

Refreshing Re-Engagement



NEW RESEARCH SHOWS MARKETERS
ARE **RETHINKING NURTURE**
STRATEGIES WITH NEW CHANNELS
AND MORE TARGETED APPROACHES

86%
OF RESPONDENTS
RATED THEIR
CURRENT LEAD
NURTURING
INITIATIVES AS
“AVERAGE” OR
BELOW.

INTRODUCTION

Lead nurturing has been a pillar of demand generation practices and programs over the past decade. With the majority of B2B cycles stretching six months or longer, marketing teams are challenged with finding ways to stay in front of prospects who are interested, but not quite ready to make a decision. In addition, marketing teams are also increasingly being tasked with developing nurture programs that drive conversions and accelerate time to close.

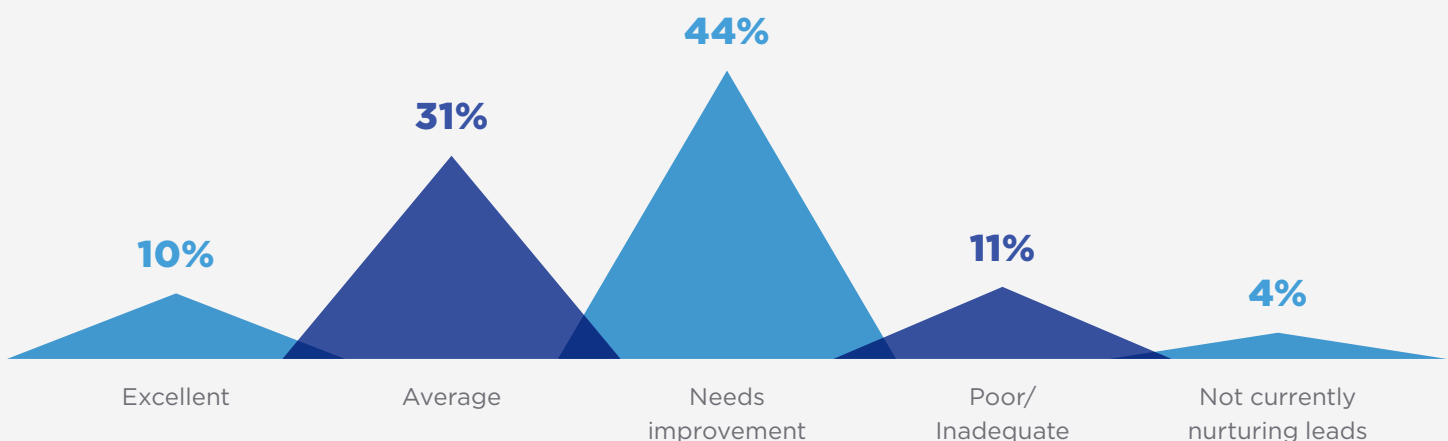
However, on the flip side of a deal, buying teams are becoming larger, more complex and harder to reach with traditional, email-focused nurture campaigns.

The majority (86%) of respondents to *Demand Gen Report's 2018 Lead Nurturing & Acceleration Benchmark Survey* rated their current lead nurturing initiatives as “average” or below. Roughly 44% said that their lead nurturing initiatives specifically “need improvement.” Only 10% consider their nurturing efforts “excellent.”

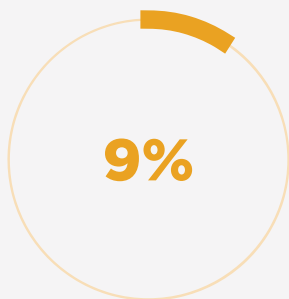
When it comes to nurture program performance, more than a third (34%) said that they are not seeing a measurable difference in the performance of nurtured leads versus non-nurtured leads.

The majority (80%) of respondents said that generating responses with their nurture programs has been a challenge. Close to a quarter (23%) said that it has been “very challenging.”

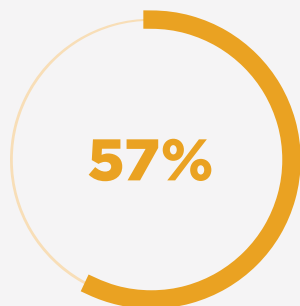
HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR CURRENT LEAD NURTURING INITIATIVES?



HAVE YOU FOUND LEAD NURTURING PROGRAMS TO BE MORE CHALLENGING OVER THE PAST 12-18 MONTHS, IN TERMS OF GENERATING RESPONSES?



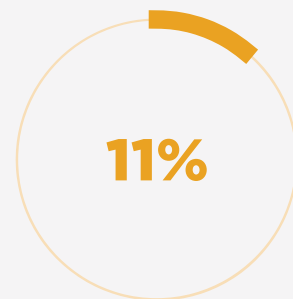
It has not been challenging to generate responses with our nurture programs



It has been somewhat challenging to generate responses with our nurture programs



It has been very challenging to generate responses with our nurture programs



Not sure

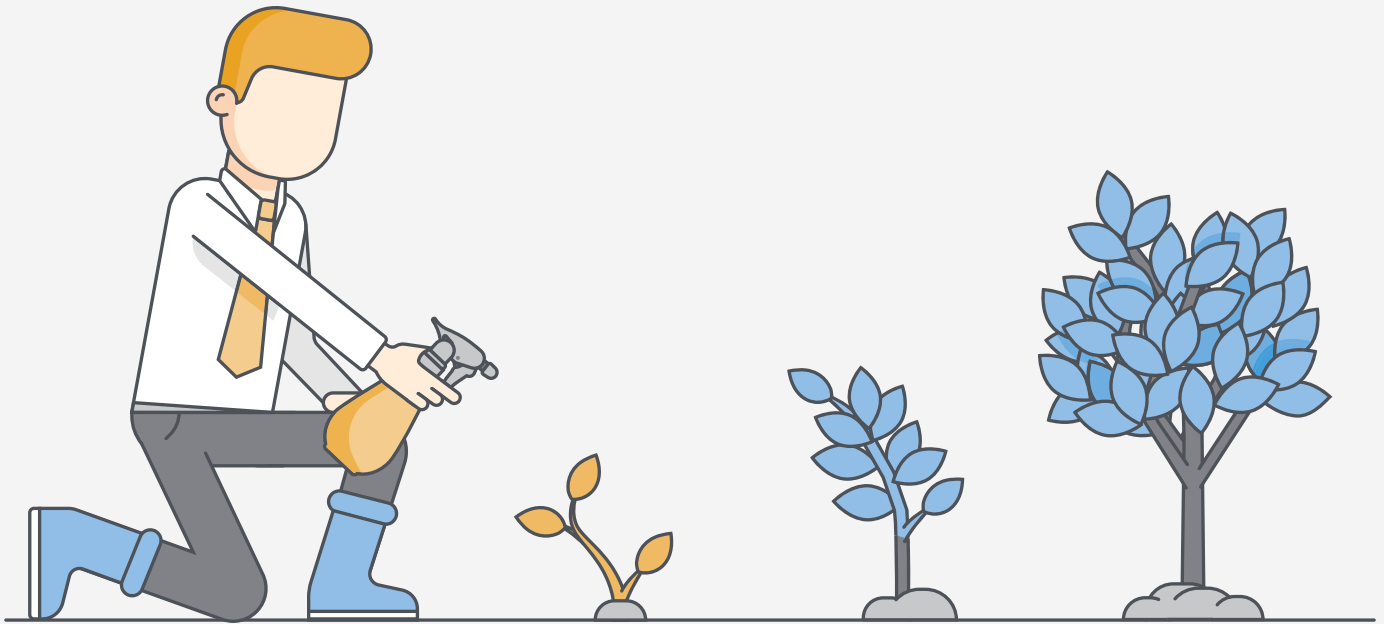
48% OF MARKETERS ARE USING ACCOUNT-BASED NURTURING TACTICS TO BOOST THE EFFICIENCY OF THEIR NURTURE PROGRAMS.

With that in mind, marketers are trying new approaches and tactics to boost the efficiency of their nurture programs. This has included account-based nurturing (48%) and intent data (24%). When asked what their future goals and priorities are for their nurture programs, respondents highlighted several goals that share the ongoing objective of becoming more targeted and relevant with prospective customers, including:

- Improve segmentation of prospects based on interests/behaviors (50%);
- Boost response to campaigns/offers due to targeting and relevancy (44%);
- Deliver customized experiences through their websites (33%); and
- Gain deeper engagement on prospects and customers (25%).

This year's findings show that lead nurturing is moving away from keeping leads "warm" to creating messaging for specific markets in a contextual and relevant way. This includes identifying the right content and messaging that resonates with prospective customers. Other new approaches and tactics being taken into practice include:

- Event marketing (50%);
- Retargeting (49%);
- Account-based marketing (48%);
- Enhanced personalization strategies (46%); and
- Video messaging (29%).



26%
OF MARKETERS
ARE SEEING
BETWEEN 10%
AND 25% OF
LEADS RETURNED
FOR NURTURING.

Despite the need to refresh and expand traditional approaches, the study did reinforce lead nurturing's position in B2B as a go-to-market strategy that continues to remain critical for marketing.

Illustrating the impact nurture programs are having on pipelines, the following percentages were reported:

- 26% are seeing between 10% and 25% of leads returned for nurturing;
- 21% are seeing between 25% and 50% of leads returned for nurturing; and
- 17% are seeing more than 50% of their leads returned for nurturing.

The following report outlines the ongoing push for B2B marketing teams to enhance and refine their lead nurturing programs, including how:

- Marketers are pushing to become more targeted and relevant with their nurture initiatives;
- Nurture teams are incorporating different content formats to increase relevancy; and
- Testing different campaign formats is helping marketers better engage target segments.

41%
OF RESPONDENTS
SAID THEY ARE
SEGMENTING
THEIR
DATABASE BY
BUYER PERSONA
TO PROVIDE EVEN
MORE RELEVANT
CONTENT AND
MESSAGING.

MARKETERS PRIORITIZE TARGETING, SEGMENTATION TO BOOST NURTURE RELEVANCY

Research from this year's survey shows that B2B marketers are looking to better segment their database to refine their targeting capabilities, which can position them to offer more relevant buying experiences to their potential customers.

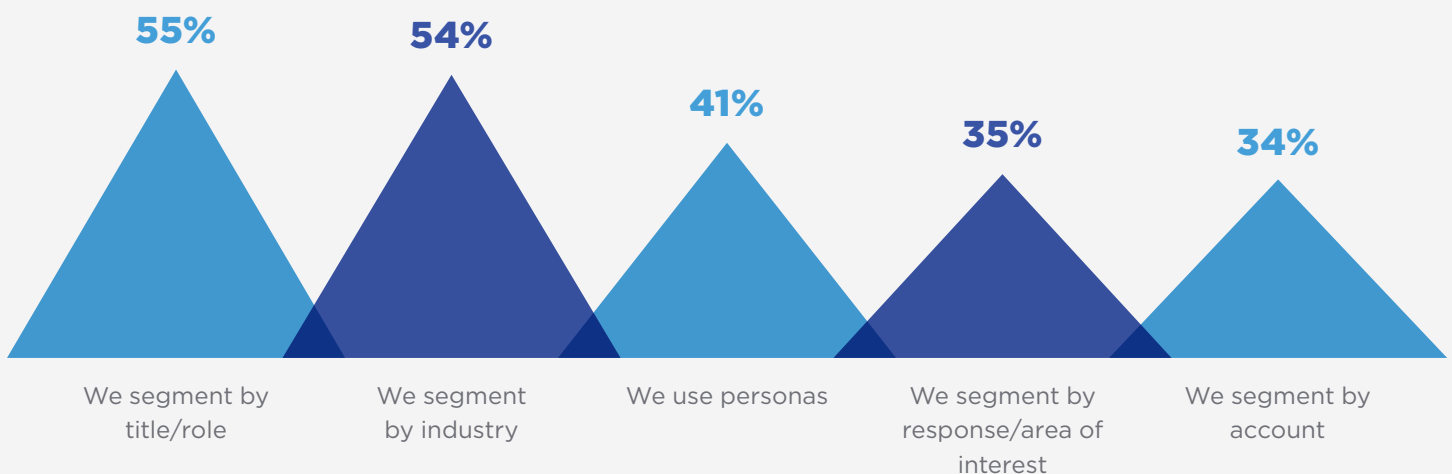
More than half of respondents are segmenting their nurtures by title/role (55%), as well as segmenting by industry (54%). This highlights how companies are refining their nurture campaigns to speak specifically to the needs and expectations of prospects based on their industry and job functions.

To refine that even further, 41% of respondents said they are segmenting their database by buyer persona to provide even more relevant content and messaging.

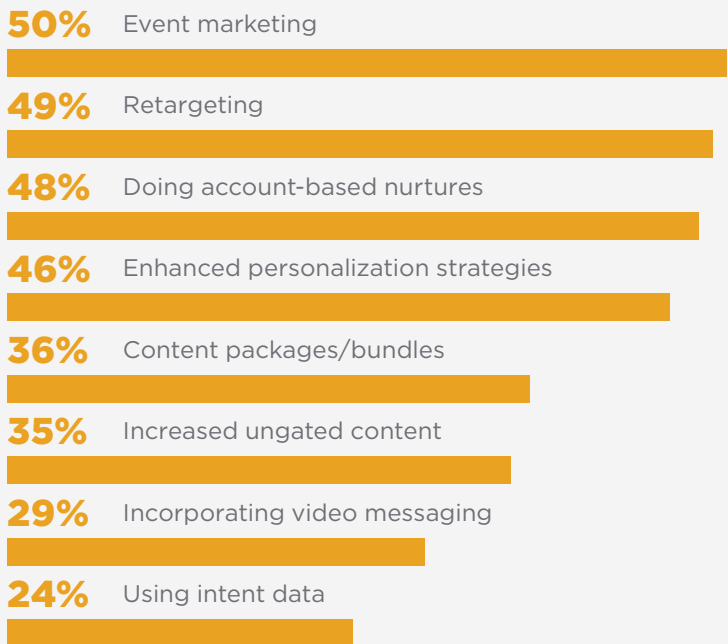
The study also found that respondents are segmenting their databases by:

- Responses/area of interest as part of an ABM approach (35%);
- Account (34%); and
- Company size (31%).

HOW DO YOU SEGMENT YOUR DATABASE FOR LEAD NURTURE PROGRAMS?



WHAT NEW APPROACHES/TACTICS HAVE YOU TAKEN WITH YOUR NURTURE PROGRAMS?



**ONLY 8%
OF RESPONDENTS
SAID THEIR
ORGANIZATION
DOESN'T SEGMENT
ITS DATABASE FOR
LEAD NURTURE
PROGRAMS.**

Only 8% of respondents to the survey said that their organization doesn't segment its database for lead nurture programs.

As noted earlier, respondents said they are relying on new tactics such as event marketing (50%), retargeting (49%) and account-based nurtures (48%). However, growth in newer tactics is also becoming more prevalent as marketers look for different ways to further refine their targeting and segmentation strategies.

Some of those new strategies include:

- Using intent data (24%);
- Adding measurement/attribution tools (24%);
- Using signal data (18%); and
- Using predictive and/or AI (12%).

57%
OF RESPONDENTS
ARE RUNNING
BETWEEN ONE
AND 10 NURTURE
PROGRAMS PER
YEAR.

LEAD NURTURING: BY THE NUMBERS

Beyond looking at some of the newer approaches marketers are taking to nurturing, the study also provided benchmarks on the current cadence and frequency of nurture campaigns.

The research showed that 57% of respondents are running between one and 10 nurture programs per year, while 23% said they run between 11 and 20 programs. This highlights how B2B marketers continue to test and experiment different nurture tactics and strategies to meet the needs of potential customers.

When it comes to the number of touches per nurture campaign:

- 23% said they have two or three touches per campaign;
- 49% said they have up to four or five touches per campaign;
- 18% said they have between six and 10 touches per campaign; and
- 9% said they have more than 11 touches per campaign.

WHAT HAVE YOU SEEN AS THE GREATEST CHALLENGES OF LEAD NURTURE PROGRAMS?





NURTURE PROGRAMS DRIVE SALES OPPORTUNITIES FOR 66% OF RESPONDENTS.

Ultimately, nurture programs continue to be a priority focus for B2B companies because they are driving sales opportunities for two-thirds (66%) of respondents. Specifically:

- 24% have seen a 10% increase in sales opportunities;
- 23% have seen a 20% increase in sales opportunities; and
- 19% have seen a 30% increase (or greater) in sales opportunities.

But marketers continue to struggle with challenges that prevent them from driving results with their nurture campaigns. Building the right timing/workflows for campaigns (50%), lack of support from sales teams in following up on nurtured leads (46%) and lack of insights into best practices on nurture frameworks (44%) are some of the top challenges hindering nurture initiatives.

Other challenges include:

- Declining response rates (44%);
- Inability to identify anonymous web visitors (41%);
- Shortage of data on which leads to nurture (38%); and
- Changing or unpredictable buyer behavior (34%).

ONLY 26%
OF RESPONDENTS
HAVE EXCLUSIVE
CONTENT FOR
LEAD NURTURING.

EXPERIMENTATION INCREASES AS TRIED-AND-TRUE CONTENT OFFERS LAG

One of the bigger challenges surrounding lead nurturing initiatives were the content offers that fueled the campaigns, according to survey respondents. More than half (56%) of respondents said that developing targeted content by buyer stage and interest was their biggest challenge.

This can also be attributed to the lack of content designed specifically for lead nurturing. Roughly 56% of respondents said that they only have multipurpose content that is used in their programs. Comparably, only 26% of respondents have exclusive content for lead nurturing, while 18% plan to create exclusive nurture content over the next year.

WHICH TACTICS HAVE WORKED BEST WITHIN YOUR NURTURE INITIATIVES?





33% SAID THEY ARE INCORPORATING SALES CALLS INTO THEIR NURTURE STREAMS.

When it comes to what content is being used for nurture programs, the same tried-and-true formats that have become staples in all B2B marketing programs still dominated. Webinars (49%), white papers (47%) and thought-leadership articles (47%) continue to fuel nurture campaigns. Other formats include:

- Email newsletters (46%);
- Blog posts (35%);
- Infographics (31%); and
- In-person meetings (28%).

Newer trends and formats, such as ABM (30%), direct mail (19%) and podcasts (6%) are increasingly being utilized to find the types of content that resonate with potential customers. Many respondents wrote in “regional lunch & learns and roadshows,” “video content” and “display advertising” as other formats that are being experimented with to put the right message in front of a lead at the right time.

The survey also showed sales team are being integrated into nurture campaigns. One-third of respondents (33%) said they are incorporating sales calls into their nurture streams, signaling that sales development reps (SDRs) are starting to have a bigger role in helping further nurture prospects.

73%
OF RESPONDENTS
NOTED THAT THEY
CONTINUE TO
PRACTICE EARLY-
STAGE CAMPAIGNS
BASED OFF NEW
LEAD FORM FILLS.

NURTURE CAMPAIGN FORMATS SHOW PUSH FOR MORE TARGETED, RELEVANT ENGAGEMENT

The study found that in addition to testing a variety of different content offers, marketers are also experimenting with a variety of different types of nurture campaigns to get prospects to re-engage or accelerate their interest in a solution.

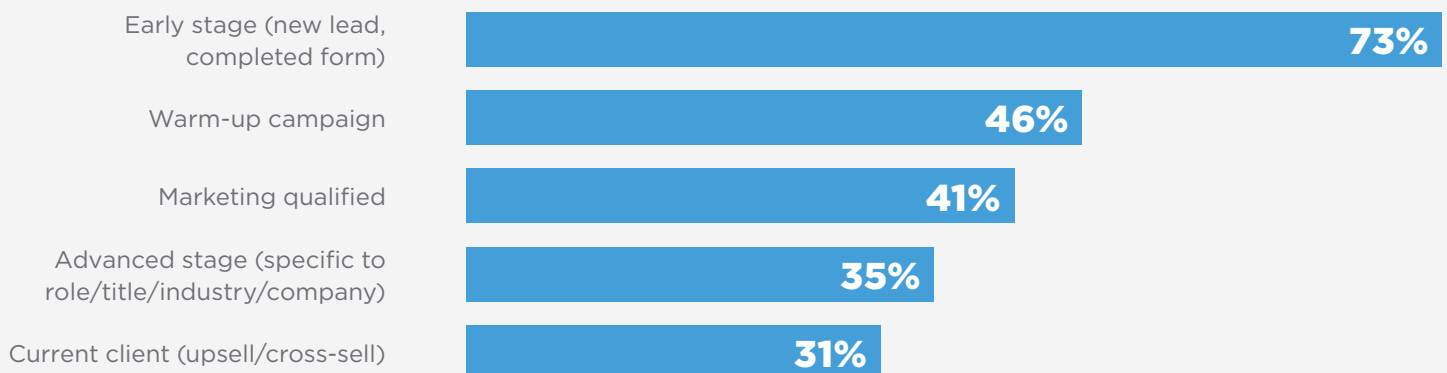
While the majority continue to practice early-stage campaigns based off new lead form fills (73%), respondents said they are also practicing with warm-up campaigns (46%), marketing qualified campaigns (41%) and current client campaigns for cross-sell and upsell opportunities (31%).

Other types of campaigns being practiced include:

- New customer onboarding (30%);
- Touch campaign for sales owner-reached SQL (28%);
- Trial nurture campaigns (22%); and
- Lost opportunity (19%).

Another notable finding in this year's survey is the number of marketers experimenting with advanced-stage nurture campaigns specific to roles, job titles, industries and accounts. More than one-third (35%) said they are using these types of campaigns, signifying that marketing teams are looking to further refine their targeting capabilities to produce nurture campaigns that speak directly to different influencers within a buying group.

WHICH TYPES OF LEAD NURTURING CAMPAIGNS DO YOU CURRENTLY HAVE?



63%
MEASURE LEAD
VOLUME IN THE
SALES PIPELINE
TO UNDERSTAND
WHETHER
THEIR NURTURE
PROGRAMS ARE
ON POINT.

NURTURE SUCCESS MEASURED BY OPPORTUNITY AND REVENUE

When it comes to measuring lead nurturing success, marketers understand that their programs have to be tied to revenue and pipeline metrics. Close to two-thirds (63%) are measuring lead volume in the sales pipeline to understand whether their nurture programs are on point, while 57% are measuring success by revenue.

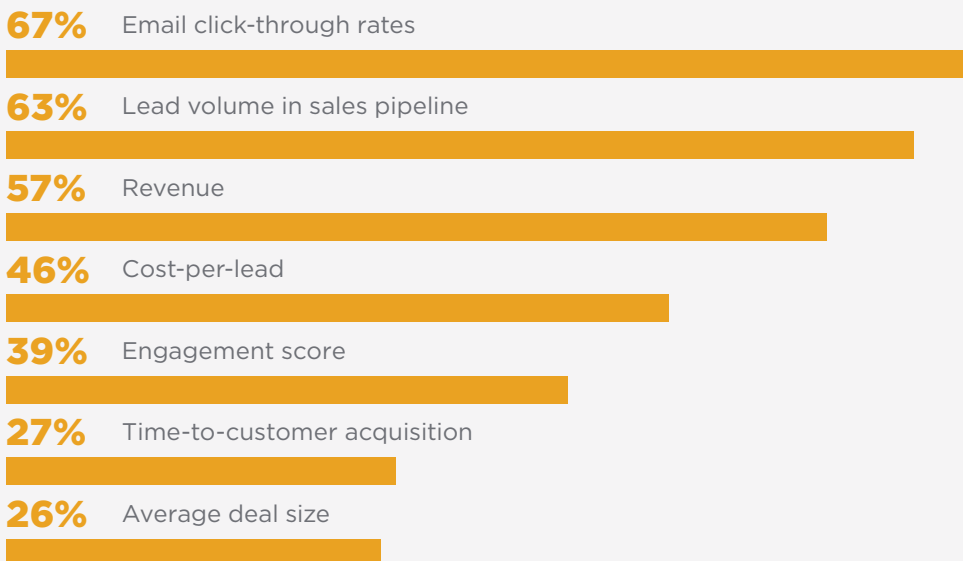
Many respondents also wrote in “lead and pipeline velocity,” highlighting that their nurture programs are accelerating leads through the pipeline and creating potential opportunities. More than a quarter (27%) said they measure success by “time-to-customer acquisition.”

Respondents are also taking lead engagement into account when analyzing the performance of nurture programs:

- 67% said they are measuring nurture success by email click-through rate; and
- 39% said they are measuring nurture success by engagement score.

Close to half (46%) of marketers said they are measuring cost-per-lead to gain a better understanding of the success of their nurture programs, which highlights how marketers are striving to validate their programs and prove the campaigns they are running are worth the effort.

WHAT METRICS DO YOU USE TO MEASURE LEAD NURTURING SUCCESS?



34%
**OF RESPONDENTS
SEE NO
MEASURABLE
DIFFERENCE
IN THE
PERFORMANCE OF
NURTURED LEADS
VERSUS NON-
NURTURED LEADS.**

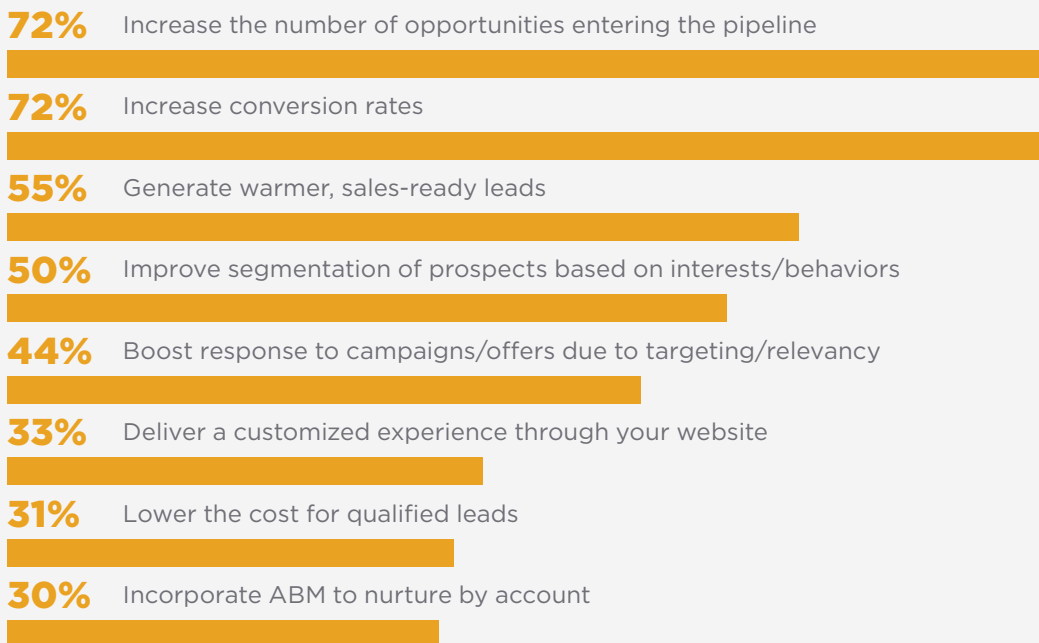
CONCLUSION

Lead nurturing continues to be a staple in B2B organizations' go-to-market strategies. This is because, when practiced correctly, nurturing can drive more opportunities into the sales pipeline and, ultimately, lead to more potential revenue.

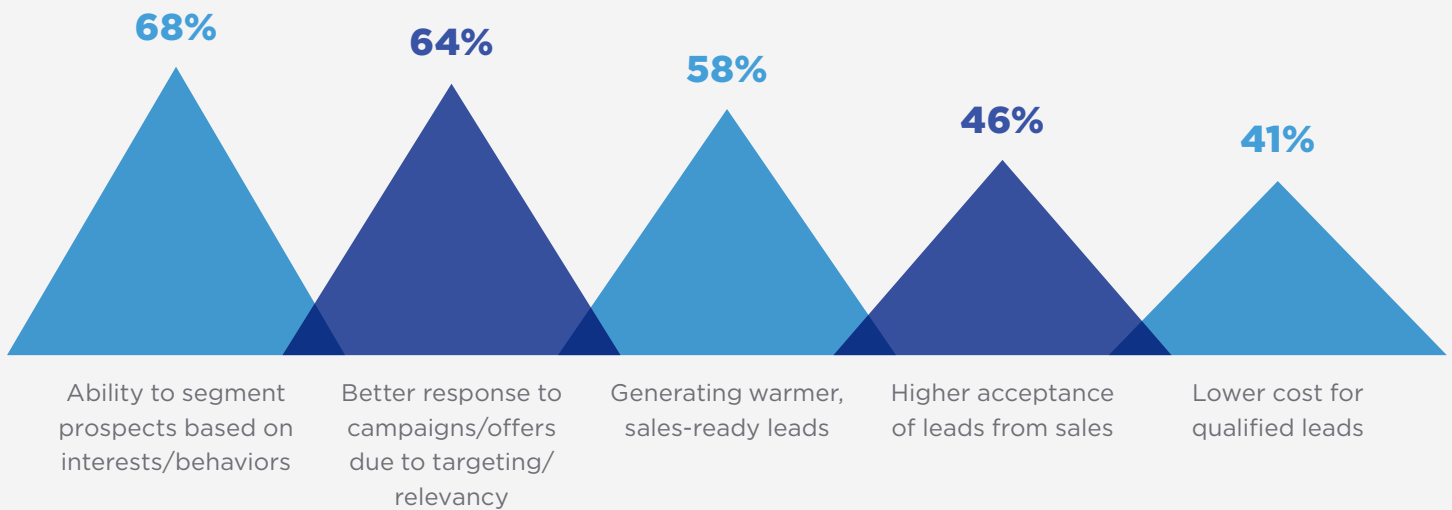
However, traditional nurture practices are showing signs of flatlining. With more than one-third (34%) of respondents seeing no measurable difference in the performance of nurtured leads versus non-nurtured leads, B2B marketers must reassess their nurture practices to remain relevant and provide value to their target audience.

To achieve this, respondents are looking to refine and segment their databases to offer more targeted nurturing experiences fueled with the right content and messaging.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FUTURE GOALS/PRIORITIES FOR YOUR LEAD NURTURING PROGRAMS?



WHAT HAVE YOU SEEN AS THE BIGGEST BENEFITS OF LEAD NURTURE PROGRAMS?



72%
OF MARKETERS
WANT TO
INCREASE THE
NUMBER OF
OPPORTUNITIES
ENTERING THE
PIPELINE WITH
THEIR LEAD
NURTURING
PROGRAMS.

When asked what their future goals and priorities are for their nurture programs, respondents stated the usual goals of increasing conversion rates (72%) and the number of opportunities entering the pipeline (72%). However, several of the other goals shared aligned with the recurring theme of becoming more targeted and relevant with prospective customers, including:

- Improve segmentation of prospects based on interests/behaviors (50%);
- Boost response to campaigns/offers due to targeting and relevancy (44%);
- Deliver customized experiences through their websites (33%); and
- Develop deeper engagement with prospects and customers (25%).

Overall, respondents in this year's survey show that experimentation, refinement and targeting will continue into 2019 as marketers look to create meaningful relationships with leads by appealing to their expectations, needs and interests.

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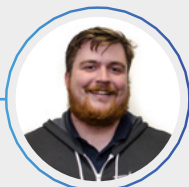
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Demand Gen Report is a targeted online publication that uncovers the strategies and solutions that help companies better align their sales and marketing organizations, and ultimately, drive growth. A key component of the publication's editorial coverage 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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