


Marketing 101 for MSPs





When it comes to marketing strategies, MSPs are among the most unique businesses out there as they have a broad catalogue of services on offer. Having those services effectively reach the eyes of your ideal client is what defines great marketing.



To do this, you need a really solid plan in place. Going in blind with a huge catalogue of services is essentially setting your business up for disappointment.

Creating a consistent flow of leads generated via paid advertising, search engine optimised website copy, content creation (including landing pages, articles, and newsletters), and an active social media presence will convert your company into an ever-growing and profitable business.

While your business may currently be thriving on referrals—referrals may have even been the driving force of profit for quite some time—it will be the fruits of the labour of a strategic and optimised marketing plan that will take your business to new heights.

'How do I get started?' you might ask. To help you make the right decision for marketing, let's begin with the first step:

01.

Define Your Customer

It's no use driving a whole bunch of people to your website if those people don't fit the profile of your desired customer.

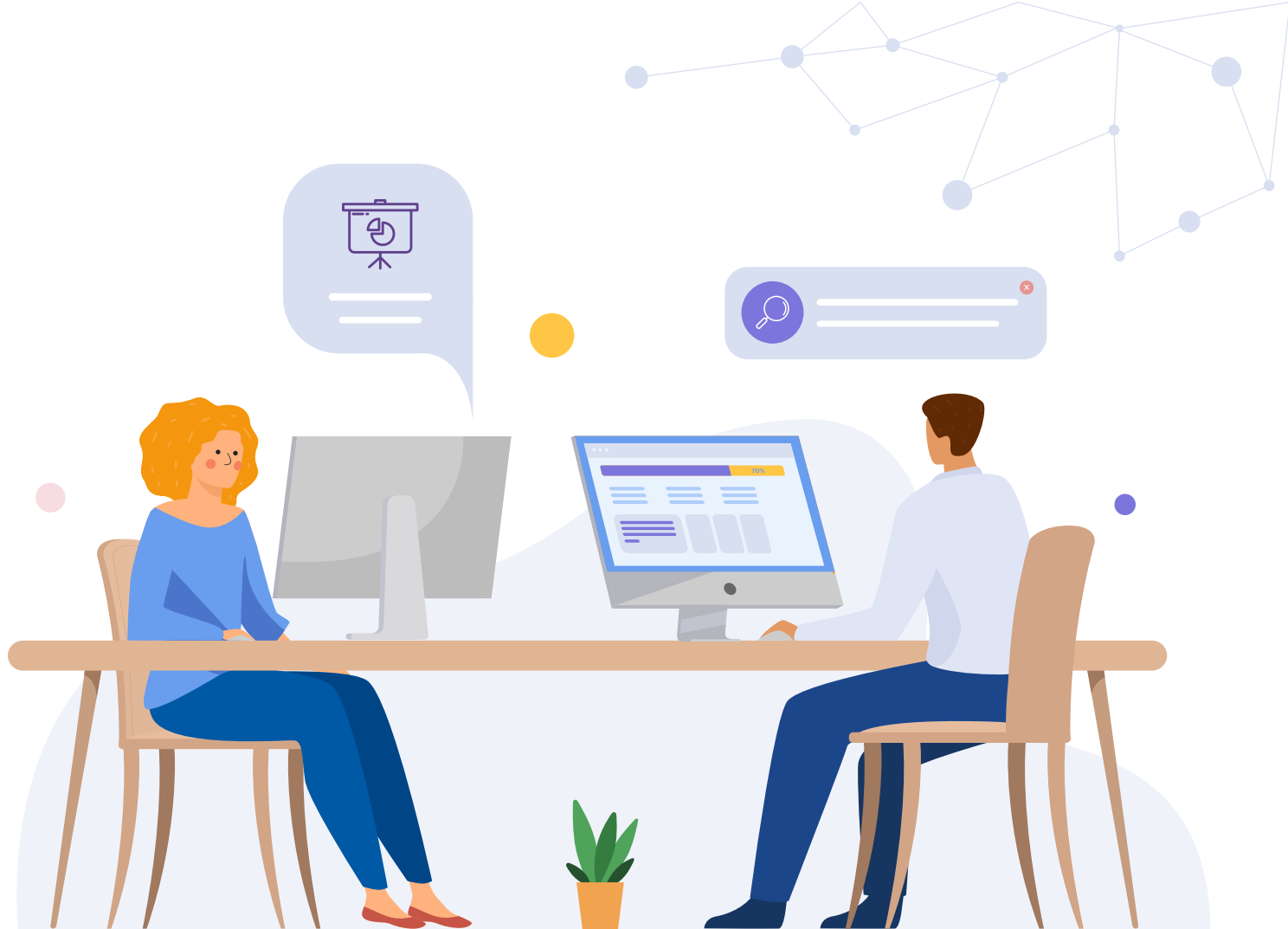
Not sure who fits your buyer persona? No worries, we'll show you how to define your customer.

Let's begin by understanding why this step is so crucial to your marketing efforts. When you have a great product that provides a solution to a need or problem; finding the customers who require said solution is literally like fitting two blocks together perfectly in a game of Tetris.

Half the work is done for you when you put your advertising efforts in front of the eyes of those who need it most.

We call this need their pain points—and it is the pain point itself that establishes your position in the market and highlights exactly what it is that your business is solving for your target demographic.





The effort put into understanding your target demographic will benefit all other areas of marketing including how you craft your content to speak directly to your customers and answer the questions and concerns they may have.

Your plan must be so specific that when your customer reads a piece of content of yours, they immediately feel like they're being spoken to.

The first step to identifying your ideal customer is collecting demographic information about them including age, gender, location, occupation, as well as interests.

With this information, you can begin to create your **buyer persona avatar**.

Once you begin to understand your customer in greater detail, you can then begin to align your marketing messages to solve their pain points.

Great copy will take into consideration the specific tone of voice for your target audience. For example, a conversational tone of voice in an article is a great thing unless this TOV includes certain slang words that a millennial—who also happens to be your target customer—doesn't feel identified with.

You can find online tools, like Make My Persona from HubSpot which will simplify this task for you.

Sample Buyer Persona



Noah

Demographics & Psychographics:

38-year old CEO of an SMB company, with 10-20 staff. He's been in the rental and real estate trade for 3 years now. He likes to communicate through phone calls and face-to-face. He's on LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram. He's an innovator and likes to attend industry conferences and seminars.

How he finds us:

- Referrals
- Online through search engines and social media

Pain Points:

- Investing time on leads but not securing them
- Accumulated stress

Why he buys from us:

Pricing and support



02. Set Goals

One of the greatest acronyms to discover and learn for your marketing strategy is SMART which stands for specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely. These steps will serve you well in designing and crafting your marketing goals (and keep you accountable). Let's look at each word a little closer.

Specific: Get very detailed and specific about the outcomes you'd like to achieve and the very purpose of your campaign. The more details, the better and easier it will be to track the results. Which leads us to the next point.

Measurable: Every one of your campaigns should have a clear goal that you can track. Detail your objectives and measure them with frequency throughout the campaign.

Achievable: While reaching for 1 million new customers sounds dreamy, depending on the size of your business and your current client database-this just might not be achievable. Don't set yourself up for disappointment but ensure your goals require decent effort.

Realistic: Following on from the last point, ensure that the goal is achievable via the tools and resources you have on hand or can afford to purchase, obtain, or hire.

Time-Bound: Timelines are important. They keep you on track and stipulate a clear end goal for your campaign.

Note:

Set metrics to ensure you're achieving your goals. Tracking all data on your campaigns will allow you to measure the return on investment and help you to realise your efforts.

Some of the most common data points you want to track include:

Website visits, cost per lead, traffic sources, keyword performance, open rate, shares, likes, mentions, follows, form submissions, views, and downloads.



03.

Develop a Campaign

Developing a successful marketing campaign begins with identifying your goals and desired outcomes for the campaign. When developing a campaign, think about where your customers are in your marketing funnel. Questions and points to ponder include:

What do you plan to do for **Awareness**?

Awareness is the initial stage where your leads begin to learn about your purpose and brand through content designed to speak to your desired customer. This may include social posts, blog articles, and infographics.

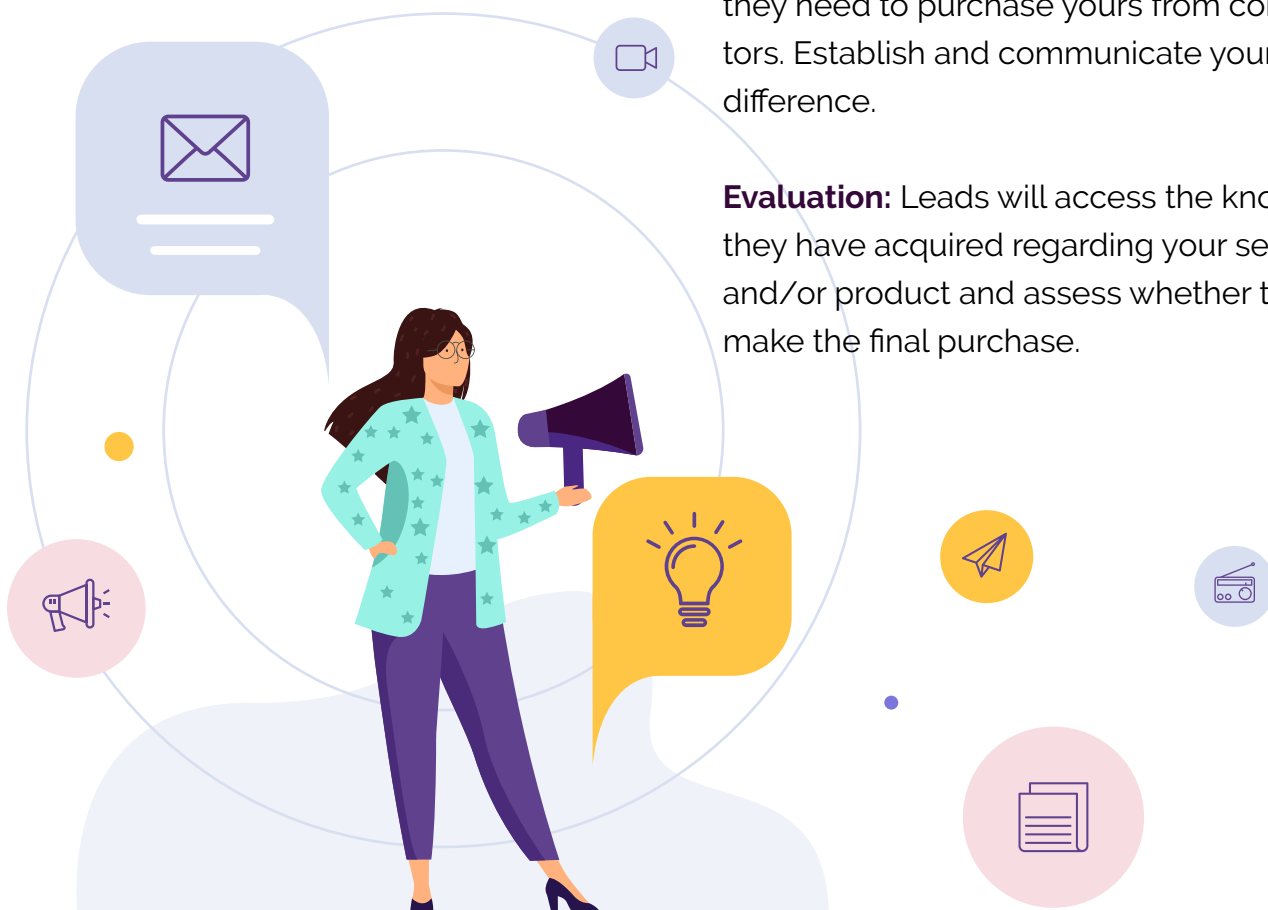
Interest: Once a lead begins interacting with your content they are essentially showing

interest in your brand and move into the interest stage of your marketing funnel. Here they will go on to learn more about your position as a company and the services you offer.

Consideration: In the consideration stage, leads have moved on to become prospective customers, and as a business, you begin to nurture them on a greater level. You can do this by communicating with them via newsletters, offering free trials, and further targeting your content to meet their needs.

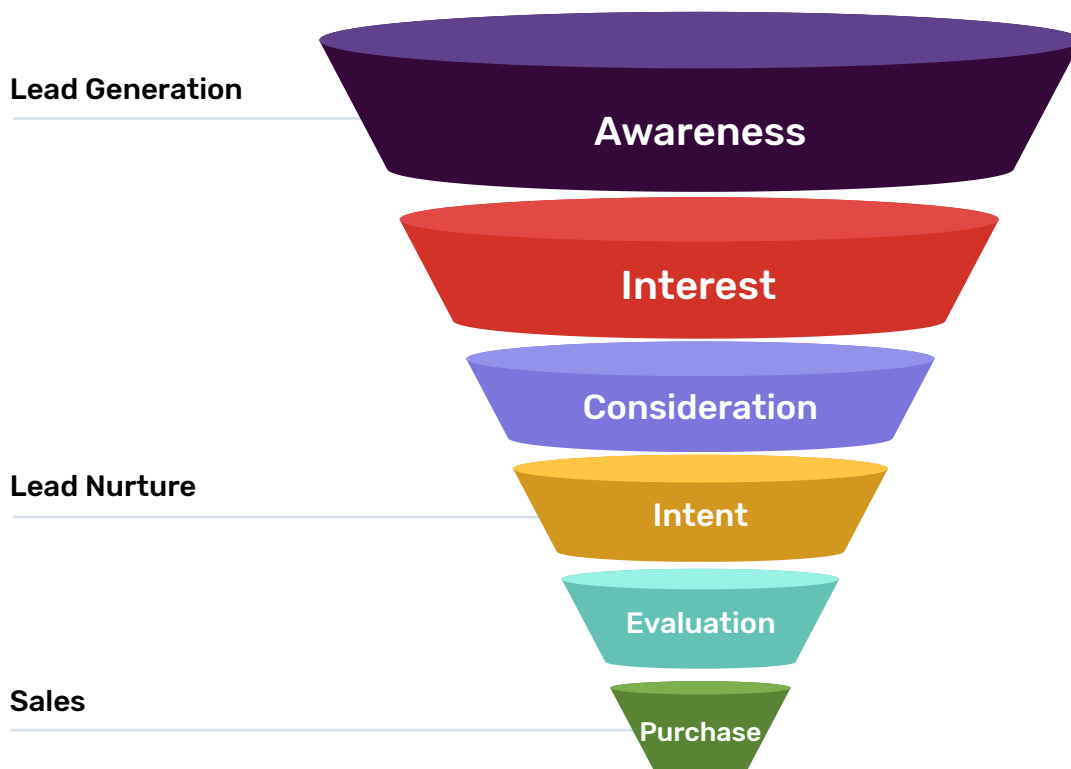
Intent: When a lead has shown some form of intention to purchase a service or product or displayed a strong interest in doing so, you as a business can begin to create a case for why they need to purchase yours from competitors. Establish and communicate your point of difference.

Evaluation: Leads will access the knowledge they have acquired regarding your services and/or product and assess whether they will make the final purchase.



And finally, we have a **Purchase**. You've achieved your goal and a purchase has been made by a lead. What steps will you take to keep them coming back?

The Marketing Funnel



Campaign Ideas:

- 1 Awareness:** Paid advertising, trade shows, events, blogs, social media and more
- 2 Interest:** Targeted content, Newsletters
- 3 Consideration:** Offers/ discounts, free trials
- 4 Intent:** Product demos, whitepaper/ e-books
- 5 Evaluation:** Sales work, prove your product is the best
- 6 Purchase:** Customer service and experience, after-sales campaigns to keep them coming back

The next step is to identify the deliverables and the timeline set out to create accountability and ensure you achieve the targets set for the campaign.

Assessing the information you have gathered around your buyer persona and their pain points—as well as buying habits, business needs, and the current market—you have detailed information to begin designing the message surrounding your campaign.

This message should speak directly to them and can come in a range of marketing assets. An article might solve a problem the customer is having, while a social post will support and promote the article and drive your audience to it.

Both marketing assets work in synergy together, and therefore, your planning and timing should be carefully thought out to ensure maximum exposure, cohesive messaging, and meticulous execution.



Sample Campaign Template

Driver	Approver	Contributor	Informed

Campaign name	
Campaign type	
Launch date	
Status	NOT STARTED
Campaign Key	

Strategy

Target market

Goals

Goals	Metrics

Budget

Total:

Activity	Budget	Details

Campaign roadmap

Campaign deliverables

Deliverable	Owner	Deadline	Status	Notes
Content + social promotion			NOT STARTED	
Email				
Offline advertising				
Paid advertising				
Webinar				
Media/PR				

Note: The above sample is from Confluence, a collaboration software program developed and published by Australian software company Atlassian.

Marketing Channels to Consider for Your Marketing Campaign



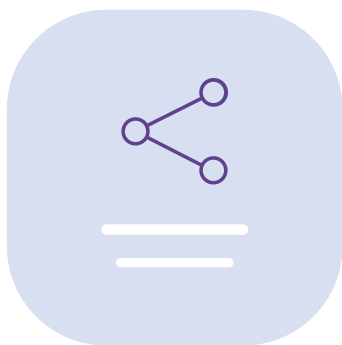
Website: A potential customer's initial visit to your website can make or break for your business. They will want to gain a sense of who you are which contributes to building their trust.

An outdated blog will make the process of gaining trust just that much harder.

Publish consistent and relevant blog articles and focus on your SEO efforts to continue driving traffic to your site.



Email: Email is still a thing, despite marketing professionals consistently stating that people are simply too lazy to read emails. Sure, a whole bunch of emails go unread or even deleted, but there is still so much room in a customer's inbox for a carefully crafted email.



People are just tired of being sold to in an old and outdated way. **Humanise your message to reach more people.**

Social Media: Social Media is essentially your business's online business card, giving an overview of who you are, and allowing customers to contact you. It is becoming increasingly popular to have customers ask questions via social media-so it has also become a customer service tool. Nurture your social media channels.

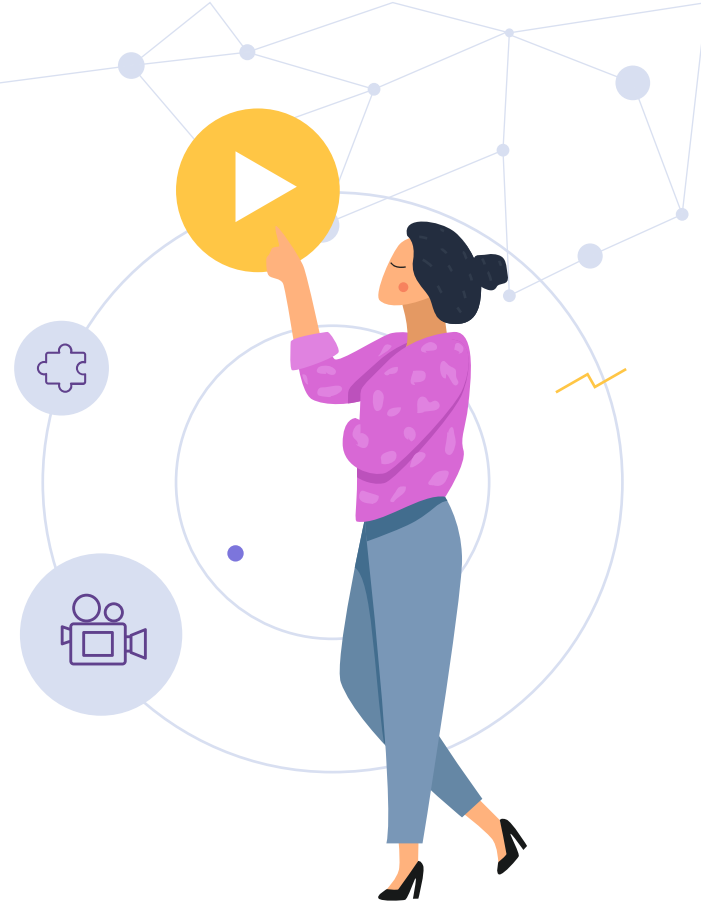


Events/Webinar: One of the best things you can do as a business is to offer value to your customers. Virtual events and webinars are a much appreciated service by your customers, and it also helps them to get to know you a little better. Your webinar will be most effective if followed by a landing page or a follow-up email campaign.

Podcast: An active subscriber to your podcast is an active listener. They are highly engaged in the content you have to offer, which due to the nature of this marketing channel can be carefully designed to truly meet their needs and wants.

Podcasts are a great way to convert a highly engaged audience (which makes the effort worth it).

Video: Videos can be an informative piece of marketing content that is easy to digest. Now that you have your customer's full attention (for a short period of time) capture them with your greatest message about why they should purchase your product, or describe the need for it.

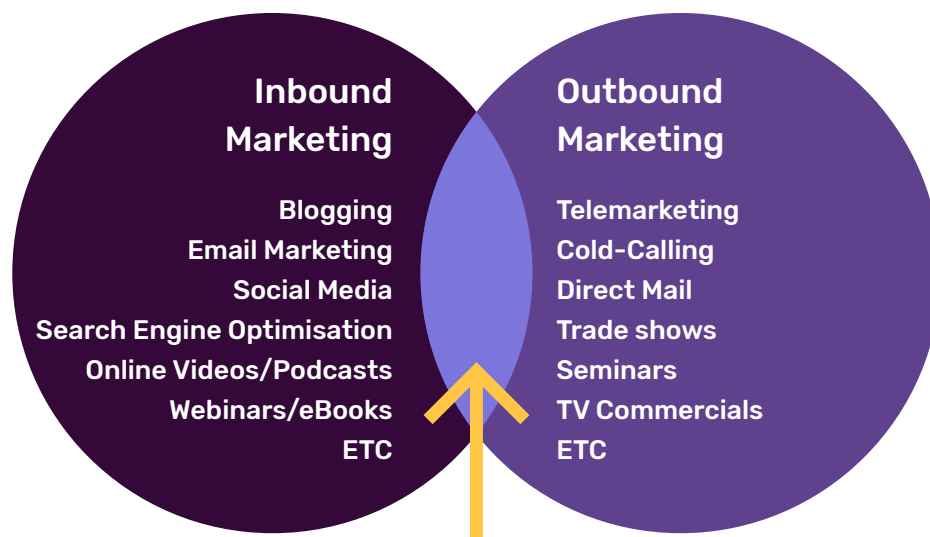


Types of Promotion:

Inbound Marketing draws in the right clientele through education, quality content, and optimized SEO efforts.

Outbound Marketing defines marketing that requires you to directly reach out to your potential customers be it via a phone call, email, trade shows, or sponsored events.

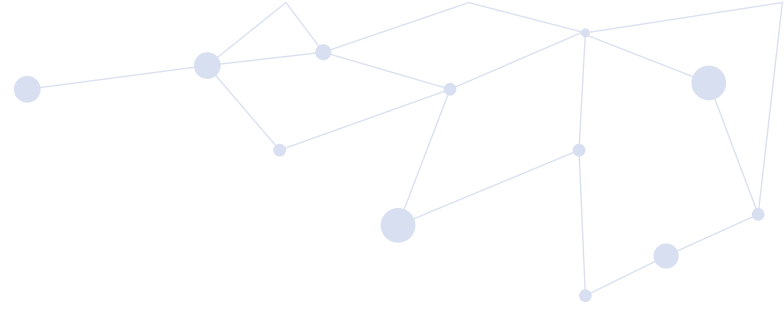
Paid digital marketing includes any advertising paid for whether it be pay-per-click campaigns, sponsored social posts, or paid publications on online media websites. A paid campaign is an effective way of micro-targeting the right lead and capitalising on search engine technology that defines those leads for you.



Where the Magic happens

04.

Nurture Leads



We've touched on the fact that when your leads are in the consideration and intent stage it's very important to nurture them. So let's dive deeper into how you can do this.

A. Education

A great way to offer information and be of value to your customers is through education in the way of whitepapers, free courses, or informative articles. Each one of these pieces of content can help you to convert engaged readers if and when you include a CTA (call to action) at the end of the article/ whitepaper/ course.

Evergreen Content: It's worth investing time in creating evergreen content for your marketing strategy. Evergreen content is a word used to define content that is always relevant regardless of what is currently happening in the market.

This content can be repurposed throughout the lifespan of your business as it is always useful and applicable to your audience. Every piece of content that is published to your website should be optimised for SEO keywords in an organic way that doesn't interrupt the natural flow of the text.

By offering quality content and being intentional with your marketing strategy, you will not only solve a problem and offer education, but you will gain their trust and help them to decide on purchasing your product/service.



B. Free Trials

Free trials are a great lead magnet in any advertising and marketing campaign.

A free trial also happens to be a show of confidence in your product.

When you have something tremendously great to offer to your potential clients, the best way to convert them is by letting them have a taste of what you have to offer.



05.

Don't Forget After-Sales

Acquiring new clients is simply one step in the greater picture of your business plan. So you have new clients coming your way, what about the clients you already have? And how do you convert your new clients into repeat customers?

Strengthening your customer service plan will help you to retain more customers who are very valuable to your business. Customers who stay with your business will become your repeat customers and your greatest asset amongst social media. It is by nurturing the relationship you have with your existing clientele that you strengthen your brand presence.

When a lead becomes a customer, offer them exceptional after-purchase support. Ensure they understand their purchase, know how to use it, and get the greatest benefits from your product.

You can potentially lose many customers due to perceived dissatisfaction with the product simply because they didn't know how to use it or lost their way due to a lack of training.

Communicate with your clients on a consistent (but not a persistent) basis and let them know you're available for training and support. Some customers may not ask for the help they need.

Ensure you have online tutorials available at hand and answer your most frequently asked questions in an ongoing newsletter campaign dedicated to training and support.



You can use MailChimp as a free and easy to use newsletter automation program to run your newsletter campaigns. MailChimp offers a range of editable newsletter templates that you can personalise and schedule to send as you wish. MailChimp is so comprehensive that you can use it to import and export an audience, create landing pages, and completely track all your campaigns with their inbuilt analytics.

Other Tools For Your Marketing Strategy

Google Analytics: Businesses use Google Analytics to track website traffic. You may already be using it yourself—which is great—but here's a few ways to get even more out of this free tool. Tracking your website traffic should include looking into where your traffic came from, your search engine rank, and your bounce rate. You can also use Google Analytics to segment your audience so that you can then micro-target each segment individually based on their key demographic points.



Adroll: Banner retargeting and so much more. This program collates all your data and channels into the one place so you have a bird's eye view of all the data you need to effectively target and market to obtain the right results.



Outsourcing: If you're looking to outsource certain aspects of your business as part of your overall marketing strategy, sites like Fiverr and Freelancer offer inexpensive services from freelancers who are experienced and provide quality content.

And if your budget allows for it, some of the greatest marketing tools out there that come with our tick of approval include **Salesforce, Pardot, and Marketot.**

You can also automate your marketing with marketing automation tools such as **HubSpot or AutoPilot** that are simple and easy to use while also being very cost-effective. Once you have gone through the initial set-up process, your automation program does all the work for you capturing leads while you work on nurturing and converting them.

How Can Hosted Network Support You?

Market Development Funds: We provide a range of Marketing Development Funds to partners looking to bring in new business. If you have an idea, reach out to your account manager.

Marketing Assistance: Our marketing team can also assist you with a range of marketing services often at no cost to you. Examples of where we can assist you with:

- Graphic Design
- Copywriting
- Marketing campaign development and execution
- Ready to go Marketing Assets

Our **Partner Portal** has a range of ready to go marketing assets such as Website and EDM content, Social Media posts and more.





About Hosted Network

Everything we do is based around building solutions for our partners to enable them to grow and succeed.

Starting off as a traditional MSP in 2003 and launching a number of direct to market cloud offerings, we quickly gained traction in the SMB market and were approached by a number of other MSPs asking if we could provide our services at a wholesale level.

We quickly realised a gap in the market for wholesale cloud services designed for MSPs to grow their service offering and reach new markets.


In 2013, Hosted Network transitioned to an entirely channel-only model, working hand-in-hand with MSPs to grow their business and win new deals.

Since then, our success is credited to and driven by the success of our partners. This has led to us adopting a simple mantra of BUILD – GROW – SUCCEED. Building successful partnerships and solutions, growing together, succeeding together.

Got a Question? We are Here to Help

Contact Us



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