criteria that determine the steps prospects should take before they are ready for a sales call.

Start by building your "perfect lead," then work your way down. Criteria should include:

- **Demographic information** – Geographic location, company size, etc.
- **Lead source information** – PPC search terms, ad source, offer, etc.
- **Behavioral information** – web page visits, white paper downloads, etc.

4. Score leads using implicit behavioral data

Let sales tell you which leads are good.

In the Web 2.0 world, the prospect is in control of the buying process. You need to **monitor their online activity to know when they're ready to move to the next stage**.

- Lead scoring should consider the prospect's interest level defined not just by their words but their actions. People's actions speak louder than their words, and the two are often not in concert.
- For example, you should track email clicks, white paper downloads, and web page visits, and update scores accordingly.

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5. Give sales detailed information to ensure a seamless hand-off

Don't just toss the lead over the wall and leave it up to the sales rep to create a continuous experience for the customer.

- Let sales know what marketing activities the prospect has responded to, and indicate which product the prospect is most likely to purchase based on his responses to date.
- Create email templates, qualifying questions, and call scripts to guide sales reps during their initial contact with the lead. Be sure to refer to the marketing activities they have responded to, such as downloading an eBook.

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6. Track sales follow-up; evaluate leads with sales' input

By working with your sales team when creating your scoring criteria, you built goodwill with them. After that, you should regularly analyze the leads that were determined to be sales-ready to **further refine your lead scoring criteria**.

- Adjust lead score thresholds based on business conditions.
- Make sure sales follows up with leads and reassign leads that don't get contacted.
- When leads aren't closed by sales as expected, recycle them back into marketing for further nurturing.

7. Track every marketing activity, not just lead source

Tracking every marketing activity is critical to understanding which marketing programs work. What programs directly contributed to sales? What programs generated the highest quality leads? **Which programs had the greatest influence on pipeline?**

It's not enough to know only which program created the lead, or caused the lead to be sales ready. You need to know the impact of all the programs.

8. Progressively understand your prospect's needs

Just like dating, as you build a relationship with your prospects, you should also be **learning more about their needs.**

Every campaign the prospect responds to tells you about their interests. Every page they visit on your website tells you about their interests. Every link they click, and every piece of information they fill out on a form, tells you more about them.

Be clever with your forms – don't ask prospects to enter information you already know, and use the opportunity to find out something new!

9. Track anonymous visitors and tie their data to new leads

Simple code on your Web pages help you track prospects, whether anonymous or known. This helps tells you which companies are interested in your products.

As anonymous prospects complete forms on your website or landing pages, any **previous web visits can be automatically attributed to the new lead**. This is important to determine the sales readiness of new leads, since you know the entire history of the relationship with that prospect – including which campaign helped them find you in the first place.

10. Develop & enforce data quality standards, including de-duplication

Demographic analysis has long been a part of the sales process, and the Web makes it easier to collect this information. Certain information such as company size can help you determine the lead score.

With many demand generation and lead nurturing activities running concurrently, automatic de-duplication is imperative. Forms which auto-complete if the visitor is recognized not only help your prospects but can also facilitate the collection of additional information for profiling and scoring.

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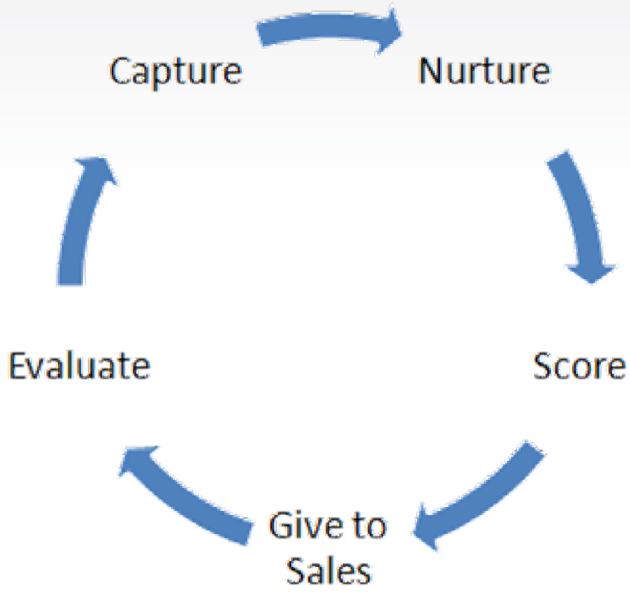
Lead Management Software



While some of this sounds simple, in reality it's not so easy to manage leads and nurture prospects, especially if you generate a lot of leads.

But it is a task that can be automated in an intelligent way, freeing your marketing people to create content, programs and analysis.

That's where lead management software comes in.

Lead Management Software

Lead management software automates the time-consuming tasks marketers have to do to effectively capture, nurture and score leads:

- Email marketing
- Campaign management
- Landing pages and forms
- Lead scoring and analytics
- Data quality and de-duplication

Dynamic & Flexible

Marketing is a dynamic job, and marketers need *flexible, dynamic lead management software* that lets them quickly and easily create and modify campaigns themselves, without requiring lots of training, IT assistance or outside consultants.

Built for B2B Marketers

Unlike older demand generation applications that require tons of up-front investment, integration, and training, *Marketo Lead Management* was purpose-built for B2B marketers, and understands that marketers don’t want to design static workflows that are hard to change.

Easy to Use

Marketo Lead Management works the way you do, with a drag and drop interface to create event-triggered and automated drip nurturing campaigns, create landing pages and smart forms that recognize known visitors, and build personalized emails in your templates.

And Marketo Lead Management is *Software-as-a-Service*, meaning there's nothing to download or install. You can be up and running without up-front fees in less than one day.

Marketo Lead Management

- **Complete email marketing functionality**
  - Deliverability, opt-in management, bounce handling, etc.
  - A/B testing
- **Automated campaign management**
  - Drip marketing campaigns
  - Lead nurturing campaigns
- **Landing pages and forms**
  - A/B testing
  - Validation
  - Recognize known visitors, progressive profiling
- **Lead management**
  - Lead database
  - De-duplication
- **Lead scoring / lead analytics**
  - Score when a lead is ready to engage with sales
  - Demographic and behavioral scoring
  - Tie anonymous web behavior to lead activity ("web caller ID")
- **Transparent connections with Salesforce**
  - Automate tasks
  - Track sales follow-up
  - Recycle leads

Learn More

To learn more about
Marketo Lead Management:

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