

MASTERING Marketing Automation



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Overview

If you have embraced inbound marketing as your marketing strategy of choice, you are well aware that inbound inherently involves marketing across multiple channels including your website, social media channels, email, and so on. In other words, inbound has a lot of moving parts.

This is one of the reasons that automation is so essential for inbound marketing. Automation helps marketers to complete common tasks like scheduling social media posts, sending out emails, and managing prospect data, all while cutting down the amount of time and potential for errors associated with each task.

Marketing automation -The simple definition



Perhaps the simplest definition of marketing automation comes from HubSpot, a leader in inbound marketing methodologies. HubSpot defines it this way:

"Marketing automation refers to the software that exists with the goal of automating marketing actions. Many marketing departments have to automate repetitive tasks such as emails, social media, and other website actions. The technology of marketing automation makes these tasks easier. At its best, marketing automation is software and tactics that allow companies to buy and sell like Amazon -- that is, to nurture prospects with highly personalized, useful content that helps convert prospects to customers and turn customers into delighted customers."



How marketing automation can be used - The quick rundown

Like any other kind of automation, marketing automation exists to streamline a process that was once very labor-intensive. Content Marketing Institute's "15 Ways Marketing Automation Can Maximize Your Content's ROI" notes:

"Activities such as contact management, list segmentation, lead scoring and nurturing, A/B testing of website pages and offers, email marketing, and performance measurement and reporting can all be done more efficiently through automation."

Automating email campaigns:

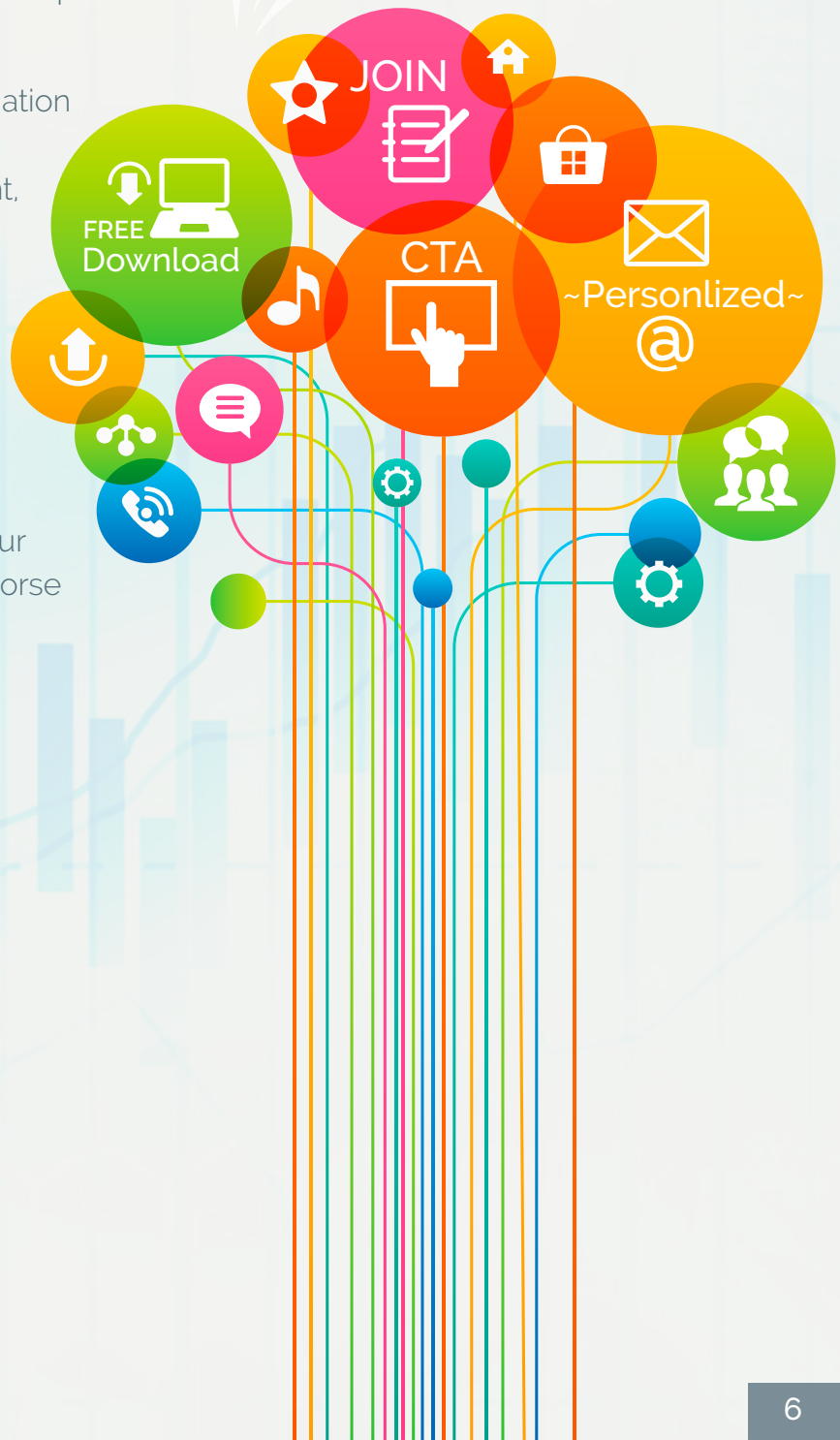
If your email campaigns are still stuck on "blast" mode, it is likely you are not getting the kind of results you want from your campaigns. Blast emails may have once worked well, when your customers were not receiving dozens (or maybe even hundreds) of unsolicited emails every day.

Marketing automation allows you to take your email campaigns to a higher plane. Think of it as the difference between aiming blindfolded or using a high-powered scope to see your target. While you might be able to hit targets haphazardly while blindfolded, your chances of success increase exponentially when you can more clearly see your target.



Marketing automation allows you to narrow the focus of your email campaigns. With automation tools, you can set pre-defined trigger points based on customer interaction with your brand. For instance, if a customer downloads a white paper, you can send a follow-up email with content specific to that white paper to keep that customer engaged.

You can use marketing automation tools to ensure that your customers are getting relevant, personalized information at every step of the customer journey. At the same time, you reduce the chances of irritating your customers with repetitive, impersonal communication. This, in turn, reduces the likelihood that your emails will go unopened or, worse yet, be marked as spam.



Social media integration:

Marketing automation can also help you refine your social media strategy. How? Because automation tools help you identify the interests of a particular customer. By integrating your social media and automation tools, you'll be able to craft more effective social media messages that more directly speak to the needs of your audience. Just as marketing automation tools help you drill down into the real interests and needs of your email customers, these tools help you do the same for those who follow your social media messaging.

Additionally, marketing automation analytic tools can help you better manage predictive social media marketing. By spotting customer patterns, these analytic tools help you to craft proactive social media campaigns to appeal to customers even before they take a specific action. This predictive marketing is increasingly important in a world in which digital interactions are lightning-fast and customers expect a high level of personalization.



Cross-channel marketing:

Marketing automation also helps you keep your brand messaging consistent across all interactions with your customers. This is increasingly important because the typical customer journey now occurs across multiple channels. With marketing automation tools, you can track the customer journey regardless of which channel your customers are using to interact with your brand. This enables you to provide a highly personalized customer experience, which drives conversions.

Lead scoring:

Marketing automation is a godsend for lead scoring. Why? Automation allows you to prioritize leads so that only qualified prospects get sent to your sales department. By utilizing criteria that you define based on your web visitors' actions, automation software triggers specific campaigns to address customers based on where they are in the sales funnel. Because these actions are performed automatically, they can save significantly reduce the time and money you spend on your marketing operations.



Lead nurturing:

Effective lead nurturing focuses on engaging with customers based on where they are in the customer lifecycle. Marketing automation helps you track customer progress through the sales funnel and deliver your messages to the right person at the right time. It is easy to see why automating this process can save time and money, especially if you are dealing with many leads.



CRM and marketing automation integration

-The best of both worlds



In a perfect world, marketing and sales are in complete alignment. Integrating marketing automation and your customer relationship management brings you considerably closer to that perfect world. While marketing automation focuses on effective lead generation, aligning your automation with your CRM means the process of handing qualified leads over to sales becomes more streamlined and efficient.

According to information from HubSpot, companies that excel at lead nurturing generate 50 percent more sales-ready leads at 33 percent lower costs. Because marketing automation is, at its foundation, about nurturing leads, integrating marketing automation platforms with your CRM bridges the gap between marketing and sales more effectively.

By automating your inbound campaigns, you can keep your marketing messages on track, supporting your overall brand position and keeping your leads nurtured appropriately at every step. Your marketing automation tools can also notify your sales staff of client activity, keeping your entire team in the loop and easing the transition of leads from marketing to sales departments.



Leveraging all the capabilities of marketing automation for your business

As is the case with all of your marketing tools, it is important to learn how to use marketing automation tools to your advantage to reap real, measurable results from them. A good first step is to assess where your current marketing workflows would benefit from automation. This requires taking a step back and examining what works now, and what needs to be tweaked to produce the results you want to see.

Your marketing automation tools can:

- ❑ Help you create automated marketing campaigns across multiple channels
- ❑ Design and test landing pages and web query forms to ensure that they are optimized
- ❑ Score leads generated with advanced analytics based on pre-defined values you set
- ❑ Nurture leads throughout the customer pipeline with relevant, targeted, personalized messaging
- ❑ Track customer behaviors and interactions with your website
- ❑ Optimize the timing and messaging of your email drip campaigns
- ❑ Coordinate the referral of qualified leads with CRM integration



Thus, marketing automation is a tool to support all your inbound marketing efforts. Your automation tools make it possible for you to continually optimize your marketing workflows and processes. In addition, because automation tools include powerful analytics, they also enable you to rapidly respond to customer behaviors and trends.

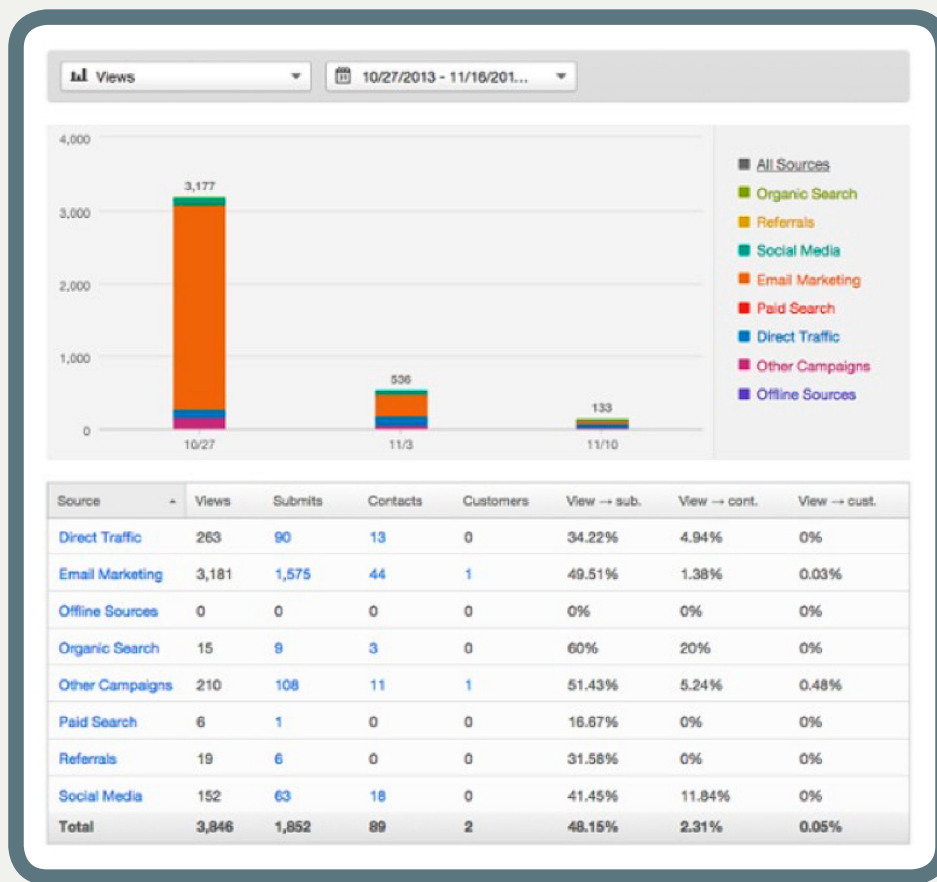
Marketing automation tools enable you to generate predictable, repeatable results and measure the ROI of your inbound marketing efforts more effectively. With real-time reporting, your marketing automation tools facilitate an agile approach to marketing that consistently delivers content that customers really want exactly when and how they want it.



Marketing automation bonus - An intuitive dashboard

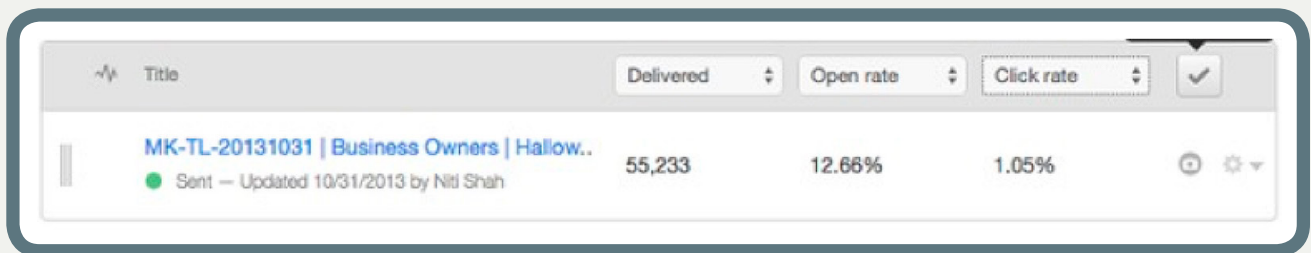
There are many marketing automation solutions available, including Salesforce, Marketo, and Pardot, to name a few. However, the following examples will use the HubSpot platform to illustrate some of the capabilities of automation tools. This is due in large part to HubSpot's easy-to-use dashboard, which provides a comprehensive look at the performance of all your marketing campaigns with just a few simple clicks.

Here are some screenshots of the HubSpot Marketing Automation Dashboard that illustrate its value:



Do you want to see how your landing pages are performing? HubSpot's dashboard displays views, submissions, and conversion information.





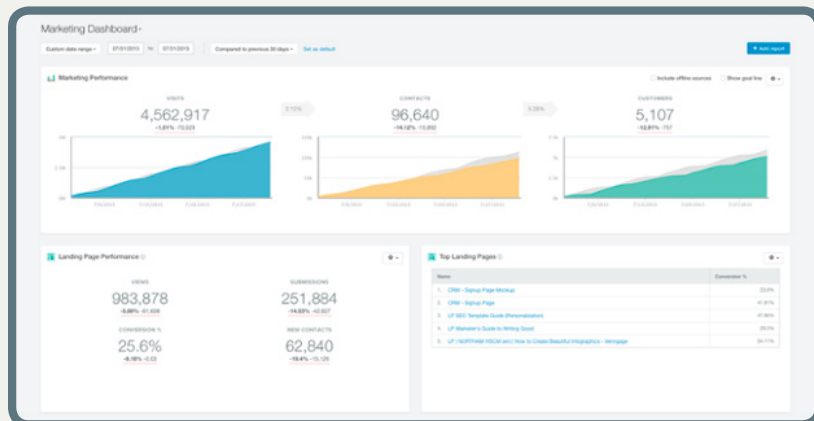
Are you interested in seeing how your email campaign is working? HubSpot's dashboard provides a quick answer.



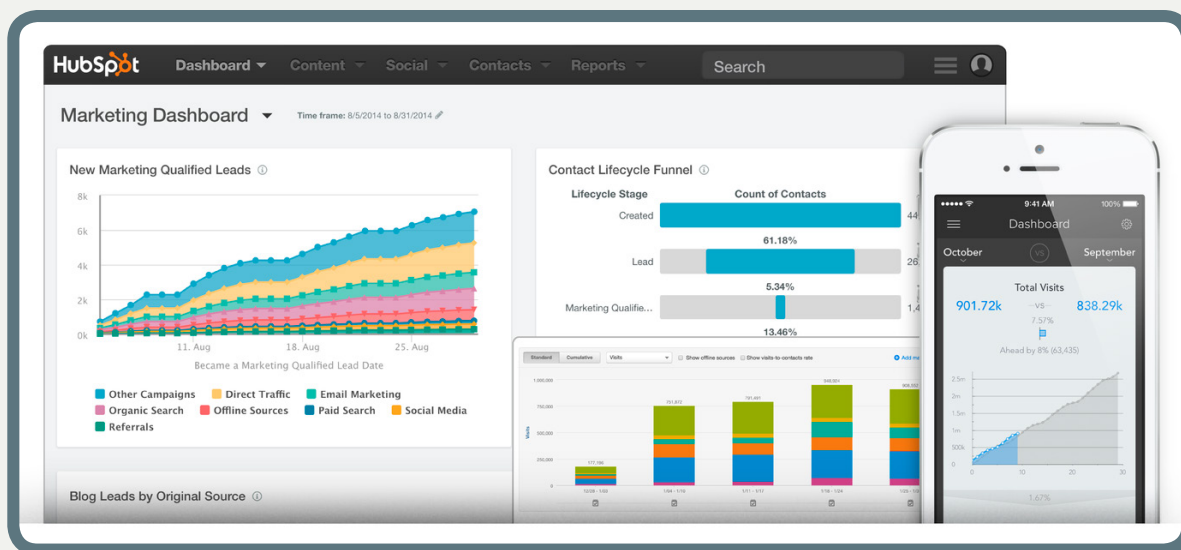
If you want to compare the results of one email message to another, The dashboard easily allows that.



Because the metrics that matter most differ from organization to organization, the HubSpot dashboard also allows for a high degree of customization. For instance, you can reorder your dashboard to display the items that are important to you, or you can resize the modules to suit your preferences. To see this in action, take a look at this [HubSpot blog post](#).



HubSpot's platform includes a content management system and tools for creating calls-to-action and landing pages. There are also tools for keyword tracking, search engine optimization, blog posting, and email-based lead nurturing. The platform allows you to create and customize workflows for specific marketing objectives, and enlists other tools and analytics reporting to help you track ROI for your marketing investments.



Another benefit of marketing automation is that it works while you are away. This means that you can spend your time running your business instead of tending to endless hours of repetitive marketing tasks. This is especially important if your inbound marketing strategy includes marketing across multiple channels and platforms.

Working with an inbound marketing agency

To truly master marketing automation, you may find it useful to partner with an inbound marketing agency with expertise in this area.



Incorporating automation into your marketing operations isn't always a quick and easy solution. It takes time and experience to master marketing automation software and the appropriate tactics. By partnering with a digital marketing agency that understands your needs and goals, you will be able to benefit from their expertise and extensive understanding of automation software and platforms.

An agency can walk your team through the process of setting up marketing automation tools and help you align your strategies and tactics with automation applications. By partnering with an agency, you'll be able to reduce your team's



About Inbound 281

WHO WE ARE

We are a digital marketing agency dedicated to helping our clients navigate the digital landscape, connect more meaningfully to their customers, and inspire their audience with purposeful content. We do this by leveraging inbound marketing and web design strategies for business, corporate, and enterprise marketers.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to use our inbound approach to develop leading-edge digital marketing plans, perceptive strategies, and valuable solutions to help you engage your customers with more two-way conversations and personal interactions to support revenue generation.

READY FOR A CONVERSATION?

If you are interested in a comprehensive plan that combines website design, email marketing, social media marketing, content development, and automation – or if you'd just like to learn more about how an inbound marketing plan can complement your established branding and communications strategies to meet your organization's unique needs, reach out and have a conversation with us.

[TALK TO US](#)



Inbound281.com

Inbound 281
2155 Butterfield Dr, Suite 205
Troy, MI 48084

1.800.834.4910
hello@inbound281.com