



5 Reasons Marketing Automation Fails and How to Fix It

You purchased marketing automation technology because people told you it would make everything better. They sang its praises and rattled off the ways it would streamline your marketing efforts. But it didn't, right? And now you have an expensive tool blasting out emails without even knowing if your audiences are receptive to the messages. Or they feel like they are at the other end of a conversation with Charlie Brown's teacher. Where's the robust sales funnel you envisioned, bustling with carefully curated leads that will be nurtured until they are ready to close? Guess what. You are not alone.

It's unfortunately a common story and there are five typical missteps we see when marketing automation technology is implemented:

1. No sales and marketing alignment on lead definitions and process
2. Lack of buyer intelligence to inform campaign strategy
3. Old, incomplete or poorly segmented contact data for your campaigns
4. Haphazard email blasts and one-size-fits-all approach on content
5. Unrealistic expectations

The silver lining in what seems like a pattern of missteps is that they are all avoidable. In fact, 79% of top-performing companies have been using marketing automation technology for more than two years. With the right planning and processes, you can avoid the pitfalls and, instead, revel in the success. Automating your marketing operations can add a powerful punch to your marketing programs. We want to make sure you are able to capitalize on that and give you the ability to attribute your efforts to closed/won deals.

Taking Down the Obstacles

1) No sales and marketing alignment on lead definitions and process

Studies show failure to align sales and marketing teams around the right processes and technologies reduces revenues by 10% for B2B companies. That's a substantial loss for something that is preventable before you implement marketing automation technology. Gone are the days of siloed sales and marketing departments. It's crucial for them to work together to properly nurture and grow leads with relevant content, targeting and follow-up. If these two sides don't come together and set common goals, there will be severe disconnects that can impact your business.



How to fix it:

Sales and marketing alignment should be a key initiative for all organizations. With alignment, you can complement technology insights with the most effective strategies to build a better bridge between sales and marketing for bringing in more leads and, ultimately, revenue. To accomplish this:

- Come together as a unified sales and marketing group to define, "What is a marketing qualified lead and what is a sales-accepted lead?"
- Identify joint goals and specific roles for marketing and sales in lead nurturing and sales qualification. Agree on processes for lead follow-up.
- Create common language on process, metrics and agreements for lead servicing (SLAs).
- Agree on a common data/reporting source to measure success.
- Communicate as a joint team, bi-weekly, to ensure the process is working to increase lead quality and the sales pipeline. Quickly identify if adjustments need to be made.

2) Lack of buyer intelligence to inform campaign strategy

Deploying marketing automation technology absolutely requires an accompanying strategy. You can't have an ad hoc scenario operations model, just cross your fingers and hope everything works. The technology is not going to do the strategy on its own. You've spent time, money and valuable resources to put this technology in place and should have a solid plan for everyone to follow to reach the anticipated end goal.



How to fix it:

Strategize before you implement. To do it the other way is backward and puts you in a situation where you are forced to be reactive instead of proactive.

You also need to decide on processes, roles and other specifics first, and then roll out the technology. Answer these questions to define your strategy/nurture mix:

1. What is the product or service you are trying to sell and why should the customer or prospect care?
2. What business challenges does your customer or prospect have that they need help resolving?
3. How should your customer or prospect go about meeting those challenges?
4. Which current customers are doing what you are asking prospects or customers to do and how did it turn out?
5. How can you help a customer or prospect make resolving this business challenge a priority?
6. Why are your company and products the right fit?
7. How are you going to be a long-term problem solver?

The best way to gain actionable insight is to interview your current customers and sales team. This will tell you exactly where people are going to find the information they need to complete a purchase. You will know where to distribute content, how to nurture prospects and customers and how to define relevant buyer personas.

3) Old, incomplete or poorly segmented contact data for your campaigns

It's the old adage of "Garbage in. Garbage out." If you start your campaigns using old contact lists that may or may not be accurate, or lacking specific data on your most likely buyers, your campaigns will be dead before they start. Have a plan for all of this before sending a single email. Filling in "white space" on current records, checking them against highly accurate sources like LinkedIn, and having a plan for continuous updating of these marketable records is required to ensure your marketing automation efforts have a chance to deliver positive results.



How to fix it:

Have a data plan with business rules for updating and maintenance. Stick to it and keep your data clean. Here is the Televerde process to leverage as a framework:

1. Capture, organize and integrate all possible sources of valuable information.
2. Translate data into actionable insights about addressable audiences.
3. Establish a segmentation strategy that includes personas, needed fields for modes and interaction types.
4. Match contacts to the right, relevant content and build engagement preferences.
5. Measure effectiveness of data strategy regularly and communicate performance.
6. Have a plan to keep your data clean going forward.

Data strategy goes way beyond “a good list...”



4) Haphazard email blasts and one-size-fits-all approach on content

You’ve diverted so much time and energy into getting your data segmented to improve performance. Don’t stop there. It’s time to make your campaigns relevant to the people you know can and will buy what you are selling. One of the biggest marketing automation technology fails is haphazard email blasts and cold, canned content. With the research from steps two and three completed and the data segmented based on the research, you should have a test-worthy strategy for mapping your marketable contacts to the information that has a high probability of being useful to your target personas based on who they are, what they do and where they need help.



How to fix it:

Stop taking the easy way out. Do your research based on customer interviews. Segment your data based on who bought your offerings in the last year. Map the people on your contact lists to the personas who bought and the information that they used during the buying process. Set up integrated campaigns based on these buyer personas; use relevant content proven to result in a sale.

5) Unrealistic expectations

Before you even consider making a marketing automation technology purchase, you need to get stakeholders from marketing, sales, finance and operations on your side. To succeed in this effort, you and those in key leadership positions need to align around achievable goals. What's more, you all need to agree on how you will measure progress toward those goals.



How to fix it:

Get your stakeholders in a room early to define what each person needs from a MAT tool to deem it a success. Is it financial return by a certain timeframe? Is it a lift in lead quality? Is it greater brand awareness? Is it shortening the sales cycle? Define it. Agree on it. Then tell your marketing automation vendor and any partner who may manage it for you what needs to happen for this to be deemed a success. And be prepared to set expectations around proving the effectiveness of marketing automation technology. Televerde's experience is that it takes anywhere from six to 18 months to get it right and report positive numbers. Some peg that at two to five years!

Set Up for Success

Organizations have a lot of work to do on their end to ensure they get the most from their marketing automation technology. Marketing automation is such a powerful tool and can greatly affect your ability to scale, personalize and drive sales and revenue growth—if you do it correctly.

What we hope you come away with after reading this piece is a roadmap that helps you build a successful strategy and execution model around your marketing automation and sales optimization initiative. Align your sales and marketing teams on lead definitions and process. Gain better intelligence from your buyers to build your strategy. Make sure your data is properly segmented. Customize your content and emails and set real expectations for yourself, your stakeholders, your employees and other relevant parties.

These steps will result in a deliberate and planned campaign based on the right audiences and their specific needs.

As a solution provider in the space, Televerde strives for customers to be successful with their marketing and sales optimization initiatives. We believe communication (on all fronts) is a key component to addressing all of these challenges head-on and turning them into successes. The more you plan, strategize, and loop your people in, the more of a seamless and effective transition you will have. By addressing the five challenges we've called out, you will set your organization up for success from the start. If you need some help with any or all of these (as well as the many other challenges that can arise), Televerde is vigilant about helping you with a successful implementation and getting the most out of your marketing and sales investments.

For details visit [Televerde.com](https://www.televerde.com) or call **1-888-787-2829**.