

Lead Nurturing: Where do B2B Marketers Start?

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Statistics show that three out of four new leads generated end up buying at some point in the next 18 to 24 months, as long as they receive quality lead nurturing during that time. For that reason, lead nurturing is no longer a wish-list program but a competitive necessity.

For most B2B marketers, figuring out how to start a lead nurturing program is a daunting task. To make matters worse, many approaches tend to over-complicate things. Using marketing automation, marketers develop complex multi-touch campaigns that overwhelm their opt-in audience with too many communications and too many messages. Buyers become not only confused, but suffer from subscriber fatigue.

Step 1: Create a thought leadership marketing program

Lead nurturing fundamentally starts with a sound thought leadership marketing program. To keep it simple, break down the problem you want to solve into three to four themes that relate to specific buyers. This thematic approach becomes the basis for the campaigns you will drive to your target audiences using marketing automation over a nine to twelve month period.

Step 2: Focus on one theme each quarter.

Each quarter, focus on one theme. You want a variety of themes because your target buyers each have their hot-buttons that draw them into a particular business problem.

Let's consider a materials management software company with a focus on reducing costs and waste with indirect materials using Point-of-Use devices. One theme might be looking at the high cost for Industrial Manufacturers of waste in safety supplies or in tool usage. One buyer, for example, may be interested in stories involving the control of safety equipment while another wants stories about a waste problem with tooling. It is all about delivering relevant messages to each buyer at the right time.

Step 3: Employ a variety of media tactics

The formula to developing great content lies in having a variety of media tactics to deliver the primary messages surrounding that theme. For example, take one really good white paper (from a reputable third party), develop a webinar on the white paper topic and have a client participate in the webinar. (Be sure to record the webinar so you can repeat and use it in subsequent campaign waves.) Also, develop one or more case studies again focusing on a theme that can be dispersed via different mediums.

Step 4: Use a consistent theme for the entire quarter

The key to lead nurturing programs lies in consistency, so spend the entire quarter with bi-weekly outbound campaigns that highlight the theme, each with a different content deliverable.

Using marketing automation, distribute deliverables in this order: First the white paper, second the webinar, third the case study. Include links in each deliverable to the other content on that topic. Then repeat this process for at least two more quarters with one new theme per quarter.

Step 5: Repackage or repurpose content

If you repackage or repurpose content, you'll find that you already have most of the content you need. The trick is how to package or repurpose correctly to feed it to your target audience thematically and on a regular basis.

Repurposing or repackaging content means using the same content, but in a different format. For example, this content was originally a blog post, and now it's an article. I could also turn it into a podcast, a webinar or a case study. And I will.

Remember: You need to contact buyers seven to nine times

Research has shown that it takes seven to nine proactive communications to get your buyer to opt-in and read the message or theme you are trying to deliver. Once buyers do that, your other complimentary content will have more appeal and increase the likelihood of launching the sales process.

It is important to keep the approach of simplifying the lead nurturing process into something that is focused and meaningful to your potential buyers.

Listen to this [podcast](#) to hear more about this [thought leadership approach](#) and the results that were achieved for one of Henry Bruce's clients.

About Henry Bruce

Henry Bruce is the President and founder of the [Rock Annand Group](#), a client acquisition strategy consulting firm focused on the B2B software industry. Henry is a passionate B2B sales and marketing strategist and blogger who brings over 30 years of operational software experience to his engagements. As both a services provider and in-house marketing executive, he has played a transformative role in driving marketing and sales programs that achieve the desired results and create alignment and synergy between sales and marketing operations.

You can learn more about Henry by connecting on [LinkedIn](#), following on [Twitter](#) or the [FOCUS](#) business community. Or you can [Contact](#) him directly via email or call him at **203-870-9076** to find out how to move your company's performance from "average" to "best".

About The Rock Annand

The Rock Annand Group is a client acquisition strategy consulting firm focused on the B2B software industry. Software technology clients hire The Rock Annand Group when they're looking for a go-to-market program with a quick return on investment in less than 90 days or for someone to turn around the entire marketing program on an interim or long-term basis. Check out the [company website](#) to learn more.