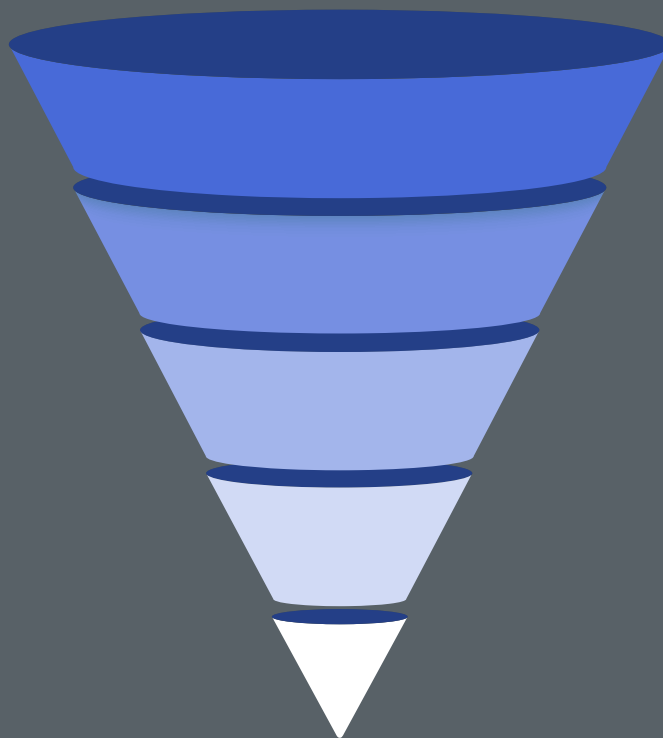


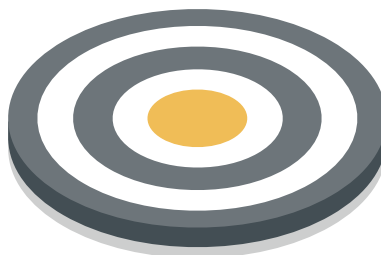
2015 Lead Nurturing Benchmark Study

*Sophisticated Tactics And Targeted Messaging
Take Lead Nurturing Programs To The Next Level*



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Survey Report

2015 Lead Nurturing Benchmark Study

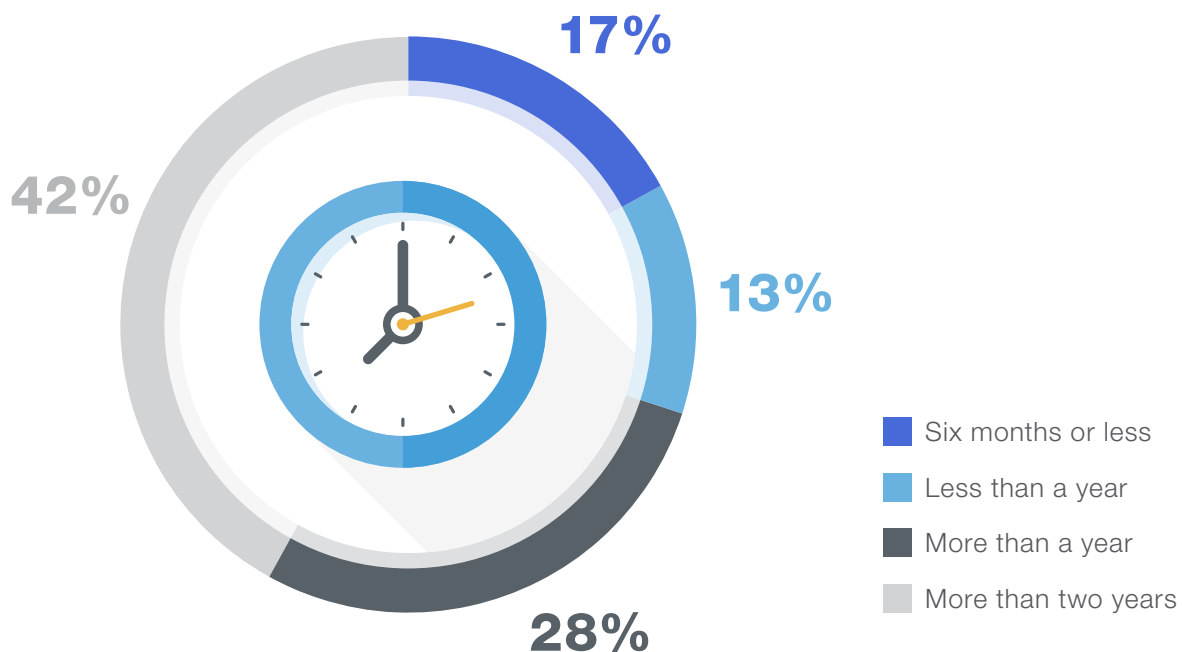
Lead nurturing, an important piston in the demand generation engine, is growing in sophistication and moving beyond simple campaigns that blast the same email to the entire database. Marketers are seeking to improve their use of data to target their lead nurturing campaigns to prospects in various stages of the buying cycle and predict who will be more likely to convert.

These are some of the main findings of Demand Gen Report's *2015 Lead Nurturing Benchmark Study*, our second in-depth examination of the strategies that successful B2B marketers are employing to drive prospects through the buying cycle.

Now that a fair number of marketers have logged some experience with lead nurturing campaigns — 42% have been implementing lead nurturing tactics for more than two years — they have a taste of the benefits of lead nurturing and want to build on that momentum.

While lead nurturing is not a new tactic, there are still a number of marketers who are just beginning to explore the benefits of lead nurturing programs. Twenty percent have been developing lead nurturing programs for less than a year, so there is still significant untapped potential.

How long have you been developing lead nurture campaigns within your organization?



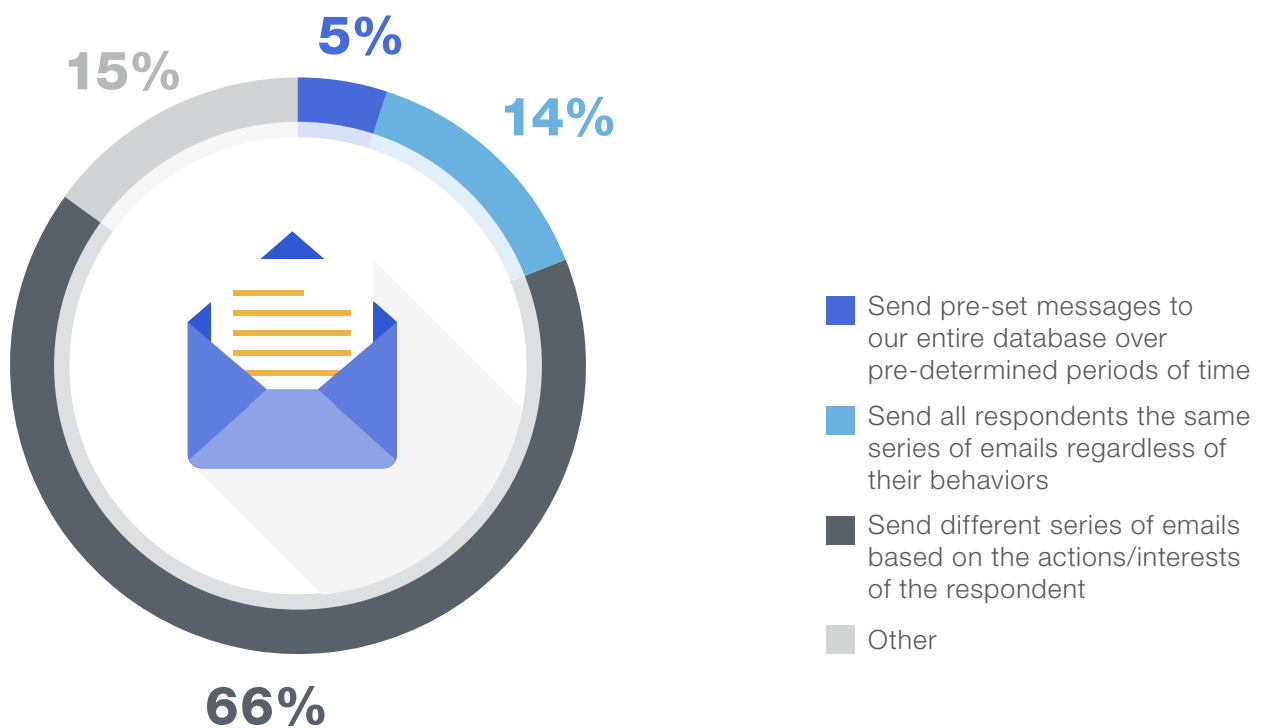
Two-thirds (66%) of respondents to the benchmark study describe their lead nurturing programs as more personalized, as they send prospects on different nurture paths depending on their actions and interests. This is a significant indicator that predictive marketing is having an impact on how lead nurturing programs are executed.

That is a far cry from early drip campaigns, in which the same series of pre-set messages are sent to the entire database in the same succession. But those practicing drip campaigns are in the definite minority this year at 5% of respondents. In addition, there are 14% who are inching forward lead nurturing maturity, sending the same series of emails regardless of their behavior, but to specific subsets of their database.

“We are definitely seeing marketers ready and willing to take nurturing to the next level, moving beyond drips to more sophisticated campaigns that align to the buyer’s journey.”

- Cari Baldwin, President and Founder,
BlueBird Strategies

Which best describes your nurture program?



3 Tips To Enhance Your Lead Nurturing Strategy

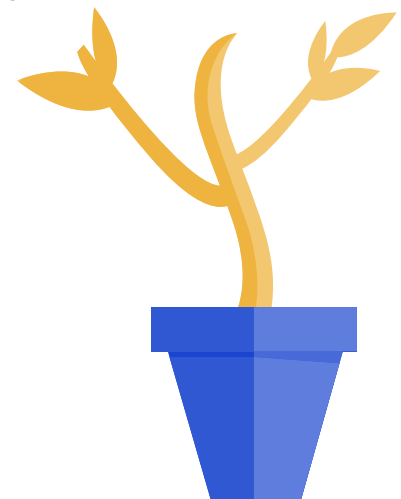
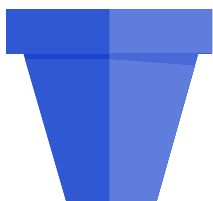
By David Johnson, Director of Product Marketing, B2B Cross Channel Marketing, Oracle Marketing Cloud

As marketers, we spend a great deal of time, money and resources to target our activities to more effectively engage with prospects. Developing a sound nurture strategy is primarily contingent on the ability to segment and offer value based on audience attributes. While prospects expect customized relevant content that supports their individual research and discovery processes, there are some unifying strategies that marketers can implement to ensure that all lead nurturing interactions count.

Consider these strategic measures as you strive to enhance relationships in a way that progresses your prospects down the funnel:

1. **Offer a helping hand.** By presenting yourself as an advocate for prospect success first, rather than serving up just another sales opportunity, your audience will warm to your messages. Focus first-encounter interactions (i.e. subject lines and leads in email copy) on the concerns most relevant to your audience. Focus your language on the value proposition of your product or service, not necessarily your brand or offering. Helpful insight equals happy and empowered customers.
2. **Think multi-channel.** Get outside the inbox. Consider every opportunity to provide useful information and thought leadership — web, blogs, events, etc. When you are in the content creation and concept phase, consider the channels and activities to support your launch. This approach of working backward will allow you to deliver assets on the appropriate channels to reach your prospects, but also support your content production process to maximize internal efficiency and budgets.
3. **Be respectful.** Always remember you are interrupting someone's thoughts. Be sensitive to frequency and always allow for opting out. The “opt in” is a precious thing, but even when your audiences have opted in, it's important to remember they've done so for other communications from brands — who may or may not be competing with you. Cutting through the clutter is not a task relegated to competing with just any content; you've got to shine in any abyss of any inbox. A little “human-to-human” philosophy never hurt anybody when trying to re-engage.

Happy nurturing!



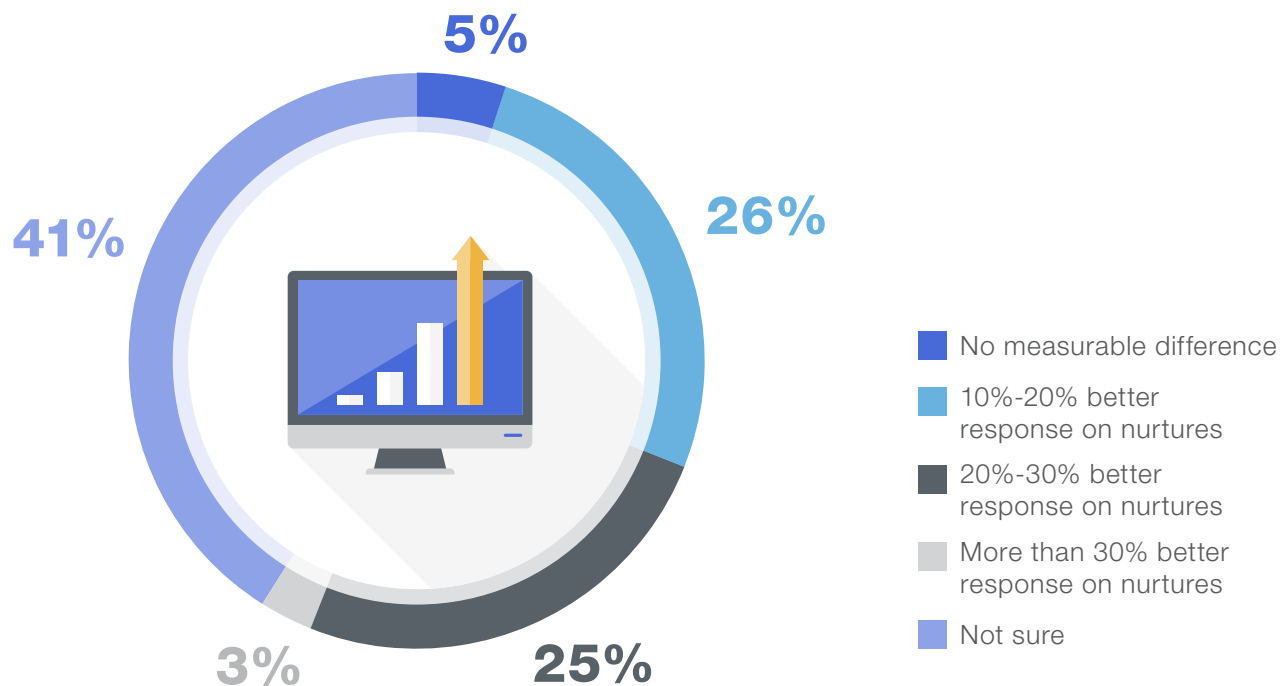
Big Benefits Across The Board

There is no doubt that lead nurturing programs make significant contributions to the bottom line in a number of ways. Respondents report repeatable successes in a variety of areas, including campaign performance and cost per lead.

When compared to standard campaigns, lead nurturing programs truly shine. More than a quarter (26%) get 10% to 20% better response from lead nurture campaigns versus standard campaigns, and another quarter get 20% to 30% better responses to lead nurture campaigns compared to non-nurtures.

Once they enter the sales funnel, nurtured leads continue to outperform non-nurtured leads. More than one-third (38%) reported a 20% or greater increase in sales opportunities from nurtured leads versus non-nurtured prospects, and another (21%) reported a 10% increase in sales opportunities.

How have your nurture campaigns performed compared to non-nurtures?



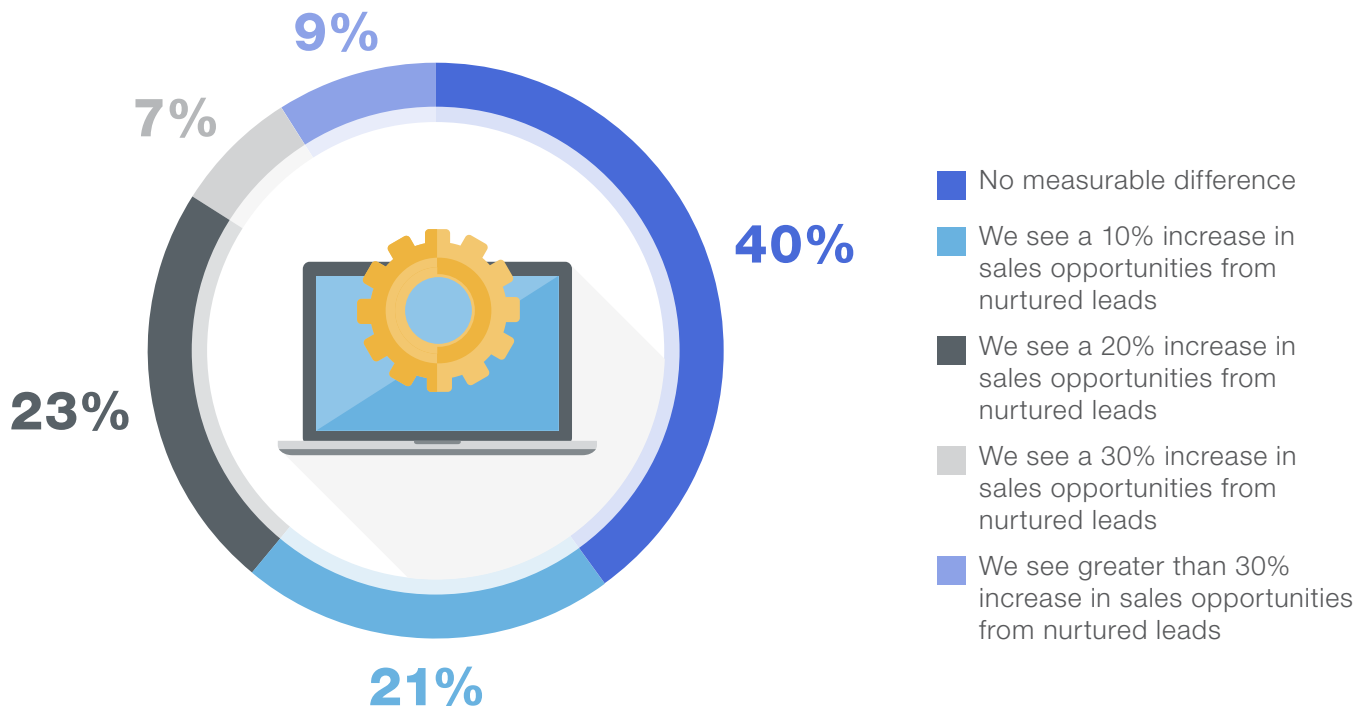
As marketers look to improve the performance of all of their marketing campaigns — and in particular lead nurture programs — they have been developing more targeted and relevant messaging. Nearly two-thirds (64%) cited better response to campaigns/offers due to targeting/relevancy as a significant benefit of nurturing leads.

The ability to segment prospects based on interest and behaviors was another top benefit of lead nurture programs, with 57% citing that as a key advantage. As buyers come to expect more relevant messaging, it becomes imperative for marketers to offer a more tailored lead nurturing experience to move prospects further down the buying funnel.

“Marketers are beginning to understand that demand generation, which includes nurturing as a key stage, is multichannel.”

- Carlos Hidalgo, CEO and Founder, ANNUITAS

How have nurtured leads performed within your funnel versus non-nurtured leads?



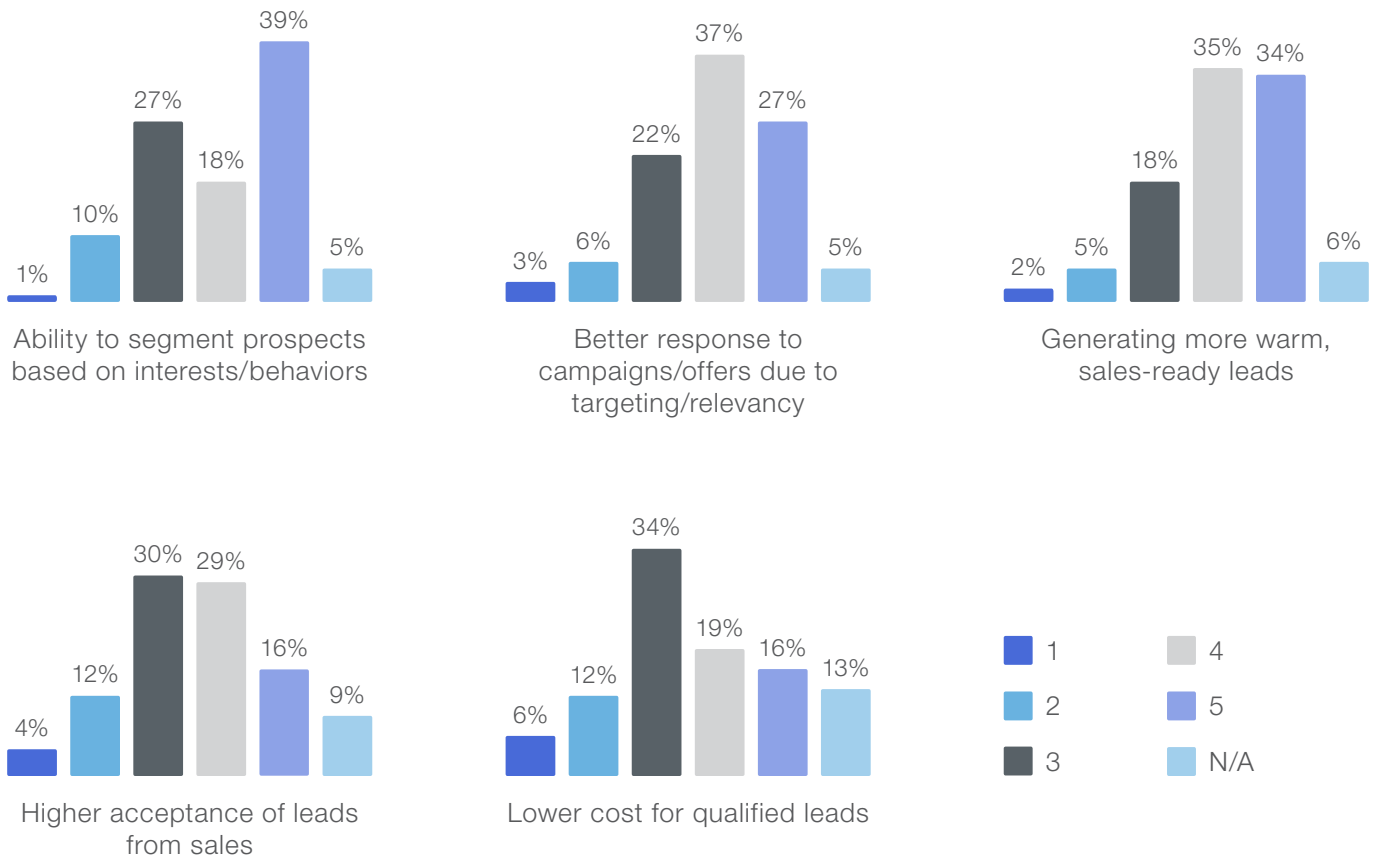
Nurture campaigns also provide the sales team with the best prospects that are most likely to convert. More than two-thirds (69%) said that generating warm, sales-ready leads was a key objective of their lead nurture campaign. Sales is also more accepting of nurtured leads, with 45% of respondents citing greater acceptance of leads from the sales team as a top benefit.

“Marketers of leading enterprises are personalizing their message and their advertising, leveraging integrated technology with their marketing automation platform.”

- Jon Russo, Founder and CEO, B2B Fusion Group

What have you seen as the biggest benefits of lead nurture programs?

Rate each on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being most effective.



Tracking Click-Throughs And Revenues To Map Success

When it comes to lead nurturing performance, revenue is a top indicator that the program is working well, with 67% reporting that revenue is a key metric they track. As more marketers are asked to demonstrate their contributions to revenue and the pipeline, campaign attribution is becoming a critical metric to determine the performance of a campaign, as well as overall marketing activities.

One of the main goals of lead nurturing is to feed the funnel with high-quality prospects. Lead volume in the pipeline was a measure of success for 61% of respondents.

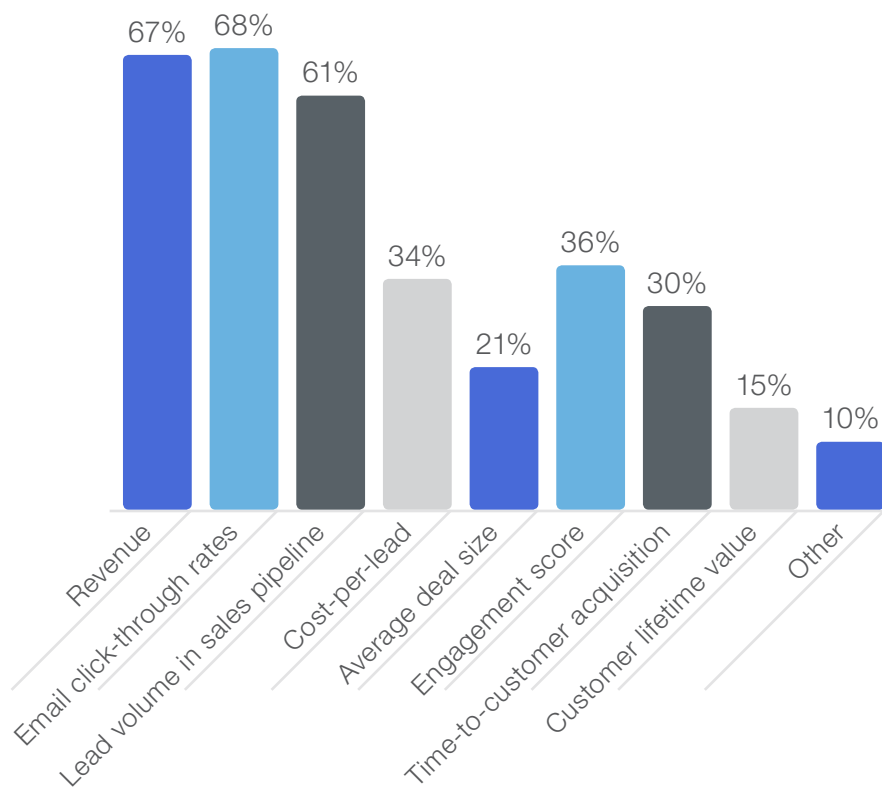
Click-through rates remain an important metric when it comes to tracking campaign performance, with 68% saying this is a top way they track lead nurturing success.

Cost-per-lead is also an important indicator of campaign performance, with 34% citing that as a key metric. Ultimately, successful lead nurturing programs should increase the average deal size, and 21% of respondents indicated that is a measurement they track.

Progressive marketers are not just looking at the clicks and downloads associated with a nurture program. They want to know how long a buyer spent with a piece of content and what areas were of the greatest interest. One up-and-coming metric is engagement score, which was cited by more than one-third (36%) of respondents.

What metrics do you use to measure lead nurturing success?

Choose all that apply.



White Papers, Thought Leadership And Video Star In Lead Nurture Campaigns

As lead nurture programs become more sophisticated and segmented, the content being used in these campaigns is becoming more targeted and relevant. When marketers know more about the audience, the messaging and offers can be more personalized.

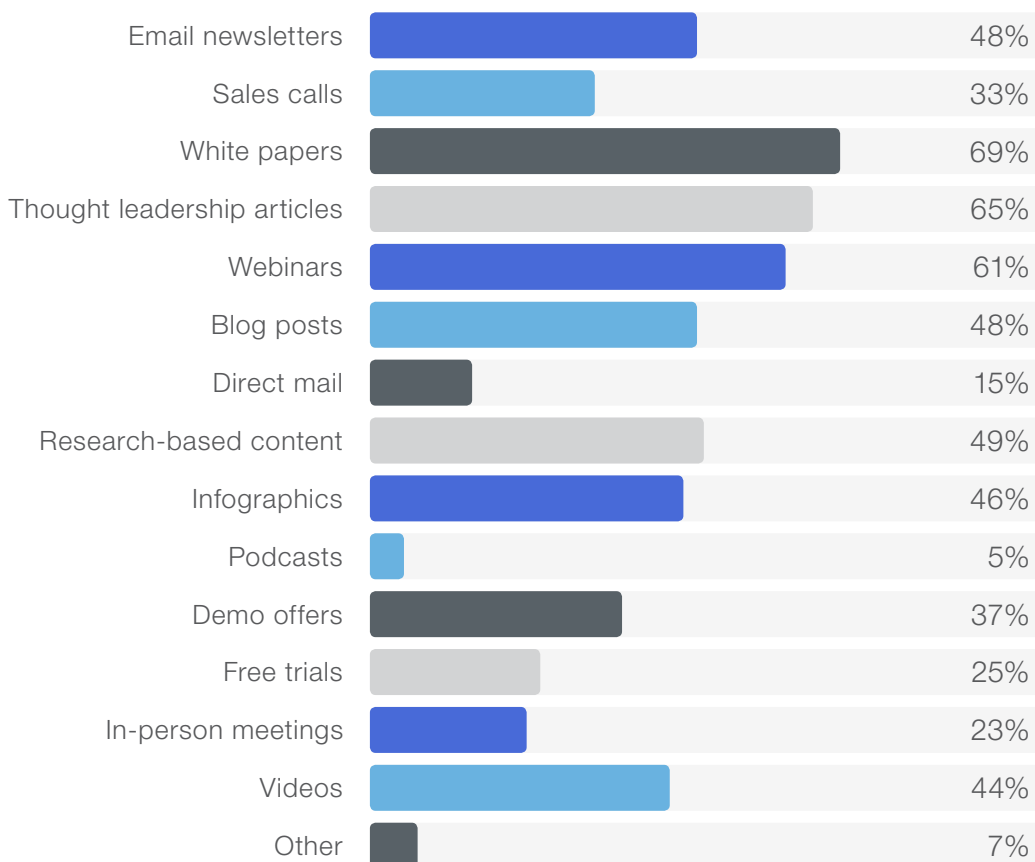
The need for more tailored content for lead nurturing campaigns has put thought leadership among the top pieces of content being used for lead nurture campaigns. Thought leadership articles, cited by 65% of respondents, help position the company as a source of overall industry knowledge, rather than just a supplier of product data sheets.

As more marketers aim to track engagement with lead nurturing content, video has garnered appeal as a lead nurturing channel. With video, there is a wealth of information about how long a buyer spent viewing the video and where they spent the most time. Video was cited as a primary tactic by 44% of those surveyed.

Webinars are a popular tactic for lead nurture campaigns, with 61% of those surveyed indicating they are among the primary tactics for their lead nurturing program. Webinars can appeal to buyers at various stages of the sales cycle and can be viewed live or accessed on-demand to provide ongoing value.

What are the primary tactics you use as offers within lead nurturing campaigns?

Choose all that apply.



White papers remain the workhorse of lead nurturing campaigns, with 69% citing this content type as a primary tactic they use as offers during lead nurture outreach.

When identifying the tactics that have been most successful, white papers (41%), thought leadership articles (35%) and webinars (33%) were the top three content types cited.

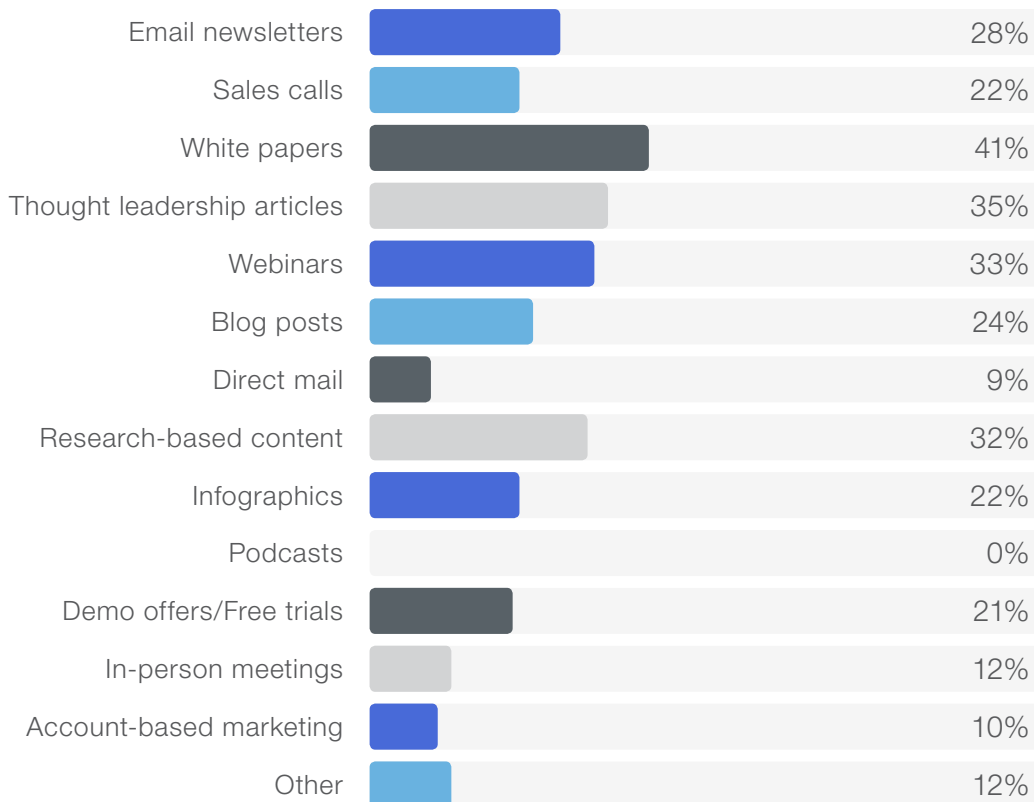
There were a few disparities when it came to the primary tactics that marketers use for lead nurturing and the ones that were most successful. For instance, distributing newsletters via email was a primary tactic for 48% of respondents, but only 28% said they were effective. Likewise, 49% said research-based content was a primary tool in their lead nurturing arsenal, but only 32% said it worked well.

“It’s important to consider that many buyers are further along the process than we may think. So if you limit your nurture to early stage, you are missing the opportunity to engage with buyers who are ready to buy.”

- Cari Baldwin

Which tactics have worked best within your nurture?

Choose top three.



Social And Chat Emerging As Nurturing Channels

Marketers are no longer limiting their lead nurturing programs to emails. More than one third (38%) say that they are nurturing prospects by interacting with them on social media.

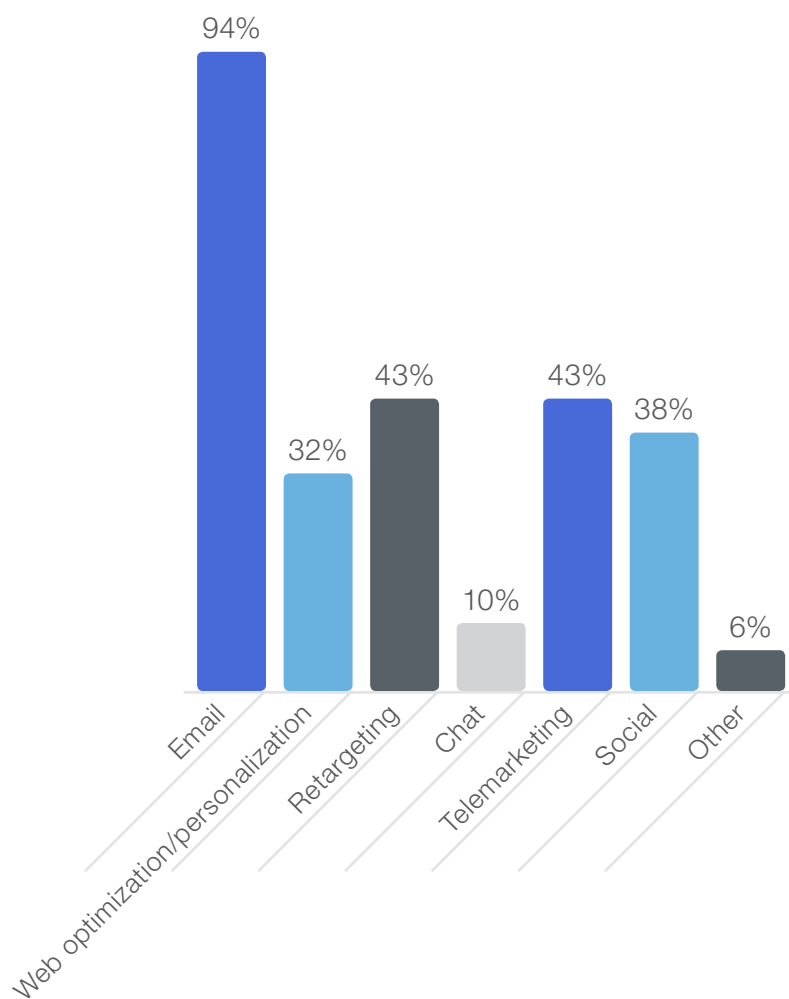
Chat has been a tactic primarily used by B2C marketers, but it is now being considered as a way for B2B marketers to nurture prospects along the sales cycle as well. While it is still a relatively new and unexplored channel, 10% cite it as a channel to support their lead nurturing activities.

Email is the go-to channel for lead nurturing programs, with 94% using it to drive prospects through the buying cycle.

Retargeting is also a popular lead nurturing channel, used by 43% of respondents. By adding a retargeting code into the HTML or signature of their emails, anyone who opens that email will see relevant ads as they surf the web. This enables marketers to further segment emails based on how far prospects are in the funnel.

What channels/tactics have you used to support your lead nurturing programs?

Choose all that apply.



Going Beyond Early-Stage Lead Nurturing

Respondents reported that they have a wide variety of nurture programs in place — from warm-up campaigns to customer upsell and cross-sell opportunities — pointing to the growing maturity of lead nurturing tactics.

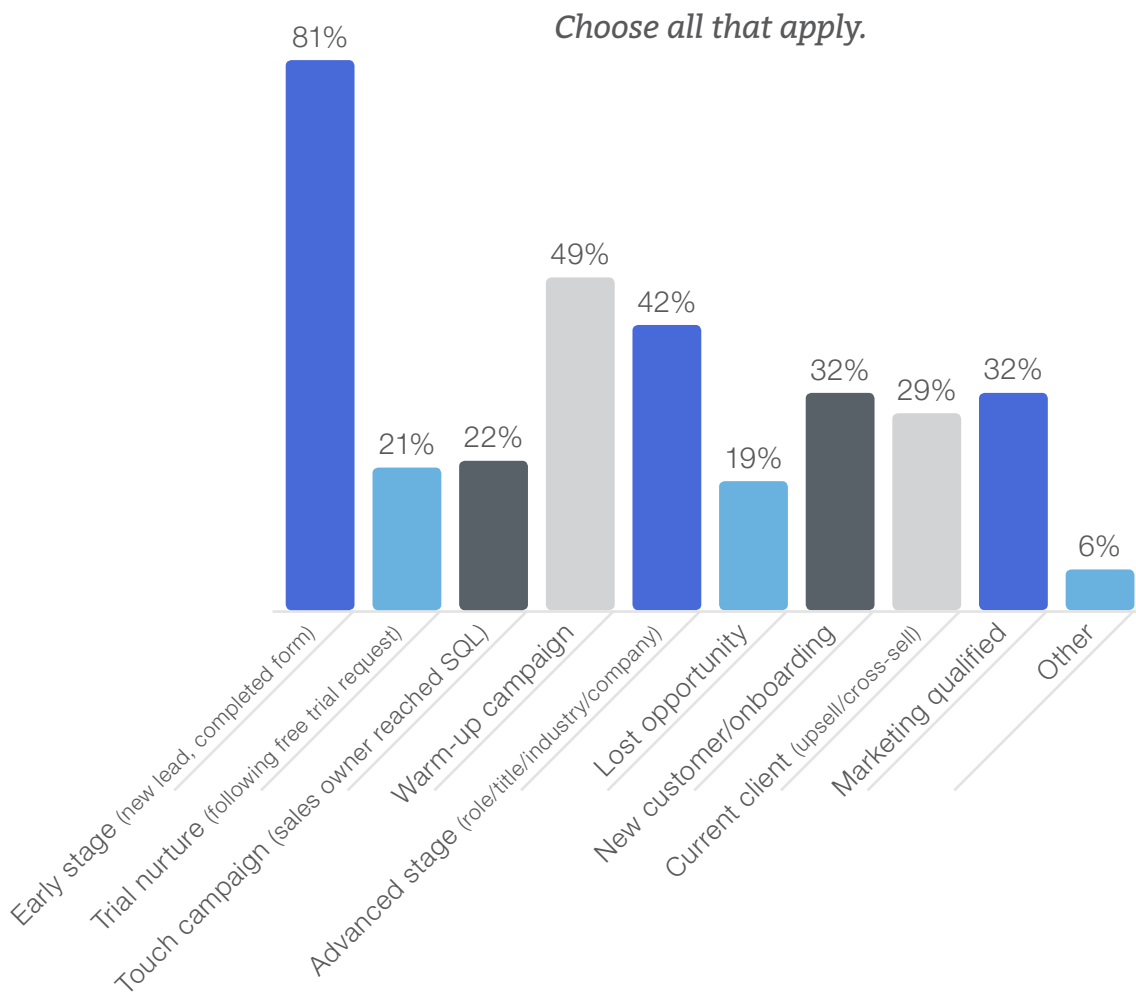
While early-stage programs still dominate lead nurturing activities — 81% have lead nurturing programs that target new leads — marketers are developing programs for leads at every stage of the buying cycle.

Nearly half (42%) of respondents said that they had a nurture program in place for prospects in the more advanced stages of the funnel that were targeted based on criteria such as role, title or industry.

A number of marketers are also realizing that it is fruitful to nurture new and existing clients. Nearly one third (32%) have nurture programs for new customers, while 29% nurture existing customers with offers regarding upsell and cross-sell opportunities. This aligns with the growing emphasis around lifecycle marketing and continually looking for upsell and cross-sell opportunities among existing customers.

Lost opportunity is another type of lead nurturing campaign that is gaining favor. This tactic still represents a small percentage (19%) of campaign types, but marketers are recognizing that lead nurturing can be helpful to re-ignite interest among leads that they had previously written off.

Which types of lead nurturing campaigns do you currently have?



Finding The Right Cadence And Frequency

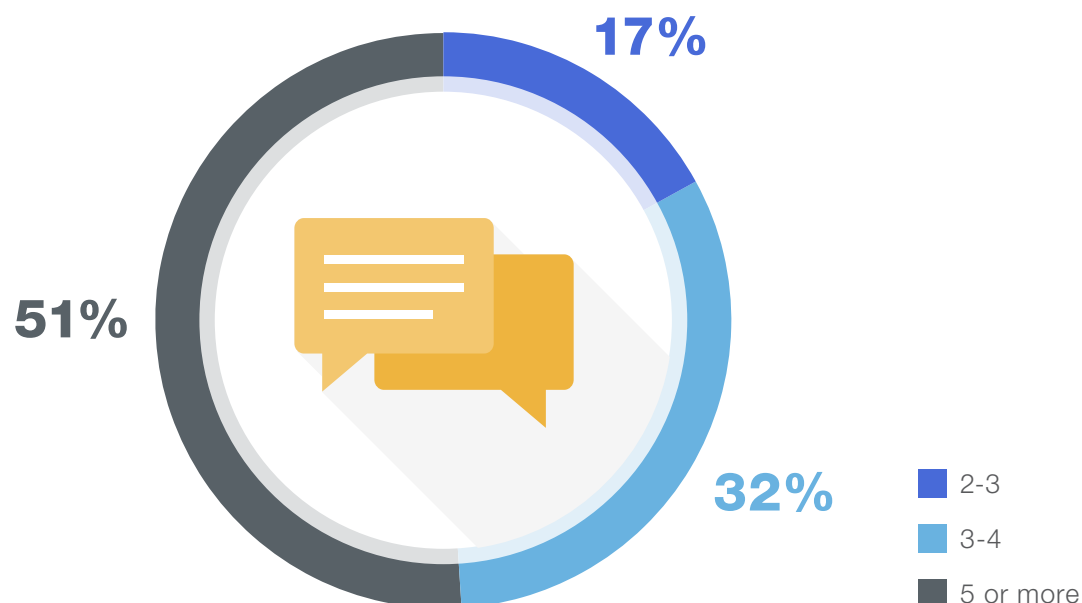
Successful lead nurturing programs have to strike the right balance of staying top-of-mind with the prospect while avoiding overkill.

In terms of the number of touches included in a typical nurture campaign, the majority (51%) responded with five or more—an increase from 44% the previous year. About one-third (32%) included three to four touches in their nurture campaigns.

“The biggest way that organizations are going to overcome the challenges they have with lead nurturing is to do the necessary work around collecting buyer insights.”

- Carlos Hidalgo

How many touches do you include in your typical lead nurture program?



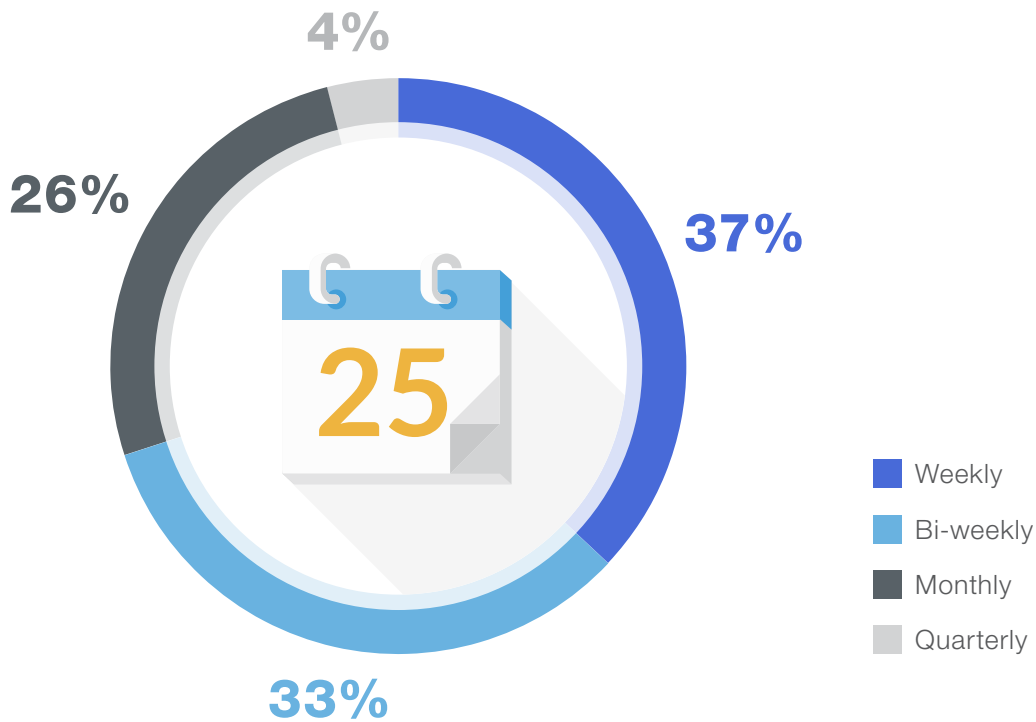
In terms of cadence, there has been a gradual shift toward weekly lead nurturing outreach. This year, weekly cadence was the most-often cited cadence at 37%, while bi-weekly outreach was cited by 33% of respondents. The previous year's results showed that bi-weekly was the cadence set by most respondents (46%), while 33% opted for weekly outreach.

However, more than a quarter (26%) of respondents utilize a monthly cadence with their lead nurturing initiatives. This shows that some still struggle to find the most effective cadence to maximize the impact of lead nurturing campaigns.

“Marketers of leading enterprises are personalizing their message and their advertising, leveraging integrated technology with their marketing automation platform.”

- Jon Russo

What is the typical cadence in your nurture campaigns?



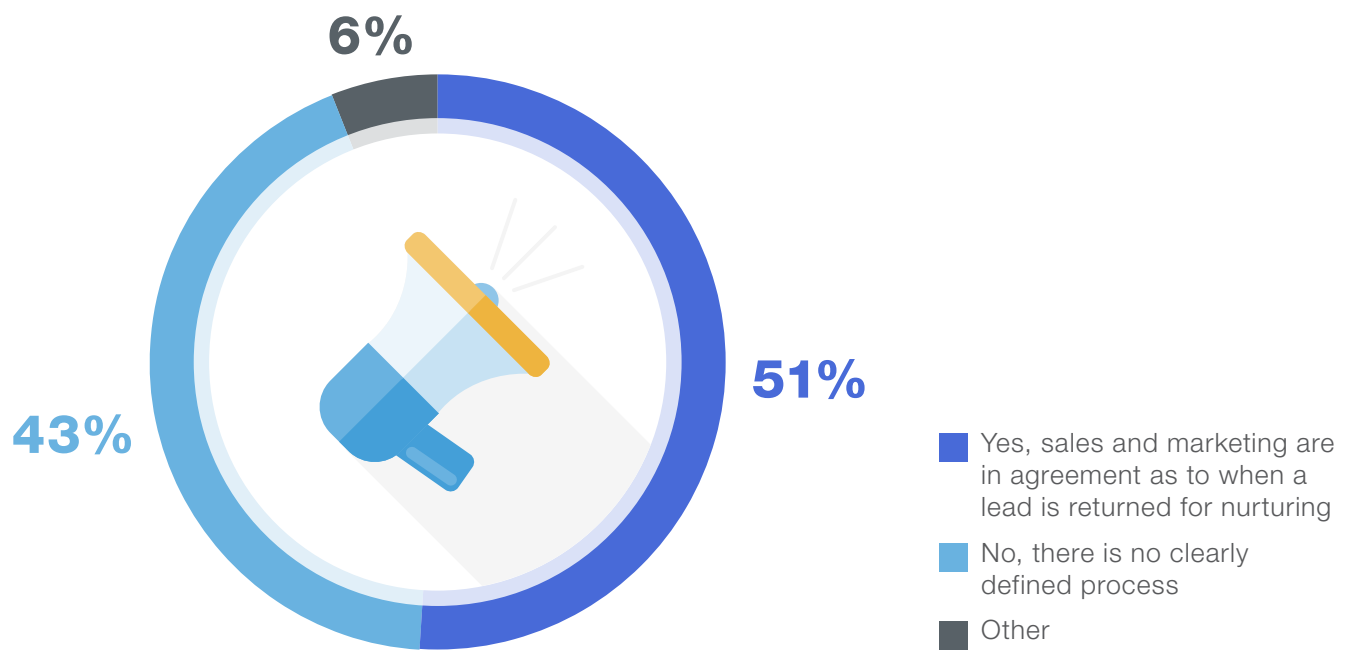
Making Headway In Strategy For Returning Leads For Nurturing

More than half of respondents (51%) report that they have a clearly defined strategy for returning leads for nurturing. This is critical, as prospects don't always respond to the first outreach and many times they are not in the buying mode when they first enter a nurture program. It is critical for marketing and sales to agree on a methodology for returning leads for nurturing.

“We suggest monitoring engagement on the website and other activities to help move later stage buyers to nurtures that have content more appropriate for those further along in their journey.”

- Cari Baldwin

Do you have a defined criteria for returning a lead to marketing for more nurturing?



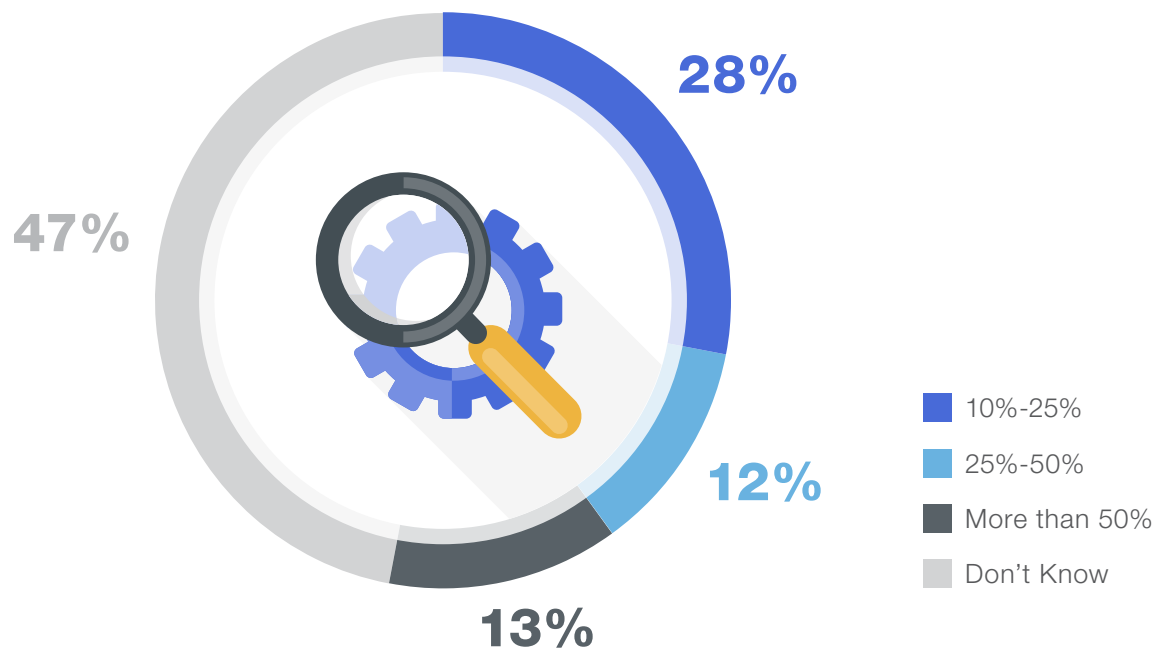
For those with a defined workflow for returning leads for nurturing, a large number (47%) do not know what percentage of leads are being returned to marketing to go through the nurturing process again. This indicates that there is still work to be done in understanding which leads are being returned for nurturing and why.

If a prospect does not meet the criteria of what makes an “ideal” customer, further efforts to bring them into the sales funnel are likely to meet a dead end.

“To generate more revenue, it is critical for enterprise marketers to assess where they are in the lead nurturing maturity curve relative to that of their peers.”

- Jon Russo

What percentage of your leads are returned for additional nurturing?



Stage-Specific Content Remains A Challenge

While there are tremendous benefits to lead nurturing, we've really only scratched the surface. Many of the challenges can be addressed with better data and analytics, as well as a more robust content strategy. Best practices are also emerging as more marketers have gained experience with lead nurturing.

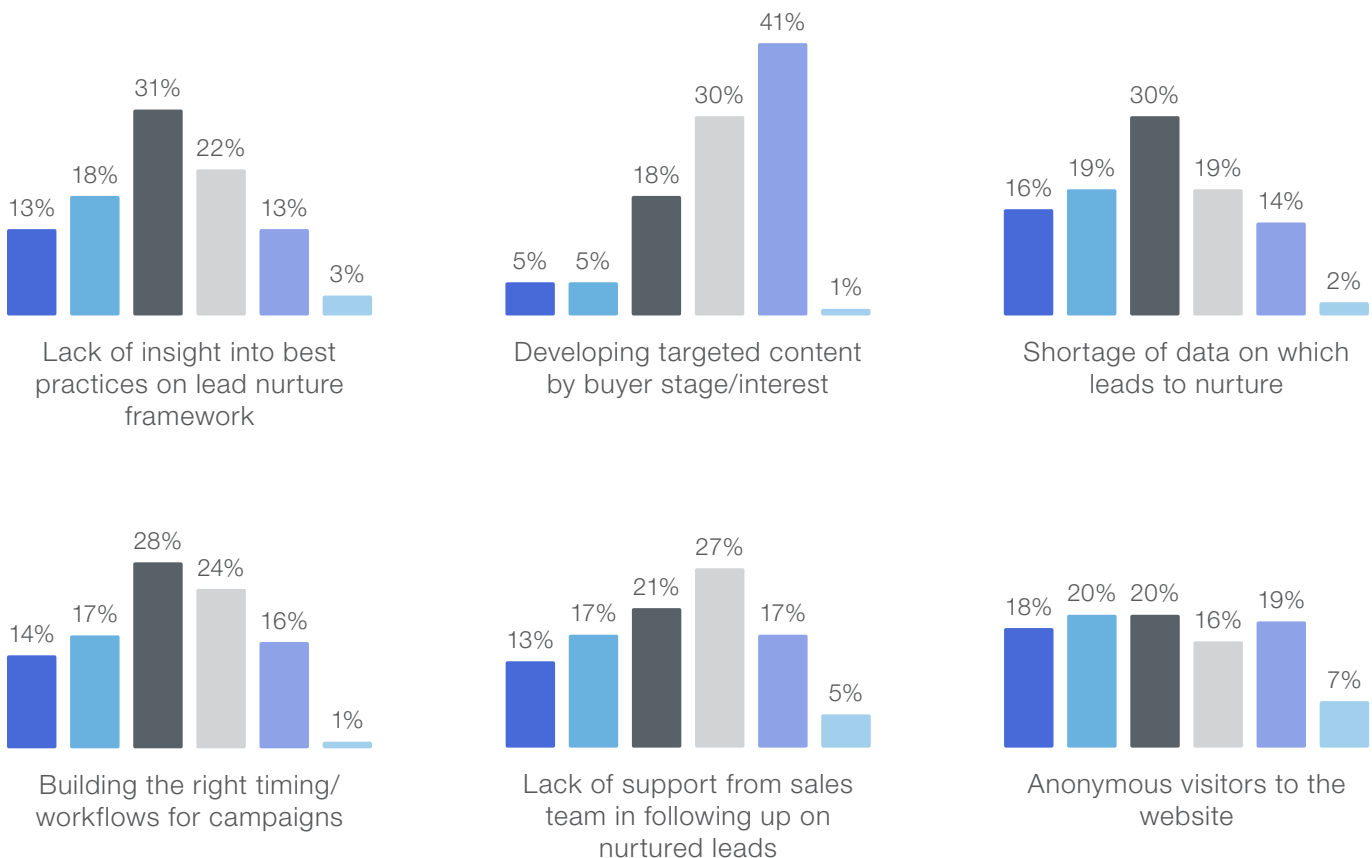
Developing targeted content by buyer stage was cited by 71% of respondents. As buyers take a cue from their B2C buying experiences, they are looking for content that directly addresses their needs at the point they are within the buyer journey.

A shortage of data on which leads to nurture was noted as a hurdle by one third of respondents. As predictive tools become more widely adopted, marketers will have more external data to help identify the buyers that are most likely to convert.

Anonymous website visitors were a challenge cited by 35% of respondents. This challenge should be eased going forward as marketers use the latest tools to track the behavior of anonymous visitors.

What have you seen as the greatest challenges of lead nurture programs?

Rate each on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being most challenging.



1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Future Goals: More Opportunities, More Predictable Results

Marketers are setting lofty goals as they build on the success of their lead nurturing programs. First and foremost, they want to increase the number of opportunities in the pipeline, a priority set by 87% of marketers surveyed.

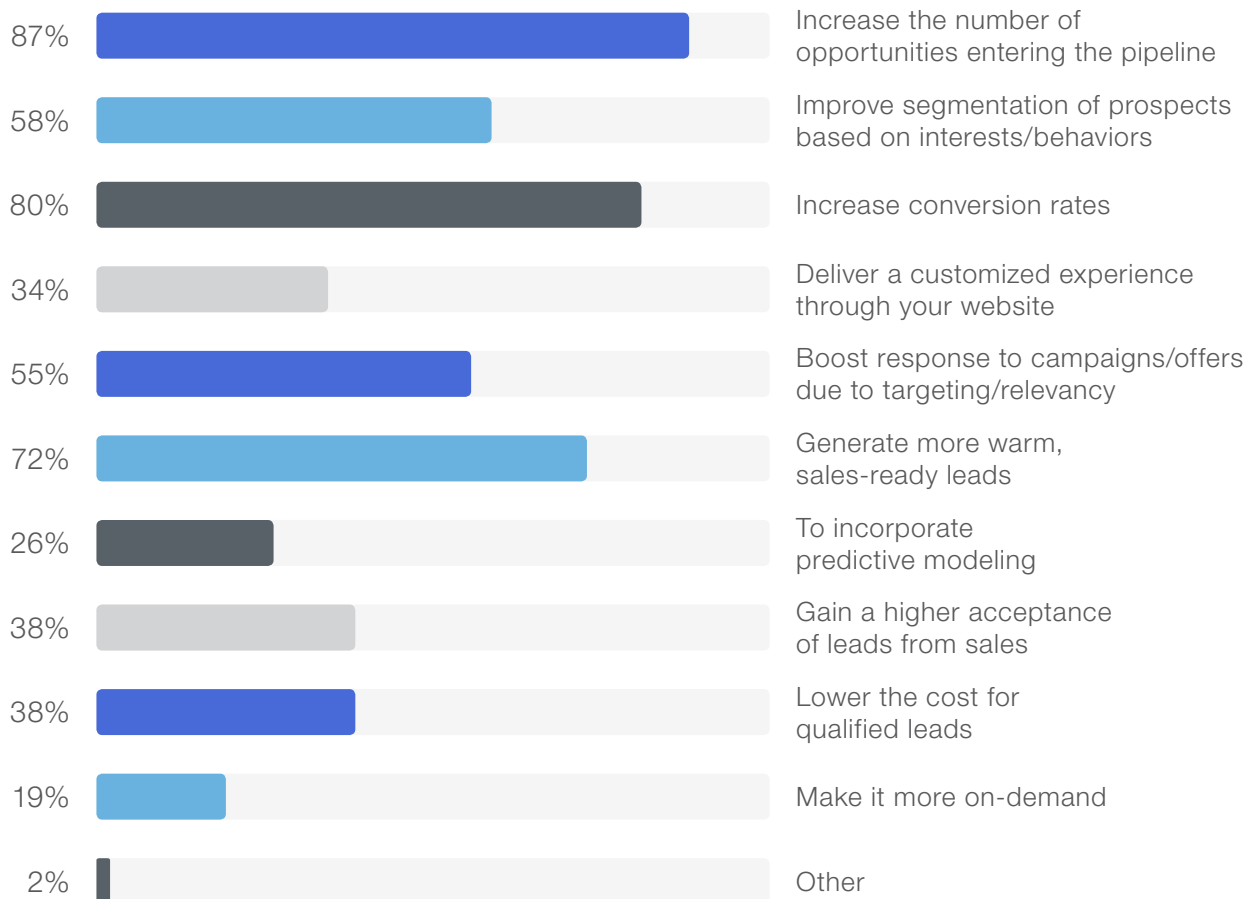
But it is not enough to just fill the pipeline. Lead nurturing goals also included increasing conversions, which was an objective of 80% of respondents.

As with all marketing programs, having a predictable outcome is the key to success. More than one quarter (26%) want to incorporate predictive models into their lead nurturing programs to be able to identify the leads that are most likely to turn into sales.

Going forward, progressive marketers are also thinking about ways to enable prospects to follow a lead nurture path at their own pace. Making lead nurturing more on-demand was a goal of 19% of those surveyed.

What are some of the future goals/priorities of your lead nurturing program?

Choose all that apply.



About The Survey

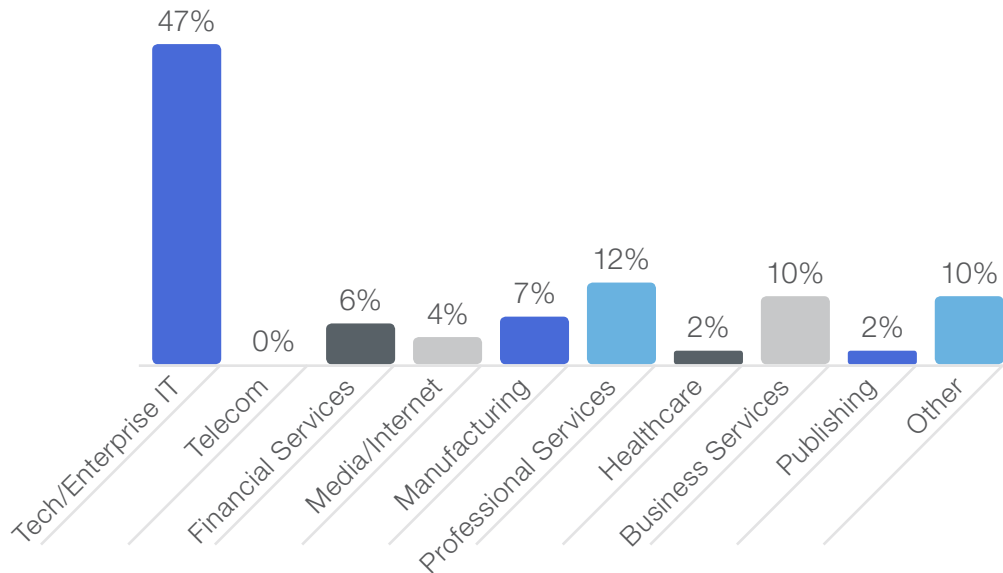
Demand Gen Report's *2015 Lead Nurturing Benchmark Study* is based on a survey of 235 B2B marketers polled in July 2015.

Broken down by industry, 47% came from technology and enterprise IT, followed by professional services (12%), business services (10%) and manufacturing (7%).

In terms of roles, nearly one third (31%) were C-level or VP-level executives.

The respondents came from companies of varying size, with nearly half (48%) reporting revenues of \$25 million or more. The next highest group was from companies of more than \$500 million (15%), and the remainder was fairly evenly distributed among the other company sizes.

In which industry do you operate?



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