5 Steps to Turning Your Digital Marketing Into Customers

Bridge the Gap
Marketing Solutions

STOP WASTING TIME AND START GETTING MORE SALES

Today's customers are online. When they have a question, the first place they will turn to is their phone, tablet, or laptop.

If your customers are online, then your marketing needs to be online as well. It needs to be easy to find. It needs to be useful. And, most importantly for your business, it needs to identify the customers who are most likely to buy from you.

Customers *trust* brands and companies that provide them with relevant, helpful information that *solves their problems.* This trust is the basis of whether or not they will buy. In fact:

74%

of B2B buyers choose a company that is first to help them with useful content.[1]

72%

of buyers use social media to research before buying.[2]

70%

of customers want problems solved, not to be sold to.[3]

That's why it's so important that you get your digital marketing right. It's not about pushing your product out to anyone who will listen. It's about understanding who your customers are, what problem they are facing, and how you can help them solve it.

Then, you need to make this information available, easy to find, and in a format your customers will be receptive to.

This guide will introduce how **Content Marketing**, **Lead Generation**, and **Lead Nurturing** come together to help move your prospects through the buying process so that you can convert them to paying customers.

1 https://business.linkedin.com/content/dam/me/business/en-us/marketing-solutions/products/pdfs/LISponsoredContentDatasheet5-2-16.pdf
2 https://business.linkedin.com/content/dam/me/business/en-us/sales-solutions/resources/pdfs/linkedin-getting-started-with-social-selling-ebook-v2.pdf
3 https://business.linkedin.com/content/dam/me/business/en-us/marketing-solutions/products/pdfs/LISponsoredContentDatasheet5-2-16.pdf

UNDERSTANDING THE BUYER'S JOURNEY – THE MARKETING FUNNEL

Prospects who arrive at your website or download a piece of content are, most likely, not prepared to buy from you. They simply don't enough information at this point to make a decision.

That's why understanding the concept of the buyer's journey is so important. Your objective with your digital marketing is to get prospects, identify the ones who are most likely to buy, and continue to contact those who aren't.

The Marketing Funnel allows you to show your prospects the information that will be most relevant to them, depending on where they are in the process.

At each stage of the journey, the type of information and content you'll be sharing with your prospects will be different. Why? Because people have different questions and needs depending on which stage they are at. The buyer's journey can be simplified into three parts:

AWARENESS

CONSIDERATION

DECISION

AWARENESS

Customer Question:
"What problem am I trying to solve?"

Your Goal:
Educate customers about solutions

Messaging:
About the Customer

Readiness:
Prospect

CONSIDERATION

Customer Question:
"What differentiates one company from another?"

Your Goal:
Get on the short list of companies

Messaging:
About Company

Readiness:
Marketing Qualified Lead (MQL)

DECISION

Customer Question:
"Does this solution meet our business and technical requirements?"

Your Goal:
Be selected as the company of choice

Messaging:
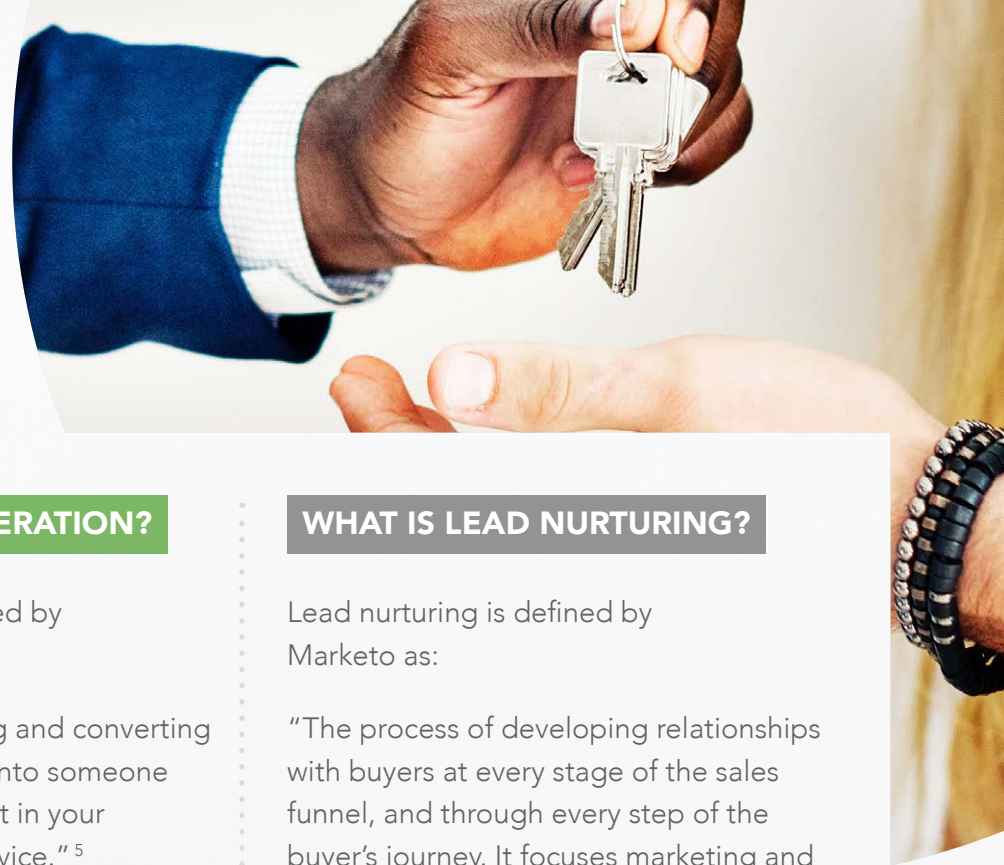Prove the Product/Solution

Readiness:
Sales Qualified Lead (SQL)

THE THREE KEYS TO DIGITAL MARKETING

In order to follow the five steps to successful digital marketing, you need to first understand three important marketing strategies: **Content Marketing**, **Lead Generation**, and **Lead Nurturing**.

WHAT IS CONTENT MARKETING?

Content marketing is defined by the Content Marketing Institute as:

"The marketing and business process for creating and distributing relevant and valuable content to attract, acquire, and engage a clearly defined and understood target audience – with the objective of driving profitable customer action." [4]

More simply:
Let's think of content marketing as a way to provide useful information to your audience across a variety of formats.

WHAT IS LEAD GENERATION?

Lead Generation is defined by HubSpot as:

"The process of attracting and converting strangers and prospects into someone who has indicated interest in your company's product or service." [5]

More simply:
Lead generation is about attracting people to your business so that you can continue to market to them over time.

WHAT IS LEAD NURTURING?

Lead nurturing is defined by Marketo as:

"The process of developing relationships with buyers at every stage of the sales funnel, and through every step of the buyer's journey. It focuses marketing and communication efforts on listening to the needs of prospects, and providing the information and answers they need." [6]
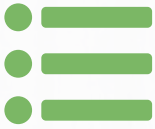
More simply:
Lead nurturing is the process of identifying who is most likely ready to buy and reaching them with the right message to move them further down the buyer's journey.

4 http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2012/06/content-marketing-definition/
5 https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/beginner-inbound-lead-generation-guide-ht
6 https://www.marketo.com/lead-nurturing/

STEP 1 – DEVELOP A CAMPAIGN
CONTENT MARKETING

One of the easiest ways to sabotage your digital marketing is to lose focus. Companies that fail at marketing are too often chasing the next shiny object, and as a result, they lose sight of what they are actually trying to achieve.

It's far more effective to be focused, intentional, and consistent. This means that the first step of your digital marketing is to develop a campaign.

To get started, identify who you are trying to target. What does your ideal prospect look like? If you have multiple audiences or product lines, make your campaign specific to just one.

Next, clearly articulate what problem that audience is facing. What are they trying to solve when they turn to the internet to do their research?

Finally, understand how your solutions will solve that problem for them. Which solutions will you be promoting as part of this campaign, and what value do you need to demonstrate to show that you are the company they should eventually choose.

Tip: Don't try and be all things to all people. Staying focused allows you to speak directly to your audience and get only the most relevant people who are most likely to become customers. You can always do more campaigns in the future that target a different audience.

STEP 2 – CREATE CONTENT
CONTENT MARKETING

Content will be the driver of your campaign. Once you know who you're targeting and what problem you're solving, you can create content that is highly relevant and useful to your audience.

The first piece of content you need to make is one that is extremely high quality and valuable enough that users will give you their email address in exchange for it.

Examples include:

- Whitepapers
- eBooks
- Webinars
- Information Kits
- Video Series

Whatever format you choose, the most important thing is that you don't talk about your products or solutions directly. Remember, buyers at this stage of the funnel (the top) do not want to be sold to, they want their problems solved. Show them that you understand how to solve their problem.

To support this big, central piece of content, you should also make other pieces of content that can be used as follow up. These can be blogs, articles, videos, infographics, podcasts, or anything else that your audience would benefit from.

47% of buyers view at least 3–5 pieces of content before they contact a sales representative[7]. That's why you need other content to keep them coming back to your brand.

Tip: Work with a digital marketing agency or writer to help you create this content. This is especially helpful If you do not have the internal resources to produce the quantity of content needed for a successful campaign, or if you don't have a skilled writer in-house.

STEP 3 – GET CONTACT INFORMATION
LEAD GENERATION

Once you've created your content, it's time to put it to use.

Your primary objective is to get the contact information – most likely an email address – of potential prospects so that you can continue to send them information in the future.

To get this email address, you'll need a few things. First, you'll need to create a landing page with a form the user needs to fill out to get access.

You should keep this page as simple as possible, with just a brief summary and the form. There should be no other links to other parts of your website – you only want the visitor to fill in the form.

The form itself should be short. The more questions, the less likely someone will fill it in. Stick to **First Name, Email**, and, if necessary, one additional field. You can always collect more info in the future.

Finally, you'll need a way to send your prospect the content. The easiest way is to simply make it available on the Thank You page of your site. However, it's more effective to send an automated email. Why? Because this way, you can confirm that the email address is real.

Tip: Be sure to get Explicit Consent that you can email your prospects in the future. A checkbox that clearly asks the user to opt-in to more marketing messages should be on each of your forms, and you should only send emails to people who check it.
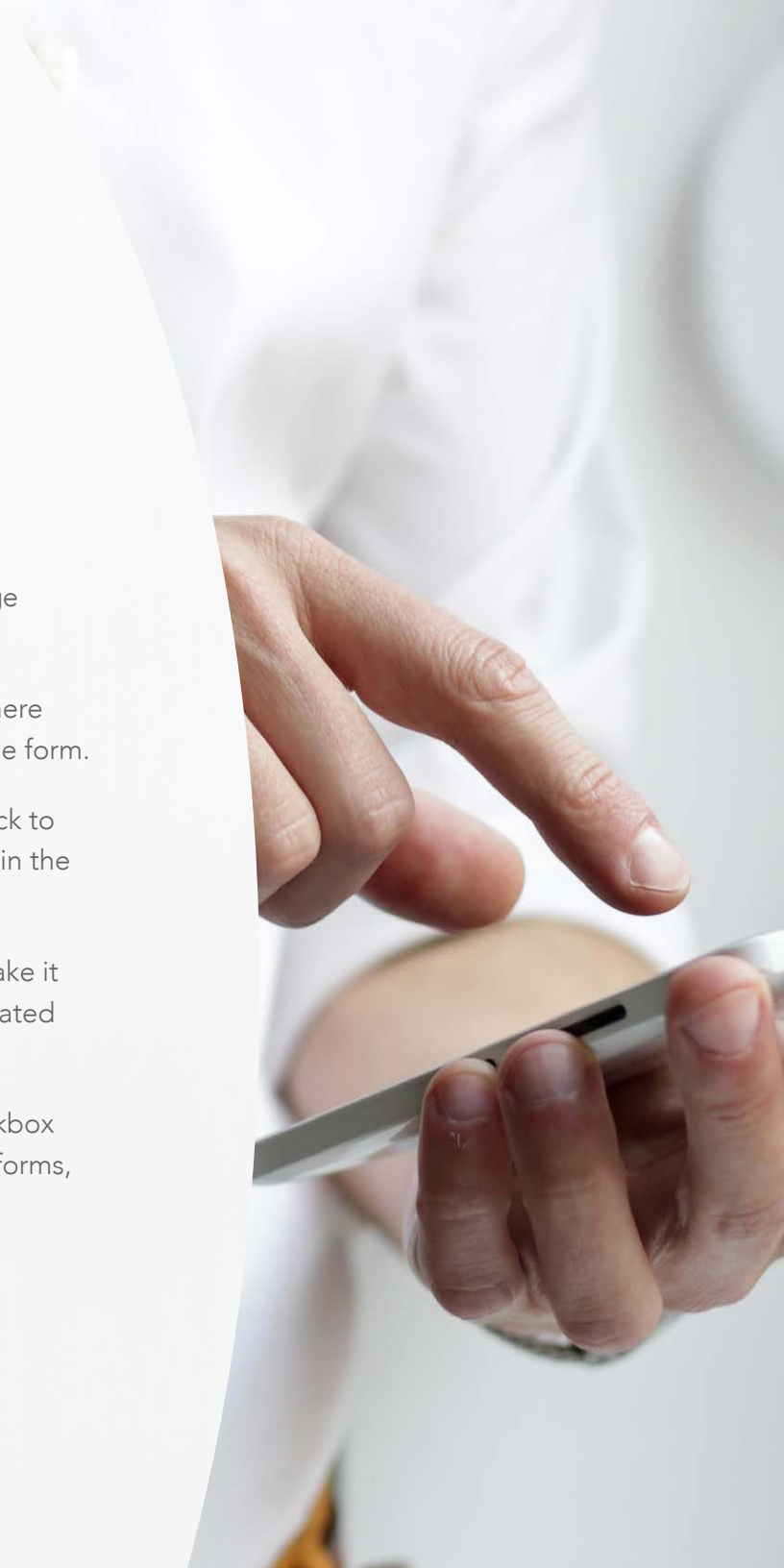
STEP 4 – PROMOTE YOUR LANDING PAGE

LEAD GENERATION

The "Build It and They Will Come" model of online marketing is no longer possible.

With so much content on the web, you need to actively promote yourself in order to be found. One of the most effective ways to do this is to spend money on digital advertising.

Digital ads include advertising on sites like Google, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn and other industry specific websites.

Each of these has their own benefits depending on who you are trying to target. But all use a similar system which lets you set your budget, create your ad, and target the people most relevant to your business.

Set a budget that you're comfortable with, and then measure the number of prospects you get. That will allow you to determine the cost per acquisition. You should be prepared to experiment to see what platforms offer the best quality prospects at the lowest cost.

Tip: Choose which platform is most relevant to your audience, and try to start with only one or two platforms until you get familiar with how everything works. From there, you can evaluate whether you are getting a return and determine which ones are most effective.
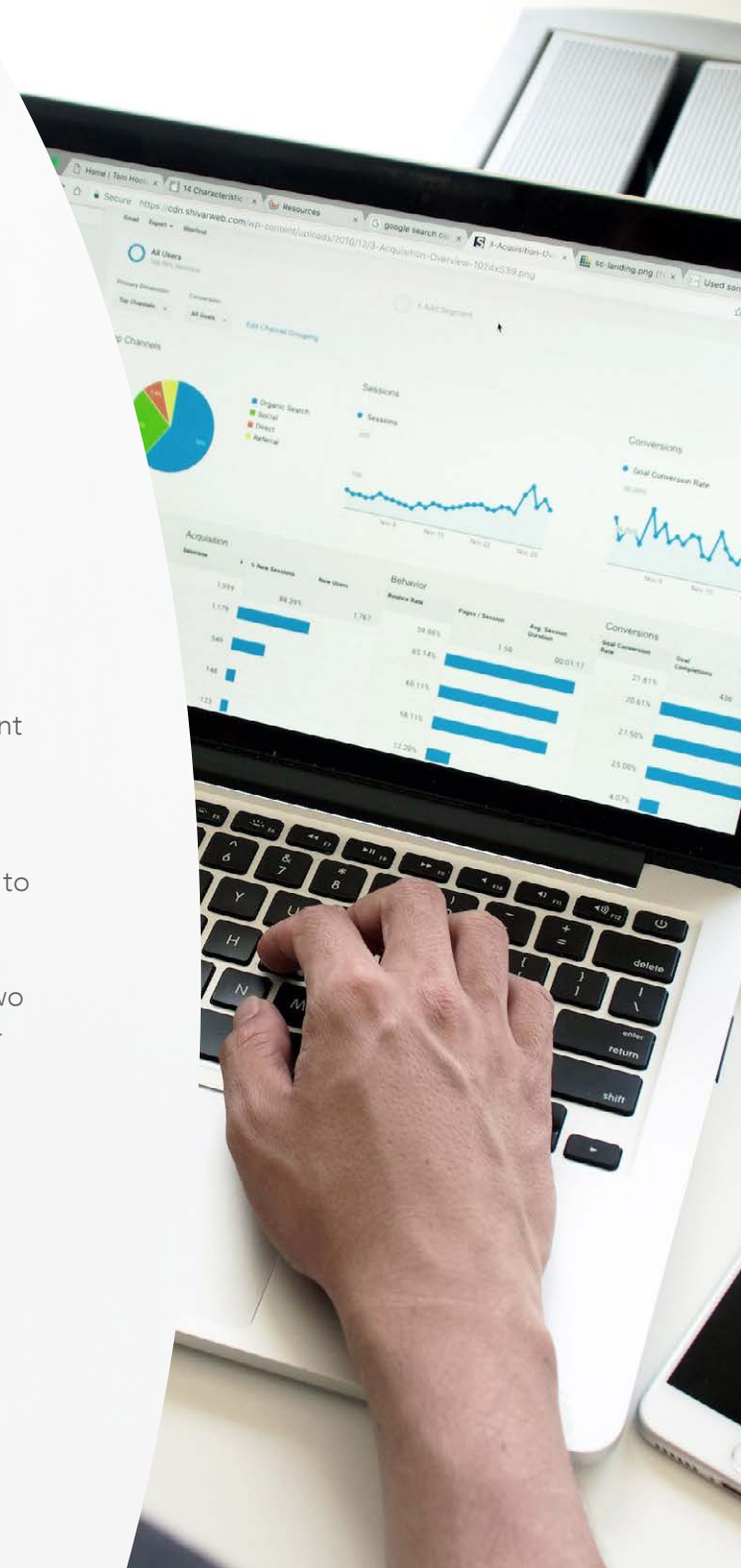
STEP 5 – NURTURE PROSPECTS THROUGH EMAIL MARKETING
LEAD NURTURING

Now that you've gotten your prospect's email address, it's time to put that to good use. Remember, the majority of people who come to your site and download your content are not yet ready to buy. They're at the top of the marketing funnel.

So how can you move them through your sales process so that they become actual paying customers?

The answer – Email Marketing.

Email is still one of the most effective ways to stay in touch with potential customers and convert them into customers.

That's why you created all of the content in Step 2. You can use this content to follow up with your prospects.

Using an email automation tool, you can set up workflows, or streams, which automatically send emails over time. These emails should start with content aimed at the top of the funnel, and progressively get more about you and your product as your prospects move down the process.

Based on who opens, clicks, replies, or otherwise engages with these emails, you'll be able to narrow down your list of prospects into a short list of qualified leads who are most likely to buy. At that point, it's time for your sales team to take over.

Tip: Remember how we only had a few questions in the original form your prospects filled in? As you send more content, you can ask new questions on your forms and find out information like title, budget, timeframe to buy, or whether they have an active project. This gives you more information when identifying who your sales team should be talking to.

TYING IT ALL TOGETHER –
START YOUR CAMPAIGN TODAY

The 5 Steps laid out in this guide are designed to help you attract prospects, identify who is most likely to buy, stay in touch with those who aren't ready, and pass qualified leads to your sales team.

They also make it so that you can get started quickly and improve as you go. After you complete your campaign, you'll be able to see which platforms were most effective for bringing in qualified leads. You'll be able to see the results of the emails you sent to learn which got the most engagement. And you'll learn which types of content your audience is most interested in.

By having a clear strategy, understanding the audience you're targeting, and building a campaign around these objectives, your marketing will be more focused, more intentional, and most importantly, more effective.

The Five Step approach laid out in this guide is built around three of the most important and proven marketing strategies available to you – Content Marketing, Lead Generation, and Lead Nurturing. With these techniques, you'll start seeing better results for your business, and be able to successfully turn your digital marketing into paying customers.

Want help setting up your own campaign, creating content, or running ads? *Bridge the Gap Marketing* **provides high quality content, consulting, social media, and training services for your business.**

Visit our website at www.bridgethegapmarketing.com, or email us at gbridges@bridgethegapmarketing.com to learn more.