

Marketing automation adoption key to South African marketers



By [Bianca Quinn-Diavastos](#)

6 Sep 2016

If they haven't already, marketers should be embracing marketing automation software to streamline, automate, and measure marketing tasks and workflows, enabling them to increase operational efficiency and the effectiveness of their sales efforts. The sooner the adoption of this software, the sooner South African marketers will be able to optimise their return on investment effectively.

By embracing automation marketers can improve their sales effectiveness, and free up more budget to spend on high-value marketing efforts like analytics and content.

With content marketing becoming the flavour of the month in South Africa, marketing automation tools are the key to unlocking the full value of the leads, and the engagement marketers generate through their web content, blog posts, email marketing and social media efforts. In addition, it assists marketers to maximise results from their social listening and CRM solutions.



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Marketing automation automates communication with customers right across the customer journey, but in a manner that delivers highly personalised and relevant messages. You probably already tag customers that visit your web properties, which allows you to track their behaviour across the web. When they fill in a web form, you can build a more detailed profile of who they are and what they are interested in. From here, you can use this data to separate them into granular customer segments so that you can send them automated marketing emails customised to their preferences and interests.

Here are some ways that marketing automation can deliver ROI for South African brands:

1. Effective use of your resources

Marketing automation software means that one person can do the work of several people. This, in turn, means that you can save money. It also means that you can put your marketing team to work on the strategically important stuff, rather than leaving them to tinker with emails.

For a smaller business, marketing automation can help it to create the impression it is larger than it really is without making disproportionate investments in resources. For example, a small online store selling banting food products can automate the process of sending customers articles or offers based on the products they usually buy. Of course, you'll need to invest some time and effort upfront in getting the workflow right and mapping the process to your customer journey, but it will be worth it.

2. Better sales results

Rather than letting a sales lead escape because a customer browsing your e-commerce site went to Google to find a lower cost supplier, marketing automation enables you take action to close the conversion. You could trigger an email offering free delivery as a sweetener, for example.

An automated process enables you to automatically upsell and cross-sell to customers, based on real-time information about how they are engaging with your website. For example, if a customer has been browsing hiking boots, you can email him or her a discount voucher to be used if he or she also buys a backpack.

3. Personalised communication

Customers today demand personalised offers and communications from brands, but delivering this level of personalisation is impractical and expensive without implementing some elements of automation. Marketing automation means it's easy to send customers a personalised message in response to them completing a task like filling in a form on your website, or clicking to your site from a direct mail.

You could say something as simple as: "Dear Sarah, thanks for visiting our website and expressing interest in the new range of wooden blinds. A consultant will be in touch to schedule a free consultation with you." The power comes from the fact that you can tailor your message to where the customer is in the customer journey, as well as the relevant demographic and behavioural factors.

4. Improved lifetime value of customers

Understanding how a customer interacts with your content, website and newsletter will allow you to sharpen your understanding of their decision-making process, preferences and needs. You could use marketing automation to do A/B testing to ensure that you continue to deliver products or services that clients need.

Or you could send reminders to customers to ensure repeat sales. For example, if you ordered flowers for a friend's birthday in August last year the florist can send you a reminder to find out if you would like to order flowers again this year. With marketing automation, you can also use lead scoring to identify and focus sales efforts on those that might be most profitable.

Closing words

With marketers spending so much money on generating leads through ads, marketing emails and content marketing, investing in marketing automation to nurture and close those leads is a no brainer. While such tools used to be complex and expensive, there are offerings today that are affordable and accessible for businesses of all sizes. South African marketers that want to augment the value and success of their marketing efforts should seize the opportunity with both hands.

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