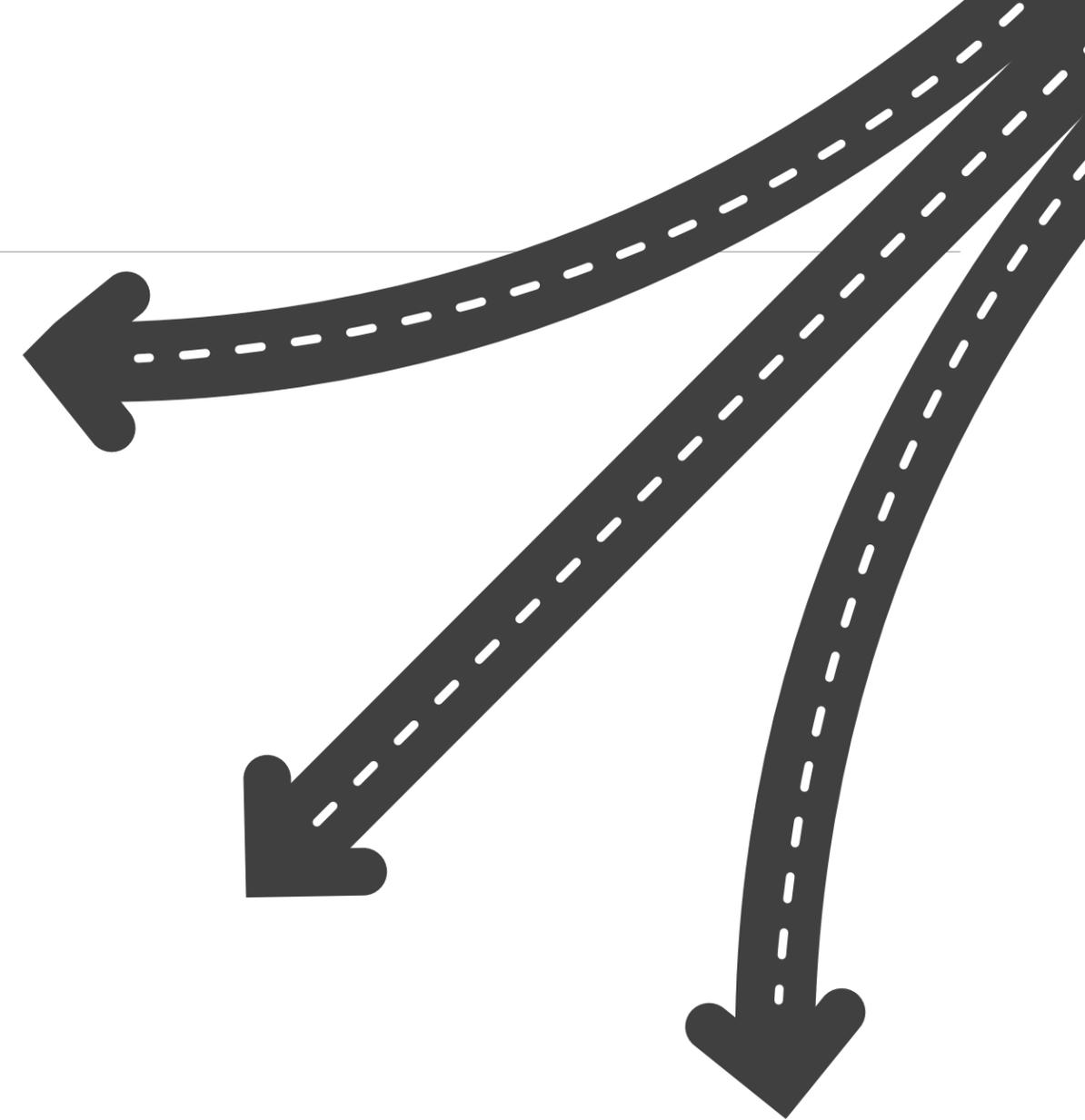


# Whose Lead Is It Anyway?



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# Introduction



Think for a moment about what you spend to obtain a qualified sales lead. From a full-page magazine advertisement to a trade show booth to a product configurator tool on your website, your lead generation tactics require a lot of time, effort and expense. Then you need to qualify them, get the requested information to them, and hope that a sales person follows up to make contact. Yet did you know that research shows that up to 80% of B2B sales leads are never followed up on by a sales representative?

In the world, there is at least some accountability between sales and marketing. These departments usually roll-up to one president, keeping some semblance of a coordinated follow-up approach. Now add the complexity of an indirect sales channel comprised of independent businesses like dealers or distributors. They have their own agendas and business plans and are likely hesitant to share information about leads and customers with a manufacturer (who could sell direct someday and steal their business).

## Mini Case Studies

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If you're generating leads and handing them out to dealers, resellers, VARs etc., when does it stop being "your" lead and become "their" lead? Is it your end user to market to or theirs? The following mini case studies attempt to illustrate different ways to work

with your channel partners to clearly spell out who is responsible for leads at what point(s). Dealers will generally welcome the assistance in responding to and nurturing leads, especially if you can do it in a way that supports their presence in the marketplace.

So, whose lead is it anyway?

## Facts

01. Optimal time to reach a web contact is

**20** minutes

02. Sales people typically blame low conversion on lead quality.

03. Average close rate on qualified leads is

**22** percent

04. Marketing people typically blame low conversion on sales effort.

Background

The study focuses on an office furniture manufacturer currently collects inquiries and sales leads through various sources and responds with an average of three “touches”.



Email that introduces the prospect to their local dealer



Mailed response that includes a catalog and customized cover letter



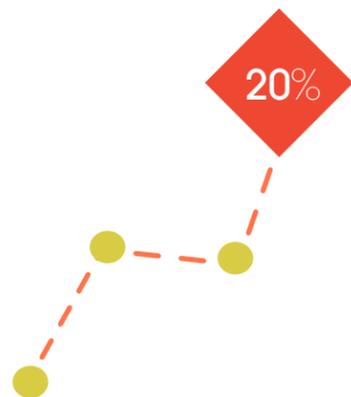
Follow-up customer satisfaction survey

Control

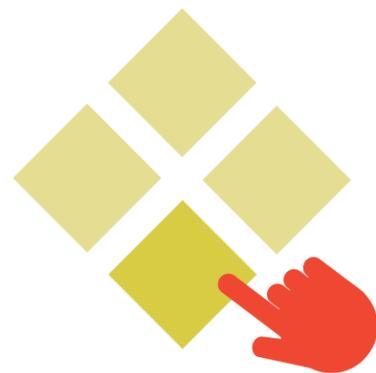
In this case study, the manufacturer took charge of the relationship with the lead and deployed an automated email campaign. Initially dealers were skeptical about the process and wanted more control of the nurturing process. To accommodate this request, a feature was added to the dealer’s lead management system. In order to pull a

lead from the nurturing process the dealer simply clicked “stop nurturing”. This gave the dealers control at the lead level in case they knew more about the progress of the lead than manufacturer. If the lead was close to purchasing already, this feature was used to avoid overwhelming the prospect with information.

Objectives



Increase lead to sale conversion by 3 to 5 percentage points or 20%.



Touch each prospect a minimum of 4 times within 2 weeks of inquiry (not including dealer contact) with relevant material.



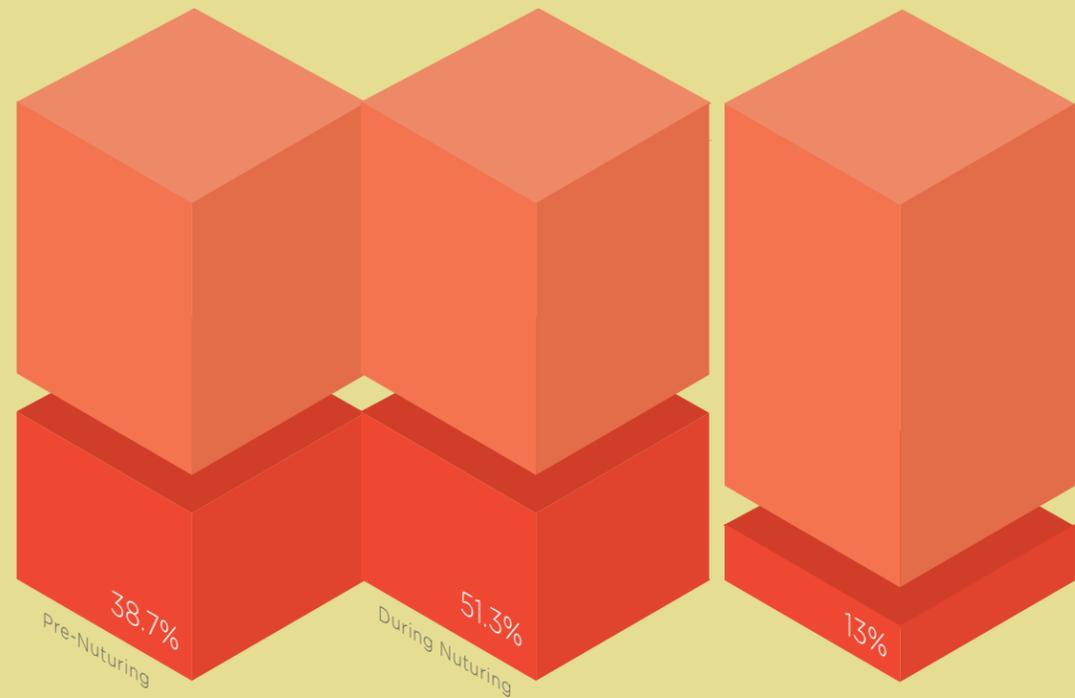
Maintain branded messaging for the office furniture manufacturer, while promoting the local dealer.

Results

● Increase %  
● Overall %

Sale Conversion In Relation To Nurturing

Overall Sale Conversion



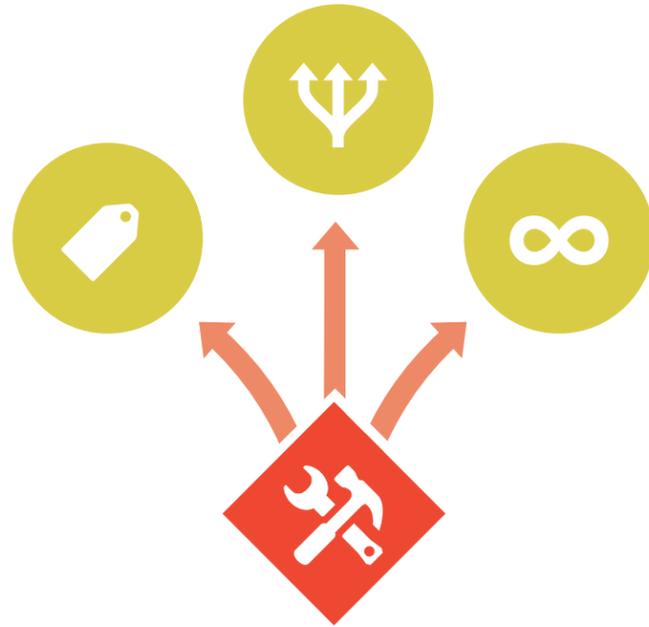
Conclusion

The results of the additional touches were extremely positive resulting an increase of 13 percentage points for sales conversions during the test period. The manufacturer also took steps to promote the local dealer in the email communications. Variable data fields were used to insert the dealer’s logo and contact information and also included

a button to “have my local dealer contact me”, which created a new lead notification message to the assigned dealer. By taking steps to ensure the channel had some control over the process, this manufacturer was able to conduct a successful nurturing campaign and obtain dealer support in the process.

Background

An office furniture manufacturer that sold through three channels (dealers, branches, and VARs) did not know if the sales representatives were following up on leads. They assumed that consistent initial contact rates on leads would have a direct positive effect on sales conversions. To gain initial metrics, historical leads were surveyed to determine whether follow-up contact was occurring from the local sales resource.



Survey Results

- Was not contacted
- Did not purchase again

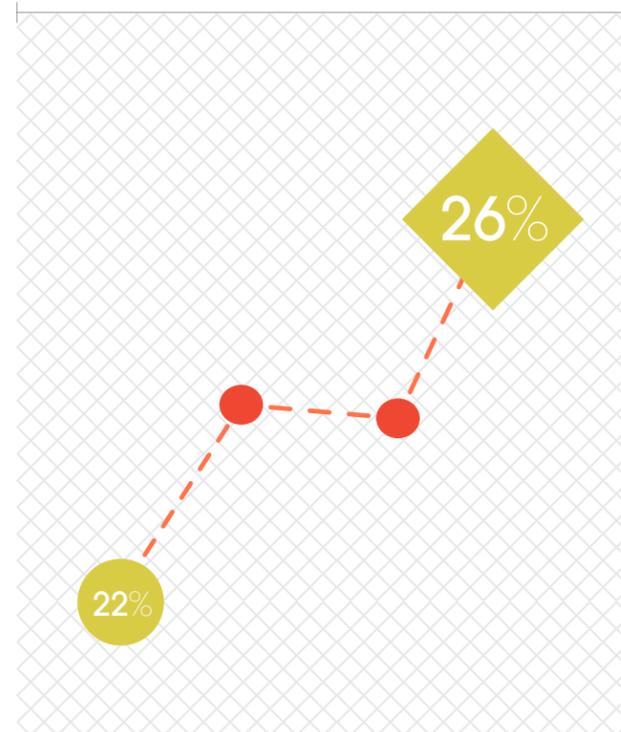


Objectives

001	002	003	004
Increase lead to sale conversion by 1 percentage point during the test.	Evaluate follow-up response performance between branches and dealers	Show the connection between lead follow-up behavior and sales conversion rates	Reinforce appropriate lead follow-up behavior by the different channels

Results

Increased Overall Sales Conversion



Increased Follow-up Rates By Sales (Both Channels)



Conclusion

In order to get feedback from leads regarding sales follow-up, the manufacturer launched an auto-responder email nurturing program. Within the program a \$1.00 MP3 gift code was offered simply for answering the question “Has a local sales representative contacted you yet?” If the respondent said they were not contacted another email went out (with another) \$1.00 MP3 gift code essentially asking “Now have they contacted you?” A double negative response resulted in escalation to the sales reps manager. On the branch side, the branch manager received the notice. On the dealer/VAR side, the district sales

manager was notified. At the end of the test period the sales entities were grouped into A, B and C locations based on their sales conversion percentage. The results of the contact study were overlaid with the location rankings by sales conversion. The locations that had the best follow-up records were also the locations that had the highest sales conversion rates! What initially started out as a test that was seen as intrusive by the sales force proved its point. If you are quick to follow-up on the leads generated by marketing, your sales conversions will increase.

## Overall Conclusion

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In both case studies, the answer to “Whose lead is it anyway?” is clear. The lead belongs to both the manufacturer and the sales entity. However, the manufacturer generated

the lead and therefore should create and control the nurturing process (within reason), keeping in mind that the channel is still their customer too.

The lead belongs  
to both the  
manufacturer and  
the sales entity.



## Checklist

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If you don't know, **ask** the lead via one of the many online survey tools:

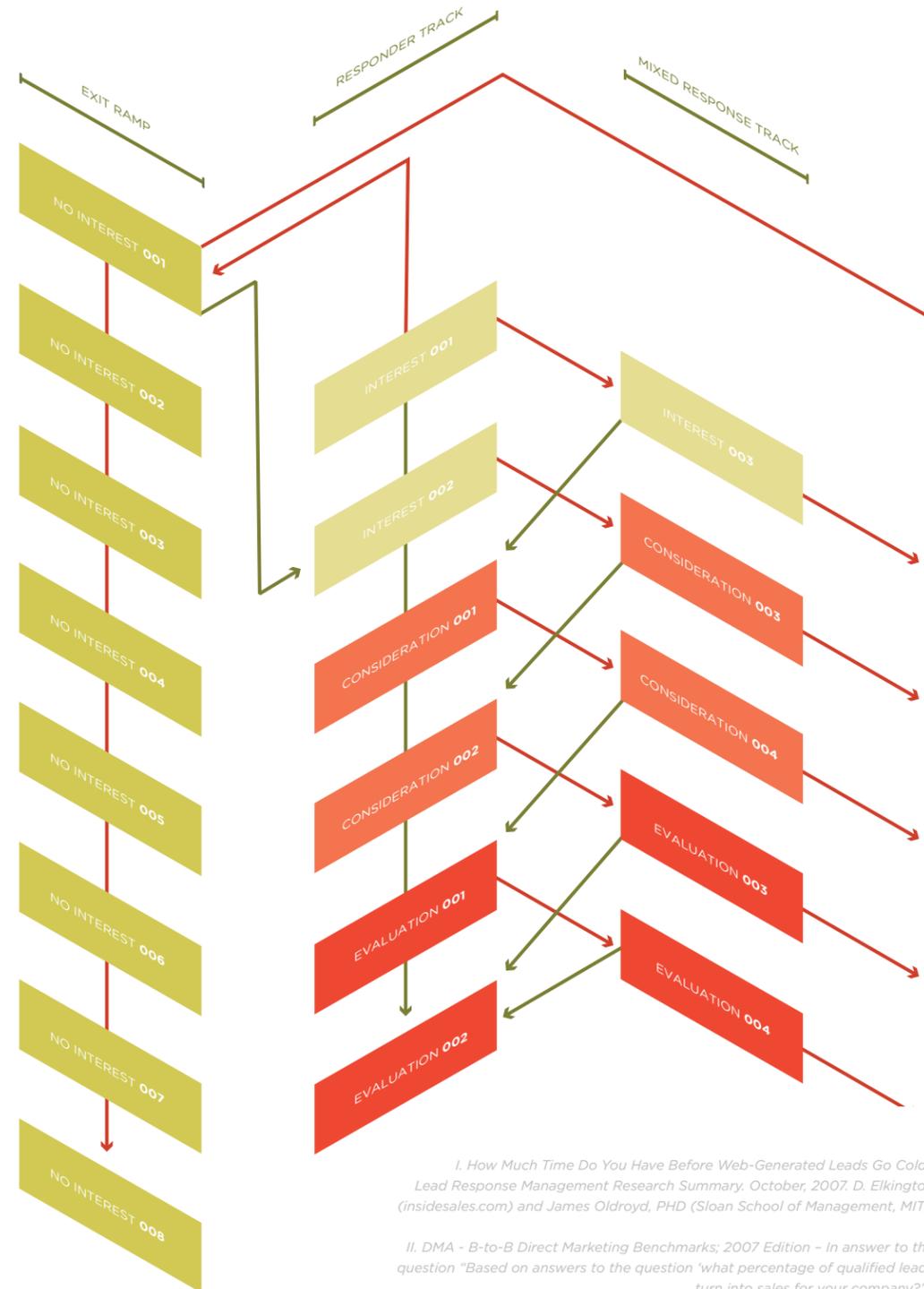
*“Are you happy with our service?”*  
*“Did you purchase?”*

These are two simple questions that provide great insight into your channel.

Consider the following when planning your nurturing campaign.

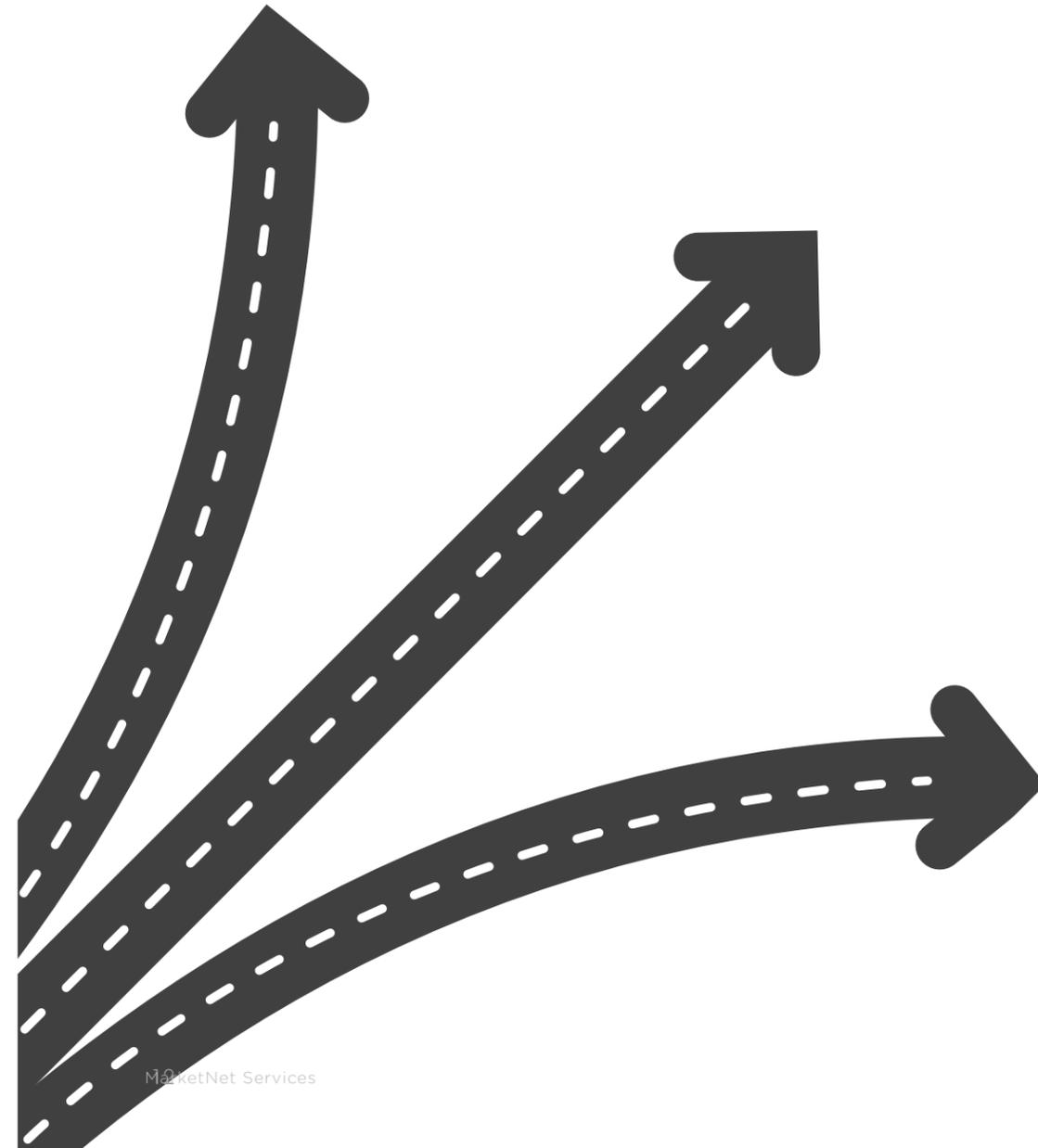
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- Are you able to measure lead conversions pre & post test?
  - Are you willing to give your sales channel the ability to “stop nurturing” on specific leads, trusting that they know when a lead is sales-ready and therefore ready for more personal and direct sales tactics?
  - Are your messages co-branded with both your and the channel’s logos and contact information?
  - Do you gather enough information on your leads (budget, authority, need, timeline, product interest) to qualify them?
  - Are you able to identify which lead actions place the leads into specific engagement stages (interest, consideration, evaluation) and then tailor your messages accordingly?
  - Do you have the tools/software to ensure that your nurturing messages are relevant and timely (trigger-based)?
  - Are you able to measure lead satisfaction with the nurturing process, both at the manufacturer’s level and after it’s been delivered to the sales force or channel?

● Movement after non-response  
 ● Movement after response



Nurturing a lead should be positioned as a positive thing for the sales organization and your channel partners. Your intentions must be clearly stated, delivered and communicated to keep the channel from

getting concerned or suspicious. After all, you are making their job easier by removing "administrivia" and giving them better leads, resulting in more sales.



With a philosophy of “No Lead Left Behind™,” MarketNet creates lead management solutions for people who:

- Want to capture, respond to, distribute and track leads from all sources
- Need immediate lead notification sent to the best-suited sales person based on the channel sales strategy
- Require automatic follow-up and lead nurturing to increase sales closure rates
- Want to know what the sales person actually did with the lead
- Must be able to justify their marketing campaigns by measuring ROI Clients such as The HON Company, Konica Minolta Business Solutions, U.S.A., Inc., 4Front Engineered Solutions, BrassCraft, Inc. (A Masco Company) and others have partnered with MarketNet to leverage their marketing investments, yielding more leads and converted sales per dollar spent.

Founded in 1996, MarketNet is based near Grand Rapids, Michigan.

For more information, please visit MarketNet at [www.marketnetservices.com](http://www.marketnetservices.com)

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