

Delivering Multiple Touches to Targets

Marketing experts contend that it takes a series of repeated attempts, a number of messages about a product or service, for a prospect or customer to be ready to act on a marketing message. Research shows that lead-to-sale conversion rates are higher when marketers implement a series of four to six touches delivered over a series of a few weeks to a few months than when marketers deliver single 'blasts'. Successful e-marketers are increasing their use of multiple-touch marketing campaigns, also known as "nurture marketing" or "drip marketing."

"Drip marketing" is a phrase adapted from the agriculture industry term "drip irrigation"- the process of watering crops using small amounts of water over a period of time to achieve growth. In drip marketing, multiple touches are made with a prospect or customer over time in order to generate familiarity with and interest in a brand, a product or a service. "Nurture marketing" is the same, with the emphasis on staying in touch with each customer or prospect without being intrusive, giving the customer repeated opportunities in which to contact you when ready to act. Drip and nurture marketing campaigns are designed to develop relationships with customers and prospects and establish brand recognition, so that when the customer is ready to act, he/she is already aware of, and thinks positively about, your brand.

Multiple-touch marketing is effective at retaining customers: you keep your name in your customers' minds, predispose them to thinking about you and your product in a positive way, and gently steer them directly back to you for repeat business. Multiple-touch marketing is effective in obtaining new customers: it gives marketers a repeatable strategy for approaching prospects, building brand awareness, gauging interest and identifying leads.

Multiple-touch marketing helps address one important factor of sales: readiness-to-buy. Customers tend to act on marketing messages at higher rates when they were already considering a purchase for the type of product or service that is being promoted. Some prospects are not ready to buy at one point, but move into the ready-to-buy stage at some point. If you have already been cultivating a relationship with a prospect as he/she moves into the ready-to-buy stage, he/she is much more likely to seriously consider you over other vendors.

Readiness-to-buy is critical for marketers to understand, and it means that approaching the *same audience* who did not respond to you initially can be effective. It also means that you may be able to recycle your customer and prospect lists and even some of your campaign materials and deliver a new campaign to the same audience and still achieve results.

Marketers who deliver multiple-touch campaigns and who re-execute or create new campaigns for the same targets over time can exponentially increase sales even without having to obtain new customers and prospects. Establishing and nurturing relationships early in a buying cycle helps decision-makers identify their problems and consider you as a solution.

Contact Beacon helps marketers define and execute successful multiple-touch marketing campaigns.

Executing Multiple-Touch Marketing Campaigns with Contact Beacon

Marketers can use Contact Beacon to execute marketing campaigns that deliver a series of 'touches' to customers or prospects over time.

Marketers using Contact Beacon have a lot of flexibility to decide:

- how many target markets to focus on, each of which may be managed in separate campaigns
- how many contacts in each target market to reach in each campaign, so that sales and support staff can adequately handle the workflow of leads that are generated
- how many touches to make with each customer or prospect in each campaign
- how many distinct targeted messages to deliver during the execution of the campaign; the number of touches and number of messages do not have to be the same;
- which message to send to which recipients at each touch based on the recipient response to the previous message(s) sent in the campaign

Identify target markets

Determine your target market(s) and identify the compelling reasons that would make each target audience want or need your products or services. For each target market, prepare the creative content of a marketing campaign: images and messages that will generate a response. Marketing messages that are targeted, relevant, personalized and offer a way to solve a problem faced by the target audience have the highest success rates.

Create website landing pages for each target market, that show how the target audience can use and directly benefit from your product or service and how the customer or prospect can immediately act to purchase or get more information about the product or service.

Gather contact lists

Compile and evaluate your email contact lists. When delivering email marketing campaigns, your contact lists should be permission-based, opt-in customer lists that you have developed over time, or prospect lists that you built in-house directly from leads or lists obtained legally through other sources.

Evaluate how to manage the quantity of contacts you have for each target market. Segment the list into smaller lists if the list is so large that leads generated from a list that size might overwhelm your sales or customer service staff.

Decide if want to deliver your first campaign to a subset of your list for each target market to determine which messages in the campaign are most well-received. Using that information, you may want to adapt the broader campaign to highlight the components of the test campaign that were most successful.

Determine how many touches to deliver

Decide how many touches you want to make with each customer or prospect in each campaign- a good benchmark is delivering a series of four to six touch points over a period of six weeks to two months. Determine the schedule for delivering touches, possibly one touch a week throughout the campaign.

Determine how many messages to deliver

For each campaign, create series of four to six distinct email messages (ads) which can be delivered over the course of the campaign. The number of ads does not have to match the number of touches. All messages should be designed specifically for the target audience for the campaign, and can escalate from introductory informative messages with links to your website to increasingly urgent calls to action. A series of messages might be designed in this way:

- Message 1: an introduction to product or service for a specific audience with highly visible links to customized website landing pages
- Message 1B: similar to Message 1 with slightly different images or copy adding additional information to the story you are presenting
- Message 2: for recipients who showed some interest, this contains a very leading question and very direct calls to action (to view demo, contact us, sign-up for trial, register for seminar, etc.)
- Message 3: for recipients with continued interest, this contains direct calls to action giving recipients many easy ways as possible to get in touch (website, phone, email, etc.)

Media Net Link's creative team can develop message templates for your campaign, or you can create the messages yourself in a HTML editor and load them into Contact Beacon, or you can use our built-in message editor that lets you toggle between HTML and a WYSIWYG editor for creating or adapting content for messages.

Develop a "touch flowchart"

The touch flowchart is the marketer's campaign roadmap. It specifies who gets what message at each touch point, and it defines how to manage the contact lists throughout the touch cycle to ensure that each contact receives a number of touches with a variety of messages that vary based on their response to prior messages. Building this workflow is a simple way for marketers to lay out options and make rational decisions about how to execute each step of a multiple-touch campaign.

Designing the overall flow of the campaign is the most important part of developing a multiple-touch marketing campaign, and it is where most marketers give up without realizing how straightforward it can be.

Campaigns

In Contact Beacon, a campaign is a related set of events that a marketer executes as a group, with the purpose of tracking results based on the overall success of all events in the campaign. We recommend that marketers define a separate campaign in Contact Beacon for each target audience, and ensure that your initial contact list for the campaign is of a manageable size. We recommend that you segment a large contact list into smaller lists and run separate campaigns for each list, staggering the launch of those campaigns to make the follow-up tasks manageable.

Touches and Events

Each multiple-touch campaign is comprised of a series of touches that occur in succession. Each customer or prospect on a list receives a certain number of touches, even if there is no response to the touches. For each touch, a number of campaign events can be defined in Contact Beacon to handle the variety of combinations of messages and contacts for that touch. An event is the combination of a specific message scheduled to be delivered at a particular point in time (at a particular touch) to one or more contact lists. In a typical Contact Beacon campaign, a marketer would set up a single event to be the first touch: delivering the first message in the series to the entire target list.

Using results to define the next touch

After each touch is executed, marketers analyze the results of the touch and use the results to drive the actions for the subsequent touch. Using Contact Beacon, it is easy for marketers to segment the results of the current touch using these categories of recipient behavior:

- Click-troughs: recipient opened the message and clicked-through to one or more website pages (and possibly even made a purchase or signed up for something already); these

- are 'hot leads'. With Contact Beacon, marketers can even see which pages the recipient went to on your website, creating an additional tier of analytics and segmentation criteria for marketers who wish to establish next touch segmentation criteria at this level of detail.
- Opens: recipient opened the message but did not click-through on any links; these are "warm" leads
 - No Response: recipient did not open the message; these are "cold" leads.

Marketers use these groupings after touch one to segment the original contact list into new lists which will be used for touch two. In Contact Beacon, you can generate a new contact lists for each category above with a touch of a button. To launch touch two of the campaign, marketers define a new Contact Beacon event for each new segmented list, indicating which message goes to them on touch two.

When the touch two events have been executed (the messages sent to the recipients), the marketer then analyzes those results and determines what to do in touch three. The marketer has complete flexibility to segment or group the contacts into new lists based on results of each touch, and to determine the next appropriate message to send to each list for the next touch.

Since the basic categories of responses (click through, open or no response) are known, marketers can plot out all desired touches, including all the corresponding Contact Beacon events up front, before launching the campaign. This list of touches and their events, the responses and subsequent touches and events is the 'touch workflow'.

Grouping results to keep campaigns manageable

Marketers have trouble implementing multiple-touch campaigns because they have the potential to become very complex and unmanageable very quickly. With an example of 6 touches and 3 possible responses at each touch driving the next touch, hundreds of subsequent events and contact lists could be created for a single campaign, which just isn't manageable.

But that level of complexity is unnecessary. If you were to take the time to map out all the hundreds of possible downstream responses with 6 touches and 3 responses, you would see that predictable, repeatable patterns develop: after each touch is executed, you will end up with just a few different paths that drive the next touch.

- Hot leads: These are recipients who click-through even once. These should be put in a separate list at the end of the touch to receive the next message in the sequence on the next touch; by viewing what pages these contacts visited on your website, you might feel these are such hot leads that you can make direct contact with them over the phone. Hot leads can be loaded into our web-based AthenaRMS workflow tool so that sales or customer service personnel can contact the prospect directly and record results of the contact they make.
- Warm leads: These are recipients who open a message on at least one touch. These can be grouped into one or just a few new lists at the end of each touch based on which message to deliver at the next touch.
- No response: These are recipients who never open or click-through. These can be kept together for the full number of touches, changing the message delivered at each touch to try to generate a response.

Using this as a guide, you can group recipients after each touch based not on a strict linear progression of every previous touch, message, and list placement, but instead based more generally on what message should logically come at the next touch for this group.

All you need to do to create your campaign workflow is to lay out your desired number of touches and decide which messages should go to which broad groups of recipients based on their response to each touch. You can make it as simple or complex as you want, and you can even change your course of action during campaign execution if you feel you have too much segmentation or too little.

Define and launch the campaign

Once you define your touch flowchart, you have everything you need to set up the campaign in Contact Beacon. For each "touch", define one or more events that indicate which message to send and which contact list(s) to use.

You can create and schedule the entire multiple-touch flow up front, so all you have to do in subsequent weeks is review campaign results and generate new contact lists based on results. Or you can establish one or two touches worth of events, and then make decisions about how to proceed during the campaign once the campaign is underway and you have a better sense of the variety of recipient behavior.

Analyze results

Monitoring the campaign as it unfolds is important: this step not only drives the next touch, but more critically, it provides marketers with vital information. After each touch, marketers can use Contact Beacon's results-tracking features to view all of the events and results for that touch. Using Contact Beacon's 'create new list' features, marketers can generate new contact lists for the following touch quickly and easily.

As the campaign progresses, marketers can analyze the results presented in Contact Beacon to determine not only what message to send to which customers or prospects, but also which calls to action from your campaign are effective- which messages cause click-throughs and which website pages are visited most often.

As you launch more and more campaigns and understand your particular audience better, you can adapt how you execute campaigns to take advantage of the techniques, the messages and the touch frequency that give you the best results. You can experiment with sending touches more or less often, or sending more or fewer touches in a campaign, or varying message content more significantly, or segmenting lists to finer detail, etc. All of these choices are open to marketers who choose Contact Beacon.

Marketers can achieve better results from their marketing efforts simply by:

- defining and implementing multiple-touch campaigns targeted at specific audiences
- designing campaigns with as many touches and messages as marketers desire
- using results at each step of the campaign to influence the activity at the next step of the campaign.

Contact Beacon gives marketers the flexibility to define campaigns with any number of touches, messages and contact lists, and to analyze results of a campaign at each step along the way, even altering the campaign midstream if desired.

For more information about using Contact Beacon to define and execute successful multiple-touch marketing campaigns, please [contact us](#).