

Avoid these 10 Marketing Automation Mistakes

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If your company is considering marketing automation or you have recently implemented it, you are not alone. According to The State of the Marketing Technology Industry, only 3% of businesses surveyed use one of the four most common marketing automation systems.

Clearly, a lot of marketers are going to be very new to this. They will have to try and convince stakeholders to budget for marketing automation. They need to get buy in from marketing, sales and IT. Someone needs to learn how to use the solution, and then become the expert who teaches everyone else. Most marketers will fail to implement these best practices. Some marketers will fail.

That's why I'm sharing 10 rookie mistakes you need to avoid if you want to have any shot at implementing marketing automation properly for your company.

Assuming marketing automation is easy

By its very nature, marketing automation is detailed and complex. You need to have a highly empirical, data-hungry mind to enjoy working within its parameters and to unlock its true potential.

Marketing automation success is a cascade effect. It takes a lot of upfront knowhow to set things up correctly. And if you don't, things will keep going wrong down the road. That's why it's important to accept that marketing automation implementation will not be easy, and to call on the services of an expert who will help you get where you need to go.

Take your company's lead scoring strategy. If you don't define your lead scoring strategy correctly up front, or if you don't know how to wash your data and improve your data hygiene, it will negatively impact the leads you pass to sales or advance to nurturing campaigns.

Using marketing automation as a glorified email marketing tool

Not using marketing automation to the fullest is the same as buying a Ferrari that you only drive to the grocery store on weekends.

Yet according to Sirius Decisions 85% of B2B marketers using a marketing automation platform feel that they're not using it to its full potential.

Buying a marketing automation system does not guarantee success. Most companies only use marketing automation as a glorified email-sending machine when you can do a lot more with it. That's because marketing automation isn't as simple as "marketing on autopilot." That's an incomplete understanding of its potential.

Marketing automation includes (in no particular order) lead management, social media, CRM, closed-loop reporting, content marketing, contact washing, landing pages, query strings, advanced multi-channel campaigns — you get the idea. Even when it's implemented, it's typically underused.

This is just a glimpse of what marketing automation can do for you:



Only doing manual marketing

If you are only going to use marketing automation for manual marketing, know that there are cheaper alternatives out there.

In fact, all of the following can be automated without marketing automation:

- Automated Multi-Channel and Touch Campaigns
- Contact Washing Machine
- Lead Scoring
- Advanced Form Processing Steps
- Dynamic Personalized Content
- CRM Integration

Now, really ask yourself: Why do I want a marketing automation solution?

Automating a bad process or having no process

Automating a contact washing machine that is incorrectly updating contacts is not a good idea. This will lead to dirtier data, which will in turn leave you scratching your head over what's going wrong with the system.

And not properly integrating marketing automation with your CRM will result in hot leads getting left behind in the marketing automation platform. Trust me, they will never find their way to sales with incomplete information and no closed-loop reporting. This negligence ultimately results in your marketing team losing credibility.

Implementing marketing automation in a silo

Implementing marketing automation across a single team or in a silo will lead to failure, especially in an enterprise company where there are 100+ marketers and 20+ marketing teams.

You must have a shared vision or buy-in from the front line marketer, as well as executive sponsorship, to achieve marketing transformation.

A simple way to avoid siloing your marketing automation is by making sure sales buys in to the plan. Marketing automation has many sales tool

depending on which vendor you choose, for example, giving you better insights into how leads are interacting in the CRM. Including sales leadership in the conversation when setting up marketing automation (and other items like lead scoring) will help align sales and marketing.

Another challenge is that many enterprise companies are using several marketing automation tools at the same time with overlapping capabilities. This leads to marketing teams customizing applications to solve only their team's needs, which leads to the company paying a lot of unnecessary, redundant cash.

Not setting up your marketing automation properly

If you ask a marketing professional what their company's competitive advantage is and the only thing they can say is that they are using the "top marketing automation" solution, this means they have no marketing strategy or competitive advantage. They're more than likely to be shooting blanks because all they're doing is blasting emails with their marketing automation tool.

Marketing automation won't function the way it should unless you use it with the right vision in mind. If you don't take its full potential into account and don't develop your strategy accordingly during the critical early months of implementation, you will not get the results you want.

Not building up your team of experts

This is why building up a team of experts and partners and having them in place for implementation is crucial. Across the board, a key ingredient in the recipe for proper marketing automation implementation is a strong, reliable knowledge base.

Training your team on modern marketing best practices is the real key to success with marketing automation. Here are some ways you can educate anyone who will be using the solution:

- Every marketing automation vendor has their own marketing university where you can learn the best way to use each tool more efficiently.

- Marketing automation vendors have phone, chat and email support. For instance, if you are not sure how to properly launch your email campaign, you can file a ticket or call customer support. This usually works best to talk through the problem and resolve it during your call.
- It goes without saying that hiring and scaling your team with people who have marketing automation skills will make a big impact in your long-term success.

Blaming marketing automation

“These leads are bad.”

“This marketing automation tool isn’t working.”

“If only we had another vendor.”

While none of these statements represent entire marketing or sales teams, they inevitably crop up as teams grow larger and more people are using marketing automation applications.

It doesn’t matter which tool they work with, the grass is always greener on the other side. But switching to another marketing automation solution will *not* solve their problems.

Understanding the problem with your marketing *and* the proper use of your marketing automation tool is the key to ending these kinds of complaints and actually solving problems. Proposing that everyone jumps ship to another marketing automation vendor is not.

According to Albert Einstein, “If I had only one hour to save the world, I would spend fifty-five minutes defining the problem, and only five minutes finding the solution.”

So focus on understanding the problem.

Automating what you don’t have

It’s important to understand that marketing automation is merely a tool that is meant to automate parts of your marketing and sales functions. But inbound marketing with high value content and assets that drive prospects down their customer journey is what will actually move the needle for your marketing automation strategy.

In other words, you can’t automate what you don’t have. *Leads you don’t have can’t be nurtured.*

The attention span of the average human is now shorter than the attention span of a goldfish. That's why targeted content — and the right content — is what really matters.

By not batching and blasting your entire database, but actually doing targeted segmentation, your conversion rates will be higher. Growing your database with targeted contacts and mapping out customer journeys according to the buyer personas will drive more revenue. Help your leads move to the next stage in their customer journey by improving their customer experience. Don't annoy them.

Not leveraging the marketing automation community

But the biggest mistake of all is not taking advantage of the resources, thought leaders, and content surrounding marketing automation.

All marketing automation vendors have their own forum or community where you can look up answers, documentation, or just ask for help. You can have your own private internal group where you share best practices and ask questions to others in at your company.

This brings us back full circle to mistake #1. Don't assume marketing automation is easy. It's not. It's powerful, wonderful, and transformative for any business, but it's not something that you tackle on your own. Stepping out there, testing the waters, *and* teaming up is what will get you to the other side of this vast blue ocean.

<https://blogs.oracle.com/marketingcloud/avoid-these-10-marketing-automation-rookie-mistakes>