Automate Smarter:

A Primer Into the World of Automation
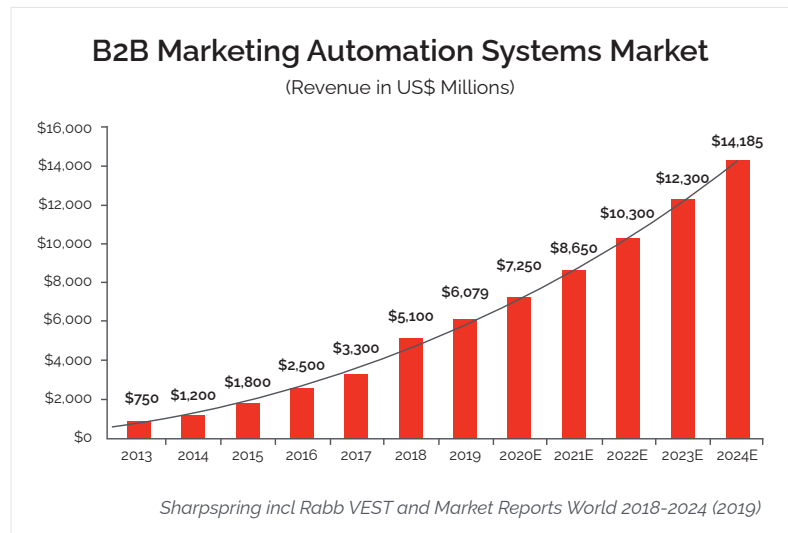
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What is Marketing Automation?

Marketing automation is a technology used by organizations of all sizes to increase efficiency across their marketing teams. With an automation platform in place, marketers can automate a number of their ongoing processes like deploying email touchpoints, qualifying prospects, and nurturing prospects through the lead funnel. However, automation is not just a way to increase efficiency. It also allows you to elevate your marketing efforts through its ability to generate unique personalized experiences for prospects and customers, on a mass scale, via dynamic insertion of content. With this type of personalization, you can excite prospects and customers with communications that speak directly to their unique wants, needs, and concerns. While this level of customization used to require ample manual effort (and a significant budget), with the use of automation, this can now be accomplished quickly and without breaking the bank.

B2B Marketing Automation Systems Market
(Revenue in US$ Millions)

Year	Revenue
2013	$750
2014	$1,200
2015	$1,800
2016	$2,500
2017	$3,300
2018	$5,100
2019	$6,079
2020E	$7,250
2021E	$8,650
2022E	$10,300
2023E	$12,300
2024E	$14,185

Sharpspring incl Rabb VEST and Market Reports World 2018-2024 (2019)

Changes to Marketing Automation in the Last 5 Years

In the past, the high price of marketing automation software has made it cost prohibitive for companies with smaller marketing budgets. However, as more solutions have entered the market and subscription costs have declined, automation has become accessible to companies of all sizes. Today, marketers at small and medium-sized businesses with modest budgets can leverage automated tactics previously only available via enterprise-level software. As a result, more marketing teams are using automation than ever before. Today, "75% of marketers say they currently use at least one type of marketing automation tool" (source). The proliferation of marketing automation also means that organizations who do not deploy customized and personalized experiences will come across as less sophisticated than their competition.
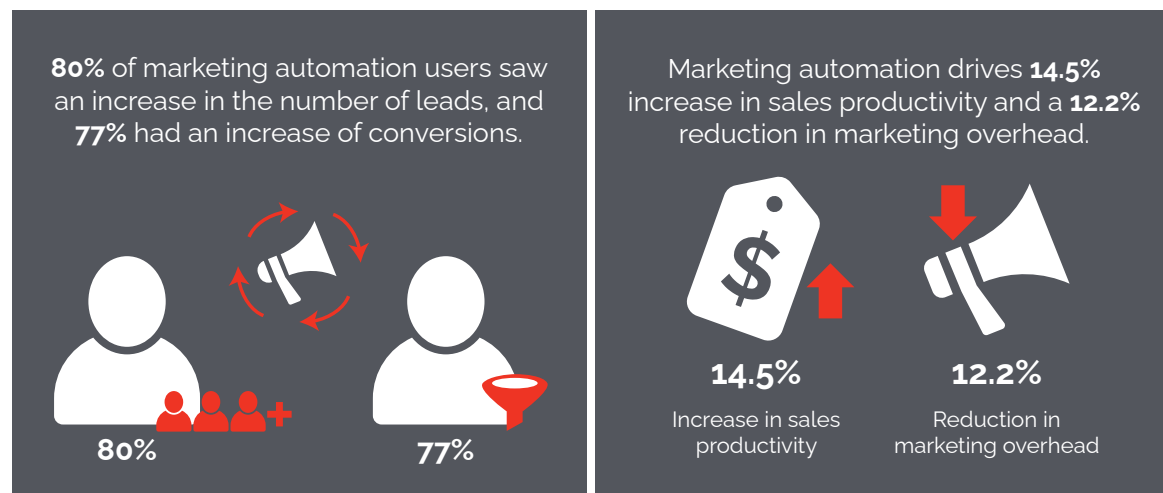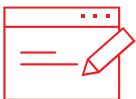
Why Businesses Use Automation

Marketing automation is more popular than ever as it provides organizations a means to reach a larger audience, deploy more touchpoints, and create personalized engagements, all without adding headcount or slowing a team's output. Channels the likes of paid search, social media, email and even traditional direct mail, can all use automation to augment their campaigns.

At the core of automation is the workflow, which uses a series of "if/then" behavior- and time-based triggers to send a series of email touch points to prospects and customers. With these automated messages, you are able to set up logic, based on behaviors and timing, so your contacts receive the most appropriate touchpoint at every stage of their customer journey.

Also note that the applications for automation are not limited to email marketing. Most every marketing activity can benefit from automation. Take paid search as an example. Let's say you have a PPC campaign that points users to a dedicated landing page with a contact form. When a user completes that contact form, if tied to an automated sequence, you can have them automatically added to your CRM, have a salesperson assigned to the lead, and have a task created to set up a call or meeting. With automation the possibilities are endless.

80% of marketing automation users saw an increase in the number of leads, and **77%** had an increase of conversions.

80% **77%**

Marketing automation drives **14.5%** increase in sales productivity and a **12.2%** reduction in marketing overhead.

14.5%
Increase in sales productivity

12.2%
Reduction in marketing overhead

Source

Marketing Automation Platforms to Consider

Marketing automation assists marketers by providing an abundance of opportunities to streamline processes. However, there are a myriad of automation solutions out there with a wide range of capabilities and features. So do your homework upfront as it is essential to know how each platform's features align to your business's specific requirements. To this end, we have outlined the pros and cons of three of the most popular marketing automation platforms available. While this is not an exhaustive list, it should help you get started rightsizing a platform to meet your needs.

HubSpot

HubSpot is an inbound marketing platform that helps companies attract, delight, and convert their customers. It's one of the most popular automation platforms in the market, ranked, as the HubSpot website states, #1 according to 100,000 companies in 65 different countries.

Pros:

HubSpot's key benefit is that it is a fully integrated all-in-one solution for your marketing, sales, and service teams. The main advantage is that all of your data for the different Hubs are in one place for easy accessibility. Each of these core "hubs" are tied together through HubSpot's powerful customer relationship management system (CRM). HubSpot's CRM arms sales, marketing, and service teams with comprehensive contact and company records. This means each and every communication you have with the customer/prospect is informed by all the interactions that have happened previously. The right hand will always know what the left is doing!

Benefits of Operations Automation

A bar chart titled "Benefits of Operations Automation". The y-axis is labeled "Most Cited Benefits" ranging from 5% to 35%. The x-axis is labeled "Principal Benefits of Automation" with categories: Cost Reduction (~30%), Productivity (~28%), Availability (~25%), Reliability (~14%), Performance (~4%).

Source: HelpSystems

To build on the platform's value, HubSpot continues to innovate. In the last few years, the company has added features to the platform that include chat bots, an ad management system, shared conversation inboxes, and document tracking systems, not to mention their best-in-class automation tools. HubSpot also offers courses and certifications to help you learn more about tools and how to utilize them.

Cons:

Despite all the positives to HubSpot (and there are many), to put it plainly, the platform is an investment. Although the free features offset some costs, HubSpot is higher-priced than some other platforms out there and requires a long-term commitment. Further, the setup fees and other expenses associated with migrating to the platform can be costly. Although HubSpot will save you time in the long run, onboarding your team so they can fully leverage the platform will take extensive time and energy. Finally, while a contract may only be 6 or 12 months, migrating all your internal processes to the HubSpot ecosystem will make it somewhat difficult to break from the platform in the future. So be sure you're fully committed as an organization to HubSpot and all it has to offer before making the commitment.
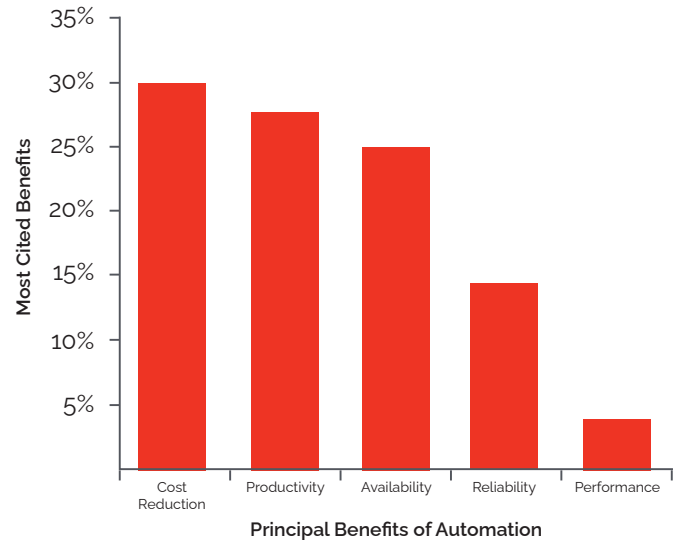
Price Point:

HubSpot's CRM is completely free. Marketing Hub, Sales Hub, and Service Hub are available via four pricing tiers, which do fluctuate. Currently those plans include:

Starter	**Professional**	**Enterprise**
($50/month)	($400–$800/month)	($1,200– $3,200/month)

Service Hub Free Trial	**$0 a Month**	**$50 a Month**	**$400 a Month**	**$1,200 a Month**
	Good for one person. Ticketing, live chat, email and chat to ticket, 5 canned, snippets, 1 meeting link per month.	Adds conversation routing, more meeting scheduling options, canned snippet, email templates and email sequences. 1 free user,	You can build a knowledge base, add Salesforce integration, phone support and customer feedback. 5 free users.	Work in multiple currencies, add custom reporting, goals, 1,000 playbooks per month, etc...

Sales Hub Free Trial	**$0 a Month**	**$50 a Month**	**$500 a Month**	**$1,200 a Month**
	A good selection of tools with limited use. For example, email tracking is limited to 200 emails. You can call users for 15 mins, etc...	Adds calling time (8 hours) unlimited email tracking, email sequences and conversation bots. 1 free user.	Adds phone support, 300 sales automation workflows, Salesforce integration, and more. Also 5 free users.	Adds English call transcription, 30 e-signatures per month, predictive lead scoring, up to 1,000 playbooks, etc... 10 free users

Marketing Hub Free Trial	**$0 a Month**	**$50 a Month**	**$890 a Month**	**$3,200 a Month**
	Tools like forms, team emails, and basic chat bots. 2,000 email ends/mo	Adds lead capture forms, ads and email marketing, amongst others. Email sends: 5x contacts	Adds all the inbound marketing features like SEO & content strategy, landing pages, calls to action, phone support, etc... Email sends: 10X contacts	This gives you the whole package, including sophisticated analytics, CMS membership, custom reports and Youtube integration... Email sends: 20X contacts

HubSpot CRM Free Plan	**Free**	**Starter**	**Professional**	**Enterprise**
	The service is 100% free. You can add unlimited users and 1M contacts.	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: EmailToolTester

MailChimp is a modestly priced email and automation platform that helps you manage email communications to your clients, customers, and other interested parties. While a starter platform, it has some features that pack a punch for the price.

Pros:

MailChimp is great place to start if you are dipping your toe in the marketing automation pool. It offers an easy-to-use platform that supports automated email campaigns, with basic time- and behavior-based triggers. MailChimp also provides clear and concise reporting, drag and drop template design, plain and HTML email support, and, of course, the crucial multi-touch email sequences. The platform offers a generous free plan and has a variety of pricing tiers designed for growing organizations. Their free plan can be an excellent solution for small companies with tight budgets and a small database of contacts.

Cons:

Although MailChimp can be cost-effective, its pricing is directly tied to the number of contacts you add to the platform. So, the more contacts you add, the higher the cost for the platform will be. A huge contact database can make the cost of MailChimp skyrocket. MailChimp does not have features that compare with higher priced platforms. Further, when compared to the competitors, MailChimp does not offer the more advanced automation behavioral triggers and other tools available in platforms like HubSpot.

Price Point:

2,000 Subscribers	2,500 Subscribers	10,000 Subscribers	15,000 Subscribers	20,000 Subscribers	25,000 Subscribers	30,000 Subscribers	50,000 Subscribers
$0/mo	$29.99/mo	$75.99/mo	$129/mo	$159/mo	$189/mo	$219/mo	$259/mo

Source: EmailToolTester

Marketo is primarily used by medium-sized businesses and offers tools for marketing automation, lead management, email marketing, and more. While at one time a leader in the marketing platform field, today it's taken somewhat of a backseat to HubSpot and other solutions.

Pros:

Marketo offers a solid solution for to deploying, measuring, and optimizing marketing automation campaigns. With the platform, marketers can design, and launch sophisticated

marketing campaigns. Additionally, through robust reporting capabilities, you can quickly determine how various marketing activities, programs, and channels are impacting revenue. The platform also offers a variety of valuable tools for marketing teams, not limited to marketing automation.

Cons:

With Marketo's positive aspects it also comes with some significant drawbacks. The platform is known to have a steep learning curve. This is especially true for some of the platform's key features, like email automation. Also, for the cost, it's significant that Marketo does not have a proprietary, built-in CRM. Rather it requires you to integrate with your existing CRM or subscribe to one, like Salesforce, separately. This adds extra costs that are not included in the already expensive platform. By not providing a built-in CRM, the automation platform's dynamic insertion capabilities are somewhat limited. Further, some marketers feel Marketo's interface is outdated and needs general UX improvements. These issues are felt the most in areas like the email template builder, which can be cumbersome to use.

Price Point:

Spark	Standard	Select
FROM	FROM	FROM
$159/mo	**$1,795**/mo	**$3,195**/mo
10,000 Records	10,000 Records	10,000 Records
Email Marketing	Includes all of Spark, plus:	Includes all of Standard, plus:
Customer Engagement Engine	A/B Testing	Advanced Revenue Analytics
Communication Limits	Advanced Lead Scoring	Advanced Email Analytics
Lead Management/Nuture/Score	Advanced Dynamic Content	Time-Series Data Warehouse
Event Marketing & Webinars	Progressive Profiling for Forms	Advanced Custom Reports
Marketing Calendar	Extended Integrations & API	Social Sweepstakes & Referrals
SEO	Marketing Program Analyzer	Role-Based Permissions
Social Boost	Revenue Cycle Modeler	-
CRM Integration	Revenue Analyzers	-
5 Sales Insight Users	10 Sales Insight Users (total)	20 Sales Insight Users (Total)
5 Marketing Calendar Users	5 Marketing Calendar Users	5 Marketing Calendar Users

Source: Marketing Automation Insider

Conclusion

Marketing Automation has significantly changed the landscape and future of marketing. Today it is essential that every organization email marketing leverage marketing automation, as the norm is customized, personal, email messages that account for a prospect/customer's unique experience and journey with your brand.

If you are looking to add automation to your marketing mix, the most critical first step is to choose an automation platform that meets your organization's specific needs. But the good news is there are countless platforms available that can meet your specific requirements. So to start, you should determine the size of your email database, the types of messages you will deploy, the types of customization you will need, and so forth. From there, you can then begin selecting a platform, paying careful attention to contract/subscription requirements, and unique platform considerations.

While we have listed out a few of the major platforms available to you, this list is in no way exhaustive. You can also consider platforms like Pardot, Active Campaign, Eloqua, among others. We recommend you check review sites and read what marketers have experienced using the platform for any potential solution. This will help you make sure that it's the right fit before you commit to a platform and will meet your functional requirements.

TribalVision
HELPING BUSINESS MARKET SMARTER

About TribalVision

As an outsourced marketing department for hire, TribalVision's mission is to help organizations grow. This is achieved by combining intelligent strategy with tactical execution in a hands-on, results-driven manner. TribalVision utilizes its clients' marketing budgets as efficiently and intelligently as possible – ensuring that each dollar spent maximizes awareness and generates new business. TribalVision's unique marketing model is designed to fully align interests with client outcomes – guaranteeing an objective, client-first partnership. This is demonstrated in the firm's fee-based compensation structure, "roll up your sleeves" mindset, metrics-driven approach, and role as a trusted marketing resource tasked to help navigate organizations to higher grounds.

To learn more, visit www.TribalVision.com.