A GUIDE TO CREATING A **WINNING** NURTURING CAMPAIGN

ISOLINE

Increase conversions with our handy workbook

KICKSTART YOUR NURTURING CAMPAIGN TODAY

Whether you're a tech start-up or a well-established industry player, learn to move prospects and leads down the sales funnel towards your ultimate goal: a conversion.

Nurturing campaigns are a cost-effective way to reach out and raise awareness of your tech b2b offering.

There's a lot of content out there. But is it useful? Is it engaging with people?

Here's how to cut through the content clutter and resonate with your target audience's pain points and needs.

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WHAT IS A NURTURING CAMPAIGN,
and why do you need one?

What is a nurturing campaign?

A nurturing campaign involves sending timely emails to prospects or leads. The campaign delivers targeted information to guide them through the buyer journey.

The goal is to deliver educational value to the lead while encouraging engagement with your resources.

Why do you need one?

Lead generation is crucial for any business. But without a nurturing process, most leads will disappear. An email has a return on investment (ROI) of $36 for every $1 spent - higher than other online and offline channels, with fewer wasted resources.

In turn, a nurturing campaign gives marketing teams a larger audience to work with when building other outreach initiatives.

Why not focus on social media instead?

Email is a mighty conversion engine. It's 40 times better at acquiring new customers than **Facebook** or **Twitter**.

96% of visitors who come to your website aren't ready to buy yet.

It's great news if you are seeing a high level of traffic going to your website. Even better if they are looking at your blogs, whitepapers, and other assets. But if you don't have an effective follow-up strategy, you're missing out on nurturing those potential leads.

Targeting users with content relevant to their position along the buying process yields 73% higher conversion rates.

Email is still the best way to reach customers and prospects. That's why having a quality nurturing campaign can be so effective. Delivering the right content at just the right time means higher chances of prospects and leads opening and interacting with your email.

54% of marketers say increasing engagement rates is their number one priority.

Getting people on your email list is one thing. Keeping them engaged with your email content is another. Help keep your audience's interest with helpful content or resolve challenges they might face.

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DETERMINE GOALS AND TARGET AUDIENCE

What do you want to achieve with your campaign?

Start at the end of the campaign and work your way backwards. Ultimately, what is the ultimate goal of the nurturing campaign?

Write down your ultimate end goal here:

How will you achieve this goal?

List up to three objectives below:

1

2

3

Who do you want to target?

If you haven't already got a good idea of your target audience, now is the time to think about who would want to buy your product or service. Identify two types of customers below:

	Customer 1	Customer 2
Demographic Age, job title, type of company		
Geography Specific country or geosphere		
Other Lifestyle, culture		

Remember, you also need to consider their pain points, your business expertise, and how your service offering meets their needs in the sweet spot.

Using the table on the next page, map out your customer's pain points. Next, match a unique strength or selling point of your business.

Finally, think about how you and your product/service is helping to resolve those needs. Write up to four below:

Customer pain points	Your business expertise	Resolution
e.g., Streamlining operational efficiency	e.g., 30+ years advising industry leaders	e.g., Reduce operating costs and time to market

PUTTING YOUR NURTURING CAMPAIGN INTO ACTION

Five campaign types worth trying

Now that you have a clear understanding of your audience, it's time to decide what type of nurturing campaign you want to run. Let's look at five different campaigns covering the whole customer lifecycle, from initial awareness to loyal customers.

Initial awareness

Welcome campaign – these top-level emails are a great way to lightly educate and engage potential prospects, keeping them informed and engaged with your business offering.

Re-engagement campaign – for every 'active' lead engaging with your sales content, you'll have others who have gone cold and disengaged. This campaign should specifically target cold leads with helpful and educational content. As a result, you should see re-engagement.

Education

Product-focused – this is your chance to address prospect pain points and how your key benefits can solve their problems.

Evaluation/Validation

Industry experts – prospects will want social proof that you can deliver on solving their problems. Case studies, industry reports featuring your outcomes, and press releases reinforce your authority as a trusted and reliable company.
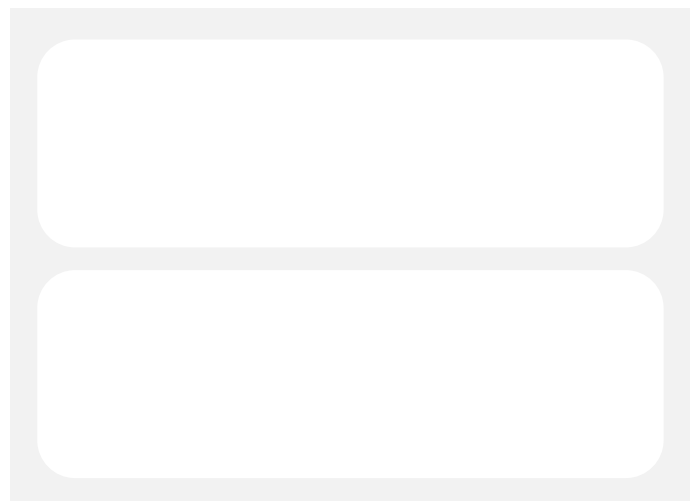
Retention

Onboarding – onboarding a new client requires significant time and investment to ensure it goes smoothly and your customer is happy with your offering. But you can automate some of this process with a nurturing campaign.

Repetitive items such as introductory training resources, frequently asked questions, and timelines can be automated to help your sales team focus on critical account support.

Upsell – capitalise on your existing clients. An upsell campaign requires little effort from your sales team and can drive more revenue. Remember to segment your targets carefully, as new products won't always address client pain points across the board.

It's time to think about which would be well suited to your current target audience. Write down the two which type of campaign will be most effective for your business:

MAP YOUR CONTENT TO THE SALES FUNNEL

Each stage needs content to fit your audience's needs

If you have some ideas about content already, take the time to plan them out ahead of launching your campaign and note them down in the box at the bottom of this section. Alternatively, if you already have a bank of relevant content, list these assets in the same box. Match your content to each stage of the funnel.

Consider the following:

- Type of asset – will your emails include links to blogs, videos, infographics, case studies, etc.?

- Is your content aimed at leads at the top of the funnel or towards the bottom? There are subtle but essential differences between each stage.

- Give each email a "theme". This theme will help you create multiple assets simultaneously, growing your bank of content. Remember, you can recycle content for other campaigns.

- You don't need to use a specific content asset type (e.g., blog, video, infographic) at each stage. The information you include is what counts.

What are the three stages of the sales funnel?

Whether you already have a portfolio of content to use or are starting from scratch, matching your content to different sales funnel stages is critical to helping ease prospects towards a conversion.

Let's look at the different stages of the sales funnel and what purpose your content should serve:

Top

At this stage of the funnel, your content needs to focus on raising brand awareness, providing information, and educating your audience. They know they have a specific issue or pain point; the content should demonstrate how your product/service addresses this.

Middle

This content is the cornerstone of your nurturing campaign. You are still educating these prospects, but now you must demonstrate your experience, knowledge, and how you stand out from competitors. You also need to be more specific about what pain points your product/service can solve for prospects.

Bottom

Your prospects have moved beyond information gathering. They are now ready to take action. Your content should demonstrate why they should buy your product/service. Is it because you can offer lower costs? Seamless integration with existing systems? Or improved customer experiences?

Tip: Avoid making your top-of-funnel content too "sales-y"; your target audience is just window shopping at this stage.

Tip: Case studies and long-form content, such as whitepapers, are a great way to showcase your expertise and provide social proof of your selling points.

Funnel stage	Asset details	Theme
e.g., Top of funnel	e.g., Blog – "Five ways to increase e-commerce conversions"	e.g., E-commerce conversions

SETTING UP YOUR NURTING CAMPAIGN

With everything in place, you are now ready to begin creating your nurturing campaign. But how does an actual nurturing campaign work? Let's run through some critical steps to get you started.

Step 1: Choose your campaign type

From the work you've done above, you know what kind of campaign you want and the results you want to achieve.

Write your campaign type and its focus below:

e.g., I want to lead a re-engagement campaign to revive middle-of-the-funnel cold leads. I have a target to re-activate at least 10 leads as a result.

Step 2: Choose the contacts you want to nurture

Create a list of contacts you want to reach. If you already have a list, you can segment it further. Perhaps by location, leads you haven't contacted within the last six months, or specific job titles.
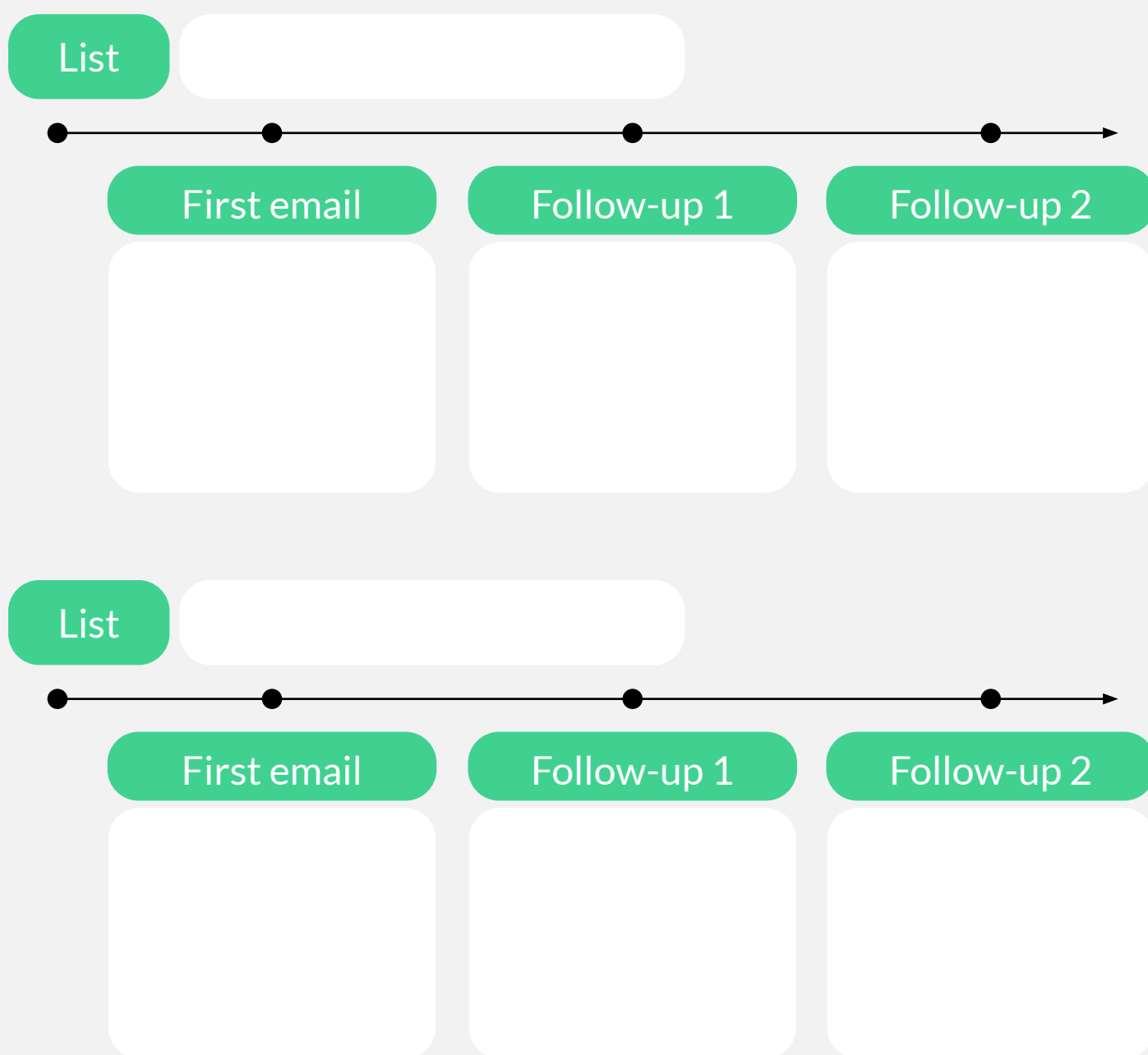
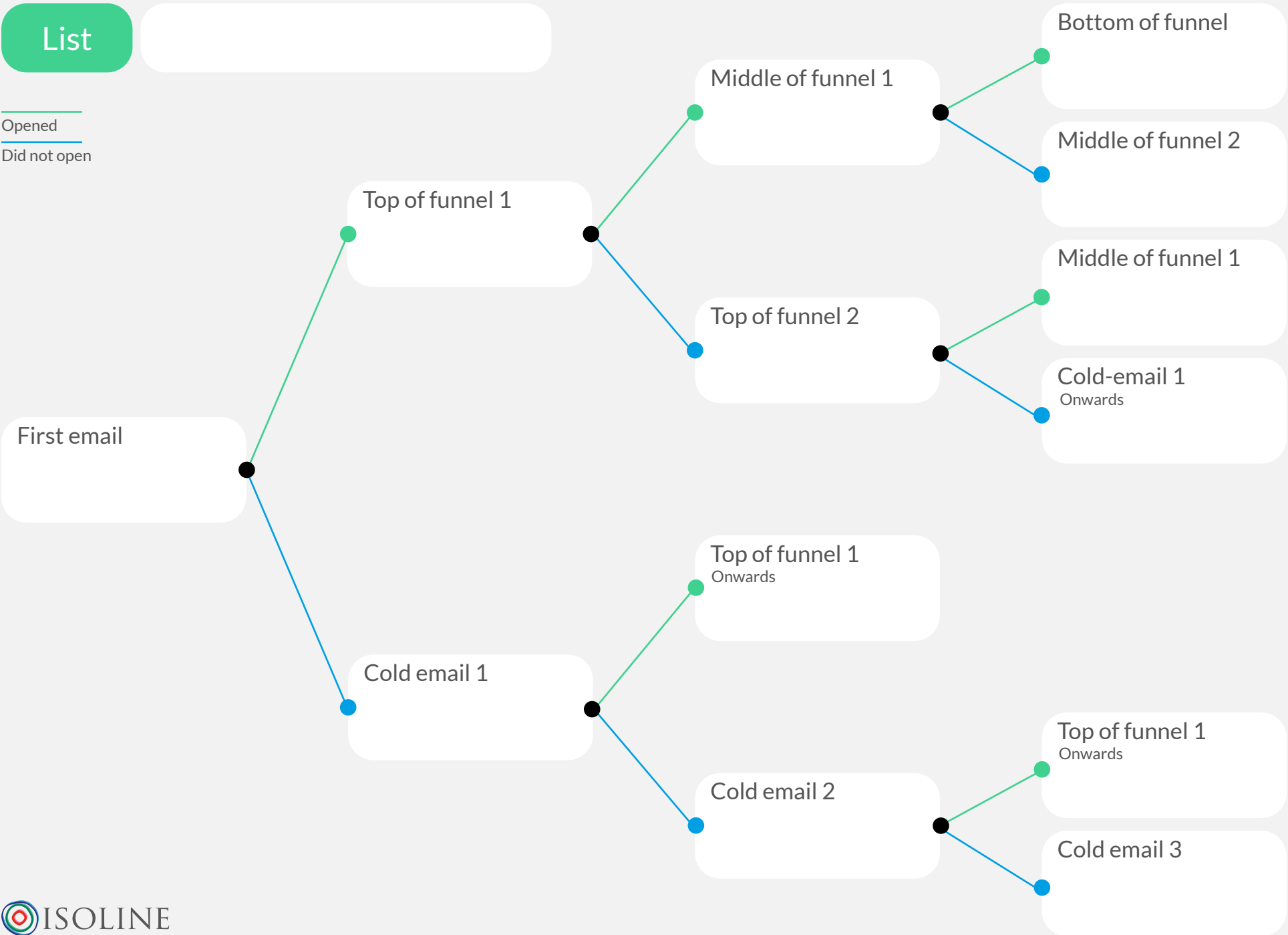| Contact group e.g., US Leads	Sales cycle stage e.g., Top of funnel	Current engagement status e.g., Cold

Step 3: Understand the timeline and content

Once you've decided who to target with what type of campaign, you need to determine how often to send emails. Nurturing campaigns are content-intensive; make sure you have a bank of different content that addresses customer wants, needs, and pain points at each stage of the sales funnel.

Depending on whether you want to run a linear campaign or something more diverse, plot out a timeline. Consider what type of assets to use, when they should be used, and what stage of the sales funnel they are best positioned for:

List

First email   Follow-up 1   Follow-up 2

List

First email   Follow-up 1   Follow-up 2

List

Opened
Did not open

First email

Top of funnel 1

Cold email 1

Middle of funnel 1

Top of funnel 2

Top of funnel 1
Onwards

Cold email 2

Bottom of funnel

Middle of funnel 2

Middle of funnel 1

Cold-email 1
Onwards

Top of funnel 1
Onwards

Cold email 3

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Step 4: Report and analyse

Deploying your nurturing campaign is by no means the end. Keep track of performance throughout the run to determine which emails are performing well and which ones aren't.

Consider the metrics you will use to measure the campaign success:

1

2

3

4

Other considerations

How complex will the campaign be? Will it be linear or have different branches depending on their actions?

What will trigger each lead to move to the next funnel stage?
Think of clicks, opens, or downloading a piece of content).

WHICH EMAIL DISTRIBUTION PLATFORM IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

Hubspot

hubspot.com

A tried and tested email distribution/CRM platform, Hubspot has many powerful automation features and an easy drag-and-drop email builder. It's a great all-rounder because it offers an all-in-one marketing platform that includes email marketing, CRM, automation workflows, sales tools, website builder, operation hub, and more.

GetResponse

getresponse.com

On the surface, you may think GetResponse's sparse interface is too basic. However, dig deeper, and you will find a sophisticated marketing automation tool with a logical workflow without the steep learning curve. It features a simple email editor (or you can use the HTML editor) and it comes with handy features such as email scheduling and an auto-response tool. You may find the analytics side lacklustre compared to other distribution platforms, though.

SendGrid

sendgrid.com

A good tool for sending emails at scale, SendGrid has excellent reporting tools, good reputation management, and a decent email editor. On the other hand, it does have a steep learning curve, and you might find email automation easier on other platforms, such as GetResponse.

ConvertKit

convertkit.com

Although they are new on the marketing scene, ConvertKit offers some handy tools to get your campaigns up and running. Their most standout feature is the landing page creator and editor. You don't even need to own a website to create one. ConvertKit has excellent deliverability rates and a sophisticated tagging system, making adding and removing subscribers easy. It's let down by a lack of templates and a steep learning curve, however.

Mailchimp

mailchimp.com

Probably the first platform you think of when talking about 'marketing campaigns', Mailchimp has been around since the marketing stone age and offers a simple yet effective distribution platform. It has detailed reporting tools and a great template editor. Once your email lists expand, however you will find the pricing plan skyrockets.

YOUR CAMPAIGN PLANNING CHECKLIST

Give your campaign a final check

Before you deploy your nurturing campaign, it's essential to have a solid grasp of best practices. Use our tick list below to make sure you have all the bases covered:

1. Coordinate with your sales team

Remove the guesswork from your campaign and speak to the people in continuous contact with your clients and prospects. Remember, they have the best understanding of your prospects' pain points, needs, and interests.

2. Target and personalise your communications

A nurturing campaign presents an opportunity to segment your contact lists and create hyper-personalised campaigns.

3. Make it clear where your audience can unsubscribe

Inevitably, some contacts won't want to hear from you. To ensure you follow email best practices and are lawfully compliant, make it easy for people to unsubscribe with a link at the bottom of your emails.

4. Include an unmistakable call to action!

The whole point of a nurturing email is to get the recipient to act, whether by clicking a link, downloading a piece of content, or responding to an email. Make sure the email CTA is clear, concise, and prominent.

5. Get the timing right

Ask yourself, when will prospects see the most value out of your emails? Is it soon after clicking a CTA on a landing page? Or after downloading a piece of content? Take care not to spam your targets with too many emails, which will lead to increased unsubscribes and potentially being blocked from email distribution platforms. On the other hand, sporadic emails will not keep them engaged with your product or service. So it's crucial to find a balance.

6. Create supporting content

Content forms the foundation of your lead nurturing campaigns. Many businesses are woefully underprepared for nurturing campaigns from a content standpoint. If you don't have a blog, video, or other types of content to put in your nurturing emails, you won't be delivering anything of value. It's as simple as that.

STUCK FOR CONTENT IDEAS?

Here's how you get creative

Do your research

There are plenty of ways to create content. Take a look at the latest news and trends in your industry for inspiration. Discuss customer pain points with the broader business, particularly your sales team, to help steer content ideas. There's also no harm in doing your own research and publishing your findings in a whitepaper or industry report. It's a great way to provide helpful content for your audience.

Plan accordingly

For a marketing campaign to be successful, it must be sustained and systematic. Once you have ideas, you need to create a content plan. Consider timing content to coincide with new product releases, trade shows, events, and current industry challenges for maximum engagement.

Populate your resource centre

A resource centre is the engine room of any great inbound marketing strategy. It demonstrates thought leadership and attracts leads to your websites, thanks to SEO. This blog gives an in-depth explanation of why you need a resource centre as a starting point.

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WHAT SHOULD YOU DO NEXT?

Congratulations! You've taken your first steps towards creating an excellent content nurturing campaign.

A nurturing campaign includes a good understanding of your target audience and how you can address their needs. It also involves creating valuable and engaging content to work with.

Once you've got these foundations in place, though, a nurturing campaign is a practical approach to personalising the experience for prospects and leads.

In turn, these prospects and leads will respond to that personalisation with greater interest in what you do and have to say.

A nurturing campaign, just like other facets of inbound marketing, requires constant tweaking and optimisation. Ultimately though, the price will be worth the wait.

If you would like further help creating a highly effective B2B nurturing marketing strategy, please get in touch at hello@isolinecomms.com.

Get in touch!