

## **Crawl, Walk, Run:** **Taking Baby Steps To Building** **A Successful Demand Gen Strategy**

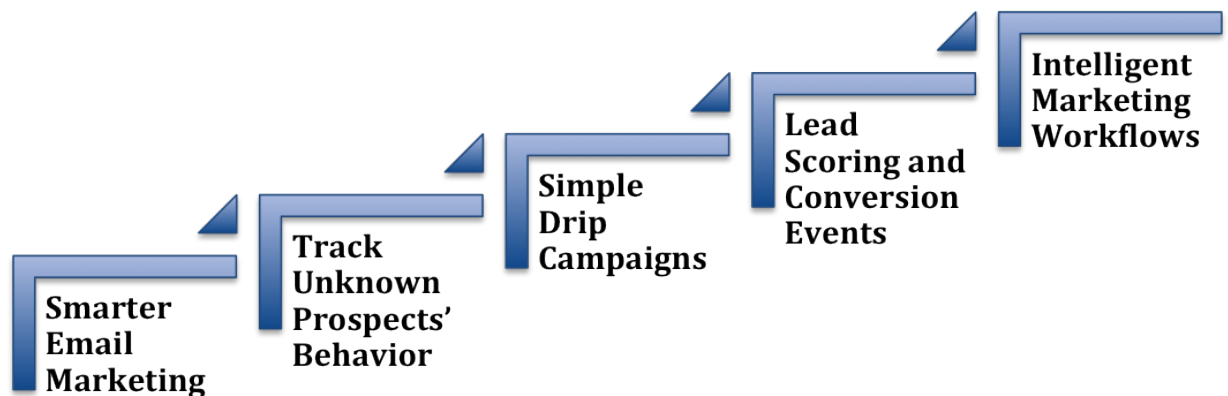
The fundamental principle of achieving anything big is by starting off small. And, when it comes to developing successful demand generation and lead management programs, nothing could be closer to the truth.

Many companies have fallen down in their early attempts to automate their marketing and lead management because they added too much complexity too quickly, without having sufficient resources and experience in place to accelerate and support the new tools and processes.

Marketing automation has proven to be a bit of a misleading term. While the software solutions now available do enable companies to manage and nurture leads in an automated fashion, to be used effectively, these tools must be matched with the right processes and messaging. Too often, companies have invested in expensive marketing automation solutions only to realize that inaccurate databases or a limited supply of relevant content is preventing them from building effective campaigns.



### **The 5 Baby-Steps to Demand Gen Success**



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As the practice of demand generation matures, it is becoming increasingly clear that marketers need a realistic path to progress from basic email marketing to personalized dialogue with prospects.

By shifting to a more tactical, phased approach, companies are improving their flow of qualified leads by following the behavior patterns of their prospects and nurturing them with a stream of relevant messages.

A recent survey conducted by Gleanster, an IT market research firm that benchmarks best practices in technology-enabled business initiatives, revealed that 58% of top performers who are currently in the early adoption phase of a lead management program have experienced measurable ROI, proving that there is success to be had even for those companies that don't have full blown automated marketing solutions in place.

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## The 5 Baby-Steps to Demand Gen Success

### 1. Smarter Email Marketing

- Get to know your customers and how they behave on your website
- Extend email tracking in order to tailor future communications
- Give Sales a window into behavioral data

### 2. Track Unknown Prospects' behavior

- Use intelligent forms to obtain more data and incorporate into database

### 3. Simple Drip Campaigns

- Auto-response or multi-touch campaigns

### 4. Lead Scoring and Conversion Events

- Sales doesn't waste time on unqualified prospects

### 5. Intelligent Marketing Workflows

- More specific and dynamic; adds complexity for marketer, but still palatable

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- **Ian Michiels**, *Chair*, Research Advisory Board at Gleanster,

Ian Michiels, Chair, Research Advisory Board at Gleanster, adds that those considering lead management adoption have a lot to learn from top performing companies who have already been “through the trenches” with solutions and have learned what works and what doesn't.

“We all don't have to learn from our mistakes,” he adds.

As the top performing companies in the B2B industry are finding success with a more personalized “1 to1 marketing approach,” Michiels says that many companies are already aware of the advantages in creating relationships with their prospects and are, essentially, positioned in the right direction to begin taking progressive steps toward their own marketing automation success.

And further research illustrates that an overwhelming majority of B2B participants in the recent Gleanster survey “Capitalizing on Nurture Marketing” are currently using some form of light personalization in their email marketing campaigns.

“Where the average company sits — from what I’ve seen in the market — is at the beginning stages of personalization. They see recognizable benefits from personalization,” says Michiels.

So, how does the average company go from the light personalization of email marketing to an automated marketing solution? The answer is simple: start small.

“The key is to not get overwhelmed by all the details,” adds Matt West, Director of Marketing Programs at Genius.com. “If you're doing the marketing side of things correctly [with automated systems], you will be feeding sales and making them more efficient.”

## Taking a Tactical Approach to Lead Nurturing

While many thought leaders agree that the “spray and pray” tactics of mass email campaigns aren’t an effective way of securing leads, they are quick to point out that email is, in fact, the logical place to start the progression toward successful lead nurturing.

The key, they say, is to learn the behavior of your customers and extend email and URL tracking so that you can tailor future communications and provide the personalization and relevancy that buyers are demanding.



“As you tailor these future communications, you can actually get them into the hands of the people who need it the most, and that’s the sales reps,” says West. “If you’re able to give Sales a window into the email marketing and behavior that your prospects have as they come to your website, they [Sales] are already getting a lot of the benefits ... and are going to be a lot more efficient.”

And, the whole point of lead management systems, regardless of complexity, “is to get the most qualified prospects in front of the sales reps,” says West. More importantly, he adds, “you want to teach Sales to get a feel for who your customers are ... to observe and serve.”

“With overall productivity down and quotas up, it stands to reason that tactics and programs that address sales performance as lead nurturing clearly need to be at the top of priorities,” says Henry Bruce, founder and President of The Rock Annand Group, a business strategy consultancy that helps technology firms develop and execute go-to-market initiatives that deliver results.

“Working closely with sales allows B2B marketers

58% of top performers who are currently in the early adoption phase of a lead management program have experienced measurable ROI.

to articulate and demonstrate the value of these programs.”

## A Plan of Action

Another benefit attainable in the early adoption stages of marketing automation is the ability to perform **simple drip campaigns** that allow companies to **enable auto-response emails** based on individual behavior that can be tied to a specific action (for example, sending a prospect who downloaded a white paper an invitation to a webinar on a related topic) or multi-touch campaigns that can be developed for groups of people with commonalities, giving marketers the ability to continue the conversation over time, educating and influencing potential buyers about products and solutions.

“So instead of reacting to every action that a prospect takes ... you still have a simple way to send, say, five communications over time, but at least it gives you much more of a presence and its still relative to the interaction you’ve had with them in the past,” adds West.

There are also alternative ways for companies to take a more manual approach to simple drip campaigns that take into account historical prospect data, and which enable users to, over time, nurture relationships with prospects without having to “boil the ocean” with a fully automated approach.

From there, companies can eventually begin utilizing more sophisticated tools such as lead scoring, **identifying conversion events**, and enabling workflows to pull prospects through the buying process by providing relevant content for each stage in the buying process.

“Not only are you able to find out who’s been on your website,” says West. “But how many times they’ve been there, what they’ve done, what they’re interested in, etc. so that you can prioritize and deliver the most qualified prospects to Sales in real time.”

## Conclusion: Reaping The Rewards

Once companies have graduated from a manual approach with basic email campaigns and are able to utilize the full power of marketing automation, the impact on the business is significant.

Sophisticated functionality such as lead nurturing enable B2B marketers to accelerate prospects the buying process by delivering timely and relevant content that matches the information needs based on where they are in the buying process. In addition, tools such as lead scoring help companies identify conversion events, allowing time-pressed sales teams to better prioritize their follow-up and respond at the peak point of interest.

To realize the full power of a marketing automation system, it requires more than simply implementing a tool. It requires a commitment to gradually changing the way sales and marketing perform their jobs and engage with prospects. This change shouldn't be expected to take place overnight or in a silo limited to just marketing or just sales. In order to see a real revenue impact, sophisticated demand generation requires a commitment and alignment from all parties involved.

By following the progression of these 5 Baby Steps, marketers will have the ability to drive more qualified leads over to their sales teams. And by personalizing their interactions and incorporating the intelligence gathered from email campaigns and Web visits, sales teams will be armed with better intelligence to have relevant conversations with prospects that ultimately lead to closed business.

Remember: the fundamental principle of achieving anything big is by starting off small.



## About Genius

Genius.com is the first SaaS solution that delivers the benefits of marketing automation to both Marketing and Sales, embodying the principles of Sales 2.0 that make it easier and more efficient for Sales and Marketing to close more deals “in the cloud.” Our powerful, intuitive and instantly available demand management software automates marketing workflows and provides real-time sales alerts on qualified lead activity so Sales can provide immediate, informed follow-up. Genius delivers a complete sales and marketing solution including: email marketing, lead nurturing, lead scoring, Web site tracking, instant alerts and closed-loop reporting capabilities to manage and qualify sales leads, shorten sales cycles, drive revenues and prove marketing ROI.

Genius.com® Incorporated™  
1400 Fashion Island Boulevard  
Suite 500 San Mateo, CA 94404  
1-888-6-Genius  
[info@genius.com](mailto:info@genius.com)  
[www.genius.com](http://www.genius.com)



## About DemandGen Report

DemandGen Report is a targeted e-media publication spotlighting 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 focuses on the sales and marketing automation tools that enable companies to better measure and manage their multi-channel demand generation efforts.