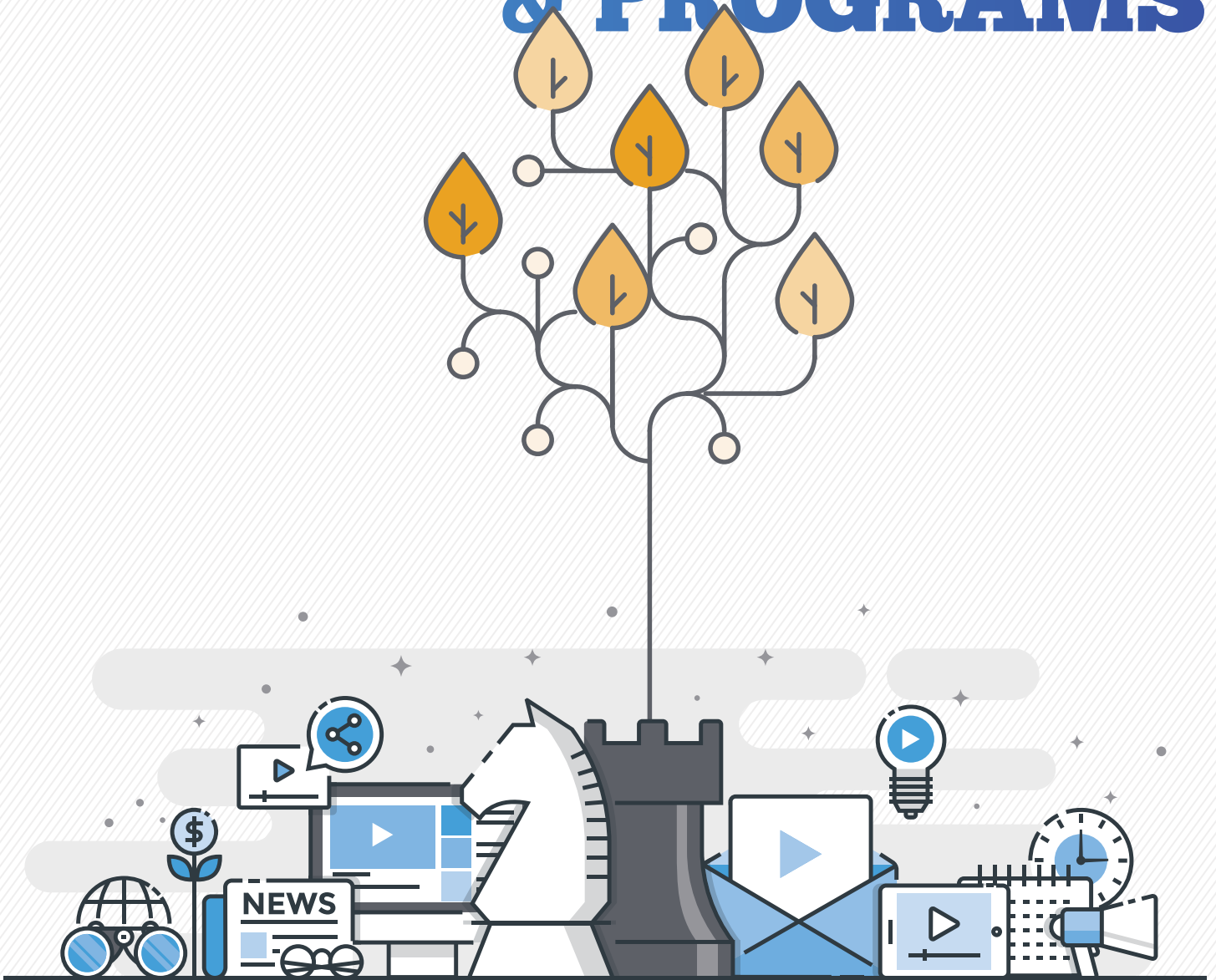


B2B Orgs Finding  
New Ways To Reinvigorate

# NURTURE STRATEGIES & PROGRAMS



# INTRODUCTION

With sales cycles averaging between six and nine months, lead nurturing is becoming an even bigger priority for B2B marketers. According to Demand Gen Report's *2017 Lead Nurturing & Acceleration Survey Report*, nearly three quarters of B2B organizations said they are now delivering nurture campaigns on a weekly (38%) or every other week (36%) basis.

The survey showed nurture campaigns are still paying dividends in terms of generating warmer, sales-ready leads, driving better response rates and providing the ability to segment.

When asked to rate the benefits they see from lead nurturing on a one-to-five scale – with five being considered the most beneficial – generating sales-ready leads had a weighted average of 3.8 and 30% said it was the biggest benefit. Respondents also said that they are benefitting from better responses to campaigns/offers due to targeting and relevancy, earning a weighted average of 3.7, and ability to segment at 3.6.

Nurture campaigns are also presenting a wider menu of offerings as well, with the majority averaging 3-10 touches (68%). The most popular types of nurture campaigns, according to respondents, were early stage (cited by 75%), warm-up campaigns and lead qualification programs (both cited by 46%).

However, while engagement and accelerating are clearly established as core disciplines for B2B practitioners, the survey revealed that the desired results of the campaigns are harder to realize.

While marketers in 2016 said that their nurturing efforts were improving compared to 2015, results from this year's survey showed a decline in how B2B companies view their nurture efforts.

68%  
stated their nurture  
campaigns average  
3-10 touches.



The study, which surveyed more than 350 B2B marketing practitioners, found that more than three-quarters (77%) stated that their lead nurturing initiatives are either “average” or “need improvement,” while only 11% deemed their nurture campaigns as “excellent.”

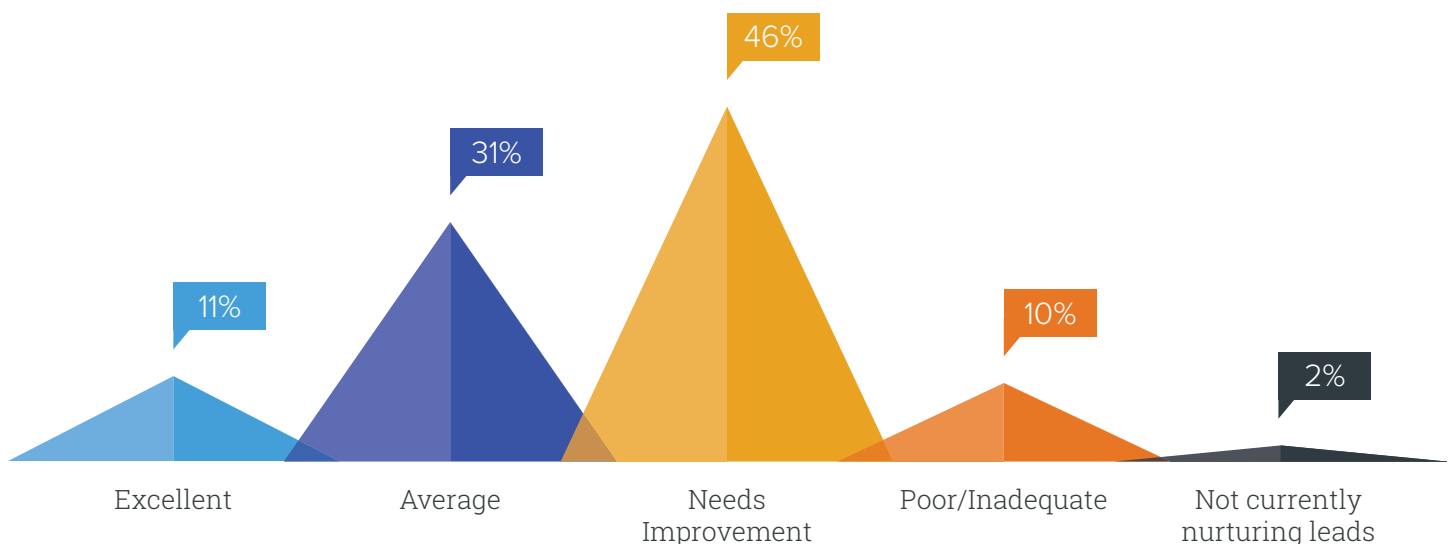
The top challenges around building successful nurture campaigns point to the ability to send the right message to the right audience at the right time. On the same type of weighted scale used to measure the benefits of lead nurturing, respondents note that some of the biggest pain points they face in their nurture efforts include:

- Developing targeted content by buyer stage/interest (3.4);
- Building the right timing/workflows for campaigns (3.3); and
- Shortage of data on which leads to nurture (3.1).

This report will provide an in-depth analysis to benchmark how B2B marketers are currently running their nurture programs and how they rate the effectiveness of their current campaigns. It will also highlight new tactics and strategies being leveraged to better engage prospective buyers with relevant messaging.

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## How would you rate your current lead nurturing initiatives?



# RETHINKING NURTURE STRATEGIES WITH NEW TACTICS

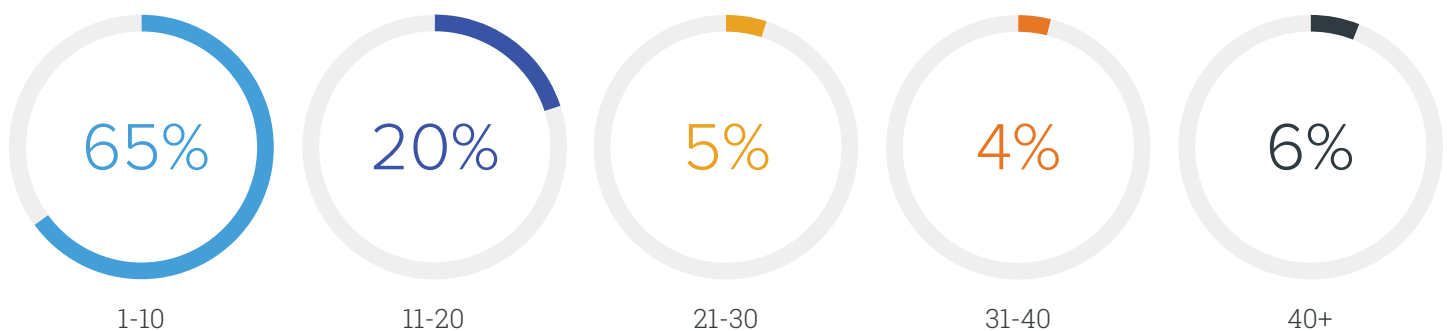
Reinforcing that lead nurturing is a well-established discipline, the respondents were well more mature in their experience levels running programs. More than half (60%) of the respondents to this year's survey said they have been developing their nurture campaigns for more than a year, with 34% stating their campaigns have been developing for more than two years.

Almost two-thirds (65%) of marketers run between 1 and 10 nurture campaigns in a year, possibly highlighting bandwidth issues within their team or a push for hyper-focused, personalized campaigns based on buyer needs. There are a growing number of marketing organizations pushing the envelope on their mix of programs, with 20% running between 11 and 20 different nurtures, 9% running between 40 programs and 6% running 40+ different nurture programs.

To support an expanded menu of nurture programs, more B2B organizations are investing in dedicated content – 30% said they have exclusive content for lead nurturing and another 13% said they planned to create exclusive nurture content.

94%  
of marketing teams  
have been developing  
their nurture  
campaigns for more  
than a year.

How many different lead nurture programs do you currently run per year?



The survey also showed marketers are experimenting with a variety of new tactics to boost engagement and get the most out of the limited campaigns they run within the year. Some of these new tactics include:

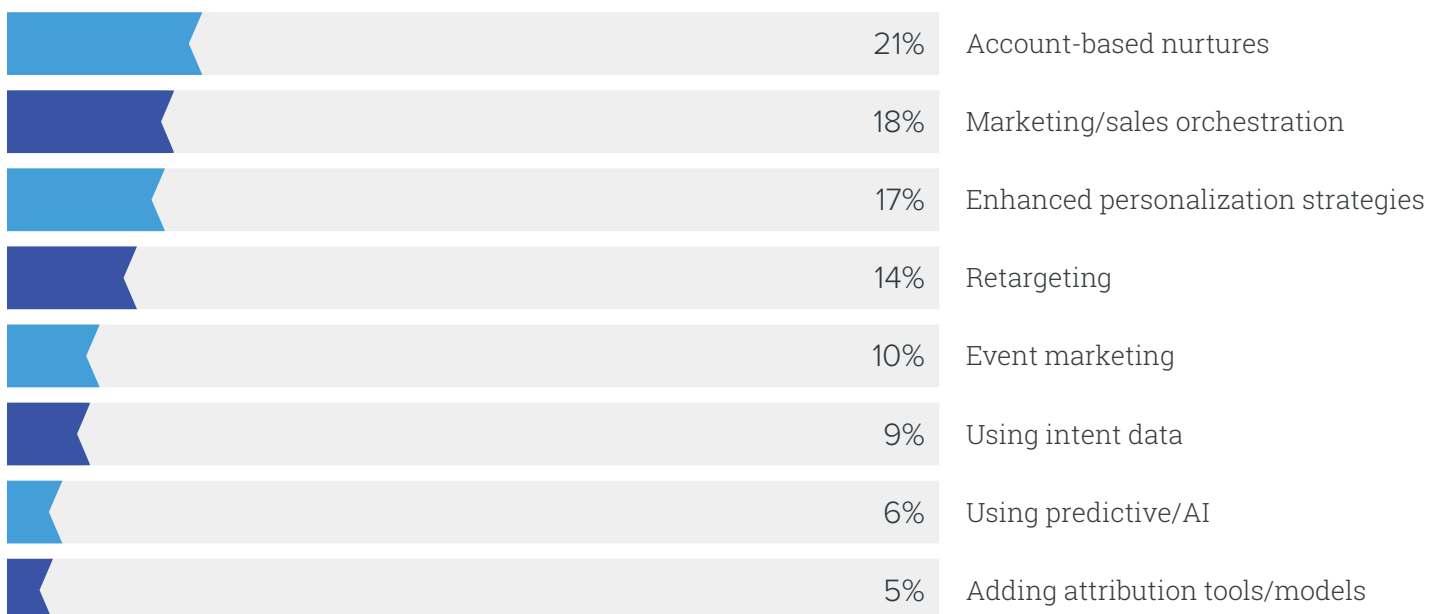
- Account-based nurtures (21%);
- Marketing/sales orchestration (18%);
- Enhanced personalization strategies (17%); and
- Retargeting initiatives (14%).

To gain deeper insight into these campaigns, the study showed that marketers are experimenting with campaigns that have a variety of touches. Specifically:

- 24% stated their campaigns have two or three touches;
- One-third (33%) build their campaigns to have three or four touches; and
- More than a third (34%) set their campaigns up to have between five and 10 touches.

Emerging tactics, such as intent data (9%), predictive/AI (6%) and attribution models (5%) are also starting to be leveraged as newer tactics.

## What new approaches/tactics have you taken with your nurture programs?



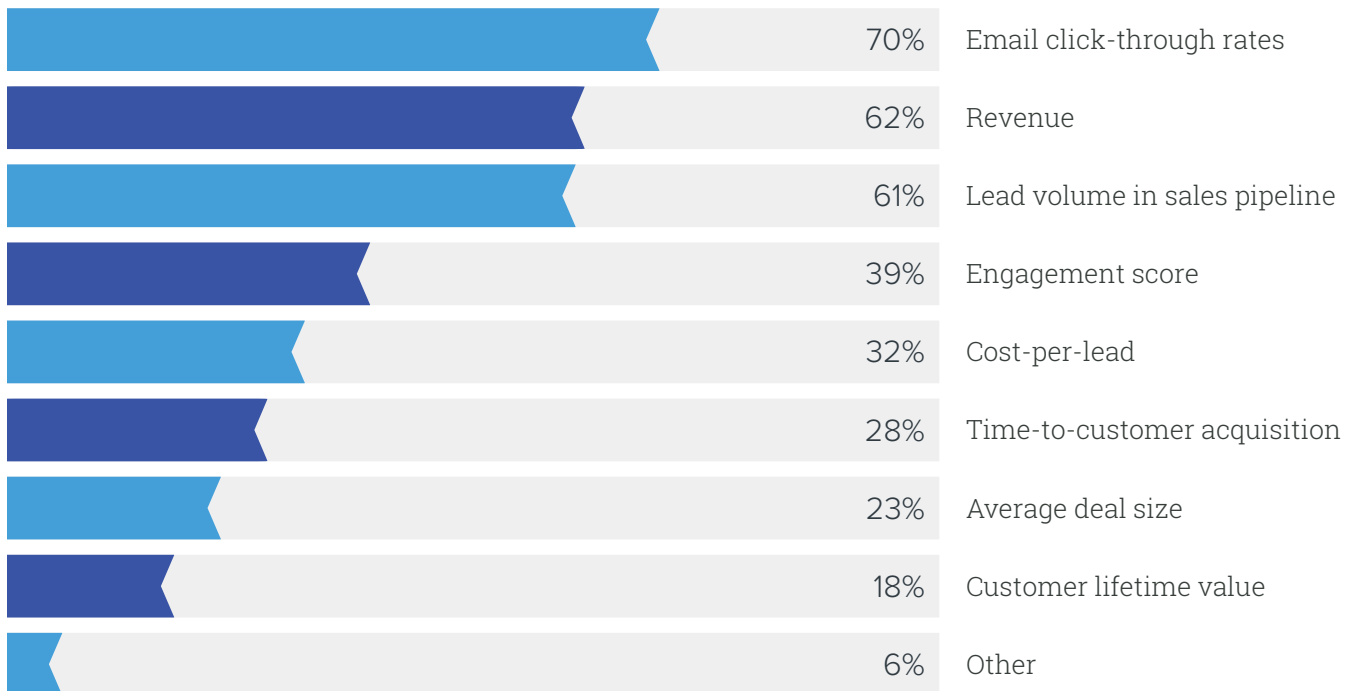
# PRACTITIONERS IDENTIFYING NEW METRICS FOR MEASURING SUCCESS, REFINING PROGRAMS

The push for new ways to nurture prospects ultimately is likely driven by marketers not seeing the results they expect from their efforts. This year, close to one-third (31%) stated that they see no measurable difference in the performance of nurtured leads versus non-nurtured leads. In comparison, only 17% of respondents stated they've seen more than a 20% increase in sales opportunities from nurtured leads compared to non-nurtured leads.

This can be attributed to the specific metrics marketers are analyzing. Close to three-quarters (70%) of respondents continue to measure traditional email click-through rates to identify nurture success. While important, click-through rates alone cannot provide a detailed report on nurture program efforts.

21%  
of marketers are now  
conducting account-  
based nurtures.

## What metrics do you use to measure lead nurturing success? (Choose all that apply)



Other notable metrics being leveraged by B2B marketers include:

- Revenue (62%);
- Lead volume in sales pipeline (61%);
- Engagement score (39%);
- Cost-per-lead (32%);
- Time-to-customer acquisition (28%).

The survey showed that there is still room for growth in what metrics are being leveraged. For example, only 18% measure customer lifetime value, a metric that can help marketers better understand nurture efforts with current clients in cross-sell/upsell opportunities.

Only 17% of marketers stated they've seen a greater than 20% increase in sales opportunities from nurtured leads compared to non-nurtured leads.



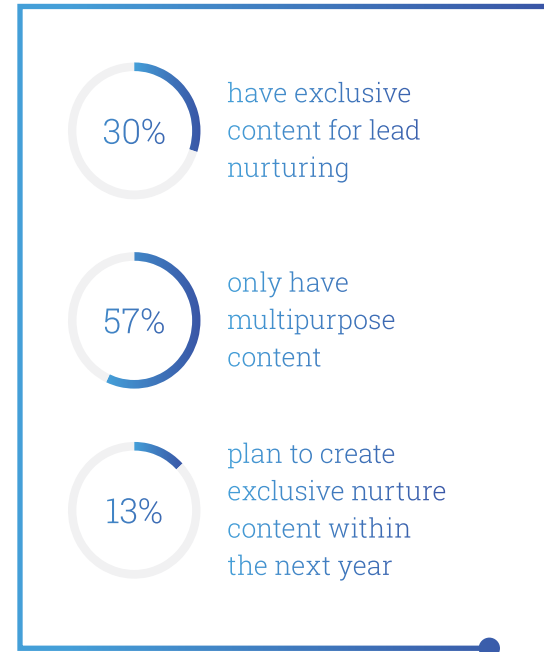
# MARKETERS PRIORITIZING CONTENT ENGAGEMENT OVER FORM FILLS

Along with new insights and metrics, respondents are also experimenting with measuring buyer engagement through offers that require form fills. In particular, video (66%), thought leadership (65%) and infographics (59%) are being made available ungated as part of nurtures, which may help drive first touch response or re-engagement on leads that are stuck at various stages of the funnel.

In terms of the tactics that are performing best in their nurture campaigns, respondents pointed to:

1. Webinars (15%);
2. Email newsletters (13%); and
3. Research-based content (11%).

As for gated content, traditional content formats such as white papers (52%), E-books (50%) and on-demand webinars (47%) topped the list.



## Which content do you use in your nurture campaign?

	Yes, gated	Yes, ungated	No, we don't use
E-books	50%	19%	31%
White papers	52%	30%	18%
Thought leadership	22%	65%	13%
Infographics	17%	59%	24%
Interactive content (calculators, assessment tools)	28%	31%	41%
Video	15%	66%	19%
On-demand webinars	47%	22%	31%



# ROOM FOR GROWTH IN CAMPAIGN TYPES, ENGAGEMENT TACTICS

Along with different content formats, there are still opportunities for growth in the types of nurture campaigns being leveraged. A majority (75%) still use early-stage nurture campaigns based on form completion. Forty-six percent run warm-up campaigns to convert leads into opportunities, as well as marketing qualified campaigns to identify leads likely to buy.

A smaller group of survey respondents incorporate progressive nurture campaigns into their marketing efforts. One-third (33%) practice advanced nurture campaigns aligned to titles/industry or even company. Only 23% do touch campaigns for leads that have reached SQL status.

Similarly, there is great potential for marketers to leverage unique tactics to engage prospective customers. The survey showed that email is still considered the top nurturing channel, with 90% of respondents using email to engage prospects.

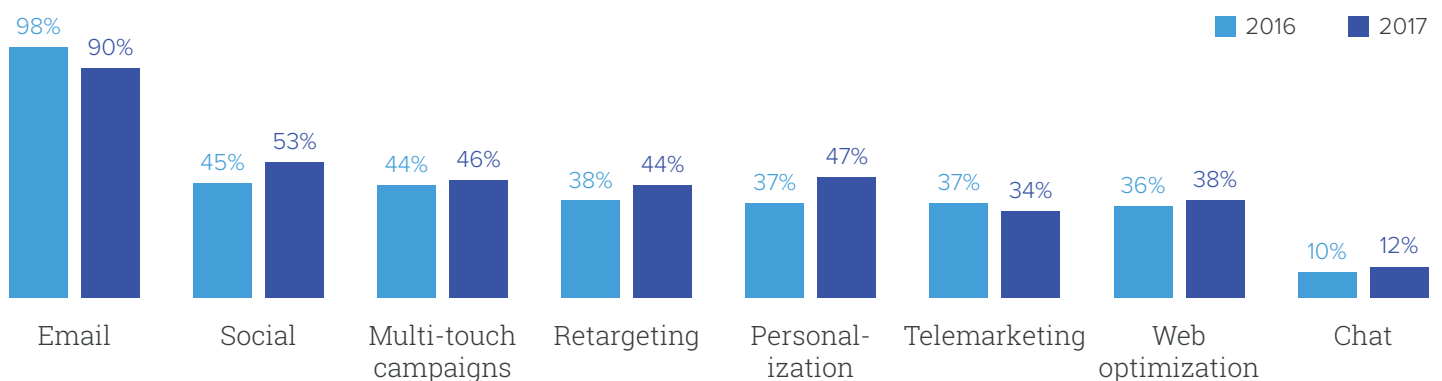
Social media, in particular, is one channel that many respondents are experimenting with for more one-to-one engagement. It is being heavily leveraged by more than half (53%) of respondents to nurture leads.

Other new tactics include:

- Personalization tools and tactics (47%); and
- Retargeting tactics (44%).

**33%**  
of marketers practice advanced nurture campaigns aligned to titles/industry or even company.

What channels/tactics have you used to support your lead nurturing programs? (Choose all that apply)

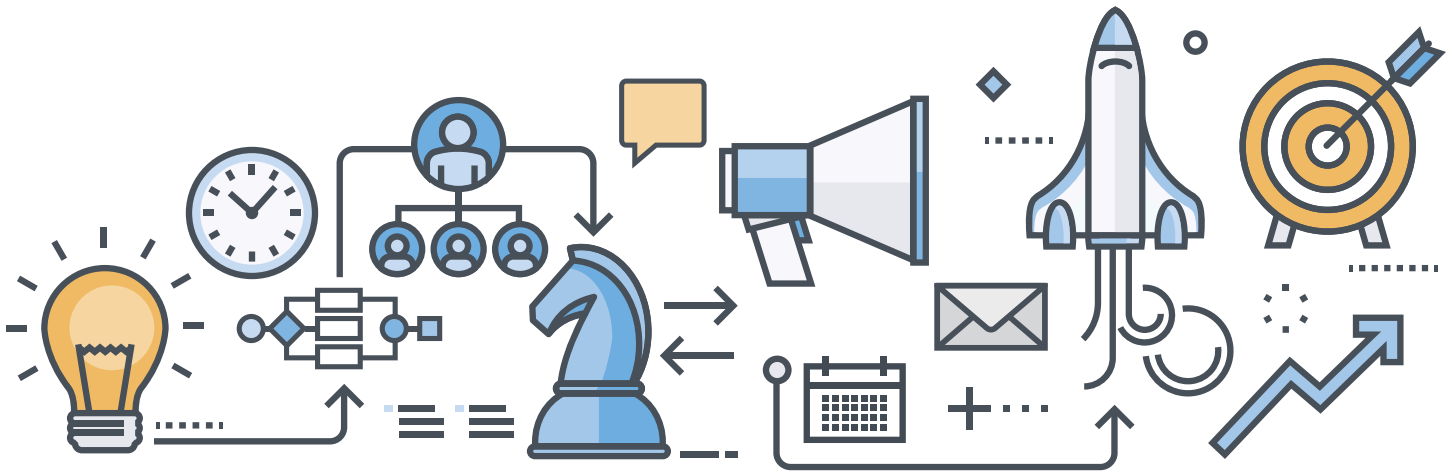


# CONCLUSION

It's clear that B2B marketing practitioners find value in their nurture programs. Respondents noted that their primary goals for future nurture efforts are to:

- Increase the number of opportunities entering the pipeline (78%);
- Increase conversion rates (75%);
- Generate warmer, sales ready leads (61%); and
- Improve segmentation of prospects based on interests/behaviors (49%).

With goals like this, marketing teams are quick to find new and innovative ways to better engage prospective customers when campaigns begin to plateau. By overcoming messaging, measurement and orchestration challenges with new content formats, channels and other tactics, practitioners position themselves to accelerate leads through the buying journey and properly gauge the impact of their efforts and maximize ROI.



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*Demand Gen Report* is a targeted online publication that uncovers the strategies and solutions that help companies better align their sales and marketing organizations, and ultimately, drive growth. A key component of the publication's editorial coverage focuses on the sales and marketing automation tools that enable companies to better measure and manage their multi-channel demand generation efforts.

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**Brian Anderson** is an avid B2B journalist with a knack for all things trendy in the automation, Big Data analytics, mobile & social realms of B2B marketing and sales.

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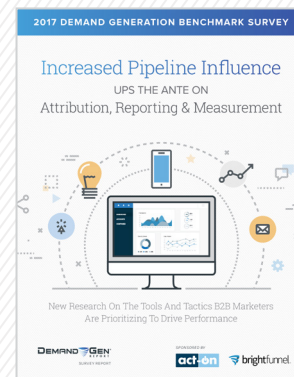
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