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DEMAND GEN REPORT®

B2B Marketing Automation Guide

Integration, Campaign Planning & Key Strategies For Getting The Most Out Of Your Automation Tech

"Marketing automation isn't just a marketing automation manager pushing a button and automating things. A process needs to be put in place and every time you layer something on, it becomes just all that much more complex."

JEFF COVENEY, DIGITAL PI

Introduction

Marketing automation is continuing its decades-long reign as a household name for most B2B marketing organizations — **research shows** that 75% of marketers are currently using at least one type of marketing automation. However, experts agree that these platforms still aren't utilized to their fullest potential, even after all these years. Many marketers still consider marketing automation as something you can set and forget, but these systems require constant care to provide value to businesses.

"We're still bumping into clients that are under-utilizing the platforms," said Marc Keating, Chief Innovation Officer at **Stein IAS**. "They've set things up years ago but have not reviewed the performance of what was being set up. So, while they might have a basic segmentation strategy, lead scoring, lead management processes with sales and a nurture strategy, they've been in place for a long time and they've not been looked at. The data has not been analyzed to see whether they're still efficient and are driving the right value, objectives and goals fit for the business and the marketing functions."

While marketing automation may not be utilized to the fullest, it is absolutely not dead. **Forrester projected** spending on global marketing automation will reach $25.1 billion by 2023.

Successful usage of marketing automation platforms, according to experts, includes:

- Integration and connection of platforms to drive real orchestration within automation;

- Data, reporting and underlying processes to take full advantage of functionality of marketing automation;

- Taking a strategic approach and creating a master campaign architecture to maintain consistency across campaigns;

- Fueling automation with an account-based marketing mindset; and

- Patience to gain a complete view of what's working and what isn't before you make any drastic changes.

"Marketing automation isn't just a marketing automation manager pushing a button and automating things," said Jeff Coveney, CMO at **Digital Pi**. "A process needs to be put in place and every time you layer something on, it becomes just all that much more complex."

This report will provide readers with an overview of the state of marketing automation, top trends from experts in the space, key considerations and best practices needed to succeed, and what to expect from marketing automation in the future. It will also spotlight top-rated marketing automation platforms, key features/ functionality of marketing automation platforms (MAPs) and success stories.

MARKETING AUTOMATION BY THE NUMBERS

Spend on global marketing automation is projected to reach **$25.1** billion by 2023.

FORRESTER MARKETING AUTOMATION TECHNOLOGY FORECAST, 2017-2023 (GLOBAL)

65% of global marketing leaders said they will increase marketing spend in 2021, while just **10%** will reduce their budgets and **24%** expect no changes.

CMO COUNCIL "GETTING IT DONE IN 2021" REPORT

70% of marketers reported significant or growing investments in marketing technology to improve effectiveness.

CMO COUNCIL "GETTING IT DONE IN 2021" REPORT

B2B marketing organizations that leverage marketing automation experienced a **10%** boost in their sales-pipeline contribution.

FORRESTER, VIA MARTECH TODAY

Marketing automation is said to increase sales productivity by **15%**, while decreasing marketing overhead by **12%**.
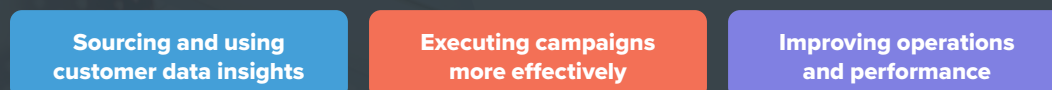
NUCLEUS RESEARCH

75% of marketers said they currently use at least one type of marketing automation tools.

SOCIAL MEDIA TODAY "STATE OF MARKETING AUTOMATION SURVEY REPORT" (2019)
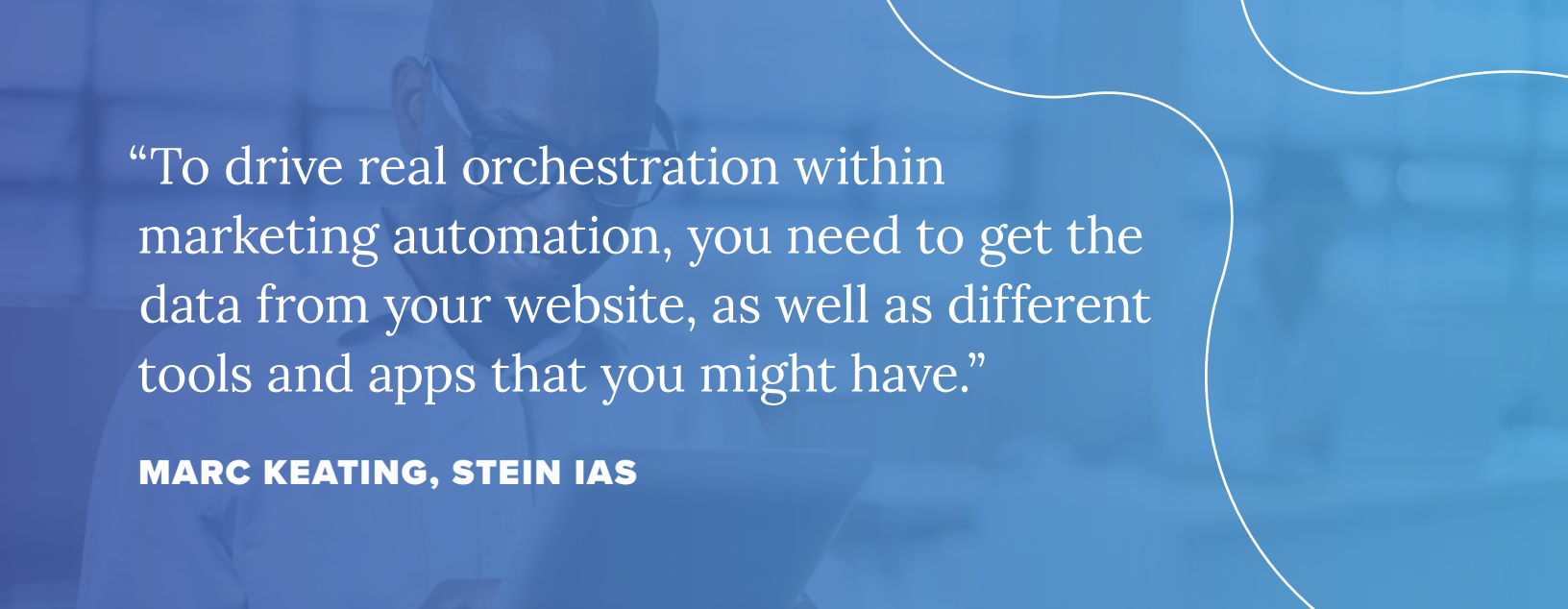
TOP GOALS FOR MARKETING AUTOMATION INCLUDE:

61%	57%	47%	36%	29%	28%
Increasing lead generation	Lead nurturing	Sales revenue	Improving customer engagement	Marketing productivity	Improving campaign measurability

INVESPCRO

TOP AREAS OF MARKETING AUTOMATION AND TRANSFORMATION ARE:

Sourcing and using customer data insights	**Executing campaigns more effectively**	**Improving operations and performance**

CMO COUNCIL "GETTING IT DONE IN 2021" REPORT

> "To drive real orchestration within marketing automation, you need to get the data from your website, as well as different tools and apps that you might have."

MARC KEATING, STEIN IAS

Integrations Enable Marketers To Drive Real Orchestration

Automation is only as successful as its integration capabilities — it must be combined with other data sets from the CRM to the CDP and more. All the data generated from the technologies needs to come together to position marketers for success.

"I think integration is still quite a big issue with a lot of these platforms," said Keating. "To drive real orchestration within marketing automation, you need to get the data from your website, as well as different tools and apps that you might have. This includes your CDP, your DMP, your DSP — all these different platforms. And although a lot of marketing automation vendors promote themselves as having those integrations and APIs, but those integrations are limited."

Keating believes that it's still difficult to conduct real customer journey orchestration — right channel, right content, right time — in an automated way. So, while marketing automation has come a long way, it hasn't come far enough. Experts noted that the next stage for marketing automation and other technology is how they come together.

Various teams working on different platforms must also be aligned for true orchestration. According to Coveney, teams can no longer work in silos.

"If you're trying to get a great experience that includes email and nurturing and direct mail and advertising, and you do any one of those individually, it's not all that difficult," said Coveney. "But when you try to orchestrate that entire experience, that becomes a challenge because the advertising team is working in an advertising platform, email teams work in the email platform, and maybe the direct mail folks are working somewhere else. So, it's about bringing that all together. Marketing automation platforms can do that."

MARKETING AUTOMATION: KEY FEATURES/FUNCTIONALITY TO CONSIDER

A majority of modern MAP providers have already gone beyond their traditional features and functionality, which include email marketing, landing page development, lead management, native CRM integration and APIs/app marketplaces. As the industry continues to evolve, most vendors are adding more advanced features to their MAPs to cater to integrating marketing practices. According to a **report from Martech Today**, these features include:

- Dynamic content generation (email, landing pages and/or website);
- Account-based marketing (ABM);
- Mobile marketing;
- AI-based predictive analytics; and
- Social/lead profile integration.

"Big [MAP] vendors are starting to realize that you can't just have marketing automation on its own," said Marc Keating of Stein IAS. "It's got to be connected and integrated to other platforms that are either owned by the big vendors, or they've got to acquire the additional products and integrate them into those core platforms. Consolidation of the market is one area."

> "I don't know how you live without marketing automation anymore. You have to have it, but you need to use it for more than a glorified email blaster."

ARDATH ALBEE, MARKETING INTERACTIONS

Activation Of Campaigns Must Be Connected & Consistent

Modern automation must go beyond traditional spray-and-pray, batch-and-blast campaigns. Everything must be connected and ongoing across the buying cycle and even the customer lifecycle. It's no longer about running a single campaign to death and then starting a new one — marketers must intertwine everything in a strategic way.

"Marketing has responsibility for not just lead or demand gen, but for customer nurturing, customer expansion, partner relationship, sales enablement, etc.," said Ardath Albee, CEO and B2B Marketing Strategist at **Marketing Interactions** and Interim VP of Marketing at **Modus**. "So, you have to start looking at it with an eye on how it all continues on rather than, 'OK, here's one campaign here, and here's another,' and none of it works together. It's been a real process trying to get that to change.

"I don't know how you live without marketing automation anymore," she continued. "You have to have it, but you need to use it for more than a glorified email blaster. Your nurture streams need to be impacted by the activity on your website, which all trigger something different. There's all kinds of features and tools you can use, but I don't think most people actually use them."

Keating agreed, noting that many companies go straight into marketing automation to build campaigns without taking a step back to develop a campaign or program framework/strategy on paper first. From brand to demand, he advised marketers to ask themselves:

- What are the different types of programs we are looking to activate?

- What are our target groups?

- Which engagement model is linked to those target groups?

- Are we looking to activate product campaigns, thought leadership campaigns, lead-gen-driven campaigns around topics in the market and/or event campaigns?

He said all campaigns need to be connected within one annual campaign plan and one master campaign architecture. Writing it all on paper provides clearer insights into the relationship between those campaigns, which helps you gain a better understanding of how to move someone from a top-of-funnel, lead-gen campaign into a product-specific nurture, or where to move someone from the product nurture into a justification nurture, and so on.

"I think it's about having a tighter architecture and a consistency in how all of these campaigns look and feel," said Keating. "I think a lot of brands kind of reinvent campaigns too much and there's too much difference between the experience. If you bump into these campaigns at different times in a buyer's journey, then they should all look consistent and connected.

"I think connectivity is what's challenging brands at the moment," he continued. "And because they don't have that connectivity, and they don't have that hierarchy of that campaign architecture, it's often hard to see where somebody starts the journey? Where did they end up? And how do we sort of attribute the end sale across all those different campaigns? The go-to-market architecture is key."

Trends In Marketing Automation

JEFF COVENEY, CMO, DIGITAL PI

2021 is light years away from the early marketing automation days when automation was one step above email marketing. Today, marketing automation platforms (MAPs) have matured — but don't expect too many cutting-edge features. However, MAPs still play a critical role in orchestrating the customer experience. Let's dive into a few trends and insights around marketing automation in 2021.

DATA IS KING

Data has always been the lifeblood of marketing automation and will continue to do so. MAPs have done a great job providing intelligence on first-party data, such as data collected via clicks, form fills and web visits.

As we look ahead, we will see more and more companies enriching this first-party data with third-party data, such as buyer intent, technographics and account level intelligence. When fed into the MAP, this added data will enable marketers to improve the customer experience with more relevant nurture streams and communications.

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ORCHESTRATING THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE THROUGH NURTURING & ENGAGEMENT

In a 2020 report, PWC found that the number of companies investing in the omnichannel experience has jumped from 20% to more than 80%.

The traditional B2B marketing mix has numerous components, such as content syndication, email nurturing, social and webinars, that drive awareness and leads. Orchestration means leveraging all of these channels under a unified strategy within your MAP.

Many of the MAPs already support these marketing vehicles. However, the challenge lies in teams working together on these integrated campaigns. I've seen some email teams create killer emails with great nurturing. However, the advertising side of the house that runs the paid media campaigns is not aligned with the email team. As these team silos get broken down, we'll see more companies leveraging the power of marketing automation to orchestrate the customer experience in 2021.

THE SHIFT TO DIGITAL CONTINUES

The physical events channel will be almost nonexistent in 2021. Budgets will continue to get redirected into digital channels with leads flowing into the MAP.

As part of this shift, we will see more integration with advertising channels. For example, Adobe announced support for continuous Audience Sync to Google, Facebook and LinkedIn to automate the advertising campaign experience.

AGENCY FRAMEWORKS STREAMLINE SYSTEMS

Marketing automation has grown up. There is no need to reinvent the wheel when deploying new MAPs or migrating to new instances. Instead, companies are leveraging agencies for their pre-existing frameworks and managed services.

For example, Digital Pi's Gold Standard framework helps companies deploy Marketo using 12 best-practice processes. Sercante uses its methodologies to assist companies with Pardot implementations. Other agencies have developed their own frameworks.

When companies are debating whether or not to switch systems in 2021, pick a framework that works best for your organization to accelerate time-to-market.
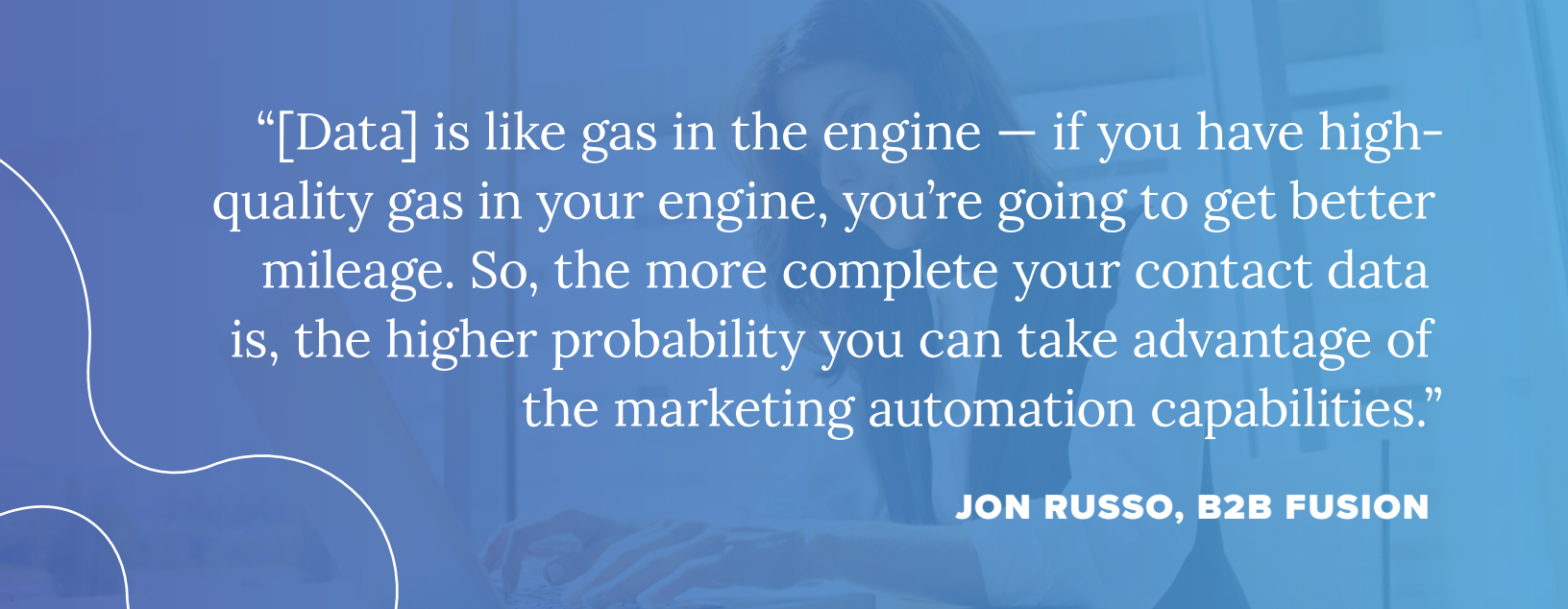
ABM CONTINUES ADOPTION

We've been hearing about the magic of ABM for several years now. Companies are maturing those strategies and we'll see more and more adoption of ABM features out of the marketing automation platforms this year.

To summarize, marketing automation will continue to power the marketing of many organizations in 2021. While the new features themselves may not revolutionize marketing, companies will evolve their use of the technology to scale their business this year.

TO LEARN HOW OTHER COMPANIES ARE ADOPTING AND REVAMPING THEIR MARKETING AUTOMATION INSTANCES, CHECK OUT THESE SUCCESS STORIES FROM DIGITAL PI.

▶ **How Beckman Coulter Migrated From Pardot To Marketo & Integrate SiteCore CMS**

▶ **How Marketo Revamped It's Own Marketo Instance**

▶ **How ThreatMetrix Improved It's 10-Year-Old Marketing Automation Instance**

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> "[Data] is like gas in the engine — if you have high-quality gas in your engine, you're going to get better mileage. So, the more complete your contact data is, the higher probability you can take advantage of the marketing automation capabilities."
>
> **JON RUSSO, B2B FUSION**

Data Is High-Quality Gas For The Automation Engine

To get better mileage out of your marketing automation processes, everything starts with data. Experts strongly emphasized the need for clean, accurate and consistent data across all platforms to deliver the types of experiences modern B2B buyers expect.

"Data is so vital to be able to provide that superior experience," said Coveney. "Everything from keeping the data clean to bringing in data the right way, to normalizing data and getting rid of the duplicates. Then making sure you have the right data coming in with intent. It's a big area and how that data fits into marketing automation is really important."

Experts agree that everything starts with data. The more complete your contact data and firmographic information is, the greater chance you have of getting the most out of your marketing automation.

"We've always pushed big time on the data quality," said Jon Russo, CMO and Founder of **B2B Fusion**. "It's like gas in the engine — if you have high-quality gas in your engine, you're going to get better mileage. So, the more complete your contact data is, the higher probability you can take advantage of the marketing automation capabilities. That includes segmentation and targeting so you get away from the spray-and-pray. If your data is crap, you're going to end up doing spray-and-pray and in this environment, because email volume is up 30% year-over-year, if you're not relevant, you're going to get tuned out. You got to really start with that baseline of the data."

YOU'VE GOT A MAP, BUT ABM IS STILL CHALLENGING

MAPs are predominantly people-based, which typically presents a challenge. But now, with a heavy push toward account-based strategies, MAPs are quickly adopting ABM features. However, ABM remains a challenge when you rely solely on automation.

"ABM is a whole different animal — it's the hard part in marketing automation, which is why companies like Engagio, Demandbase and others exist," said Ardath Albee of Marketing Interactions/Modus. "It's really difficult to look at an entire account in HubSpot, or you know, most other marketing automation platforms. And so, I spend a lot of time jumping back and forth from HubSpot to Salesforce, where I can look at an account overall and all of the contacts and see who's engaging. This makes managing from an account-based perspective really challenging."

While some MAPs advertise themselves as capable of aiding in ABM, the data structure differs, according to Jon Russo of B2B Fusion. "They're really designed on a person orientation. It's a completely different data structure for an account perspective, so that's one shortcoming."

TOP 10 MARKETING AUTOMATION PLATFORMS, AS RANKED BY G2

based on a 5-star scale

ActiveCampaign	**autopilot**
4.6 ★★★★½	4.5 ★★★★½
SharpSpring	**HubSpot**
4.5 ★★★★½	4.4 ★★★★½
mailchimp	**act·on**
4.4 ★★★★½	4.1 ★★★★☆
GetResponse	**Marketo Engage**
4.1 ★★★★☆	4.1 ★★★★☆
salesforce pardot	**ORACLE	eloqua**
3.9 ★★★★☆	3.8 ★★★★☆

SOURCE: G2 CROWD

> "You have to have the patience to look at the data and maybe tweak and tune, but not make any major decisions until you've run through a whole cycle."

ARDATH ALBEE, MARKETING INTERACTIONS

Conclusion: Patience Is A Virtue

Although most B2B organizations aren't leveraging marketing automation to its fullest capability, MAPs still play a huge role in go-to-market strategies and campaigns. Some experts even said that Covid-19 has given the category a bit of resurgence.

"Brands that didn't have marketing automation in place suffered as Covid kicked in, because they didn't have the platform, they didn't have the processes or the models to get campaigns out," said Keating. "They couldn't be agile with campaign deployment or program deployment. So, I think we've had that rise, then fall, and I think back to the rise, again, of marketing automation and its value within the business and the marketing team."

With that said, it's important to be patient when evaluating what is working and what isn't before making a rash decision.

"The biggest thing is you have to have some patience in B2B," said Albee. "So, for example, our sales cycle is eight months. I can't make a change and watch it for 30 days and go, 'Oh, that didn't work, we need to do something else.' You have to have the patience to look at the data and maybe tweak and tune, but not make any major decisions until you've run through a whole cycle."

B2B THOUGHT LEADERS ON THE FUTURE OF MARKETING AUTOMATION

While highly adopted, marketing automation is underutilized. However, these experts feel strongly about the power and benefits (and potential demise?) of automation in years to come. Here are some of their predictions for the future of marketing automation.

JEFF COVENEY
CMO, Digital Pi

"Historically, marketing automation has been the place for managing the data — you take in your web data, your CRM data and your marketing data, and you bring that together and you're making business decisions. But companies have so many more places for data, whether it's online or offline. And bringing that together is what a CDP is supposed to do, right? But how those actually relate to the marketing automation platform is going to take a little bit of time. I think the future is either using a separate CDP or bringing more of those capabilities into the marketing automation platform."

"What is marketing automation's ultimate life? Five years from now, it probably still has a place. But it may not be as important as an account-based platform will be in the next five years. So, if you were thinking about it as air in a balloon, it's like you're squeezing down a little bit from marketing automation, and the ABM platform 'balloon' is starting to increase. So long- and short-term of it is marketing automation will get a lot of use in the short term, but longer term, I think it's going to start coming into question."

JON RUSSO
CMO & Founder,
B2B Fusion

MARC KEATING
Chief Innovation
Officer, Stein IAS

"Because we've got intent data, we're going to see marketing automation platforms becoming a lot more intelligent. So, you can build all these campaigns. Then when somebody comes on to your website, and they start engaging, we can start to track that intent, even though they might not have downloaded anything yet. If we know who they are, or what account they're in, we could then start to trigger display advertising and IP-targeted kind of messaging. Then they start to register for content and we can move them up to a nurture strategy. So, I think it's about the campaigns and the canvases becoming a lot more intelligent to adapt and evolve. I think that's where I kind of see the future: Integrated, data-connected, nimble products that are using real-time data to drive real-time campaigns, which in the future, will be driven by first-party data. Plus, very much driven by inbound and by an ABM kind of layer over the top of it, as well."

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Digital Pi helps clients grow their business while attaining sustainable, quantifiable business ROI from their marketing automation solutions. Our team of consultants uses a proven standard framework to help customers attain the full value oftheir solutions investment to grow their business and drive long-term success.

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DEMAND GEN REPORT

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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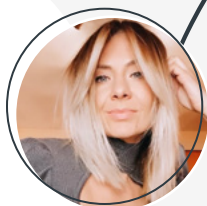
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