

CONVERSATIONS, NOT CAMPAIGNS



CONVERSATIONS, NOT CAMPAIGNS

NOBODY WANTS TO GET BLASTED

Commercial email marketing evolved out of the traditional direct-mail mindset, which is all about big campaigns sent to many, on the marketer's schedule, not the buyer's.

With email blasts, marketers realized that they could save a lot of money over direct mail — and reach their target audience much faster. It seemed logical that if sending 100 emails generated \$10 in revenue, then sending 10,000 emails should generate \$1,000. Batch and blast was off and running.

But marketers soon ran into a serious problem: **No one wants to get “blasted.”** What seemed like a dream solution for companies became a nightmare for recipients, who were inundated with messages.

Think about the word blast for a moment. What does it bring to mind? An explosion? A batch and blast email strategy is, indeed, like an explosion — a violent shattering or blowing apart of something that often results in more damage than benefit.

Popular marketing expressions such as *batch and blast*, *hit the database*, and *e-shot*, certainly don't have positive connotations. The sentiment behind the words is telling. When you batch and blast, you are essentially admitting that your emails are not individually relevant.

The days of batch and blast are numbered. Contemporary subscribers expect personal and relevant emails on a non-disruptive schedule.



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From Direct Mail Origins to Ongoing Conversations

Just getting your messages to recipients is not enough; you have to give subscribers reasons to engage with those messages. This means abandoning the idea of batch and blast and entering into a relationship-oriented mindset that continuously builds engagement with consumers, one by one and over time.

We now have the opportunity to listen and respond to every customer at every stage of his purchase process, keeping him engaged and helping to drive his purchasing decisions. Emails should flow in logical fashion through smart marketing tracks to create engaging, personalized conversations.

Email needs to evolve from campaigns to conversations.

What Does an Engaging Conversation Look Like?

We've used the word "engaging" quite a bit so far, but what does it really mean in terms of email marketing?

For starters, engaging means that your email marketing content stimulates a dialogue that's organic and free-flowing. Just like a real-world conversation, the dialogue you start should foster a two-way conversation. In other words, an engaging email doesn't just talk to a recipient; it also gives him a reason and an opportunity to respond, and fits into a broader conversational arc.

Put another way, having a conversation means you:

- Listen and adapt
- Send messages that flow one to the next

“Sense and respond’ communication in the digital world requires automation that monitors for explicit and implicit behavioral cues, captures that data (senses) in a rich behavioral database, and then uses the data to customize a valuable response (responds). Marketing automation platforms, sometimes known as campaign management systems or marketing operations systems, are one of the primary technologies used for this kind of ‘sense and respond’ digital dialogue.”

– [Graduating from Email to Engagement: Using Marketing Automation to Achieve Success with Today's Buyer](#), an International Data Corporation (IDC) Workbook, sponsored by Marketo

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Listen and Adapt

A romantic date goes badly if all you do is talk about yourself. The same holds true for marketing conversations. If you don't listen — really listen — to your prospects and consumers, you'll never earn the chance for a "second date," let alone a long-term commitment.

To start a two-way conversation, you must provide content relevant to a consumer's interests. Then, you must be willing to adjust your content based on how that consumer responds. It's great to automate workflows that map to a buyer's journey, but they can't be static workflows; you must be willing to adjust them as you observe how your buyer actually navigates across channels.

Here's how to listen and adapt in email marketing:

- **Use behavioral filters to target.**

As discussed in Part 3, behavioral filters ensure relevance in your email marketing. So, start a conversation with a smart subset of your contact list based on unique profiles and behaviors. Then, continue to watch your subscribers' behaviors as the campaign progresses and your conversation with each recipient diverges down its own unique behavioral path.

- **Trigger messages and adjustments based on behaviors.**

When a prospect does something meaningful on your website, in social channels, or offline (such as making a purchase at a physical store), you need to be able to respond with a relevant, timely email. When you automatically send a prospect a message based on an action she took (or didn't take), you allow for the message to be delivered at the moment your brand is on her mind. You are communicating with her on her terms, not yours. But if you miss these triggers, and simply blast emails to your entire list as your promotional calendar dictates, you ignore your potential customers and their buying signals.

As a simple example, imagine you're a marketer at a food company, and your goal is to drive sales for a particular brand of salad dressing. You have two marketing messages — one about the health aspects of the dressing, and the other about how kids love the taste. In practice, you find out that Customer A responded to the health message, but that message did nothing for Customer B. By listening for a lack of response to your initial marketing message, you can automatically deliver the "your kids will love it" message to Customer B.

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Send Messages That Flow One to the Next

Good email marketing conversations evolve over time. They tell stories that have a beginning, a middle, an end, with each component flowing naturally from the last and weaving a plot.

Each step in the conversation should flow from prior communications and move the relationship forward. Here's what an engaging conversation might sound like:

- Welcome! Here's what to expect.
- Check out this article.
- Here's a cool video.
- See our latest offering.
- Share this with friends.
- Here's what others like.
- Download our new book.
- Happy birthday!
- Are you ready to buy?
- Here's more great content!
- Join us at our event.
- You like X, so check out Y.
- Here are some fun ways to learn more about our products (or services).
- Take this survey?
- You haven't bought X yet, so here's a 10% discount.

“Every interaction is a link within the context of a communication supply-chain. Don't look at each discrete message, or even each campaign, as a unique event with a direct link to the end result. Marketing is not a candy machine. Instead, view each as a link in a chain of events each of which leads to other actions.”

– [IDC Technology Marketing Blog](#)

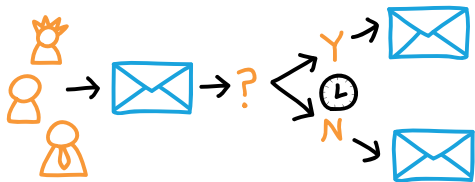
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TRADITIONAL TOOLS DON'T CUT IT

There's no doubt that engaging conversation is a great marketing technique. So why aren't more companies using it effectively? Turns out, flow-chart approaches don't work for real-world conversations.

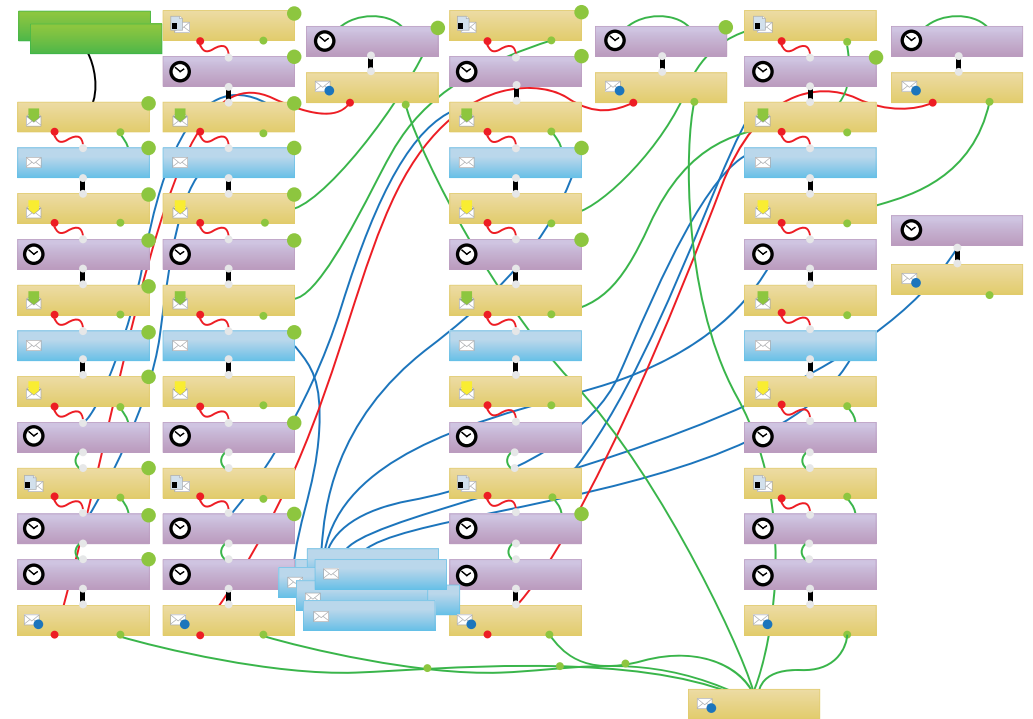
Flow Charts Don't Flow

Perhaps you began by sketching out a plan on your whiteboard during a marketing meeting:



It made perfect sense while planning, but now that your campaign is live, your prospects and buyers aren't taking the actions you mapped out. You did your best to script the conversations, but people are unpredictable. Think about it: you can prep for a cocktail party by coming up with some great conversation points based on things you've read or seen on television, but you can't control how the people you meet at the party will react to your conversation. All you can do is make a loose plan, and then be willing to adapt in real time.

Similarly, with email marketing conversations, you can do your best to map countless if-then scenarios, but in an attempt to cover all your bases, you might end up with visual spaghetti.



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Complex flow charts quickly cause problems for marketers because they are:

- **Confusing.**

Charts can get so complicated that only technical experts can understand them. As David Raab, marketing technology expert and consultant, wrote in his blog: *"I never saw a flow chart interface that actually did a good job handling complexity. So I've reluctantly concluded that flow charts are only suitable for serious technical experts."*

- **Less agile.**

Flow charts require rebuilding workflows when new content is added. Subscribers who are already partially through a track won't ever get the new content if it's scheduled early in the sequence. Or, if the content is scheduled for the end, they might not receive it for months. Making changes requires you to reprogram complex flow charts – which can quickly get unwieldy.

- **Error prone.**

It's almost impossible to act intelligently on information that's hard to follow. Complex flow charts can cause you to send expired or duplicate content, or even too much content to subscribers. The last thing you want is to send prospects an invitation today to an event that was held last week, or to receive an email from a subscriber who is fed up with your constant messaging.

Marketers using flow charts can't keep up with the dynamic, interactive nature of behavior-based conversational marketing. They're handicapped when it comes to customizing their dialogue with customers.

"My own opinion is quite firm: flow charts don't work. They look good in demonstrations and can lay out simple processes quite nicely. But they get impossibly convoluted once you try to do something complex."

– David Raab, Marketing Technology Consultant & Analyst

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CONVERSATIONS: A BETTER WAY

Years of experience at Marketo have shown us that there's a better way to manage engaging consumer conversations.

1. Easily add new content

An intelligent solution will let marketers easily drag and drop relevant content where they want it in the stream of communications, and the system will automatically deliver appropriate messages to each recipient at the perfect time. This means that subscribers always get the freshest and most relevant content.

2. Schedule content to activate and deactivate

With traditional solutions, it can be hard to remember to activate content at the right time or deactivate it when it's no longer relevant. Plus, the more complex the workflow, the more error-prone management can be. A better solution is to support content activation and expiration dates for each message, and let the system automatically activate and deactivate it for you at the right time.

3. Automatically limit email frequency

Sending too many emails can kill your campaign and quickly lead to high unsubscribe rates. So, look for solutions that let you control the number of emails any one recipient will get — regardless of the communication streams in which he takes part. You simply set limits and let the system do its thing.

4. Never serve the same dish twice

It's never relevant to send a subscriber an offer for content she's already downloaded or a product she already owns. A smart conversational solution monitors content consumption across channels — not just within your email marketing — and ensures that customers don't receive duplicate content or offers. For example, if your prospect downloads an eBook

from your website just before an email promoting that book is scheduled to go out, the system should be smart enough to know that this prospect shouldn't get that email, and deliver the next most relevant piece of content instead.

5. Know when you've run out of content

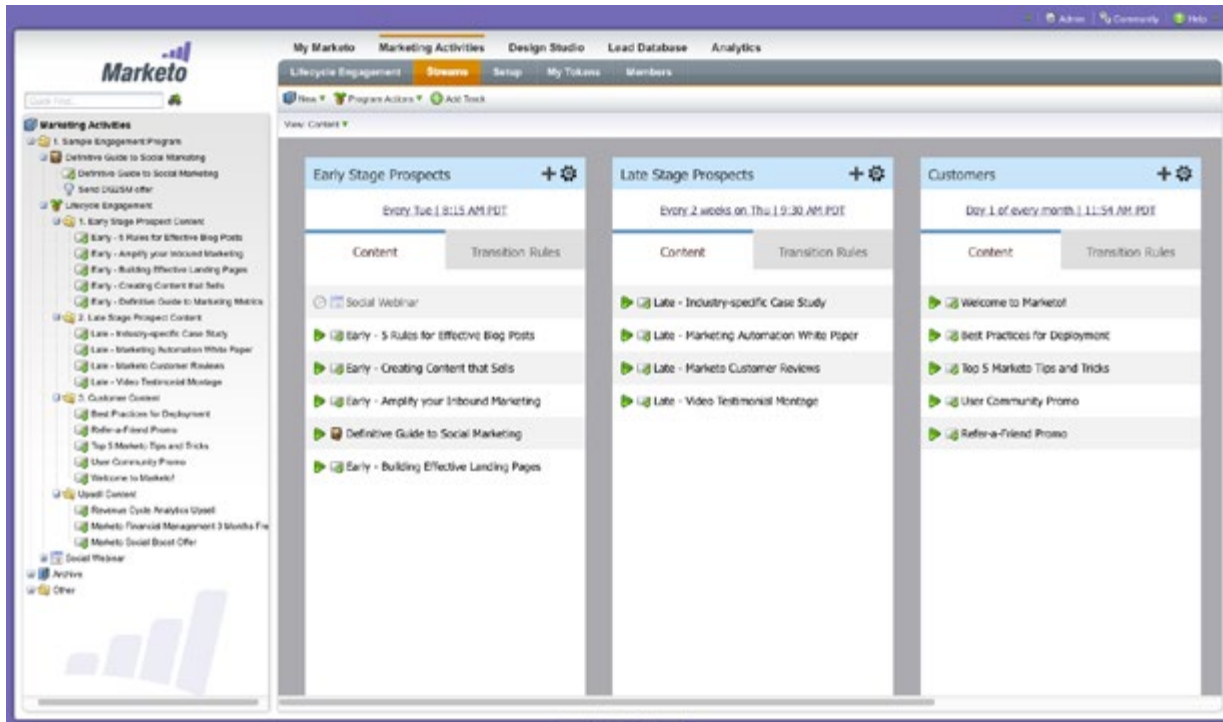
With regular flowcharts, there's no indication when a consumer hits the end of your content stream, which can result in large numbers of subscribers falling out of the string of conversations. Instead, the solution should track when consumers have exhausted all the content in a stream and alert the marketer that it's time to input new content or switch streams.

6. Engage across even more channels

You want to engage your prospects and customers wherever they are most apt to hang out, but traditional email solutions don't let you do that, because they are focused on, well, email. As we'll explore in Part 5, an automated solution for marketing conversations enables you to listen and adjust the conversation based on information over any channel (e.g., trigger engagements based on mobile application usage, or interacting with online videos) as well as coordinate messages over other outbound channels including direct mail and SMS.

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Marketo's Customer Engagement Engine intelligently and automatically manages the timing and distribution of the right content to the right person at the right time.



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Automation Makes Personal Conversations Scalable

Having a conversation with one subscriber at a time is easy, and you can even do it manually. You could probably even manage dozens of consumer conversations manually, in fact. But there is a real scalability issue when your subscribers start to number in the hundreds, thousands, or millions, because you still want to have relevant, personalized conversations with each and every one.

Some companies try to implement these processes using the wrong tools. Remember the “I Love Lucy” episode in which Lucy took a job working at a candy factory? She could handle packaging when it involved just a few chocolates, but as the volume increased, things got messy (and funny!). When your subscriber volume increases, it’s as if your conversations are on a fast-moving conveyor belt. Without the right technology to keep you up to speed, your marketing could become a mess, and no one will find humor in that!

That’s why automation is critical to customer engagement — there is no other way to have one-to-one conversations with your customers on a large scale.

Automation allows you to be relevant to each and every one of your customers lets them feel listened to and respected. Remarkably, in this new digital era, we’re back to the good old-fashioned business ethic of putting the customer first!

When your subscribers number in the hundreds, thousands, or millions, you need the right technology to keep up with the volume and engage customers in respectful and relevant one-to-one conversations.



CASE STUDY: TRIMBLE



WITH AUTOMATED EMAIL MARKETING, TRIMBLE POSITIONS ITS DEALERS TO DELIVER SALES

Highlights

- Actively supports their dealers and distributors by sharing valuable lead insights for trial downloads, accelerating conversion rates
- Transforms data aggregation and greatly reduces manual processes, which improves ROI and allows for deeper focus on marketing campaign quality

Challenges

Best known for commercializing GPS technology, Trimble offers over 500 products that are used for a variety of applications including construction, surveying, agriculture, fleet and asset management, transportation and logistics, and public safety. Trimble products are used in over 141 countries, and their 6,500 employees are assisted by a highly capable network of dealers and distribution partners. One of many divisions leveraging Marketo is the Trimble Heavy Civil Construction division, who supply advanced automation and lifecycle solutions which incorporate precision machine control, software, site positioning, telematics and real-time connectivity. Trimble Heavy Civil Construction recently implemented Salesforce.com to manage their leads globally and with that realized their previous email service provider was not providing the level of engagement with clients they were hoping for. As Tamara

Schoder, Marcom Project Manager for Trimble's Heavy Civil Construction division, explains, "Before our Marketo implementation, we weren't confident that we were getting the most out of our tradeshow, website and customer opt-in lists. We didn't have an integrated way to measure and manage success." Trimble wanted an easy-to-use platform that integrated seamlessly with Salesforce.com and that possessed advanced functionality to assist their channel partners in nurturing leads to enhanced sales.

Solutions

After researching the top Gartner-reported automation vendors, Trimble chose Marketo. Immediately after migration, Trimble's marketing team was freed from numerous data management chores and could finally focus on creating compelling campaigns and programs. Before Marketo, when Trimble wanted to send out specialized content to their regional

dealers, they were forced to hand sort address lists and communicate in one-off emails. With Marketo, Trimble segments campaigns with precision and communicates with specific dealers about support issues, webinars, and events that specifically pertain to their clients' needs. Trimble's marketing has been able to energize customer acquisition for dealers and distributors by automating nurture campaigns associated with its free trial download. For example, when potential clients visit Trimble's website, and take advantage of the free software, Marketo enables Trimble to follow up at each stage of the free trial. With Marketo, Trimble makes sure opportunities are cultivated with customized campaigns. From data collected from form fill outs, Trimble can assess an opportunity—whether it's a small or large company and how many people from the same company have downloaded a trial. They can follow behavior in the pipeline and know if a lead

CASE STUDY: TRIMBLE



has filled out a form, downloaded software, or opened a newsletter. Trimble's marketing passes on valuable lead data to their dealers, who then have the ability to engage opportunities in meaningful conversations that close deals. The net effect: significant increases in conversion rates.

Benefits

With Marketo, the Trimble Heavy Civil Construction division has improved their relationship with their dealer networks by providing active support. Sharing valuable insights on opportunity behavior with dealers has also improved Trimble's sales processes. With Marketo's metrics, Trimble's marketing team proves the value of their efforts and quantifies the leads that they attract and nurture. After a year of using Marketo, Trimble has seen impressive reductions in time and resources for managing their databases.

"The difference between using our previous email marketing tool and leveraging Marketo's full-fledged automation has been night and day. Before, we were passing spreadsheets of leads to sales and had mostly anecdotal data to support strategic decisions. Now, we're sharing valuable behavioral insights with the field and managing our campaign development much more efficiently. Marketo has completely transformed our sales and marketing process."

– Tamara Schoder
Marcom Project Manager – Heavy Civil Construction
Division, Trimble



Marketing Software. Easy, Powerful, Complete.

Marketo, (NASDAQ MKTO) uniquely provides an easy-to-use, powerful and complete marketing software platform that propels fast-growing small companies and global enterprises alike. Marketo® marketing automation and sales effectiveness software streamlines marketing processes, delivers more campaigns, generates more win-ready leads, and improves sales performance. With proven technology, comprehensive services and expert guidance, Marketo helps thousands of companies around the world turn marketing from a cost center into a revenue driver.



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