



A Kuno Creative eBook

CREATING CONTENT  
for  
MARKETING  
AUTOMATION



# Why Content Matters

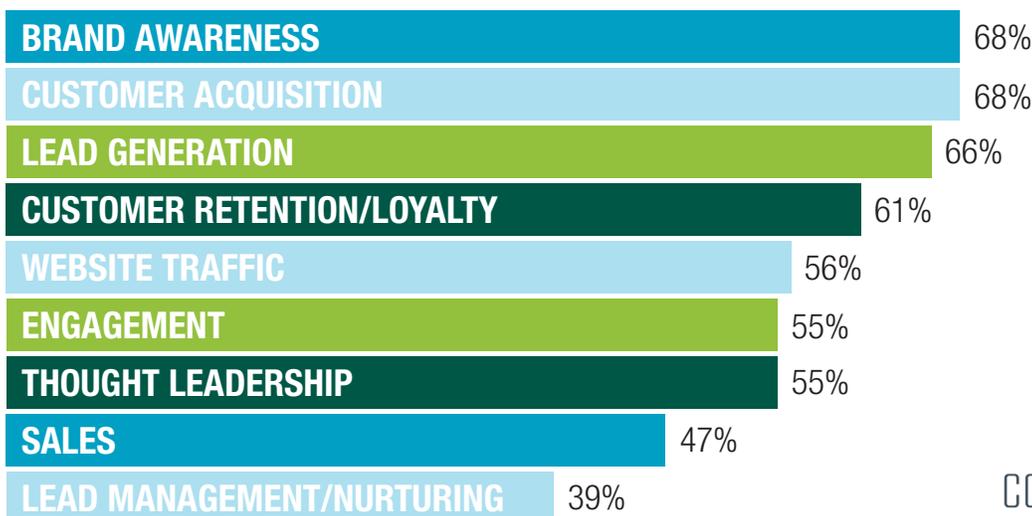


## Content is an essential part of any online marketing strategy.

Blogs, downloads and video can be used for anything from increasing web traffic to generating leads for the sales team. In a popular Marketing Profs/Content Marketing Institute survey, 68 percent of marketers said they used content for brand awareness, 68 percent used content for customer acquisition and 66 percent used content for lead generation.

**But these marketers are still under-utilizing content. In that same survey, using content for automated lead nurturing was a reported goal for only 39 percent of marketers.<sup>1</sup>**

## ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS for CONTENT MARKETING

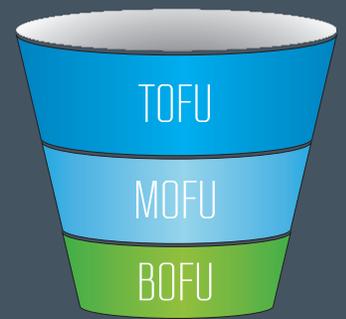


Brand awareness and customer acquisition rise to the top of content marketing goals

Brand awareness and customer acquisition are certainly important, but those goals alone generate a massive amount of unqualified leads. **Content marketing can be used more effectively when it's part of a greater campaign that utilizes the latest lead nurturing and marketing automation tools.** This combined effort can generate qualified leads, so that salespeople can focus on prospects that are most likely to buy.

By developing content for each stage of the sales funnel, targeting it toward specific buyers and analyzing the results for constant improvement, content marketing can achieve a greater level of success for any size business.

# Defining Content for SALES FUNNEL STAGES



## STAGE 1: Top of the Funnel (TOFU)

**Prospects need to become aware of a problem a company's product or service solves.** For instance, a person searching online for ways to improve the air quality in his or her home has a problem. Top of the funnel content that provides information about air quality problems in the home can help an air conditioning service provider draw that person in to its sales funnel. Down the road, the web visitor may become a customer, even though the lead isn't ready to buy now.

Top of the funnel content solves problems and doesn't focus on the brand at all. This builds a relationship between the business and the website visitor that didn't exist before. This stage can include helpful checklists, tip sheets, whitepapers and ebooks.

### ✓ INDUSTRY GUIDES & WHITEPAPERS

Engaged buyers are often more inclined to buy than buyers who are not engaged with a brand.<sup>2</sup> For instance, some buyers may read a general industry guide and become interested in a product or service. The industry study may pique a buyer's interest and begin the process of learning more about specific products and services.

### ✓ CHECKLISTS & TIP SHEETS

Many people searching online are looking for a quick solution to their problems. Providing website visitors with a quick reference sheet or a checklist to help them do their job better gets them in the door. Long term, that immediate solution may not last and they may forget where they learned to do something on the fly, which makes nurturing this lead even more important.

### ✓ EBOOKS

While some prospects only need quick reference material or shorter reads, others need to engage at a deeper level. An ebook provides the same helpful information that may be found in a guide or whitepaper, but expands on the topic by providing more insight into a problem and its solutions.



# STAGE 2: Middle of the Funnel (MOFU)



After raising awareness and building a relationship with a lead, Stage 2 lead nurturing uses content to help the buyer understand how your product can help solve their problems. This stage may use case studies, product-specific blog posts and videos.

## ✓ CASE STUDIES

Case studies highlight how another company or customers used a company's product or service to achieve a goal similar to the customer's goals and aspirations. Case studies are instrumental for lead nurturing and helping the customer understand how the product or service can improve a business or a person's life.

## ✓ VIDEOS

Videos, like top of the funnel downloads, are another way to pique the interest of B2B buyers with helpful information. Because they require a greater time commitment in front of the computer, they're best utilized in the middle. Your videos can be purely informational, or they can be purely marketing-based to help customers remember the product or service for future purchase. Most successful videos are a combination of the two: showing the product in action and describing how it is being used.

## ✓ BUYER'S GUIDE & SUCCESS KITS

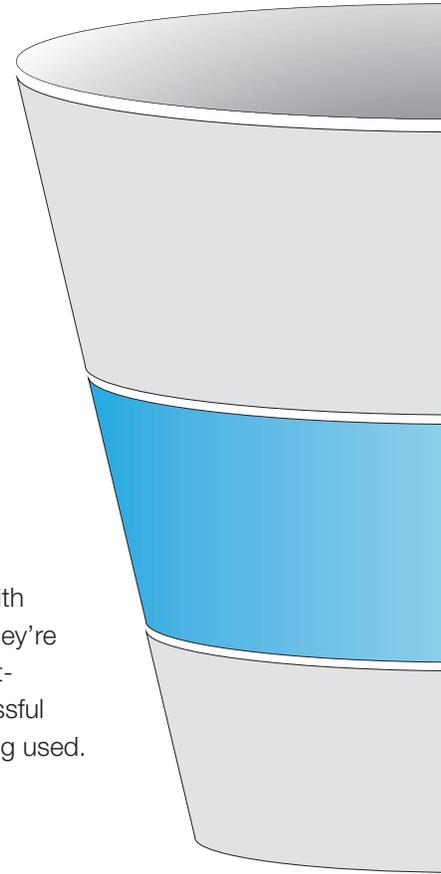
Convincing a user that one product is better than another and that the lead can use it effectively are key to moving a buyer down the funnel. A buyer's guide explains all of a product or service's features and allows prospects to know what to expect when purchasing the product or service. Success kits are provided by companies to inform their customers on how to use their product or service and achieve success. These kits are often provided free of charge to customers.

## ✓ REVIEWS & TESTIMONIALS

Most consumers these days are very informed. They read customer reviews, look for answers online and see what past customers have to say about a product. This helps them make the best decision for their organization. When companies solicit advocates to write customer reviews, they are more apt to make a sale on a product or service. Reviews build trust and entice people to buy. Similarly, customer testimonials help prospects to learn more about a brand and develop trust in the company. With trust in the brand, long-lasting relationships are born.

## ✓ FAQs

The lead may also have questions that those reviews and testimonials don't answer. Sending leads to the frequently asked questions on a company's website, or a downloadable version of those FAQs, gives them something they can print out and use when proposing the purchase of a product to members of their organization.



# STAGE 3: Bottom of the Funnel (BOFU)



**When leads have a significant awareness of a product or service and its usefulness, it is time to convince them to make on final commitment.**

Stage Three gets the lead to contact you for more information. This stage can include a number of offers including free trials, demos, consultations and quotes.

## ✓ FREE TRIAL

A product may be easy to ship or a service may be accessed online anytime, anywhere. Giving leads hands-on access to the product or service allows them to finally use the product a lead nurturing campaign have been touting. This final step lets the product do the work before the leads receive a sales call.

## ✓ LIVE DEMO REGISTRATION

If a product or service requires an in-person demo, then the last step in the lead nurturing campaign can be an offer to have sales visit them. These live demos may have already proven effective in a company's sales efforts, but are rarely promoted properly online. Now with lead nurturing, a marketing department can encourage a lead to request this live demo after he or she has interacted with the brand.

## ✓ FREE CONSULTATION

For service providers or consultants, an on-site or online consultation request, like a live demo request, can provide a sales team with the foot in the door it needs to finally convince the lead to buy. Combined with the qualifying questions the lead was asked throughout the lead nurturing process, this hand off ensures that sales gets a candidate worth talking to.

## ✓ REQUEST A QUOTE

Has a company already provided pricing information to the lead? Is it already on the company website? Maybe it's just time to get down to brass tacks and have the lead request a quote based on the information she or he has already received. This offer takes full advantage of the lead nurturing efforts because someone who finally fills out this form should be ready to buy.



# Developing & Using CONTENT EFFECTIVELY



## Defining Buyer Personas

**The buyer persona is a representation of the real person who is interested in buying a product or service.** This isn't just a current customer and a sales prospect, as David Meerman Scott noted in a video produced by Cisco.<sup>3</sup> Buyer personas are for people who are not even on a sales team's radar—the potentials who can turn into customers with the right content.

But many marketers still don't have buyer personas for their current customers. Developing content for lead nurturing means that there is an opportunity to finally build out those buyer personas for current customers and prospects. This can be done by interviewing some of the most recent customers for a fresh perspective. If buyer personas for existing customers already exist, it's also helpful to go back and take a second look.

These existing personas will be the foundation for creating content that will encourage website visitors to fill out a form for the offer and become a lead. This isn't a replacement for the true buyer personas, but it's a great place when looking for ideas for helpful, problem-solving content.

## Creating a Content Asset List

Once the buyer personas are defined, it's important to review what content is available for lead nurturing and how it fits with that persona. Creating a content asset list gives marketers the chance to review existing content and search for gaps. Be sure to look at everything available, including guides, ebooks, videos, articles, brochures, case studies, reviews, testimonials, etc.<sup>4</sup>

Once all of these questions are answered for all content items, list them in a spreadsheet for easy organization now and for reference in the future.

### THINGS TO CONSIDER:

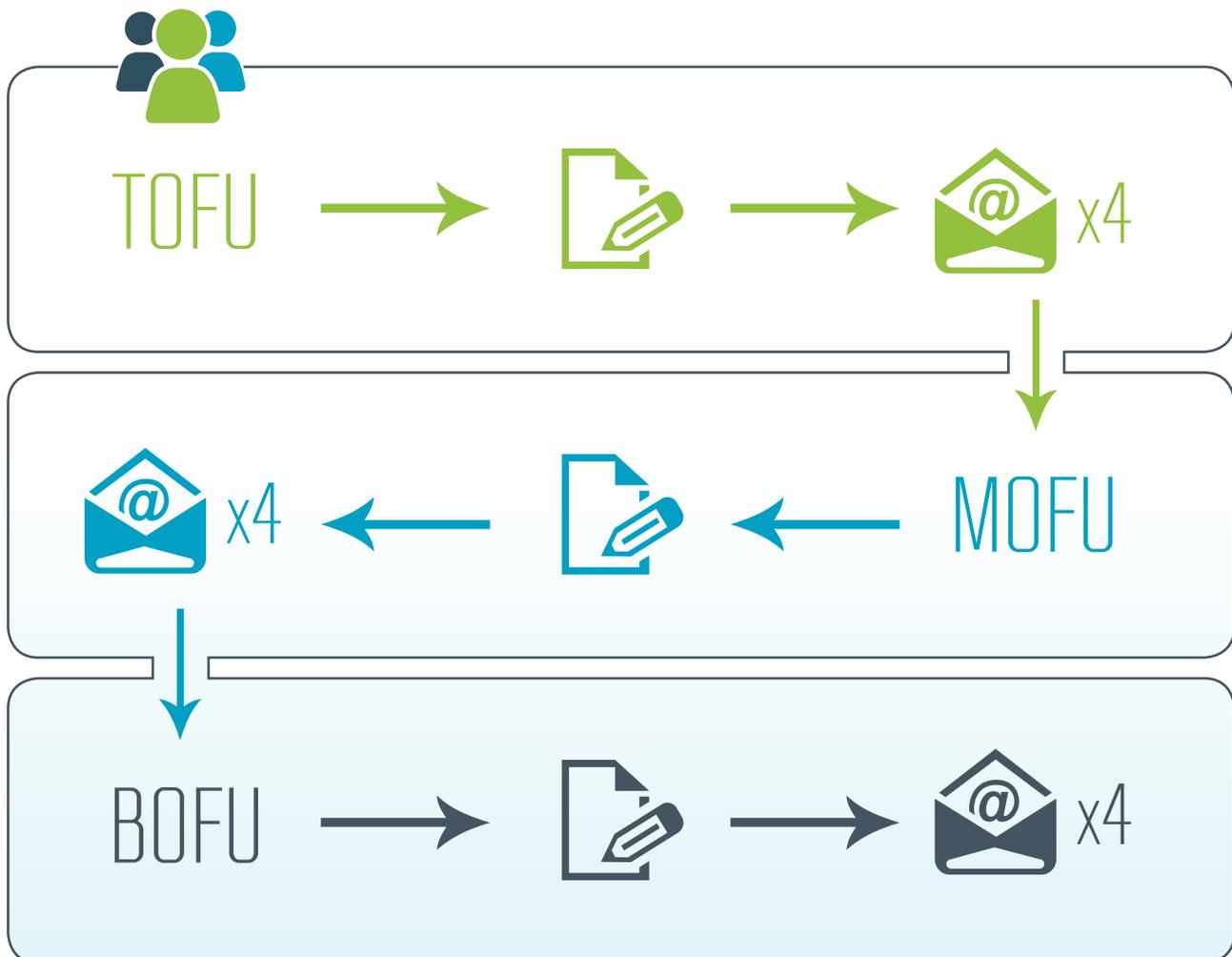
- ✓ **Where does the content exist in the funnel, BoFu, MoFu or ToFu?**
- ✓ **Can the content be used in lead nurturing?**
- ✓ **How should the content be categorized?**
- ✓ **By product type? By service group? Find a way that makes sense.**
- ✓ **What product or service line does the content belong to?**
- ✓ **Is this content actively being used or not?**
- ✓ **What is the URL or landing page for the specific content?**

## Mapping Existing Content for Lead Nurturing

Once the buyer personas are defined and an asset list is created, the next step is to “map” that content to targeted lead nurturing workflows.

For example, top of the funnel blogs written for a specific type of buyer will lead to an top of the funnel offer. That offer then triggers a workflow that includes a series of emails that will go out to the prospect.

If the lead responds to an offer in one of the emails, he or she moves on to a middle of the funnel offer and a new workflow is triggered. Finally, it all leads to a bottom of the funnel offer which is where the lead makes contact for a quote or a demo.





## Writing Top of the Funnel Blog Posts

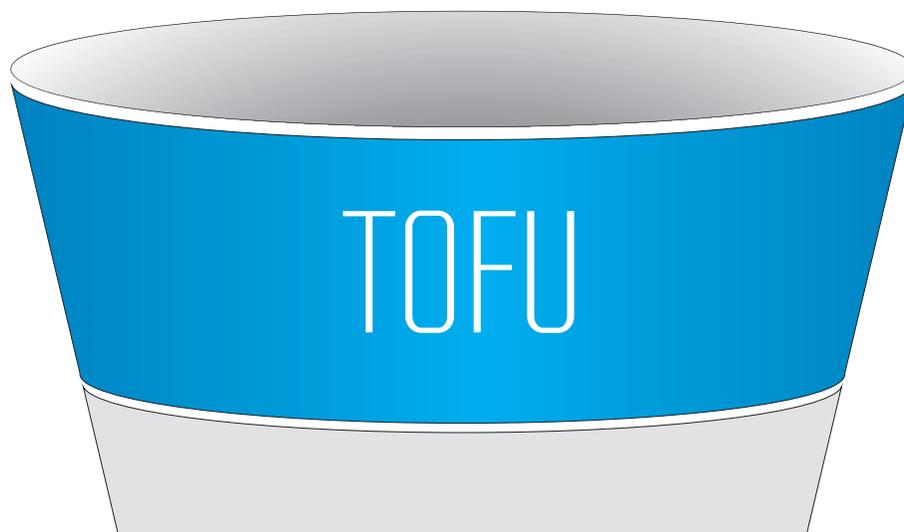
**So what makes the best content for a blog post?** By reviewing popular content, surveying existing customers and investigating what people are talking about on social networks, it's easy to get an initial idea of what blogs should be created. Google also has a Trends service at [www.google.com/trends](http://www.google.com/trends), which provides information about what is popular and where it's popular based on a specific search term or brand name. All of these tools will help inform the process.

### Here are a few popular ideas for blog posts:

- ✓ Review of a new product or service
- ✓ Tips or ideas on how to do something easier or more cost effectively
- ✓ Interview with industry thought leader
- ✓ Educational "how to" video
- ✓ Write about an interesting industry development



**These blog posts will be used to bring traffic to a website through search and social.** And they will be one of the main ways to promote the top of the funnel content that begins the lead nurturing process. On the blog and within each post, there should be a call-to-action graphic promoting the top of the funnel download. If a user clicks on the graphic and converts, he or she goes from website visitor to lead. This is where marketing automation and lead nurturing take over.



## Developing Content that Converts

**Creating compelling content requires knowledge of the targeted buyer persona, research and interviewing skills and design capabilities.**

**Hiring freelance journalists or outsourcing to an experienced content creator can make content production easier.** Many companies do this because the internal staff is busy managing the day-to-day marketing activities and don't have time to sit down and write a blog post or ebook everyday. Still others hire a full-time staff member to solely create content.

But content isn't just written, it's designed. Statistics need to be displayed graphically and the text needs laid out so it's easy to read. The combination of art and copy, the heart of marketing since the beginning, is still relevant today. Web users expect a download, and even a company's blog, to be as good looking as it is informative.



# MEASURING RESULTS



## Defining Lifecycle Stages

**A website visitor could be a tire-kicker or a sales-ready lead.**

Unless marketing lifecycle stages are defined, the web leads delivered to a sales team will remain unqualified. There are three primary lifecycle stages that should be utilized when using content for lead nurturing:

### 1) LEAD

A prospect who fills out a top of the funnel form on a website.

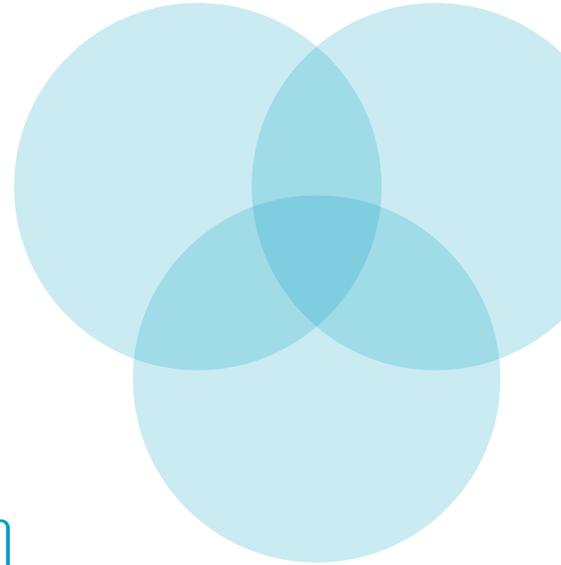
### 2) MARKETING QUALIFIED LEAD (MQL)

A lead who is consuming additional content on a website including middle of the funnel content.

### 3) SALES QUALIFIED LEAD (SQL)

A lead who has consumed content and requests sales contact by filling out a bottom of the funnel offer.

**Tracking the number of contacts in each lifecycle stage helps focus the campaign on the most successful content and lead nurturing workflows.**



## Analyzing Leads for Sales

**Great content creates leads.** Great leads that are nurtured can more quickly turn into customers. Having hundreds of qualified leads is a good “problem” to have. But how do you analyze the leads that are coming in?

Popular inbound marketing software tools like HubSpot are available to help companies analyze leads and determine a lead’s lifecycle stage. More than 6,000 companies worldwide use HubSpot, and it’s for good

reason: It works. Customer relationship management (CRM) tools like Salesforce.com and Sugar CRM are also used to support this function.

When HubSpot and CRM tools are used, marketers can focus on other tasks while the automated tool evaluates and selects the best leads based upon captured information. The best leads can be listed and delivered to the sales team.

# Determining Key Performance Indicators

**Finally, measuring results requires the tracking of key performance indicators (KPIs), so adjustments can be made along the way.** Not all content is going to work, especially the first time around. An inbound marketing program takes many months to perfect.

Everyday, marketers must ask, **“How are my lead nurturing campaigns performing? Is the content converting? Are goals being met?”**

To answer those questions, there are six primary KPIs that should be tracked when using marketing automation tools.

# KPI

✓ Website Traffic

✓ Total Leads

✓ New Leads

✓ Total Marketing Qualified Leads

✓ Visit-to-Lead Rate

✓ Total Sales Qualified Leads

**These KPIs are the place to start, but there are many more things to track.** A number of tactics affect those six primary KPIs, such as number of blog posts written, number of emails clicked, number of landing page submissions and call-to-action conversion rate.

## So what is the value of all of this data?

**It answers the question:** “Is my content working?” And if lead nurturing campaigns are generating sales qualified leads, you can prove to yourself and other members of your organization that the answer is, “Yes!”

### Sources:

<sup>1</sup> B2B Content Marketing: 2012 Benchmarks, Budgets & trends. MarketingProfs & Content Marketing Institute, December 2011

<sup>2</sup> Cross-Channel Commerce: A Consumer Research Study, Oracle, March 2011

<sup>3</sup> Social Media Marketing for Service Providers- David M. Scott: Buyer Persona Insights Part 4

<sup>4</sup> Enterprise Lead Nurturing Guide, Kuno Creative, August 2012



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