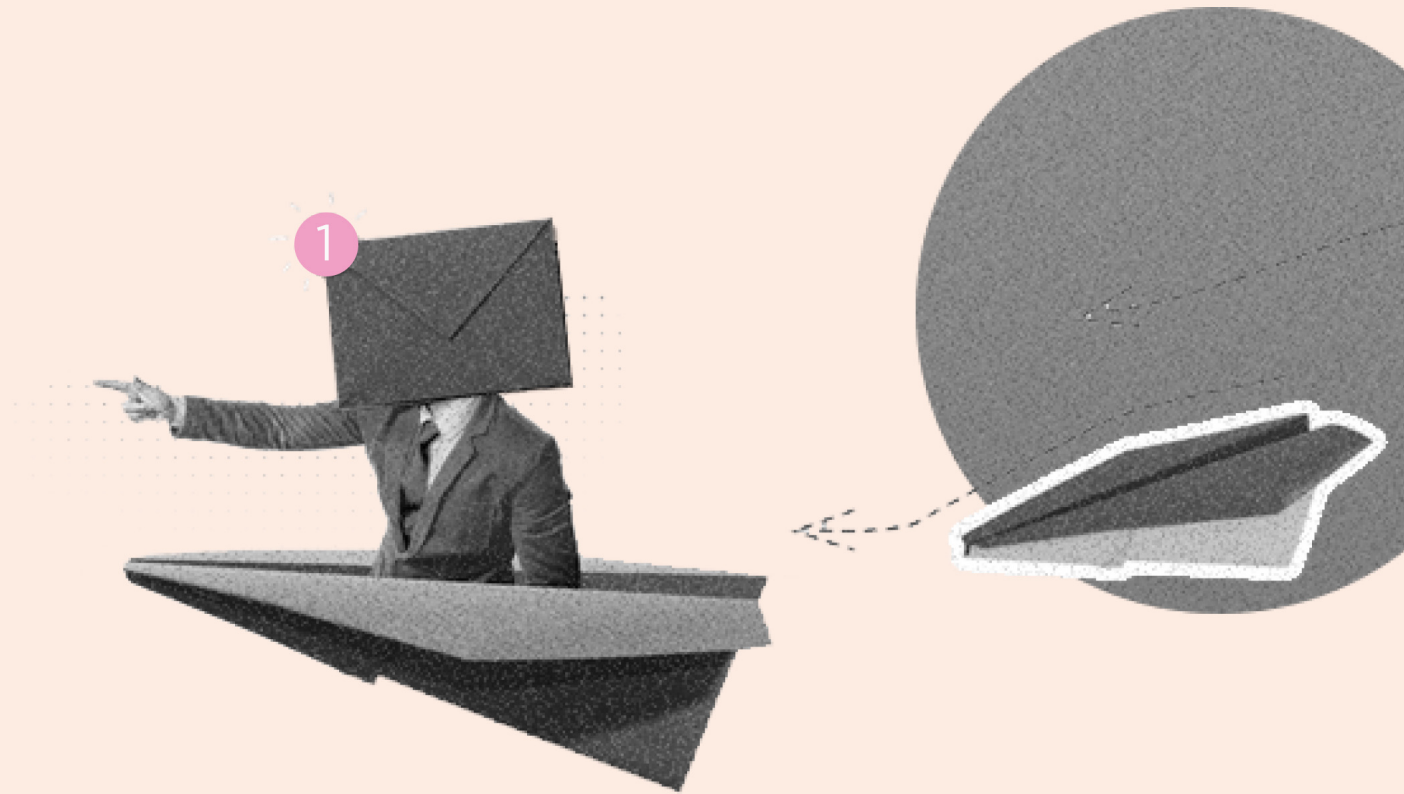


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A guide to lead nurturing for education marketers

Utilizing the power of an email strategy

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Introduction

When it comes to education marketing, marketers are faced with ambitious targets across a wide pool of prospective students. Their audience is further segmented into parents of students, and adult students. With a large audience, each requiring unique messaging at each stage of their journey, it's understandable that the sales cycle in education marketing is much longer than the likes of retail, or eCommerce for example.

Lead nurturing is (simply put) the process of both establishing and strengthening relationships with potential students at each stage of the enrollment journey. A successful lead nurturing program focuses marketing and communication efforts on listening to prospects' needs and providing the information and answers they require to build trust, raise brand awareness, and maintain a connection until the prospective student is ready to enroll.

According to recent findings, between 10, and 15% of leads convert into buyers - in industries such as retail, or eCommerce. The conversion rate from qualified lead to a student is significantly lower, which is why lead nurturing is a vital component of any ed(tech) campaign. This is why it is critical to nurture student relationships through a strategic lead scoring system. Lengthening sales funnels fosters independence in prospects, necessitating the need for well-crafted lead nurturing programs.

We're living in a digital world, with everything and everyone online. We are connected, and the more connected we become the more important it becomes to provide students with an omnichannel experience.

Prospective students today expect a level of personalization in marketing to catch their attention and allow for a seamless web of engagement without bombarding them with ads or emails. They prefer to be heard rather than sold to.

Through genuine understanding, you can better serve and earn the patronage of your potential students if you get to know them and what they want. Consider the communications your leads are receiving, including newsletters, product updates, database emails, and other cross-channel communications, effective lead nurturing must encompass your entire marketing calendar.

By focusing on ensuring that these channels work harmoniously and provide equally valuable content to the prospective student, you're working to guarantee the loyalty - and longevity of the student leads in your database.

Students don't convert overnight. The sales cycle of the average student can take as long as a year. It's important to remember that you're selling them their future - not a product that they can return if they are not satisfied.



It's in the strategy

Defining your lead nurturing strategy

Education companies and institutions use this phase to develop personalized communications with potential (and current students). This strategy consists of three main tactics, with the ultimate goal of converting more “browsers” into “interested” prospects, more “interested” prospects into applicants, and more admitted students into enrolled students, and ultimately - graduates — all while not crushing their admissions team.

When considering lead nurturing as a strategy - it's important to remember that it does not happen in isolation. Consider how it fits in with the rest of your long-term strategy.

Lead nurturing cannot be considered in a vacuum.

As a fellow education marketer, you should examine your entire marketing calendar to see what other communications your leads already receive. Newsletters, course updates, standard database emails, and other cross-channel communications may be sent.

How do these interactions interact with one another? You want to provide consistent and relevant consumer experiences across all channels your potential students will use.

The primary goals

- **Relationship:** Develop a stronger relationship between prospective students and your institution by communicating about topics that are important (and valuable) to them.
- **Qualification:** Effectively qualify prospective students within your database by tracking their interest and engagement.
- **Efficiency:** The job of the education marketer is to simplify the admissions process for the institution that you're representing. Your strategy will have an impact on admissions, enrollment, and retention.

Qualitative objectives

What business outcomes do you hope to achieve by establishing lead nurturing tracks? Consider the following:

- Convert ‘browsers’ into students over a certain period of time
- Move students through the journey at a comfortable and effective pace
- Engage with prospective students
- Build a database of inbound leads
- Educate existing leads (through your content)
- Stay in touch with existing student leads to position your institution as the authority
- Convert cold leads into qualified leads



Quantitative objectives

In addition to creating qualitative objectives, make sure to set **quantitative goals**— those that can be measured. Even if you aren't sure what your metrics should be at first, estimating them ahead of time will help you define your campaign strategy. Quantitative metrics help you not only define success but also determine the scope and scale of your overall lead nurturing efforts. Here are some that you can consider.

- Improve the percentage rate at which leads convert to qualified prospects
- Improve the percentage rate at which qualified prospects become students
- Increase the number of sales-ready leads per month
- Increase the institution's site traffic
- Increase your institution's CTR Increase your institution's ROAS
- Prove the ROI

It's easy to become overwhelmed with the vastness of an education campaign strategy - with multiple objectives, targets, and conversions to meet. It's important to start small - but think big. When implementing qualitative and quantitative benchmarks, it's critical to take a phased approach to your nurture launches and implementations, depending on how complex they are.

A phased approach allows for:

- Launching simultaneous campaigns, efficiently
- Minimizing risk of error
- Setting digital benchmarks
- Provisioning room for the testing of creatives, copy and CTA's

Timing is key

The frequency with which you send lead nurturing communications, particularly email, must be balanced against the frequency with which you contact your database with other (unrelated) communications. The first step in achieving this is determining your overall communication pattern. How frequently do you communicate with the people in your database? Meet with your organization's stakeholders to determine what this number should be. Test and tweak this over time to determine the optimal number of touchpoints based on your results.

It's also important to consider the average length of the buying process. As we know, converting strangers into students is time-consuming, and it could take years to achieve. Ensuring that you have a relevant content repository, and a strategy that quite literally stands the test of time is key.

In the following example, let's assume that the prospective student has downloaded an exam preparation sheet that they accessed through one of your campaigns. Your lead scoring methodology deems this individual a lead nurturing candidate. If the buying cycle for your program is 6 months, the nurturing path for this specific prospect might look something like this:

- **Day 1** - Prospect receives the 'exam preparation sheet' as promised
- **Day 10** - A personalized follow-up, introducing the prospect to the institution
- **Day 18** - An email offering additional free content that relates to the prospect (based on their activity up until this point)
- **Day 25** - A personalized email from a tutor, a lecturer, or faculty member
- **Day 35** - A targeted social ad containing social proof, i.e. a student testimonial

- **Day 48** - An email offering additional free content that relates to the prospect (based on their activity up until this point)
- **Day 60** - An email detailing the programs, or courses that your institution offers
- **Day 75** - A targeted social ad detailing the admissions process, i.e. infographic
- **Day 90** - An email detailing course or lecturer updates
- **Day 105** - A video offering a virtual tour of the campus
- **Day 120** - A targeted social ad
- **Day 135** - An email detailing application deadlines
- **Day 150** - An email containing social proof, i.e. a student or parent testimonial
- **Day 160** - A personalized invitation to tour the campus in person
- **Day 170** - A personalized email from admissions, or faculty members
- **Day 185** - An invitation to apply for enrollment



Consider the channels

Fostering an omnichannel approach

Today's students move seamlessly, and quickly across digital channels. They hop from email to social media, to your website - and then back to social media - all without losing their momentum. They also do this using whatever device is most convenient, or accessible to them at the time.

The modern, digitally empowered buyer has an indifference when it comes to marketing channels.. This new buyer has become the undisputed controller of their relationship with your brand. Now, more than ever, the consumer, and in our case - the student is in charge. Before we jump into more details on creating your lead nurture content and plan, we wanted to address how to think about the nurturing process with an omnichannel lens. As an ed(tech) marketer, you need to think across channels in your lead nurturing efforts - to ensure that you're present (and active) where the student is.

The great thing about marketing is that there are always tools, and resources available to automate and manage our efforts. The ed(tech) marketer (specifically) should be using tools to optimize, and automate these processes! These tools will allow you to create a mindset of both listening and acting.

Listen: Pay close attention to student behavior across multiple channels to create a single, unified student persona view.

Act: Manage, personalize, and act on your findings to optimize your campaigns and overarching strategy.

This mindset needs to be present across all channels. If you're making use of social listening, and you happen upon a new interest within your target audience - then implement it across the web, social, email - wherever possible. Student consumers don't skip a beat, so you shouldn't either.

Nurturing your leads across multiple channels ensures that your message is heard, and acted upon. It fosters authenticity, builds awareness, and sets the tone for a trusting relationship between you and your prospective student.

Here are some examples of where you can unify your lead nurturing efforts:

Website - Traditionally speaking, a brand's website would be the single most important resource available to them - and served to capture leads and engage with their audience.

While in some cases, social now takes precedence over traditional streams, a web presence - and an active one at that, is still a crucial aspect of any campaign.

Student facing websites should be optimized, user friendly, and most importantly - engaging.

Make use of automation in the form of a chatbot, to accurately identify and qualify potential leads.

Account (persona) based strategies - Personalization allows you to target both personas and accounts. With account marketing, your institution can concentrate on a group of accounts with similar characteristics that are either most likely to generate revenue or strategically significant to your institution.

You can nurture high-value accounts through their decision-making methodology with a combination of web content and email by using personalization tools to modify your account-based marketing approach. When someone visits your website from a strategic account, you can change the messaging, images, content, and logos to create a completely tailored and relevant experience.

Retargeting campaigns - Some companies include a retargeting pixel on their websites as well as in emails sent to prospects and customers (including emails sent by individual employees). This places a cookie on the subscriber's computer, allowing the company to target specific display ads to them as they browse the web. If done correctly, it can result in more coherent experiences between messages received via email and those received online.

Social - Social media is an essential component of omnichannel lead nurturing. It's great to run social campaigns, but it's even better to make every campaign social. Consider social as a component of the campaign cake, rather than just the frosting. When you link your lead nurturing to your social initiatives, they complement each other.

Combining email & social

- **Awareness** - direct email subscribers to your social channels, and vice versa.
- **Reach** - use email marketing to extend the reach of your social media messaging.
- **Promotion** - use social media to grow, and nurture your potential student database - think online forms, surveys, or quizzes.



Google ads - Google ads are classified into two types: Search network ads and display ads.

Google search ads, which place your listing on the Google search engine results page (SERP) of someone looking for specific keywords. Display network ads appear as banners on other websites .

Paid advertisements, according to three out of four people, make it easier for them to find the information they require.

Combining these tactics with social, email, and web - make for a seamless student experience.

- A better user experience
- Cohesive brand strategy and identity
- Increased revenue, subscriptions and enrollment
- Accurate attribution data

Omnichannel marketing is the integration and cooperation of the various channels organizations use to interact with consumers, with the goal of creating a consistent brand experience.

This is the seamless integration of branding, messaging, and online and offline touchpoints as students and parents move down the sales funnel, enabling a more impactful user experience.

Steps for leveraging omnichannel marketing campaigns

For the education marketer to effectively create an omnichannel experience, you need to take into account how the potential student interacts with your brand or institution. It focuses not on the channel, but the experience as a whole. With this in mind, there are a few fundamentals when it comes to creating an omnichannel experience.

Data, data, data

Accurate (and timely) data collection about your prospective students is vital for the successful implementation of an omnichannel strategy. This data will help you understand when (and on what devices) your target audience prefers to interact with you, what type of messaging they are more likely to engage with, what courses or programs they are looking for, and so on. Your omnichannel strategy will be guided (and evolved) by this data.

Understanding the journey

Before launching your omnichannel campaign, you should create a customer journey map for each of your audience segments. I.e. High school students, university students, adult students, parents etc. This map will evaluate the steps that your prospect takes from brand discovery to enrollment. Being sure of these metrics will allow you to create a truly targeted marketing campaign that considers audience interest, demographics, behavior, experience - and factors outside of your control, i.e. financial constraints.

Analytics - and lots of it

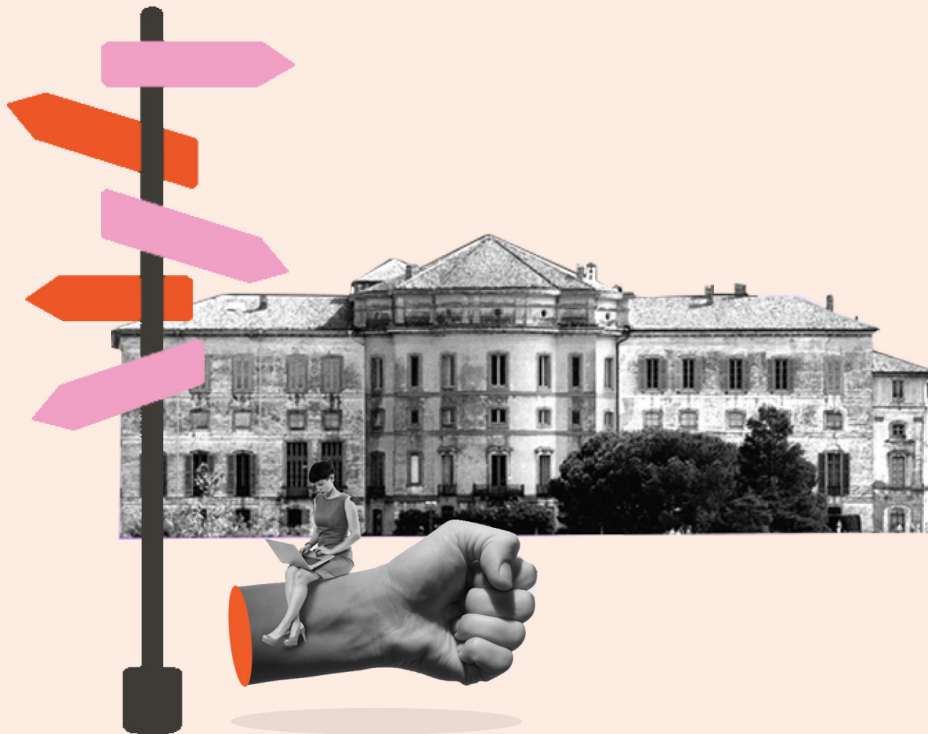
Collecting the data is only the first step. Without a system or team that can translate the data into actionable steps, the data itself serves no purpose.

By deploying an analytics platform that can translate data in real-time, your team can course correct - and optimize campaigns while they're running to meet your prospective student's needs immediately..

Testing, testing, 123

Arguably one of the most important aspects of an omnichannel strategy is the ability to continuously, and regularly test the effectiveness of your approach.

These insights allow you to adjust, reframe and optimize your campaign spend, messaging, creative, CTA's, etc.



Content is king

Choosing content for every phase of the student journey

Having a well-planned, and even better-executed content strategy can increase the effectiveness of lead nurturing by delivering compelling content to each student persona at just the right time.

A comprehensive strategy should be data-driven, with metrics from your marketing automation solution (CRM) used to establish which types of content are most relevant for each persona at each stage of their journey.

Content should always be:

- Engaging
- Relevant
- Share-worthy

SEO should also be factored into your strategy so that each new piece of content you create enhances your organic search rankings. Keywords with a high volume of searches should be included in your content.

Think of your content strategy - and ask yourself if what you're creating could be repurposed, and serve to add value to a subsequent campaign. An example would be a case study that could be expanded into a blog post, with the blog post being used for social content too.

Each piece of content that you share, create, or curate - needs to serve a purpose.

Content should not be shared just for the sake of sharing. Your nurture content must teach your prospective students something new by providing interesting and relevant information, but through your story arc creation, you also must accelerate your leads through your sales cycle using content to nudge them to the next step.

When defining your story arc - remember your audience. Students typically have a shorter attention span, and it takes compelling creatives to get them to stop scrolling and engage with your content.

The 3 types of content

Original content

This is yours, and yours alone. It's completely original, and belongs to you! Giving your audience original (and relevant) content is a great opportunity to encourage them to opt-in.

Curated content

The main goal of nurturing is to keep in touch with the potential student. As long as you are hyper-relevant, you are accomplishing this goal. The nurturing process doesn't only require original content. Content curation is the process of collecting, organizing, and sharing relevant content. This can be an important part of your lead nurture strategy.

Curation can be an effective tool, as long as what you are collecting and sharing is relevant to your (student) audience.

User-generated content

The majority of an education marketer's audience is highly active on social, which is a great opportunity for you to collect user-generated content. This could be in the form of encouraging followers to snap photos of their current campus, or school life, with a hashtag - i.e. #studentlife.

You could also create polls through social or email, and share the results on your page. The aim is to keep followers engaged.

Diversified approach

Many education marketers make this mistake with their prospects in the early days - resulting in qualified leads turning cold, fast. The mistake is - using the same message for all new leads, across all platforms, or relying on a single outreach tactic targeted at students, parents - or leads. Simply put - if you're looking to sign up for a marketing masterclass, for example - and you're hit with the exact same message on email, Facebook - and Google Display, would you spend a large sum of money from the outset? Or - would you start looking for an alternative?

The best way to avoid these errors of judgment is to start with a foolproof strategy. This plan should include information on lead segmentation for each lead type, what information you want to collect from prospective students, what content offers you have, and how you will deliver those offers to the right prospects in a personally tailored and strategic manner. Each of these steps will assist qualified leads in nudging from one stage of your enrollment funnel to the next.

Including multiple communication approaches at each phase of the enrollment funnel has a host of benefits including:

- Authentic and mutually beneficial relationships
- It's not all groundwork - it can be automated
- It's personal
- It's targeted
- It aids in 'word of mouth advertising - or referral advertising

In short - if your institution is present on social, email, and Google - use all of these channels to deliver variations of a message, suited to the stage of the journey that your prospect is currently in.

Let's have a look at lead nurturing emails, and how you can use them to further your objectives.

Dissecting a lead nurture email

Email marketing is not dead - and it's not going anywhere anytime soon! In fact, according to a report by Marketing Profs, 85% of Gen-Z respondents had used email in the last month, while 89% of Millennials and 92% of Gen-X respondents have used email in the last month. Half of the Gen-Z respondents said that their use of email has increased in the last few years, while the other half say it has remained constant. In other words, your audience has an inbox - and they use it.

Certain elements are crucial for your email campaign to be as effective as possible. The content that you share in your emails not only needs to be relevant (i.e. it's solving a problem for the student), but it also needs to come at the right time. Every email needs to serve a purpose, even if that purpose is to entertain the prospect for a while!

Types of emails

If you have an email address - you will know that there are a few types of emails, that can quite simply be categorized according to their function.

Promotional

These are emails that promote a course or a program. You might be running a seasonal, or a once-off offer - these serve as additional touchpoints with your prospective student. Promotional emails should be used sparingly - as too many could serve to frustrate your audience, leading them to unsubscribe.

i.e. Register now and receive 10% off your next tutoring class.

General communication

As the name suggests - this type of content is generalized, and can often be repurposed from social or blog posts. This could be in the form of a faculty update, a course redirection - or a newsletter.

i.e. From the desk of (Dean's name) - your monthly (Institution name) update.



Relationship builders

These are more common than you'd think! As their name suggests, this type of email has the sole purpose of building an authentic relationship with a prospective student. This content is valuable, personal - and tailored to the experience of the potential student. Many marketers find that video or other graphic content works well in this case, providing leads with quick access to valuable information.

I.e. A message from our lecturers.

Reminder emails

These are a gentle 'nudge', reminding your prospect of an upcoming event, deadline, or action that needs to be taken on their part.

I.e. Applications for this semester close in 10 days!

Why email marketing works

The most important part here is to be memorable. Your emails need to serve a purpose. They should be insightful, valuable, and helpful. The more valuable your content - the more likely your prospects will anticipate your communication.

- It's targeted and personal
- It builds and maintains institutional credibility
- Increased brand awareness and recognition
- Enhanced user experience, leading to better student relationships
- Time, resource and financially efficient
- It's measurable
- It builds excitement

But there's more...

As with most things in the world of marketing - there are a set of best practices that we are to adhere to. When it comes to email marketing, while the content, subject line and purpose may differ from institution to institution, there is a global standard that applies.

That is - do not be considered spam.

The best practice policy also applies to your institution specifically. In other words - the strategy that worked in your B2B marketing days might not be effective (or even welcome) in the world of ed(tech) marketing.

Subject Line

This is your way in. It's the first impression - so it's always best to make it count! Your prospect will likely make a call as to whether or not they'll be receptive to (or even open) your email based on the words that pop up in their inbox. Subject lines are vital for successful lead nurturing. Your email (and its content) doesn't matter if it's left unopened.

Here's a great guide, inspired by Copyblogger, which will generally help identify whether or not your email is ready to be sent.

- **Urgent:** Does it seem like it should be read right away?
- **Ultra specific:** Does your subject line adequately explain what can be expected in the email?
- **Useful:** Does it communicate the value that is in the email?
- **Unique:** Does the message stand out from the rest?

Here are 4 techniques that you can apply to your email subject line creation.

Educate the recipient: “10 ways you can effectively prepare for your exams.”

Offer a potential solution: “Graduate without the debt - scholarship applications still open.”

Ask them a question: “Did you receive your free guide to exam preparation?”

Curtail on a trending topic: “The state of education - how has the pandemic accelerated online learning?”

Credibility

In addition to a genuine subject line, a great way to foster authenticity lies in the sending address - or, “from” section of the email. This is just another factor that will lead your prospective student to either delete or read the email.

Here are some authentic options.

Institution name: A standard, and well-utilized option, i.e. Harvard, etc.

Personal name: A traditionally under-utilized option that allows the recipient to feel a sense of familiarity. I.e. John, Sarah etc. In this case - you can assign a persona to your marketing team, it does not need to be a real person, (although real is always safer).

Campaign-based: In this case, you would create an email address per campaign. It’s not always the most efficient but can prove effective in the long run. I.e. “Online Admissions.”

The copy - If your lead has made it past the gatekeeper that is the subject line and has decided that the sender is worthy - the next step is to ensure that your email content is not a letdown. To check if you deliver a worthy experience, run it by the 30-second summary rule. Can you get through the email in 30 seconds and know what value it provides? This test helps you make sure that your CTA and value proposition are clear and that your copy (regardless of format) is not too dense.

Here are a few things to consider when formatting your email body.

- Is your copy error-free, succinct, and enticing?
- Is your tone of voice clear?
- Is your subject matter relevant?
- Is the next step indicated, i.e. is your CTA clear?
- Is it personalized, i.e. have you addressed the recipient directly?

The design - While your chosen format will depend on your brand identity, there are elements that should be consistent. There is no harm in testing out different variations of design or no design, depending on the copy, and purpose of your email.

For example - a simple check-in with a potential student might not require any design, while a copy-heavy, value add would call for a few well-placed creatives.

Here are a few design-related to keep in mind.

Dimension - most emails are 600- 640px wide. However, to keep your image crisp on high-resolution displays, you need to make your image 2x the size (ie. 1200px)

Alt Text - If your image doesn’t load - or breaks somewhere along the sending process, Alt text is the text that will display in its place. This also makes your email more accessible.

Use images, or videos that compliment the copy - If an image doesn’t add value to the email, then it’s not necessary.

It's what we're here for

Measuring the ROI of your lead nurturing email campaigns

While every education marketer knows the value behind their work - it's vital that the value can be backed by a number. Defining your metrics at the start of a campaign ensures that no bases are missed when determining the ROI.

ROI calculates the total gain (or loss) generated by money invested in a specific campaign or action. It is commonly used to establish long-term campaign objectives and to assess the success of a specific strategy.

Basic metrics

Campaign success or failure isn't determined by a single factor, and in most cases, there are multiple attributes that can be used to measure the outcome of a campaign. Ideally, and specifically to education marketing - the defining factor would be whether or not enrollment numbers increased over a campaign period, however - due to the standard length of an ed marketing sales cycle, this might not always be the case, nor an accurate measurement of success.

Here are the most common email nurturing metrics.

Sent - How many emails successfully left your automation system.

Delivered - How many emails were sent, and not rejected by the receiving server.

Bounced - The opposite of a delivered email. Bounced emails can be further segmented. A hard bounce refers to a permanently rejected email, i.e. where the address is invalid or no longer exists, whereas a soft bounce refers to a temporary rejection, i.e. in the case where the recipient's mailbox is full.

Clicks - clicks to open rate - When your recipient clicks on a link, image, or button in your email - it registers as 'clicked'.

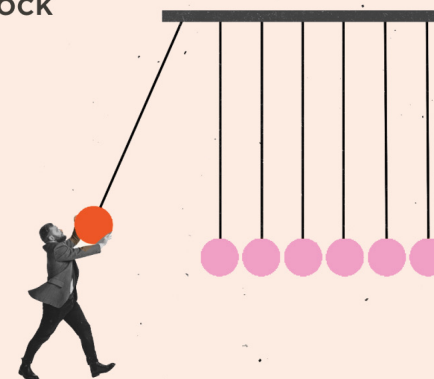
Unsubscribe rate - The number of contacts who click the 'unsubscribe' link within your email.

Percentage of emails marked as spam - This can be calculated by dividing the number of subscribers who marked your email as spam by the number of emails delivered. The ideal number would be zero - so be sure to make your content engaging, and relevant.

Opened (or open rate) - Opens are defined by the number of contacts who opened the email at least once. The open rate is the number of opens divided by the amount delivered. This can be tracked by adding a pixel (small personalized image) to your email. When the image renders, the platform that you use to automate emails will register this as opened. It should be noted that this is not the most accurate metric, and by no means that an email was read.

"Marketing's job is never done. It's about perpetual motion. We must continue to innovate every day."

-Beth Comstock



Otherwise known as vanity metrics, these basic measurements provide an indication of success or failure, while allowing room for improvement and campaign optimization.

Once the basic metrics have been discovered - there are a few advanced metrics that can be used. By combining vanity and advanced metrics, you'll be better able to ensure a cohesive strategy, and optimize your efforts to move students through your sales funnel.

Engagement - Engagement is simple - it's a way of interacting with your students on a personalized level, across platforms. This is done by listening, acting, and then optimizing. With the right tools, engagement can be tracked and measured - allowing you to improve on your campaign efforts.

Lead acceleration - By now we all know that students typically take a fair amount of time to move from 'interested' to 'enrolled', and while there aren't always campaigns that can speed their decision-making process up - you can still track, measure and optimize along the way. Identifying the average amount of time that it takes leads to move through the nurturing journey until ultimately becoming students, versus the same amount of time that it takes non-nurtured leads can provide valuable insights into your campaign efforts and lead interest.

These insights will allow you to improve, replicate, or remove a strategy where necessary.

Regardless of the outcome of a single lead nurturing campaign, it's absolutely crucial that you adopt a learning mindset. In other words, you learn from your mistakes and use them to optimize your next attempt. If your first campaign was a raving success, conduct an in-depth analysis based on all available metrics, audience, copy, creatives and messaging - **and improve on the strategy.**

Lead nurturing for increased enrollment

Finding the link between traditional and education marketing efforts

Finding the link between traditional marketing efforts and education marketing objectives can seem daunting at first, particularly if as a marketer you come from a (hard) sales-oriented background. You'll soon come to realize that while the process and funnel might look different, the objectives are much the same.

Leads = potential students

Sales = enrollment

We don't like to refer to enrollment as a sale, simply because the 'product' that we are selling is more than just something that can be bought and returned if necessary. As ed marketers, we're marketing (and selling) education, life purpose, hopes and dreams. We're not pushing products, and we're not selling an item of convenience that will be left on the shelf and forgotten about. Education is an investment, and the decision to pursue higher education is never taken lightly. While the commodity differs, when boiled down to its basic elements the journey is much the same as a traditional buyer's journey.



- A student (or parent) realizes their need for further education. (Top of the funnel)
- They begin the process of researching potential choices to fulfil that need. (Top of the funnel)
- They identify their criteria (location, cost, program etc.) and narrow their choices down to institutions that fit the narrative. (Top and middle of the funnel)
- They scrutinize each option until they are satisfied with their final choice, or choices. (Middle of the funnel)
- They make a decision to pursue their education with the chosen institution and begin the enrollment process. (Bottom of the funnel)

While there may be additional steps that a student takes along the journey, the above outlines the basic (or average) student enrollment process. By understanding this journey, you'll be better equipped to design a campaign that includes touchpoints at each stage of the funnel, increasing your chances of being 'chosen'. Compelling and creative content is a foot in the door, it is also worth noting that attracting your audience is only the first step. In ed(tech) marketing, what happens after a stranger becomes a lead is crucial.

Lead nurturing in the (higher) education context

While the 'buyers' journey is comparable to that of any industry, there are certain nuances present in (higher) education lead nurturing that are hard to ignore. These require a more strategized approach focused on intent and purpose, with multiple touchpoints spanning the entire length of the student journey, and beyond. Most institutions are already engaging in a form of a lead nurturing strategy, albeit subconsciously. An example would be that most institutions that capture information online will follow up the initial interest with a reminder, a download, or a welcome email. Unfortunately for the lead nurturing process, this is where it ends, with little to no subsequent communication.

In the context of (higher) education, lead nurturing also goes beyond an email or a drip campaign. Where there are admissions and administrative teams, deadlines and class size limits involved-communication is often conducted via phone call or an online meeting in addition to email.

The key is to evaluate the existing communication channels by conducting a high-level audit, and then improving on, optimizing, and complementing these efforts with a well-strategized lead nurturing campaign.



Conclusion

A word from Pink Orange

The (higher) education landscape is more competitive than ever, with the number of high school graduates declining, and an increasing number of colleges providing online and hybrid (and perhaps other) alternatives to traditional college programs. With several options, today's college-bound students want to know that the investment will be worthwhile.

With this in mind, it's prudent to note that the lead nurturing journey is a critical aspect of any higher education marketing strategy.

- Keep the lines of communication open
- Position your institution as the authority
- Keep your institution at the forefront of a prospect's mind
- Demonstrate that your institution is the right cultural, financial and academic fit for the prospect

Prospective students are more likely to apply and enroll if they receive relationship-building communication throughout the inquiry, and ultimately the admissions process. Analyzing the attributes of those who do convert will help you focus your student recruitment program's efforts and budget.



By now you'll understand the value that a well-strategized lead nurturing campaign can bring to your institution and strategy, with the benefits and path forward made clear. We have outlined what lead nurturing is, why it is important, how it's done, and how to measure it. This guide was created to help both seasoned and novice ed(tech) marketers navigate through the lead nurturing process while illuminating the difference between ed(tech) marketing processes and alternate industries or sectors. By implementing what you've learned in this guide, you will be well-positioned to refine your processes, define your strategy, and create campaigns that are designed to convert.

Investing in a lead nurturing strategy ensures that your institution makes the most of its marketing budget while optimizing its enrollment process and results.

Through interacting with your students (or potential students and parents) and understanding their interests and behavior through lead nurturing campaigns, you will gain a deeper understanding of their intent, increase the relevancy of future lead nurturing campaigns, and ultimately benefit from more and higher quality leads, increasing conversion rates and driving institutional enrollment growth.