

Converting Prospects into Sales with Lead Nurturing



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Introduction

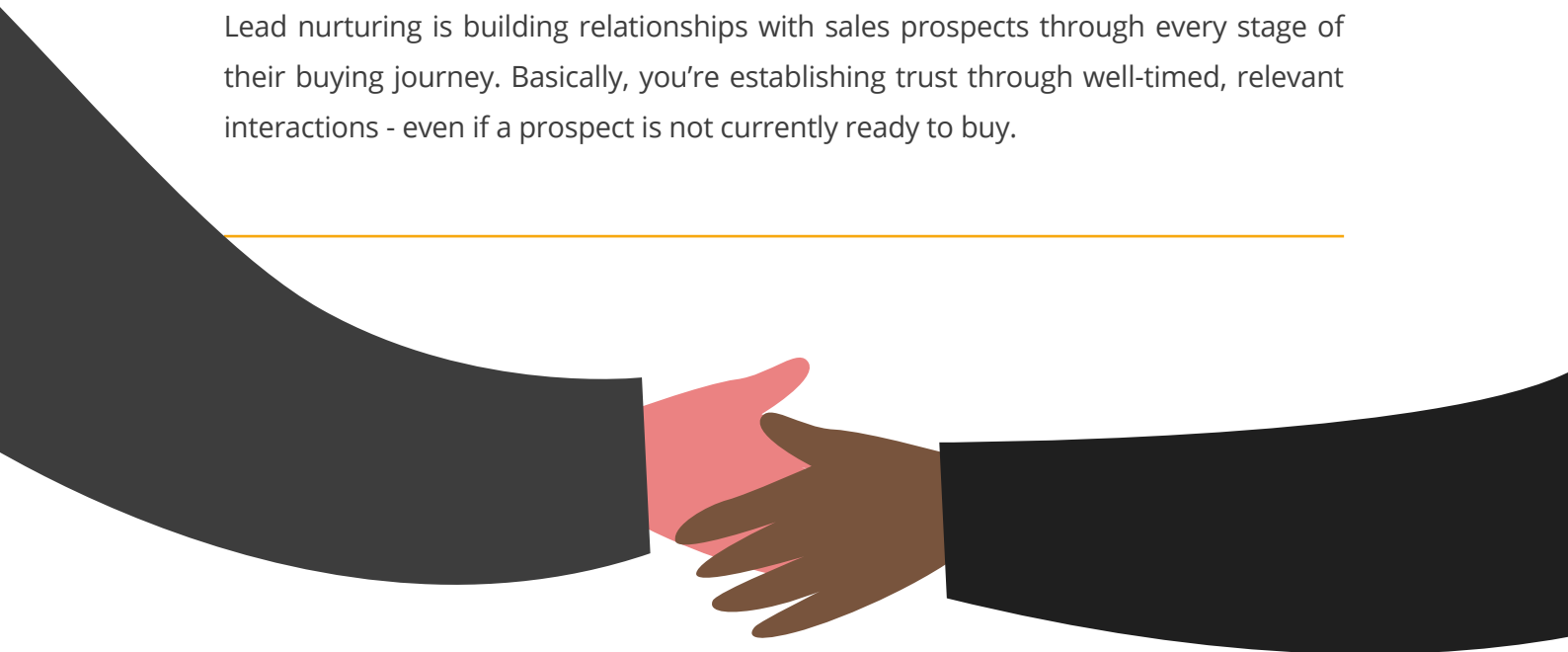
In an ideal world, customers would make an immediate purchase and keep coming back for more. And sometimes that's the reality. But, more often than not, converting prospects into sales is a process more akin to dating. You have to *woo* them before they commit.

Potential customers need to be sure that you're the right choice, and they likely won't come to that conclusion on their own. They'll need some gentle nudging. So how do you keep them engaged?

Enter lead nurturing.

What is Lead Nurturing?

Lead nurturing is building relationships with sales prospects through every stage of their buying journey. Basically, you're establishing trust through well-timed, relevant interactions - even if a prospect is not currently ready to buy.



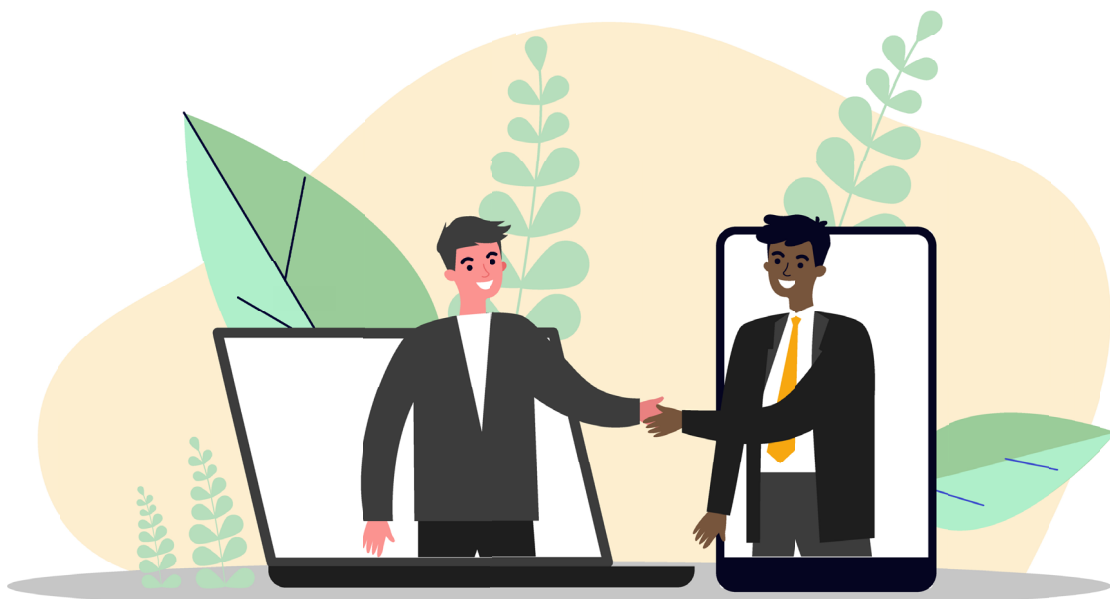
Why is Lead Nurturing Important?

If you're a B2B marketer or salesperson, you're probably nodding along and might be quite familiar with lead nurturing. Trust is the currency of B2B: long sales cycles and relationship building are the norm, not the exception. However, lead nurturing is becoming increasingly important in B2C as well.

According to Google, people are taking [9 days longer on average to make purchase decisions](#) compared to 2015. Consumers now take the time to self-educate by checking your customer reviews, comparing your prices to your competitors', reading about your company on blogs or in the press, and that's just the beginning. Longer sales cycles mean it's more challenging to keep prospects engaged long enough to get them through the sales funnel.

The longer sales cycle also makes trust a defining factor in purchasing decisions. Beyond customer satisfaction, some consumers may need to feel that a brand aligns with their personal values. A study from Edelman indicates that [67% of consumers will try a product from a reputable company](#), but unless they come to trust the company, they will soon stop buying it.

Lead nurturing addresses both the consumer's need to be engaged and guided while creating trust with your company.



7 Best Practices for Successful Lead Nurturing



Start Lead Scoring

Lead scoring is the act of quantifying the quality of your leads based on a set of pre-defined criteria. Scoring leads can be useful since it is a data-driven tool that allows you to see whether a lead is “sales-ready”, is still being nurtured or if a lead isn’t a good fit. It can definitely help your organization prioritize and make sure they are making the best use of resources and time.

Use Multiple Touches

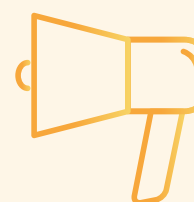
A prospect needs 6-8 touches before being “sales-ready”. In 2015, half of companies include fewer than 5 touches in their lead nurturing strategy. Find ways to nudge your prospects through the buying process with a mix of helpful content that addresses their pain points.



Think Multi-Channel

So, you need to reach your prospect several times. Go beyond email!

Think multi-channel lead nurturing. Use social media, paid retargeting, dynamic content, blog posts, webinars and even traditional marketing methods to nurture your leads. The possibilities are endless.





Get Personal

Email marketing is one of the most effective strategies when it comes to lead nurturing, but if you're sending impersonal email blasts, they are probably going straight into the trash.

Tailor your emails. Create segments based on customer behavior, demographics and, above all, where they are in the buying cycle. Or use email campaigns that are triggered by a specific action, whether that be on your website, on social media or within another email. A marketing automation platform is your best friend.

Be Relevant



Creating content shows that you are a thought leader and provides more opportunity for engagement, but you have to deliver the content at the right time. Make sure that you have mapped out your buying cycle and select content that correlates with where your prospect is in that cycle.

Creating content can be a daunting task, but you might be surprised by how much content you already have that can be reused and refreshed. Take a look at old blog posts, customer testimonials, sales presentations and newsletters. You probably have a wealth of untapped resources waiting to be discovered.



Re-engage

Sometimes leads take longer than average to close. Not everyone is going to be ready to buy after 6-8 touches. That doesn't mean you have to totally abandon leads, especially ones that are a good fit for your company. Re-engage prospects who haven't interacted with you in a while through targeted communications that change up what you have previously sent them.

That being said, it is also important to create a deadline where leads are removed from your funnel. After a set period of time with no engagement, you could send an email asking if they wish to keep hearing from you and remove prospects who don't respond.



It's all in the details

So, you've created your lead nurturing plan, created content and aligned it with the buying process. Now it's time for quality control. Sending out emails with broken links, poorly done personalization and spelling errors can undermine your best efforts. Set up a quality control process before you put content out there, then schedule times to revisit and revamp content that has aged.

And remember, your content is only as good as your data, so practice good data management. It's vital to creating timely and relevant interactions.



BONUS

For those that are new to lead nurturing and wondering where to begin, a good place to start is with the buyer journey. Take a look at your best customers and determine why they were good prospects. Examine customers who took longer to convert. Look at what marketing content worked best and identify any pain points. Then make a game plan. As with anything, the hardest part is simply taking the first step. But creating stronger relationships with your customers always pays off.

We hope you've picked up some new ideas and are ready to start experimenting. **Send us a message**, and let us know what strategies worked for you!



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At VirtualExpo, our goal is to help all B2B project owners make the right purchasing decision. We offer buyers a carefully organized selection of quality products and suppliers from around the world. We are passionate about helping companies make their projects a reality. A lack of quality information will never again be an obstacle to their success.

The year 2020 marks a new era for VirtualExpo Group. We have launched our six specialized B2B marketplaces in order to better meet the needs of buyers and sellers alike.

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CONTACT

Stephanie Watson

Product Manager

mail-marketing@virtual-expo.com

