The Smart Business Owner's Guide to Marketing Online

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What constitutes a good marketing campaign? This is a big question, and one that can open the doors to tremendous business opportunities. In this ebook, we seek to find the answer to that question and help you implement it across your marketing assets. First, let's take a look at some indisputable characteristics of an effective and well-regarded campaign.

Educational & Helpful

Educational or informative marketing provides answers to a question, need or concern that a prospective customer might have. This is the marketing that is most useful when a prospect is in a research mode and trying to obtain specific information to get closer to a decision point. "How-to" blog posts and step-by-step videos, for example, would fit into this type of marketing. The tone of this content borders on the role of consulting and even customer service.

Timely & Customized

In order for marketing to be truly helpful, however, it needs to be available to you at the right time. Think about it: if you are facing a certain challenge and are actively searching for a solution, wouldn't you love to find it right in your inbox at the moment you needed it most? Let's say you are organizing a wedding and looking for the right venue. In your research, you might have visited a few websites, but your heart will be won by the company that follows up with you, acknowledging what you are searching for and offering to help. Amazon is the classic example of a website that customizes viewing experiences based on the needs and preferences of its customers.

Consistent in Language and Message

In order to make marketing people love, you need to consider the experience of the user across their different life-cycle stages: from the first time they encounter your brand, through their interaction with your website and content, to the point of converting into a customer, and their long-term success as one. By making this movement across different life-cycle stages consistent and fluid, you remove hurdles and encourage your audience to become evangelists for your brand.

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How to Start Making Effective, Lovable Campaigns

Now that we've covered the key characteristics of marketing that people love, let's discuss how you can adopt these features in your marketing practices. In this ebook, we will walk you through the process of running a holistic marketing campaign and show you ways in which you can make each part of this campaign educational, helpful, timely, customized, consistent—in other words, lovable! From industry best practices and our own experience, here are some key components of a successful marketing campaign:

- Produce a compelling marketing offer
- Place the offer on your website
- Attach the offer to automated workflows
- Promote it via email, blog & social media channels
- Measure results

How to Develop a Stellar Marketing Offer

Constantly coming up with new content ideas can be overwhelming. To handle the demands of content creation, marketers have been told again and again to “think like a publisher.” It’s great advice, but what exactly does that mean? Just how do you think like a publisher?

Like publishers, inbound marketers must have a detailed picture of their target audience in order to create optimal content for them. Who are your ideal customers and prospects? What are their biggest concerns, needs, and interests? Where can you reach them – on search engines, social media, or blogs – and what kinds of content do they prefer? These questions will help you develop buyer personas.

Focus on the right stage

Content plays a critical role in every stage of the inbound marketing process, from generating awareness about your company to helping convert leads into customers. But the types of content you should use to achieve each of these goals are often very different from each other.

Awareness

The prospect gets acquainted with your brand or realizes they have a need for your product/service.

Research/Education

The prospect identifies the problem and researches potential solutions, including your product/service.

Comparison/Validation

The prospect examines the options and begins narrowing the list of vendors.

Purchase

The prospect decides from whom to buy.

What Content Attracts Traffic & Leads?

For the purposes of launching a powerful marketing campaign, you will focus on the first stage—creating awareness through your marketing content. This means your marketing offer needs to attract a ton of traffic and generate new leads for your business. There are different types of content formats and topics that you can pursue to achieve this goal.

Finding the Right Content

In order to find what content topics capture the attention of your target audience, you should look at past data that you have access to. For instance, what are the most popular blog articles you have published? What are some of the most viewed pages on your website? Your historical performance should dictate your direction for new marketing content. If you don’t have access to marketing analytics that give you this type of intelligence, look in the public domain (Google news, Google trends, Twitter trending topics) for popular and newsworthy industry stories. Piggyback on this information by adding a personal spin, your expertise and comments.

Finding the Right Format

You can create content in different formats, from text-based content like whitepapers, reports and ebooks to media content like webinars, videos and audio interviews. While you can host an internal brainstorm session and come up with creative ideas for different content formats that you can produce, it's important that this new content matches the needs and preferences of your target persona.

Take a look at your landing pages. Does a webinar offer typically do better than an ebook? If the conversion rate of one type of format is lower than average, the marketing offer isn't appealing enough to your audience. If you have a sense of what that format is for your business, use it to build your marketing campaign around it.

Recruit a Team of Content Creators

You don't have to be the only one creating your company's inbound marketing content. You can use different voices from inside your organization. Technical folks, customer service people, c-level executives, product managers, and others in your organization have a unique take on important aspects of your business. Get your coworkers to contribute by:

- Asking them to cowrite a whitepaper or an ebook.
- Interviewing them and posting short videos that share their expertise.
- Inviting them to give presentations or answer questions in webinars.

You can also look outside your own company for help creating content. New online content marketplaces are springing up to connect marketers with legions of freelance writers and editors who will take on blog posts, ebooks, and other writing jobs for you.

You can specify the topic, your desired style and tone, and your intended audience, and you typically don't have to pay unless you accept the finished article. You can easily find external writers using Zerys or the Writeraccess, both apps available in the HubSpot marketplace if you're a HubSpot customer.

Repurpose Content

Almost every piece of content you create can be adapted, reused, modified and re-published in another format. Make a habit of finding multiple ways to package and distribute the same information in different formats.

Here are a few ideas:

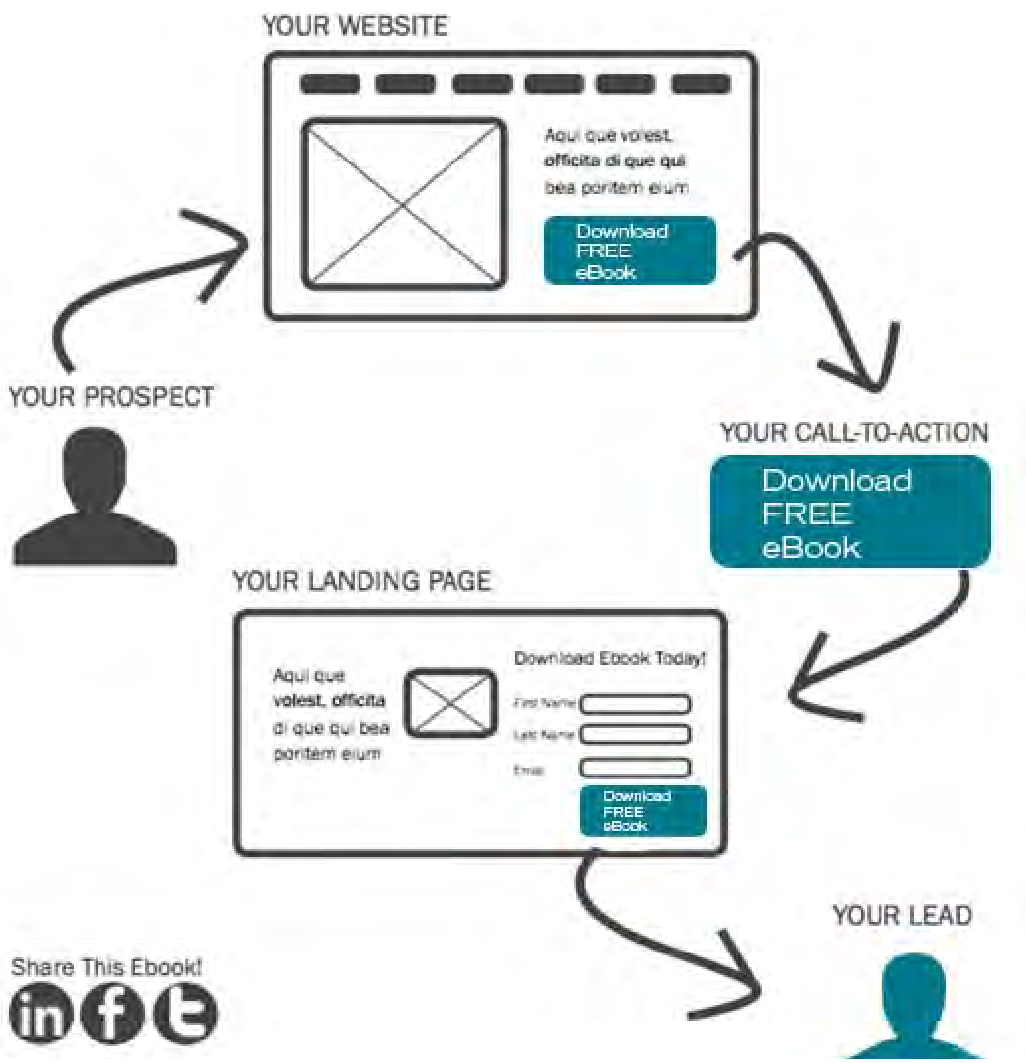
- Combine text from an old whitepaper with new videos to create a multimedia ebook.
- Turn videos or webinars into blog posts and ebooks or vice versa.
- Use commonly asked questions and comments from webinars to create a new ebook.

These topics will directly address your prospects' pain points. Share all company presentations in multiple formats. Post the slides on Slideshare, upload the video on YouTube, and create a series of blog posts that dive into specific points of the presentation.

Place the Offer on Your Website

In order to start generating new leads from your offer, you need to place it on your website. You will do that by creating a landing page, a web page that features a description and an image of the offer and a form for visitors to fill out in order to receive the resource.

This transaction is a type of information exchange, in which the visitor gets the offer they are interested in and you receive the contact information of your visitors. They transition into their next lifecycle stage, that of leads. This is the process of lead generation.



A good landing page will target a particular audience, such as traffic from an email campaign promoting a particular ebook, or visitors who click on a pay-per-click ad promoting your webinar. Therefore, it's important to build a unique landing page for each of the offers you create. You can build landing pages that allow visitors to download your content offers (ebooks, whitepapers, webinars, etc.), or sign up for offers like free trials or demos of your product. Creating landing pages enables you to target your audience, offer them something of value, and convert a higher percentage of your visitors into leads.

How to Make Effective Landing Pages

There are several key components that make a landing page effective for converting a higher percentage of visitors into leads. The major areas of importance are the headline, the content of the page, and the form. Let's look at each of these, explain why they're important, and discuss how to optimize them.

Headline

People's attention spans are short, especially online. This means you need to make sure your offer is as clear as possible. A good rule of thumb is to make sure your landing page passes the "blink test" – can the viewer understand the offer and what you're asking them to do in less than five seconds? Make sure your title makes your offer immediately clear so that the viewer understands what the offer is right away.

Body

The body of your landing page should provide a description of what your offer is and why your visitors should download it or sign up for it. Make the specific benefits of the offer clear. Format the body of your page in a way that quickly conveys the value of the offer and the action visitors need to take. For instance, use bullet points and numbering to simplify the visual layout of the text, and use bold or italicized text to highlight the main points.

An Example of a Landing Page

The other critical factor to consider is the effect of the length of the form on the prospect's willingness to fill it out. If the form is too long, prospects are going to stop and evaluate whether it is worth their time to complete all of those fields. So you need to find a good balance between collecting enough information and not asking for too much information that prospects are not willing to give it.

So what information should you ask for? Your goal should be to collect enough information through your form to enable you to both contact and qualify the lead. Fields such as name and email address gather contact information of leads, allowing you to put them in a workflow and nurture them in the future.

Fields like number of employees and role at company allow you to qualify the lead and find how likely they are to become a customer.

Design your form so you get enough info to contact and qualify the lead. We use this information to learn more about and qualify our leads before putting them into our sales funnel.

The Image

Your landing page needs to feature an image of the offer you are presenting. Visuals have the power to instantly capture the attention of visitors and should be leveraged to the fullest in your marketing. For instance, depending on what your offer is, you could feature an image of the cover page of a whitepaper or ebook, or headshots of webinar presenters.

The Form

Remember that the ultimate goal of your landing page is to get people to fill out your form. Make sure that your form appears above the fold so that the viewer does not have to scroll down on the page in order to see it.

The length of your form inevitably leads to a trade-off between the quantity and quality of the leads you generate. A shorter form usually means more people will be willing to fill it out. But the quality of the leads will be higher when visitors are willing to fill out more forms fields and provide you with more information about themselves and what they're looking for. Therefore, shorter forms usually result in more leads, but longer forms will result in fewer, but higher-quality leads.

Calls to Action

The goal of a call-to-action is to drive traffic to a landing page. In order to increase visitor-to-lead conversion opportunities, you need to create a lot of calls-to-action, distribute them across your web presence and optimize them.

Placement is one of the most critical elements of leveraging the power of calls-to-action. So how do you decide which call-to-action belongs where? Simple. Calls-to-action should be spread across your web pages.

Your homepage should have a call-to-action. As your most frequently visited page, your homepage presents a huge opportunity to drive traffic to a specific campaign. Your product/service pages, About Us page and Contact Us page all need to include calls-to-action or the visitor will be deciding on their own what to do next. You need to help them decide what to do next.

While calls-to-action are usually thought of as images and text placed on a website, the concept of a call-to-action can be found across all types of marketing. In all of your marketing assets you should be trying to drive people to get further engaged with your company. If the goal of a call-to-action is to drive traffic to your landing page, think about the different ways in which you can achieve that. For instance, you can use marketing emails and social media updates to drive traffic to your landing page.

Build Workflows

So you have designed a stellar marketing offer and placed it on your website. But before you start driving traffic to it, you need to consider how you are going to nurture the new leads that you create. How are you going to further educate them about your company and product or service? You will need to use workflows.

What is a workflow?

Workflows are an automated series of emails or other communications that pre-qualify early-stage leads before handing them over to sales. Workflows are also known as advanced lead nurturing, marketing automation, drip marketing, and auto-responders. Their goal is to make your new leads more sales-ready.

By using workflows and nurturing your leads, you save your sales organizations time because you educate and qualify the lead overtime. This is only one of the reasons you should start doing lead nurturing. Let's look at some of the other benefits.

Workflows are an automated series of emails or other communications that pre-qualify early-stage leads before handing them over to sales.

Getting the timing right

Study after study shows that email response rates decline over the age of the lead. In his science of timing research, Dan Zarrella, Hubspot's social media scientist, discovered that there is a positive correlation between subscriber recency and click through rate, one of the key metrics of engagement.

Once you set up workflows, emails are sent out automatically according to your schedule as new leads come in. You might launch the campaigns and forget about them, but the emails will be doing the work for you, helping you qualify leads and push them down the sales funnel faster.

Targeting

Studies show that targeted and segmented emails perform better than mass email communications. Lead nurturing enables you to tie a series of emails to a specific activity or conversion event.

Segmentation

Your contacts are not all the same. In order to do effective, targeted marketing, you need to break your contact database up into smaller groups or segments. Creating smaller segments allows you to group your contacts by their interests, industries, geographies, etc., and then create experiences and messages specifically for each segment. This will increase engagement, and help move your contacts farther down the funnel. For instance, you can automatically segment your leads based on any criteria like:

- **A Contact Property:** A contact property is based on company name, state, size, industry, lead grade or life-cycle stage, etc.
- **A Form Submission:** Segment based on ebook download, a webinar registration, a demo request, etc.
- **An Existing List:** Segment based on presence in an existing marketing list.

Once you've created your segments, you need to figure out how you can help them move them through your sales and marketing process in a way that caters to their needs.

Create nurturing campaigns that will resonate with each segment and make sure that your lists of leads are updating in real-time to include new leads who need to be nurtured.

Software Highlight: HubSpot enables you to create workflows that can be triggered when one of your contacts becomes part of a segment. We call this a smart list. For example, if someone downloads an ebook, indicates that their company size is between 50-200 employees, and says that they are in the manufacturing industry, you can send them a nurturing campaign designed specifically for them. If another company downloads the same ebook, but says that their company size is between 1-10 employees and that they are in the software industry, you can send them a different nurturing campaign that will be more relevant for their business.

For more information about HubSpot and to see if it can help your business, call us today:

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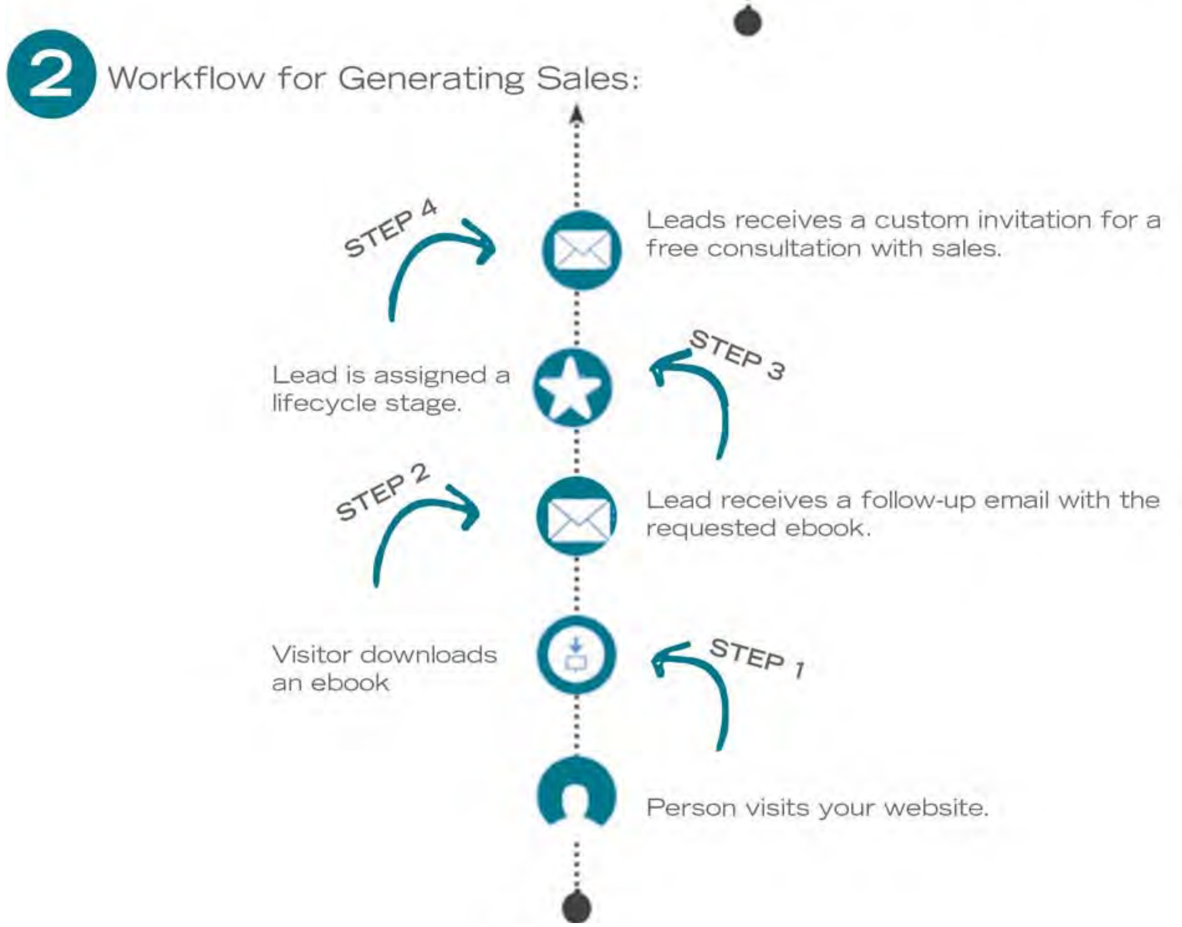
Examples of Workflows

Wondering what your workflows might look like? They can be as simple or complicated as you wish them to be. Let's look at a couple of examples of hypothetical workflows that can help you with lead scoring and moving prospects down the sales funnel, accordingly:



Marketing to Your Existing Contacts

Now that you have ensured that all new prospects who will grab your marketing offer will receive the appropriate follow-up communication, you can start thinking about sending traffic to your landing page.

First, think about ways to notify your existing contacts about the new marketing offer you have released. Your email list should be one of the most powerful contact databases that you have access to (your social following represents another growing database of evangelists). So how would you go about making this announcement to your email list?

Dedicated email send

For instance, you can be notifying your target audience about a new whitepaper you have released or invite them to attend an event that you are hosting. Dedicated emails help you set up the context to introduce the main call-to-action. Dedicated sends can be used to reach out to your entire email data-base or just a segment that you think this marketing offer applies to.

While there are instances when all of your subscribers should be notified about a specific marketing campaign, such as a timely new offer or an upcoming event, in most cases you would want to segment heavily based on your subscribers' persona.

Tips for your email sends

Dedicated email sends are generally easy to set up and measure. They are certainly not as complex as newsletters, for instance. Still, there are some best practices that you should keep in mind when you craft your email:

Feature one call-to-action

Dedicated sends focus on driving results for one call-to-action. As a MarketingSherpa case study of Kodak's successful list growth tactic explains, "these calls-to-action were not stuffed at the end of a newsletter or tacked onto another message. They were the focus of a dedicated email, which gave them much more impact."

Personalize Emails

Show your prospects that you know them. Person-alized emails not only increase your open and clickthrough rates, but also demonstrate a deeper relationship with your audience. Make sure to use a consistent voice across your marketing commu-nication.

Design mobile experiences

Make sure your email layout displays well on mobile devices. As more people start checking email on their smartphones, you need to optimize for that viewing experience.

Make your emails social and seo-friendly

Make sure that your recipients can share your email content on social media. Integrate social media sharing buttons in your marketing emails to facilitate that activity. Also, make sure that your emails create a web-only version which will ensure you are leveraging your email for SEO.

Clone & reuse

Once you have your email template in place, building dedicated sends should be easy. You will generally grab some of the information already on the landing page, make a few tweaks to it and spend most time on nailing down the subject line.

Measure performance fast

Naturally, if you have one main message and call-to-action in your dedicated send, it will be easy for you to track progress. You can quickly check the email CTR, landing page views and conversions, and follow the long-term ROI.

Promote Your Offer Through Blogging & Social Media

Now that you have announced the release of your new marketing offer to existing contacts in your email database, you can start looking for other opportunities to drive traffic to your landing page. This is where you can leverage your blog and social media channels. Blog and social media can increase the reach of your content and support your lead generation efforts. Just remember to always have a call-to-action: a link to your landing pages with the marketing offer.

Take excerpts from the content in your offer and feature it as blog articles or advertise it through social media and ask your followers for comments and shares.

How to use your blog in the campaign

When putting your blog post together, optimize your writing to grab people's attention and to rank well in search engines. Don't forget to introduce a call-to-action to the marketing offer you want to promote! Here are a few more tips for your blog post:

Feature a compelling image

Include an image that conveys what the blog post is about. This is appealing to readers and helps them go through the text-based content. A blog post that has some type of visual that's a photograph, a graphic or some type of infographic typically plays a little better than merely text.

Write an eye-catching title

Headlines are the most important element of your blog posts. While there are quite a few elements that make up a successful blog post, one of the best things you can do to capture readers' attention and entice them to view your post is to write an awesome blog title.

Format:

In blogging, it is important to break text up in chunks. Online reading is not like reading a physical book. The online reader needs to be able to immediately scroll through content to get to the subheaders and the bolded content and even bullet points. In that way you can make content more visually drawing and engaging.

Social Media Sharing

Give your blog content extended reach by including social sharing buttons (e.g. "like," "share on LinkedIn," "Tweet," etc.) on every post. This will encourage readers to share you content with their personal networks and expand its reach beyond your own connections.

How to Use Social in Your Campaigns

While Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+ and Pinterest are all different social media platforms, they have something fundamental in common: the element of information exchange. So with the creation of a good marketing offer to promote, you make your job on social media much easier because now you have content to share!

Here are some other best practices when it comes to promoting your marketing offer through social media channels:

Plan the timing of your promotion

Control how often you share your offers to ensure your account doesn't turn into a spam-bot. This will be contingent upon your business. For example, a recruiter will be more likely to repeatedly share offers to job openings because users will naturally be vested in that opportunity. However, users may not be as willing to download the same whitepaper about, for instance, improving heating systems.

Decide On Your Networks

There are a lot of available social networks out there. Which one are you going to use to promote your offer? You probably don't have bandwidth to spend equal time on all of them. Look at your marketing analytics and your historical performance with different social channels. Identify the three networks that bring you the best results and focus on using them for supporting your campaign.

Map different content based on the network

Different social networks are effective at promoting different types of content. While visual content performs well on Pinterest and Facebook, simple copy works well for Twitter and LinkedIn. YouTube, on the other hand, is a strictly video sharing platform. Find out which social network makes the most sense for the type of marketing offer you have created.

Use a Hashtag

When promoting your offer on Twitter and/or Google+, consider using a hashtag. There's more to hashtags than simply adding a pound sign in front of a word. In fact, simply adding a hashtag to a tweet isn't going to give you any results; you need to integrate them to a marketing campaign. As you develop your marketing offer, think of what hashtag would be relevant to this new resource. Try to use the hashtag on the landing page, your marketing emails and, of course, in your social media updates. That will help streamline a lot of the discussions around the offer and help you receive feedback.

Measure Every Element of Your Campaign

Now that you have created a marketing campaign from start to finish, you need to revisit each element of the campaign and how it performed individually and as a part of a whole.

There are a wide range of metrics that you need to look at in order to evaluate if your campaign was successful or not. If you are trying to have a quick peek at your overall performance, you should start with a look at the analytics tied to the landing page that hosts your marketing offer.

What if performance was poor?

Different metrics tell different stories. So if your performance was poor, you need to spend time and find out exactly which metric needs to be improved. For instance...

If the number of views the landing page got is low, you need to work harder at promoting the offer and sending more traffic to it.

If the conversion rate of the landing page is low, you need to focus on creating a more compelling offer or optimizing your landing page.

If the number of new leads this offer brought you is low, it could mean that your existing contacts are not sharing your offer with new people. You need to either incentive them or find venues of promotion to a new audience.

If the number of customers the offer brought you isn't very high, that could mean your workflows aren't successful at qualifying leads to convert them into customers. You might need to revise the workflows and make them more powerful.

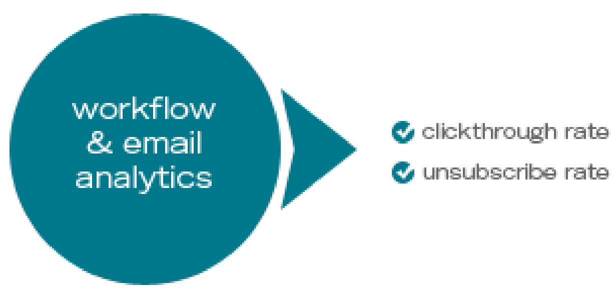
The same story applies to the rest of the marketing components used in your campaign. You should be able to explore the number of new leads and customers you generated from each channel, and you should also have access to key performance indicators that give you cues on how to improve the final results of your campaign.

When it comes to calls-to-action, for instance, there are two key metrics that you can monitor in order to improve the effectiveness of this marketing asset:

If the view-to-click rate of your calls-to-action is low, make your offer more compelling so that more of the people who see the CTA click through.

If the click-to-submission rate of your calls-to-action is low, focus on optimizing your landing page and making it perfectly aligned with your CTA.

The metrics behind lead nurturing and email marketing overlap. They show the performance of your email sends and the extent to which recipients engage with your email content.



If the clickthrough of your emails is low, that could mean your offer isn't appealing enough to the recipients you are sending it to. Start creating more compelling offers or spend more time on segmentation. (Note that open rate might be a helpful metric, but isn't very reliable.)

When it comes to blogging and social media marketing, here are some of the key metrics that you need to monitor:

Each of these individual metrics can help you identify weaknesses and strengths in your marketing campaign. However, don't forget about the bigger picture and stay focused on the number of new leads and customers your campaign (and each of your channels) generated.

Final Note

From producing a stellar marketing offer, to promoting it on your channels to measuring its impact, you have learned how to piece together the main components of a holistic marketing campaign. Most importantly, you know how to make each of these components valuable, consistent and timely--all prerequisites for creating marketing that your prospects will love.

Now that you know how to create a holistic marketing campaign that will bring you lots of new leads and customers, go ahead and make one!

About Hudson Fusion

Hudson Fusion is an innovative agency at the cutting edge of digital marketing. Our unique, hybrid methodology combines the best of inbound marketing with the best of traditional advertising and PR.

We deliver results-oriented custom plans tailor made to achieve your business goals. Our one-of-a-kind approach is focused on getting to know your business, understanding your market, and doing everything we can to make sure you're moving toward your goals.

From website design to social media strategy to staging trade shows, Hudson Fusion is your dedicated agency partner.

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