



5 B2B LEAD NURTURING MISTAKES & HOW TO FIX THEM



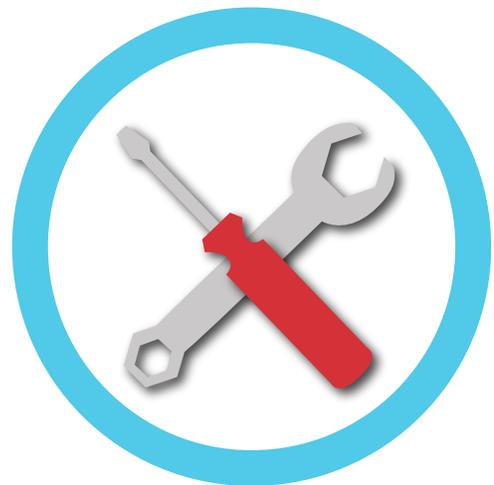
5 B2B Lead Nurturing Mistakes & How to Fix Them



In the business-to-business (B2B) marketing landscape, sales don't come easily. Before customers sign on, [your marketing and sales teams must collaborate to build brand awareness and trust, demonstrate value, and help prospects make an informed decision.](#)

That's a challenge — especially in the digital age, when prospects have instant access to huge amounts of conflicting information and reviews from multiple sources. Today's prospects are often reluctant to reach out to your sales team until they've completed a significant amount of independent research.

To maximize potential sales opportunities, your marketing team needs to master the lead nurturing process. Here are five common mistakes that many B2B companies make during the lead nurturing process—and practical tips for how to avoid them.



MISTAKE #1

WAITING FOR YOUR TARGET PROSPECT TO REACH OUT TO YOU

If you wait for customers to find you, you could be waiting forever. A recent Forrester survey¹ found that prospects are now as much as 90% of the way through their buying journey before they ever reach out to a sales rep—so if you're not making an active effort to generate and nurture leads, you'll likely see them slip away to your competitors.

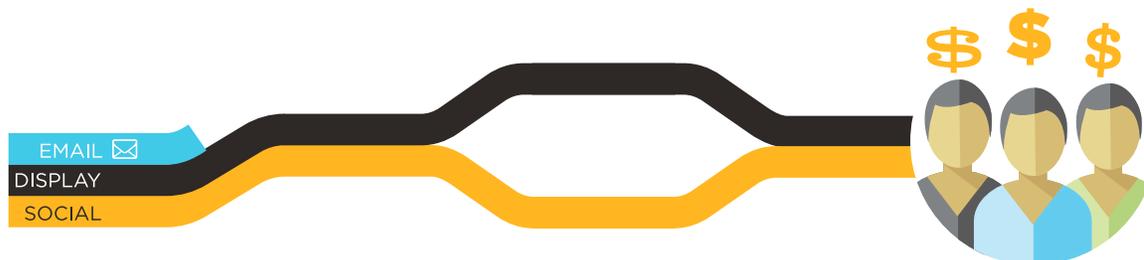
 **THE BIG FIX:** Engage prospects earlier in their journey. To fill your marketing funnel with new qualified leads, you'll need to focus on generating awareness among a wide pool of targets. To that end, invest in broadly targeted display advertising campaigns, which are paired with thought leadership content offers designed to appeal to each segment group you're targeting. As viewers fill out forms for white papers, webinars, or free trials, you'll be able to nurture these new leads through your marketing funnel.

MISTAKE #2

IGNORING YOUR ANONYMOUS WEBSITE VISITORS

Email marketing is a powerful tool for reaching and engaging with your known prospects—but not powerful enough on its own. According to “The State of B2B Lead Nurturing” report, less than 5 percent of anonymous website visitors fill out contact forms on business websites to enable email outreach, and what's more, most B2B marketers say their average email open rates don't exceed 20%.² So how can you reach the 80 percent of leads who aren't opening your messages in their inboxes?

 **THE BIG FIX:** Don't limit your lead nurturing to email marketing. Engaging in a multi-channel nurturing program—in which your email marketing is integrated with a comprehensive program that includes targeted display and social advertising—can help you reach your target prospects anywhere they travel on the web. That means even when your leads don't open your emails, you can still reach them online and continue nurturing them through your funnel.



¹ Forrester Blog, http://blogs.forrester.com/lori_wizdo/12-10-04-buyer_behavior_helps_b2b_marketers_guide_the_buyers_journey

² “The State of B2B Lead Nurturing,” Bizo, May 2014.

MISTAKE #3

TAKING A ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL CONTENT APPROACH TO YOUR ONLINE NURTURING EFFORTS

You wouldn't share the same promotional offer with different segments of your email marketing database—so why would you target every prospect with the same ad creative? When developing online marketing campaigns, it's important to consider each prospect's stage in the marketing funnel to develop messaging that will resonate. Otherwise, you risk losing prospects because you fail to engage them.

 **THE BIG FIX:** Break down your prospect groups into segments, and think about what types of content and information would be helpful to each group. Develop a content marketing strategy that builds trust in your brand as a source of useful and reliable industry information, and supports your prospects throughout their discovery process. It's also important to consider which stage of the funnel each prospect falls in when developing both your ad creative and on-site content offers. For new prospects who are just beginning to learn about your company, your ad creative should offer a higher-level overview of your solution; for mid- or late-funnel prospects who have visited specific product pages, you can display ads focusing on that product and offer downloads to white papers that dive deeper into specific product capabilities.

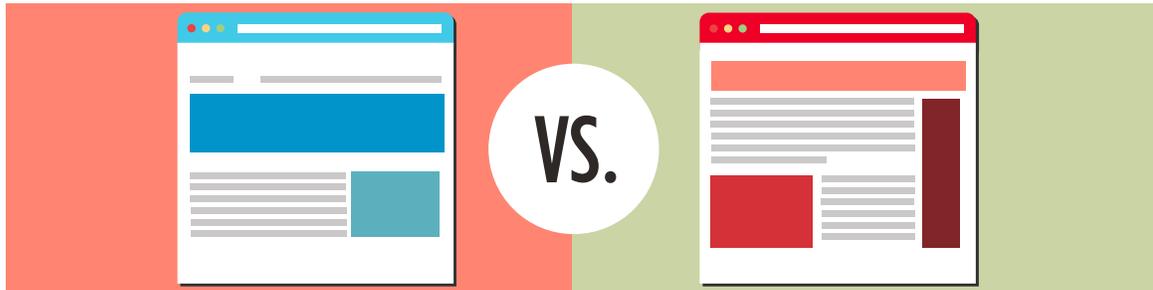


MISTAKE #4

NOT TESTING AND OPTIMIZING YOUR AD CREATIVE OVER TIME

When you develop ad creative, small tweaks such as a different call-to-action or a new background photo can often make a big difference. Developing campaigns that only incorporate one type of creative at a time can cost you in missed conversions.

THE BIG FIX: Use A/B testing to optimize your ad creative by simultaneously running display ads with a few small differences (e.g. variations on call to action language, images, etc.), and then measuring results after displaying a few thousand impressions to see which types of ad creative are performing best. You can then allocate the majority of your budget to the top-performing ads, while continually experimenting with short-run campaigns featuring small tweaks to the best ads to further optimize your results.



MISTAKE #5

APPLYING THE WRONG SUCCESS METRICS TO MULTI-CHANNEL NURTURING

While it's important to measure leads and conversions, they don't tell the whole story about the success rate of your lead-nurturing efforts. In order to track how well your multi-channel nurturing programs are truly meeting your company's goals, it's essential to develop a more complex benchmarking system that helps you assess how well your marketing campaigns are converting top-, mid-, and bottom-funnel prospects, so that you can evaluate strategies for optimizing your campaigns.

THE BIG FIX: To track the impact of your nurturing programs, pay attention to metrics that measure engagement, such as lift in visits, time spent on site, visits per user, and number of pages visited. This data will help you discover whether visitors who have viewed your nurture ads are more likely to engage with your website content than those who have not seen your ads.

CONCLUSION

In order to avoid these mistakes in your lead nurturing, it's essential to develop a comprehensive, multi-channel lead nurturing process that can help you create an ongoing conversation with your potential customers. Developing a process that lets you reach specific qualified prospects with customized content to appeal to them can help drive engagement with your brand—all the way from the top to the bottom of the marketing funnel. Multi-channel lead nurturing helps you reach more prospects, engage them more thoroughly, and ultimately close more sales.



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