



Marketing  
know-how,  
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# Your Boardroom Guide to Best Practice Lead-Nurturing

10 ways to enhance  
conversion-rate success

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## How to make unripe leads bear fruit

### 1. Keep it relevant

Relevance will help prospects bite when the timing's right.

Nurturing leads is about providing information that will assist prospects in making informed decisions when the time is right. So go right back to basics and understand why a lead became a prospect in the first place. Did they download a guide from your website, enquire for particular information or sign up for a webinar? Understand the context of their interest; keep it front of mind as the dialogue evolves; monitor changes in buying interest and you can deliver relevance.

### 2. Segment for greater appeal

Meaningful messaging is clear cut – it stems from segmentation.

Segmentation helps make sure your lead nurturing is resonant. Using title, role, sector or the particular stage in the sales process, you can ensure messaging is meaningful.

Remember recipients will be all too aware of generic personalisation – blanket mail-merged 'Dear Mr So and So' communications. It may be OK for lead nurturing new starters, but further down the line, it's worth using prospect profiling and lead scoring to single out buying cycle segments and gauge conversion stages.

### 3. Profile incrementally

Build information, piece by piece, to avoid prospect irritation.

Don't bombard people with questions. Request a small amount of incremental information each time you have the opportunity. This way you can build a rich data matrix without causing inconvenience and frustration.

And give more than you take... you could provide interesting content without asking for registration, followed by say a case study or white paper that enables you to capture more information.

## 4. There's life beyond email

A multi-media approach helps keep the dialogue going and elicit responses.

Utilise all appropriate media to reach out to prospects and elicit responses. Your lead nurturing campaigns could include direct mail, telemarketing, online ad retargeting, events, YouTube videos, webinars... emails alone may not be enough to engage with prospects and maintain the conversation.

(And don't forget to ask your prospects how they prefer to be contacted.)

## 5. Go easy on the promo

Prospects may need time to chew things over – beware purchase-linked sign offs.

Use promotional purchasing offers in your Call to Actions at your discretion, because purchase-linked sign-offs or being overtly promotional can make the recipient switch off – and not necessarily through lack of interest.

It may simply be that the prospect is not yet at the buying stage in your nurturing campaign. Take them through the awareness, discovery and education stages in relaying your proposition, in the right sequence, before expecting them to take up an offer - or you'll fall prey to deterioration of the sales stream, aka 'funnel leakage'.

## 6. You decide how many touches

There's a fine balance between often and too much of a good thing.

There's no hard and fast rule for communications frequency, but there can be a fine line between staying front of mind and becoming a nuisance.

Lead scoring – assigning points based on pre-defined criteria to determine engagement and interest – can be an effective way of recognising leads that are nearing the end of the funnel and can be considered qualified leads, ripe for sending through to your sales people

## 7. Start simple

Begin with a basic lead nurturing programme and focus on your best leads first.

While the nuances of lead scoring or behavioural data analysis have their place, lead nurturing novices should begin by defining a simple programme that can be implemented quickly and easily managed.

Focus on your best candidates first – those with potential to be the most profitable customers – and dig down to just two or three of the core messages you want to convey to them.

## 8. Measure effectiveness

Measure results using the appropriate metrics.

Be realistic from the very outset. Set your objectives then measure the effectiveness of your lead nurturing programme by comparing your goals to the appropriate metrics.

If groups within your business question the value of lead nurturing, then consider setting up a control group to compare those exposed to your lead nurturing activity with a control group not exposed, at six monthly intervals.

Measure leakage at every stage of the funnel, and identify any points that will benefit from greater attention.

Opters-out may well be switching off to the content of your communication because it's not inspiring enough. Rather than offering just a standard 'unsubscribe' option, how about asking why someone wanted out at this stage, or giving the option of less frequent contact?

## 9. Don't forget your current customers

*A proportion of your existing client base maybe ripe for up-selling.*

It's all too easy to rest on your laurels and take customer loyalty for granted. How many of your customers are power users, ripe and ready to be primed for up-selling? Steven Woods, co-founder of Eloqua, advocates nurturing active accounts with post sales follow ups, retention strategies and customer renewal activity in his eBook: Digital Body Language – Deciphering Customer Intentions in an Online World. Excerpt: Chapter 6, Nurture to Win.

## 10. Recognise when it's time to change tack

*Trying a new media type can encourage leads to bite.*

While it takes time to instil trust and persistence pays off, it's equally important to recognise what Woods terms: 'a pattern of zero activity in response to regular and frequent communication.'

By re-engaging on an unexpected media type, you may receive a chance to re-engage the prospect,' he advises. So if someone repeatedly chooses not to open your emails, try another communications medium, such as direct mail or a professional phone call.