



B2B Lead Nurturing





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Introduction

Lead nurturing is an invaluable practice that helps convert leads into customers, especially when coupled with email marketing.

Through effective marketing, listening, and communication at every step in the sales funnel, businesses can maximise on every lead that comes their way. Let's dig deeper and find out how.

What Is Lead Nurturing and Why Is It Important?

Lead nurturing is exactly what the name implies. It's a way for businesses to nurture business leads to conversion, no matter where they are in the sales funnel.

With so many products on the market today, it makes sense that consumers don't always take buying decisions lightly. This goes for businesses too. When looking for new service providers, most businesses prefer to make educated decisions, taking time to research, compare, discuss, and analyse products or services before buying in.

Remember this if, say, a business opportunity drops off after connecting with you via an online form. The fact that a prospect doesn't reply or sign up immediately doesn't mean that they won't. It may just mean that you need to put in a little more effort to get them over the finish line. And email lead nurturing is the most effective way to do this.

This is because lead nurturing emails are perfectly timed to go out when the prospect needs a nudge. Reaching out to them at that moment demonstrates that your business is standing by and ready to assist; increasing the client response rate, even if it is further down the line.

In a sentence, lead nurturing can be defined as:

Connecting personally with potential clients to build trust at each phase of the sales funnel.

These prospects are often in limbo, surveying their options. By connecting with them and responding to their concerns, you're more likely to turn them into future customers. In fact, even if your prospective clients don't have concerns, connecting with them and speaking to their interests keeps your brand top of mind. But it requires some effort to get them there.

According to a [Demand Gen Report](#), lead nurturing emails get 4-10 times the response rate compared to individual email blasts.

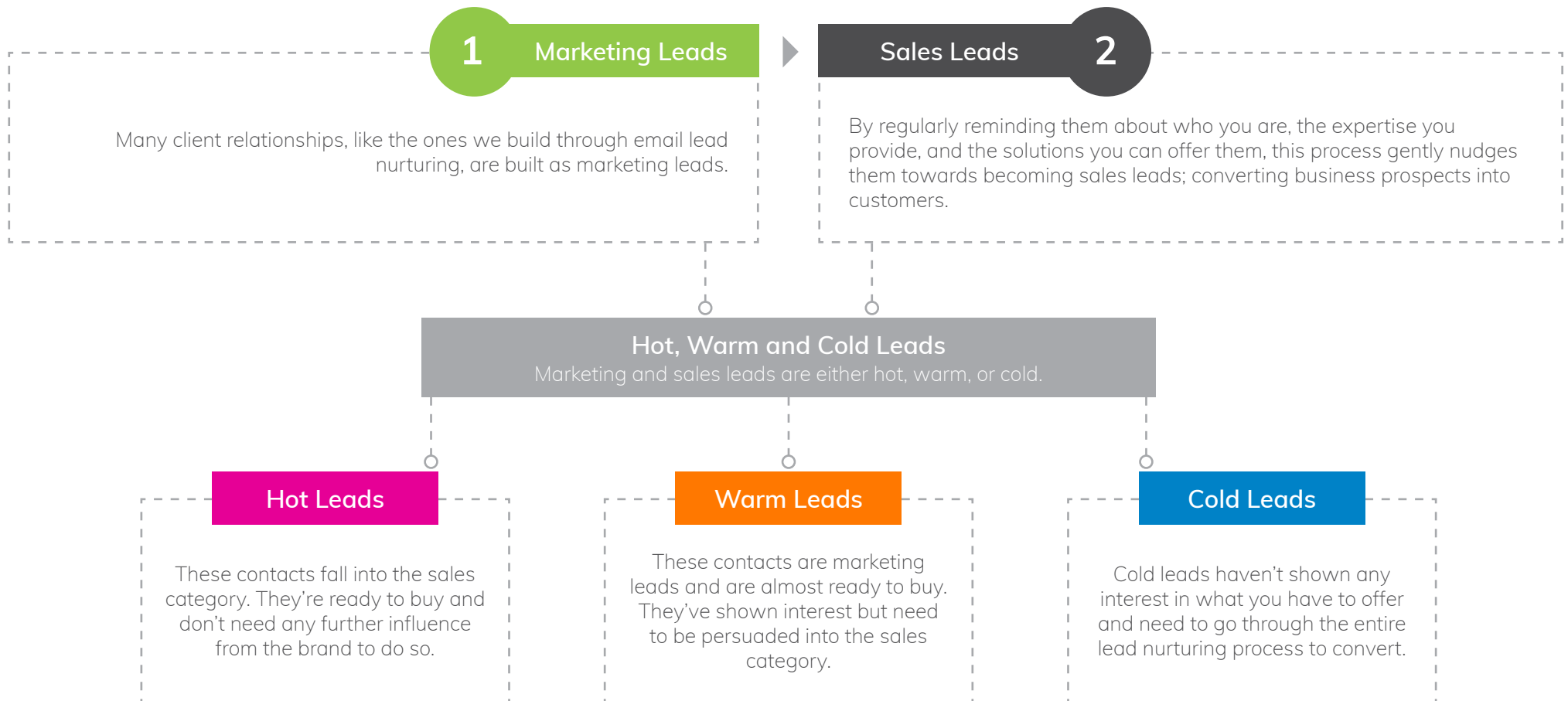
Visit us at www.everlytic.co.za or [click here](#) to request a demo.



The B2B Buyer's Journey

Lead nurturing doesn't just *happen*. With multiple options at their disposal, buyers are far too cautious to make quick decisions. You need to go above and beyond standard expectations to get their attention.

To understand the buyer's journey, leads are usually broken into **two main** categories:



The B2B Buyer's Journey (cont.)

Understanding the Sales Funnel

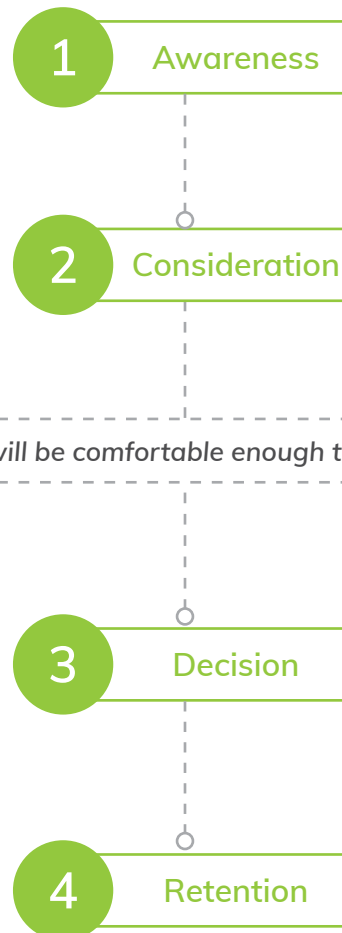
As business leads consider their options, they usually move through four main phases of the sales funnel:

Once a prospect has an idea of what they need to solve their problem, they enter a phase of consideration, where they weigh the pros and cons of their potential purchase.

During this phase, email marketing is the most effective way of communicating with them. This is because it helps decision makers to gather the information they need to address their questions and concerns.

It's at this point that many business prospects will be comfortable enough to move from being marketing leads to sales leads.

Once your business prospect has been converted into a customer, it's essential to maintain contact with them via standard customer support. But, to have a real impact, you can go a step further with email marketing - the most effective way to retain trust, upsell, or cross-sell other products without being invasive.



The first step in the sales funnel is when a prospect realises that they have a problem. After they search online, your website or social media pages are usually the first places where they learn more about how you can solve them. Many businesses also rely on word of mouth and positive recommendations.

The decision phase is where prospective customers decide whether they want to invest in your product or service. But, even at this stage, potential customers are usually still assessing their findings.

Tailoring content towards the value you can provide them will help them understand what makes you different to your competitors.

Using Email Marketing to Nurture Leads

With so many communication tools available today, businesses often underestimate the efficacy of email. Though it is the more traditional approach to communication, email marketing has always maintained a secure spot in the buying journey and remains the business communication standard.

Email is also less intrusive than a phone call or direct message and it can help keep your brand top of mind.

According to a [Demand Gen Report](#), 90% of respondents use email to engage with potential prospects. And to them, it's still considered the primary lead-nurturing channel.



Using Email Marketing to Nurture Leads (cont.)

These are some of the email marketing best practices that you can use to optimise your campaigns:

Personalisation

Email is an opportunity to connect personally with prospects; sharing all the information they need to make informed decisions and improve their services. But personalisation is more than just greeting a potential customer by name. It can be expanded on using segmentation and the use of consumer-relevant content (read our blog post on hyper-personalisation [here](#)).

Segmentation

Segmenting your audience into separate groups or categories can help you communicate more authentically with each of them, based on factors like:

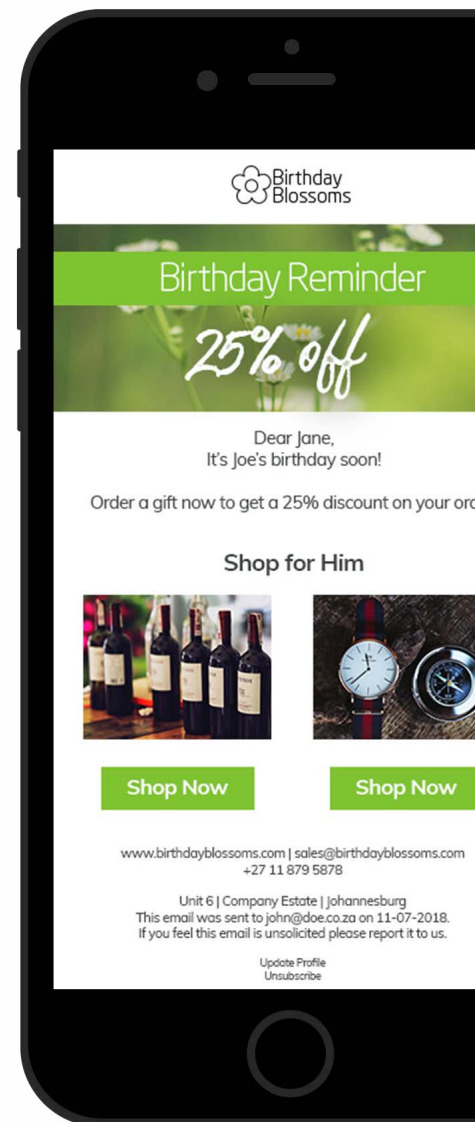
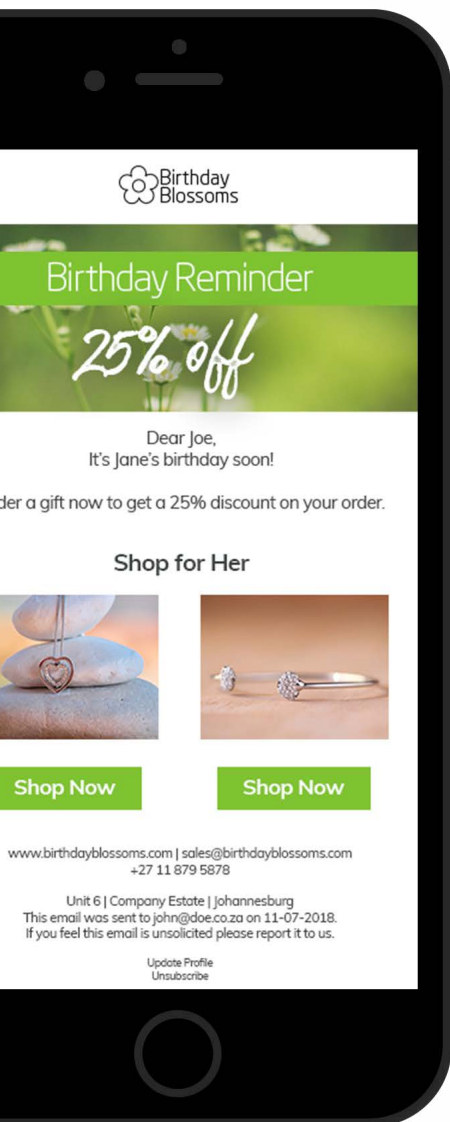
- Demographics, like location, age, or sex
- Purchase history
- Specific interests

From here, you can use features like dynamic content to adapt your message to speak directly to the individual receiving it. For example, if Discovery Health is sending out a newsletter, dynamic content helps them to send information that's specific to each reader's Vitality status or points level.

Relevance

As a marketer, you need to take time to really understand your audience and their pain points. By understanding this, you can create content that matches their needs and helps them find solutions.

One of the common pain points that potential customers encounter is cost, which often prevents them from moving further in the buying journey. If your service offering comes at a higher price than your competitors, try focusing on the value you offer, using thorough product reviews and customer testimonials. This will lower resistance and improve confidence that the extra investment is worthwhile.



Content Planning

Creating content for each phase of the buyer's journey will help potential customers move through the process with confidence. This is your opportunity to re-purpose the content you have on-hand and build it into your lead-nurturing strategy. Additionally, you can look for credible sources of supporting information, like review websites that speak proudly of your business.

According to [Aberdeen](#), sending users content that's relevant to their position in the buying process yields a 73% higher conversion rate compared to content that isn't.

Sending hyper-relevant content to clients may require more initial groundwork, but the results speak for themselves.

Here are some content types that you can use to get the most out of your leads at each stage of the sales funnel:

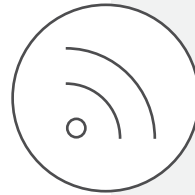
Content Planning (cont.)

Content for The Awareness Phase

Prospects in the Awareness phase have realised that they have a problem that needs to be solved. As a business owner, you need to understand the mindset of this person and what questions they're likely to be asking themselves, so you can answer them with your content.

Email marketing doesn't play a role in the Awareness phase, as you won't usually know who these people are yet. So, the type of content you share on your website and via your social media channels must be valuable enough to draw them in. Once it's persuaded potential clients to sign up for your email communications, you can start reaching out to them personally.

Content Types in this phase:



Blog posts that speak to general concerns that prospects have during this phase



eBooks or videos that delve deeper into typical questions. These can be based on market research gathered from past customers

Content Planning (cont.)

Content for The Consideration Phase

Prospects in the Consideration phase have identified their problem and started researching ways to solve it. They might have read some of your content and even connected with you by signing up for email updates.

At this stage, they'll be exploring the pros and cons of your products or services, pulling on all resources to assess whether you can help them meet their goals.

In previous research, we've found that 63% of South Africans prefer to receive promotional messages via email, opposed to social media and mobile.

Content Types in this phase:



Webinars with a product or service focus



Case studies into previous buying journeys



Product reviews or demonstrations



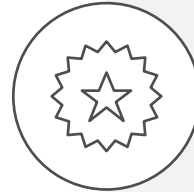
Data sheets

Content Planning (cont.)

Content for The Decision Phase

The Decision phase is the final stage where your prospects will use all the information available to them to decide if they want to buy into your product or service. If there are any lingering concerns about price, service delivery, etc., this is where it will come up. It's also the perfect time to present prospective clients with personalised offers.

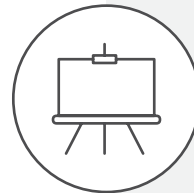
Content Types in this phase:



A free trial of the product or service



A personalised consultation to help set prospective clients' minds at ease



A live demonstration of what they can expect



An estimate of costs related to the work required

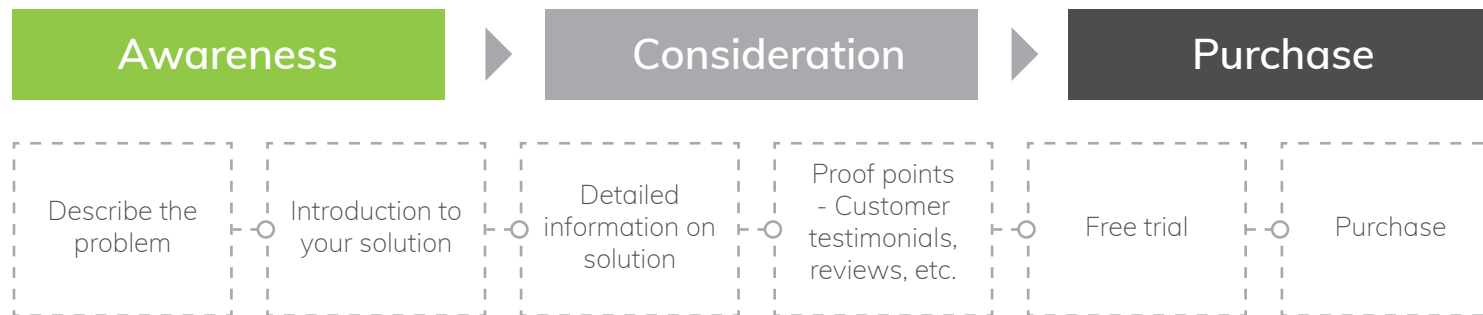


Client testimonials

The Power of Automation

Lead nurturing emails are less promotional and more informative, as if they come directly from a representative who's personally dealing with the prospect's account. This gives clients the kind of free insight they can use to make better decisions, even without the full package that your business offers.

Giving away your intellectual property for free may seem counter-intuitive to securing new business, but it demonstrates that you're a credible and trustworthy expert in your field. And one day when they do need a product / service that you offer, you'll be the first company they think to call.



Automation gives you the opportunity to trigger communications based on the behaviour or demographics of your potential customers. This provides a foundation for engagement even when customers connect with you outside of work hours. It also removes the need for you to manually interact with each and every lead at each appropriate touchpoint.

For example, when someone signs up for a newsletter, automation allows you to send out a confirmation response email immediately. This kind of mail lets the prospective client know that their request has been received and they've been added to the mailing list. If, after a few days, they haven't responded or taken action, you can send another automated mail that gives them further insight relating to what you can offer their business.

According to [Ascend2](#), 57% of marketers say that lead nurturing is their most valuable marketing automation feature.

All of this can be set up according to the various stages of the funnel and automated to send when a prospect reaches a certain point in their journey. This ensures that the right message is sent at the right time, giving you time to focus on other business initiatives while staying active in the customer's eyes.

Lead-Nurturing Checklist

To make the most of your email lead-nurturing campaign, you must operate in line with current best practices. Follow our **lead-nurturing checklist** to get started:

- ☐ **Use data to inform your lead nurturing.**
Data is your most powerful asset and can be used to effectively dictate what emails should be sent, to whom, and when. For instance, if you analyse your past results and experiences, you can set up your email marketing campaigns to match typical customer behaviour.
- ☐ **Understand your audience and where they are in the buying journey.**
Having a deep understanding of your audience will help you create valuable content that they appreciate.
- ☐ **Set up appropriate goals.**
Each buying journey can have a different goal relative to the problem that your potential customer needs to solve. For each action, make sure you have a process in place that matches your customer's desired outcome.
- ☐ **Keep it personal.**
Personalisation is key to ensuring that your audience views you as a trusted resource. From personalised emails and segmentation, to staying relevant to your client's specific requirements, tailor your communications and triggers to customer activity rather than generalised outcomes.
- ☐ **Create relevant content for each stage in the buying journey.**
Pay attention to the phases of the buying cycle and the content that's most suited to each one. This will help you to create content that brings clients back for more. Review each phase alongside the typical questions that are asked at that stage and adapt your content to fit these needs.
- ☐ **Cater for all devices.**
Your emails must be mobile-friendly and able to render easily on any device. If customers can't read your mail content from the device they open it on, they're more likely to delete the communication or unsubscribe.
- ☐ **Analyse and optimise.**
People change, and so do their needs and expectations. So, test your email campaigns regularly, analysing the data, and optimising them according to the insights you gather.
- ☐ **Move to predictive lead scoring.**
Predictive scoring can help you understand the value of a lead using historical data and customer activity. Manual lead scoring, on the other hand, can introduce mistakes through human error.

According to our [2017 Email Benchmarks Report](#), over 28.10% of emails are read on mobile devices.

Lead Nurturing with Email

What is Lead Nurturing?



Connecting personally with potential clients to build trust at each phase of the sales funnel.

Why Lead Nurturing?



Lead nurturing emails get **4-10** times the response rate compared to individual email blasts.



Sending users content that's relevant to their position in the buying process yields a **73%** higher conversion rate.



Companies that excel at lead nurturing generate **50% more sales leads at 33% lower cost** per lead.

References

Demand Gen Report - The 10 Commandments For Lead Nurturing Success
Demand Gen Report - 2017 Lead Nurturing & Acceleration Survey Report
Aberdeen - How to Define Market Needs to Align Content Effectively
Everlytic - Demystifying the Inbox 2015
Everlytic - 2017 Email Marketing Benchmarks Report
Ascend2



28.1%

of emails are read on **mobile** devices



90%

of respondents use email as their **primary** lead-nurturing channel



63%

of South Africans prefer to receive **promotional** messages via email



57%

of marketers say that lead nurturing is their **most valuable** marketing automation feature

Understanding the Sales Funnel

1

Awareness

Blog posts | eBooks | Videos

2

Consideration

Webinars | Case studies | Product reviews | Demonstrations | Data sheets

3

Decision

Free trial | Personalised consultation | Live demo | Cost estimate | Client testimonials

4

Retention

Email marketing | Blog posts | Thought leadership content | Product demos | Comparative data

Nurturing Leads with Email Marketing

Optimise your email marketing campaigns with these best practices:



Personalisation
Connect personally with prospects.



Segmentation
Segment your audience into separate groups.



Relevance
Understand your audience and their pain points.



The Power of Automation

Automation means sending the right message at the right time, no matter what time of day or night your clients engage.

Follow our lead-nurturing best-practice checklist to make the most of your campaign:



Use client data



Understand your audience



Set up appropriate goals



Keep it personal



Create relevant content



Cater for all devices



Perfect timing and frequency



Test and optimise



Move to predictive lead

scoring



Conclusion

Many of your business leads won't be ready to convert the moment they enter the sales funnel. But this doesn't mean that they're lost. Sometimes all they need is a little reassurance to move to the Decision phase of the buying journey.

Help them get there by strategically nurturing leads through every stage of the buying cycle. This improves your chances of converting your customers into sales leads, all while building lasting relationships. The process may take time to set up initially, but in the long run, the benefits far outweigh these efforts.

On that note, here's one last pertinent thought:

According to Demand Gen, companies that excel at lead nurturing generate 50% more sales leads at 33% lower cost per lead.

Start compiling your lead-nurturing campaign today.