

# NEW MARKETING FOR SMALL B2B BUSINESSES: PART 1 OF 2



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Simplifying Digital Marketing for Small B2B

Marketing tactics, which work, have changed much in recent years. You've heard about digital marketing, inbound lead generation, social presence and even marketing automation. Few have fairly explained this to small businesses so they can adopt these new tactics. No fear – it's not rocket science! Think of it as a new way to efficiently farm new business in a unique environment..

# New Marketing for Small B2B Businesses: Part 1 of 2

## SIMPLIFYING DIGITAL MARKETING FOR SMALL B2B

### ARTICLE OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this article is to help B2B businesses under \$50-75M (annual revenue) understand what happened to old marketing tactics and to simplify the tactics and methodologies that are now working. Much has changed. Yet, comprehension for these new methodologies is not overwhelming or complicated. My hope is that the explanations I provide help save you money and get your business started in the right direction – sooner than later. Like never before, small B2B can efficiently and cost-effective reach new audiences.

### WHAT HAPPENED THAT CHANGED MARKETING SINCE 2005?

Let's start with email. For most people, our email inbox has become our "To Do" list. For several industries, the decision maker is receiving 300+ emails every day. Our items to complete grows every minute and we work frantically to triage the must-address items from the FYI messages and the salesy introductions. Think about how you triage your own email inbox. "Triage" is a word that absolutely hits the mark. It's hard to keep up. But, in 2017, our inboxes are NOT where we wish to receive sales introductions, become educated to new products/services or to get a full-blown pitch. Just as it is for all things, this may not be true for all people, or at all times. But, it is generally true and true most of the time.

**In 2017, our email inboxes are NOT where we wish to receive sales introductions.**

Yet, as the use of CRM tools has grown (like Salesforce.com, Constant Contact, etc.), B2B marketers and salespeople continue to heavily pound messaging through the pipeline where it is least appreciated. A simple right-click and delete is performed so simply and quickly that email messaging effectiveness is not even close to what it was in the mid 2000s. I recall the days of 40-50% open rates and 25-30% click rates. I can tell you that this seasoned B2B marketer misses those days. Now, average open rates are 8-10% with slight variation within industries. It's not that email messaging is dying, it is more accurate to say that the target audience has re-defined where they will and where they will not accept introductory and/or educational content.

### The Impact of Social Media – Especially LinkedIn for B2B

Within the last four weeks, I've heard a dozen or more business owners (in their mid 50s to 60s) explain to me they don't use LinkedIn because they are "not looking for a job." To them, LinkedIn is really about networking to find your next job. And, "I don't need a new job." This quick-to-judge mentality is something that even I have been guilty of so I strive to not judge too harshly. But, I ask the readers here to trust the following I believe to be truths about the various social media tools:

- Twitter is for those under 30, Donald Trump and Trump observers
- Facebook is where users share information with FRIENDS
- LinkedIn is for business. LinkedIn is where business leaders go to learn, get new ideas, consider options, receive paradigm shifts, establish new channel partners, build professional relationships, promote their own B2B business and ENGAGE THEIR AUDIENCE.

As you might expect, the aforementioned truths are likely to change and these may no longer be accurate by the summer of 2017. Yet, here are two truths you can count on for the next 5+ years:

- Social media is here to stay and it has changed where people want to receive information
- Only the agile marketer will have a job in the future
- Only the agile business will be operating in the future.

If you agree with my perspectives on agility, you will appreciate the education I've tried to simplify in this document and its companion piece. Proven B2B tactics for small business can make the difference between a great 2017 and a mediocre one.

## WHAT IS DIGITAL MARKETING, INBOUND LEAD GENERATION, SOCIAL PRESENCE & MARKETING AUTOMATION?

First, take a deep breath and respect that the words to follow are intended for the broadest possible audience of business owners. All of these terms are inter-related. Your basic knowledge of them is critical to business ownership and marketing that works. I do not suggest trusting this knowledge to the job descriptions of your marketing team.

### Digital Marketing – Simplified

Digital marketing primarily refers to presenting your brand, products and services in the digital space. These tactics are not printed and mailed ( aka direct marketing). It is not a “face-to-face” visit by your or your sales representative. It is also not a lousy PowerPoint presentation that was created using software on a computer. Digital marketing includes your website, your outbound emails, online ads, online videos, etc. It includes your company's/products' presence in the social media space. Digital marketing is an umbrella term. It helps mostly in marketing titles and to be able to throw several responsibilities onto the shoulders of one employee. An ideal way to think about digital marketing is that it can be in places where your salesperson cannot. It can help manage the frequency of touches/interactions necessary to drive brand recall and service/product interest. Digital marketing could be seen as a “virtual salesperson or sales team.” Good digital marketing will always drive the audience to good marketing content. Great digital marketing will drive engagement with content at a location where the activity can be tracked and analyzed for sales follow-up.

**Digital Marketing is an umbrella term. It is a “virtual salesperson or sales team.”**

## Inbound Lead Generation – Simplified

Marketing is supposed to drive leads, too. If it's not, it's not really an effective marketing department. Certainly, you have your sales “hunters” that proactively search for new logo business. And, you have your “farmers” that foster sales growth within existing client relationships. Marketing, too, has a responsibility to look holistically at all your target audiences and provide the mechanisms necessary so that this audience of prospects is contacting YOUR company. An inbound lead is someone who has read or seen enough content to look up and come to the door. The effective marketing team will be content gurus that continually build content that drives engagement – without the hands-on solicitation of the sales rep.

With modern tools and mechanisms, marketing ROI can be measured. It should no longer be “pie in the sky” guessing. A great marketing team is not only helping the sales team drive engagement, but they are driving their own inbound engagement that is equal to at least 20-25% of the total leads generated by your entire team. This is not a revenue number! The measurement is an engagement number. Marketing must hand the inbound lead over to the sales team to establish a deeper relationship and close the deal – earn the revenue.

If your company does NOT have a formal sales team, inbound lead generation is critical. However, there needs to be designated relationship managers/executives that can foster the relationship and close the business. After the lead has been brought to the table, marketing is no longer responsible and should continue farming the ground for new growth. Blending real marketing expertise into sales is a mistake common to small business. They are two very different disciplines.

Some companies will pay great credence to having marketing establish “Marketing Qualified Leads (aka MQLs).” This is not typically a consideration of smaller companies (under \$150M) and with a very limited marketing staff. It can also become a very sloppy process when the sales process includes technical consultation.

**With modern tools and mechanisms, marketing ROI can be measured.**

## Social Presence – Simplified

To most B2B small companies' credit, they understand the need to have a presence at social media. Sadly, they give equal effort to a presence at LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter – even Instagram. I will again say that LinkedIn is apropos for B2B, but the others are generally best for B2C companies.

I am also sad to note that there are several small B2B companies that have hired social media managers and there is no Marketing Automation tool present. If you're under \$150M in revenue and you have a social media manager, and this person is not responsible for a marketing automation mechanism, you are throwing money to the wind and this person is seriously wasting the money you're paying for their salary. Even more, if they are only focused on social media presence and not engaged in marketing automation, the skill is only worth \$12 an hour and could be outsourced at a few hours each week – a much less expensive tactic.

I have personally witnessed a dozen-plus companies in the Twin Cities that have social media managers that have nothing to do with marketing automation. Truth told, these employees are only providing an hour or two of value to your business each day. Also, they are extremely lucky because you cannot measure their effectiveness. You'll get some “fuzzy math” in reports that are without much substance.

Social presence is more about having a presence WHERE your audience is located. Being in those locations where they want to learn, meet new providers, seek new ways of doing business and new ways of saving money. If your audience only goes to Twitter to read the latest Donald Trump posts, Twitter may not be for your B2B business. Be where they are. Be where they are comfortable. Be where they are open and wish to learn.

Then, have the “content” necessary to capture their interest and attention. Have the “content” essential to driving respect for your subject matter experts, awareness for your products/services, interest in proactively reaching out to you. Note: To pick on most social media managers, they are knowledgeable of the social platforms, but they are generally not knowledgeable enough to produce effective content. It’s critical to remember this.

## Marketing Automation – Simplified

Marketing Automation is the use of an external tool that helps your business and marketing. It helps ensure that digital marketing efforts are maximized. It revolutionizes inbound lead generation. It drives best practices in social presence and effective content. It drives engagement at a whole new level. Marketing Automation ties it all together. Marketing Automation is the two-word term you most need to understand.

It may be prudent, here, to explain what Marketing Automation is and what it is not.

### Marketing Automation is:

- The centralization of several disparate data points into one, easy-to-use tool, with a dashboard that gives your team real Business & Marketing Intelligence, rooted in the principles of Big Data. It’s Big Data for marketing, and also for sales.
- Dashboard-level interfaces for executives, sales leadership and marketing leadership.
- A new level of transparency into the effectiveness of email and social campaigns.
- A direct spotlight onto ineffective inbound lead generation like no other tool that exists.
- A toolbox that requires the participation of several critical roles; however, each role NEED NOT be framed as a full-time position. Much depends on the size of the company, the size of the target audience/geography and the company’s realistic growth goals.
- Drives internal engagement so that marketing strategies/tactics are forced into a new level of agility.

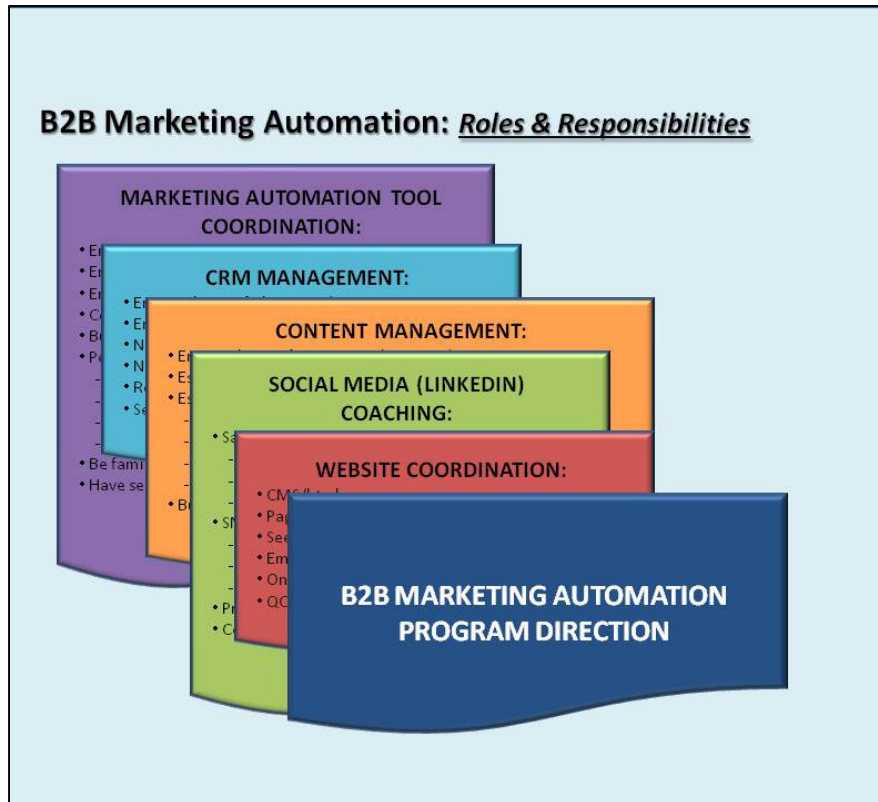
### Marketing Automation is NOT:

- A Ronco-based, “set-it-and-forget-it” program. It is not a robotic mechanism that does everything for you, with zero involvement from your company’s leadership and its subject matter experts.
- One role for one person. But, responsibilities can be effectively carved out into roles-focused responsibilities that can be shared between existing team members.
- A quick study. Sometimes “Managed Marketing Automation” makes sense so that your team can spend a greater percentage of their effort on those things they already do well.

**Marketing Automation is not a Ronco-based, “set it and forget it” program.**

## What is Managed Marketing Automation?

This is a great question, but it's also an example of putting the cart before the horse. In this new world of marketing, one must crawl before they walk and they must walk before they sprint. I promise to better answer this question in my companion article (Part 2). In the meanwhile, I believe it is necessary to first understand the various roles that play into a truly effective marketing automation program.



## MARKETING AUTOMATION: ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

There are six hats to be worn. In some instances, one person can wear two-three hats. In very rare instances at very small companies, four to five hats can be worn by a very talented and market savvy person. Yet, this is very rare and efficacy is difficult to sustain for long periods.

Every company has options, but it's best to really understand all six of these roles before any roles-based decisions are made. Your knowledge of the following will have an impact on program costs and program effectiveness. Within the role descriptions I have built for you here, the details will help you begin to understand the process and the standards/expectations that you should have for each role.

## Marketing Automation Tool Coordination Responsibilities

### MARKETING AUTOMATION TOOL COORDINATION:

- Ensure CRM & Marketing Automation interface
- Ensure strategy-driven KPIs built into dashboard
- Ensure actionable details are accessible to sales
- Collaboration with CRM manager for reporting fields
- Build automated reporting for key stakeholders
- Per each email distribution:
  - Verify appropriate target choice
  - Verify choice of en masse distribution vs. one-to-one distribution
  - Prior to distribution, alert sales of their role
  - Provide activity reports at 48 hours, again at 72 hours
- Be familiar with social post activity/successes
- Have seamless partnership with CRM Manager

### Marketing Automation Tool Coordination

The tool itself needs a dedicated manager. Some of the more common marketing automation tools include Marketo, Pardot, Hubspot and Act-On. Some programs are better than others at on-boarding and training. But, you will need one person that knows this program well and has almost daily interface with reporting and campaign success.

The ideal coordinator will have working knowledge of your CRM tool and/or an in-depth understanding of how CRMs work and what they are supposed to do for the sales team. Since the marketing automation tool is an add-on mechanism that **MUST** interface with your CRM, this coordinator must be in lockstep with your CRM manager. If not, you might as well be a wide receiver carrying a football covered in Crisco. Fumbles will happen regularly.

This coordinator must also have direct interface with executive and sales leadership. Such parties will want to see regular reporting and need to provide KPI guidance into dashboard details.

Most importantly, this person is 100% responsible for making sure that passive data and actionable data is available in real-time to the sales team. Real-time, not a week later.

The Marketing Automation Coordinator will be responsible for the distribution of outbound emails and the deployment of email automation structure. But, they will not be responsible for content in most instances. They will need to interface with strategic experts and content experts to pull together the distribution timing, the content and the prompts for automated or human follow-up. Any salesperson that complains they don't have

transparency into who exactly is engaged is the burden of the marketing automation coordinator – not the sales manager. Period. No exceptions.

As content experts are preparing social posts, the marketing automation coordinator is responsible for making certain that such promotions or campaigns are properly tracked by the marketing automation tool. And, of course, they are responsible for feedback to content experts and the primary marketing strategist.

The choice of your marketing automation coordinator is as important as your choice of marketing automation tools.

**CRM Management**  
**Responsibilities**

**CRM MANAGEMENT:**

- Ensure clarity of objectives/strategy
- Ensure CRM & Marketing Automation interface
- Negotiate/organize fields critical to reporting
- Negotiate/deploy target categorization
- Regular strategic reviews of target chosen for Marketing Automation
- Seamless partnership with Marketing Automation coordinator

## CRM Management

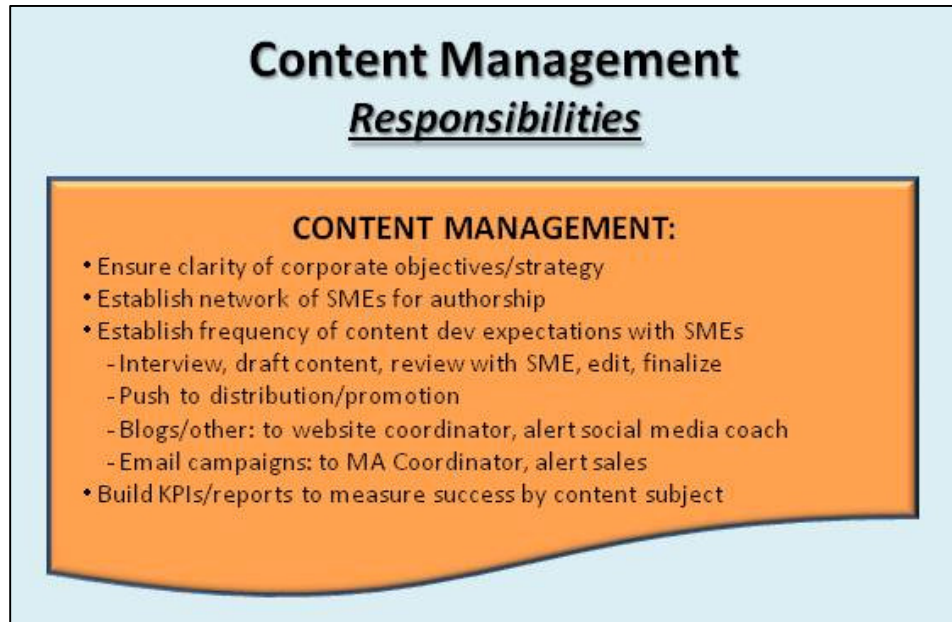
Likely you already have someone responsible for CRM management. This person, however, just needs transparency into the marketing automation tool and should be able to back-up your M.A. coordinator during vacations and such. It is very likely that your CRM manager will need to create new and/or custom fields within the CRM to accommodate reporting requests by management and the M.A. coordinator.

It is critical that no one in sales, sales operations or sales management changes ANY fields in the CRM without the involvement of and awareness of the M.A. coordinator. Changes made can negatively impact the reporting or dashboard accuracy within the marketing automation tool.

As previously mentioned, the CRM manager and the M.A. tool coordinator **MUST** be in lockstep. In smaller companies, both of these first two roles can and should be managed by one person.

In best case scenarios, your CRM manager and your marketing automation coordinator will have direct involvement in the choice of M.A. tools. And, both should go through all administrative training offered by the marketing automation provider.





## Content Management

Your content manager needs to be a rock star. Someone that has:

- In-depth understanding of the target audiences' needs, wishes and pain points
- Deep understanding of corporate strategies, marketing strategies and brand strategies
- The respect of your Subject Matter Experts and can extract information from them efficiently
- Can juggle several content projects at one time (often 10-20), but also has proven abilities in marketing integration – aligning the content of a blog post with the content of an email campaign which will help promote the blog
- Be able to build a “call to action” statement in one efficient sentence or title

The content manager has the most critical role in the marketing automation process. He/she must be extraordinarily proficient in social media platforms and be able to anticipate what content will work and what will not work.

The ideal content manager will be a master facilitator and able to interview SMEs and produce good content drafts in short order. The content necessary for a first draft blog should not take more than 10-15 minutes to interview the SME. If it takes longer, you don't have the right content manager.

The content manager will be responsible for content in blogs, email campaigns, videos, news releases and announcements. Great content managers will not have an inflated ego about their content (and look at their work as though it is “their baby”). Instead, they will be realistic about effective content. And, that they **MUST** rely on SMEs. In those instances when the primary elements of blog content come from the SME, it is the SME that should be listed as the author. Not the content manager. This is a great way to keep the SME engaged and to retain a collaborative environment.

Authorship is negotiated. The best content managers are master negotiators that can keep their ego in check.

**Social Media Coaching**  
**Responsibilities**

**SOCIAL MEDIA (LINKEDIN) COACHING:**

- Sales/Execs Participation:
  - LinkedIn networks >50% End-User target audience
  - >25 target-rich LinkedIn groups
  - 3-5x weekly checks of company profile
- SME Participation:
  - LinkedIn networks >40% channel/EU targets
  - >15 target-rich LinkedIn groups
  - 1x weekly check of company profile
- Pros/Cons of "Liking" vs. "Sharing"
- Coordinate/Delegate re-promotion at LinkedIn groups

## Social Media Coaching

This is also a critical role. Quite sadly, most marketing automation companies sell to B2B clients and focus on a message about emails and email automation. They touch so very little on social media. But, as mentioned previously, emails are simply not as effective as they once were.

Here's why this happens: The Marketing Automation software provider does NOT want to also be the social media coach for those that do not understand all the angles necessary to be proficient in social media marketing.

**Here are a set of facts to catch your attention and build your desire to become a company that is effective across LinkedIn:**

- During the last six B2B campaigns I ran, 80% of engagement came from LinkedIn and only 19% of engagement came from outbound emails.
- I personally distributed 60k emails, en masse. The sales team distributed another 50k emails manually, and often one-at-a-time. ...Think of the labor time and cost.
- In each campaign, at least 3,000 emails were distributed to existing and very satisfied clients.
- Yet, the lion's share of engagements came from LinkedIn. 80%!!!

This role is described as a coach by design. Regular activities and best practices are necessary from the executives, the SMEs and each person in a sales role.

As per the associated graphic, permit me to spell out a few examples:

- A. For any salesperson or executive, not less than 50% of their individual networks (connections) should be made up of the target audience. To be more clear, if the company president has 300 connections, not less than 150 should be made up of clients and tangible prospects. PERIOD! If you're hiring young reps, the lion's share of their connections should not be college and high school connections. Why promote your business to an audience that does not buy your product or service. Also, it is not acceptable for them to excuse that their friends could possibly influence buying activity. This is a crucial standard where most companies fail. If your social media manager is not a coach of others' use of professional social media, you've got the wrong manager.
- B. Both executives and sales personnel MUST be regularly exploring for "target rich groups" to promote company blogs and news. If your sales rep, today, has any less than 10 target rich groups that he/she is following, then they absolutely need some critical coaching before you invest too much in marketing automation or significant content development.

If you're going to exist and have a social presence in those locations where your target audience is more deeply listening, the team needs to know what to do, where to do it and the purpose for refining their daily and weekly activities.

Social media coaching is critical. It is better to trust someone that has been involved in marketing automation than to trust coaching from someone that only claims to know social media. 25-year-olds may understand elements of the social mechanism, but they do not understand how to teach a drive to find target-rich groups or how to help an older salesperson grasp the value of changed behaviors.

Even when the young rep's network is not yet 50% prospect rich, he/she can be successful when focusing on target rich groups; then, behaving appropriately within those groups.

**Website Coordination**  
**Responsibilities**

**WEBSITE COORDINATION:**

- CMS/html savvy
- Page creation ability
- Seek page type strategic direction
- Embed MA tracking code
- On-demand content posting
- QC checks of analytics vs. Marketing Automation data

## Website Coordination

This role is not much different than it has been for 10+ years. The coordinator needs to understand html or CMS (Content Management System) tools, have access to the current site, be able to post new pages or landing pages. As you might expect, it will be important that they are very good at Google Analytics so that checks can be made against the data available within the marketing automation tool. This person is also responsible for SEO (Search Engine Optimization) guidance/reporting to the content manager.

This coordinator should have a very flexible schedule or set of tasks so that he/she can be agile enough to post on-demand content. Timing is critical in some marketing pieces. Another consideration is that this role should always have a back-up – someone else that can post content without any procedural failure.



## Marketing Automation Program Direction

Lastly, you need someone that is going to lead it all, ensure that all roles are appropriately filled and that all players understand the process. This is going to be someone that is equally technical as they are a promoter and coach. At small companies, this could be the president and CEO – assuming they have absorbed the training. At other companies, it could be the marketing leader. But, this leader absolutely must own the process, the mechanism and the outcomes.

## IN CONCLUSION

In my companion article, I will get into process details and offer more about expected outcomes. My hope is that readers of this content have a renewed sense of optimism for the new marketing tools and tactics available to them in 2017. It's a great time to own a business and a remarkable time for connecting with target prospects like never before.

If this is sounding incredibly interesting, yet somewhat formidable, please know there are companies that offer "managed marketing automation." These firms can help you with as many as four or five of these roles. I can help you get connected to a few of these firms – and welcome such inquiries.

## About the Author

### **Brent J. Anderson**

Innovative and dynamic B2B marketing leader with a 29-year career (high-tech/healthcare – 16 years; creative agency sales/strategy – eight years; B2B sales – three years; CPG marketing – two years). Best known for refining strategies to better meet corporate objectives and dramatically improving awareness for unknown brands/products/services. Also, highly respected for building web and social presence to drive inbound engagement, bridging sales objectives with audience preferences, measuring awareness/satisfaction, strategic participation with senior leadership, building new markets and ensuring brand-appropriate internal cultures. Have been a strategic and technical leader in the launch of more than 100 new brands and over 200 websites.