

COVID KILLED THE COLD CALL



WHY DIGITAL NURTURE IS MORE ESSENTIAL THAN EVER IN B2B MARKETING

Marketers know that digital nurture is no simple endeavor. Yet, with the right support and strategy, the payoff is worth the effort. In this guide, we'll lay the framework for setting up an effective digital nurture strategy—and explore why, in the age of COVID, digital nurture has never been more imperative for brands to succeed.

B2B'S NEW BUYER JOURNEY & THE CASE FOR DIGITAL NURTURE

The modern B2B education and buying process has undergone a sweeping digital transformation in the last few years. The search engine has become the first step in decision making. Email marketing and social media allow for outreach and engagement with buyers throughout all phases of the buyer journey. Information abounds and decision makers are only becoming increasingly savvy in their research—challenging B2B marketers to continually surround prospects with personalized, relevant content that cuts through the noise.

With **70% of the buying process**⁶ happening online and buyers' wanting to work independently before speaking seriously with a sales rep, it's crucial that marketers develop potential leads in an unobtrusive, virtual manner. B2B brands and marketers must optimize their strategy to capitalize on the shift towards self-guided learning. This need has been compounded in the age of COVID and the normalization of working from home.

Digital nurture—the strategic placement of certain content in front of prospects based on their stage in the buyer journey—was designed to accommodate the new way that B2B buyers make decisions.

While marketers know that digital nurture is no simple endeavor, with the right support and strategy, the payoff is worth the effort. In this guide, we'll lay the framework for setting up an effective digital nurture strategy—and explore why, in the age of COVID, digital nurture has never been more imperative for brands to succeed.



61%

Buyers' research begins with search engine queries link¹

75%

Purchases are made online²

B2B MARKETING IN A CHANGING BUYING ENVIRONMENT

Marketers are finding themselves in a new landscape. With COVID's lasting impact on B2B working environments, and the inevitability that a large portion of the workforce — **likely upwards of 30%**¹³ — will continue to work from home, much has changed.

New products and solutions are needed to support those working from home. While potential buyers were once in need of digital security for entire office buildings, they are now in search of solutions to make individuals secure on personal devices at home. Products like those used for virtual conferencing have become more integral than ever — in April of 2020, **Zoom was hosting 300 million daily meeting participants**¹⁴.

The disposition of leads working from home has seen a significant shift as well. What was once a call to an business line and a buttoned-up professional in their office is now often a premature and invasive step into to a buyer's home. Boundaries between work and home are blurred, and marketers need to adapt to the changed attitude of the person they are reaching out to.

With all of this transition for both buyers and marketers, it is clear that new methods and guiding principles need to be developed and adopted.



25-30%

Of the workforce working at home on a multiple-days-a-week basis by the end of 2020¹³

WHY DIGITAL NURTURE?

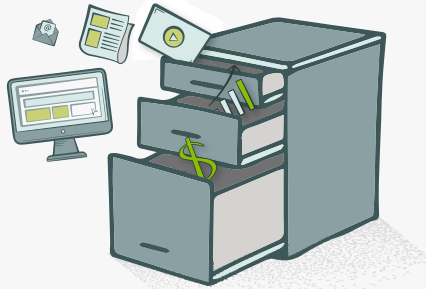
The cold call is ineffective and, now more than ever, a detriment to creating a successful relationship with a buyer and closing a sale. Instead, sales teams should be focusing their energy, time, and expertise on qualified leads who have already been nurtured and self-educated.

With **nurtured leads producing, on average, a 20% increase in sales opportunities⁵** and **60% of B2B buyers reporting that they are only ready to talk to a salesperson once they've done research and created a shortlist³**, digital nurture is a clear path forward to more successful B2B marketing.

Companies that excel at lead nurturing generate **50% more sales leads at **33%** lower cost.⁷**

HOW TO: DIGITAL NURTURE

Utilize this guide as a framework for getting started on your company's digital nurture path. The following pages will delve more deeply into each of these steps.



1

Develop and organize content based on learning stages and buyers.



2

Set up and automate nurture tracks to focus attention on serious leads.



3

Surround audience with multi or omni channel approach to diversify and broaden the contact with potential buyers.



4

Consider solutions to cultivate self-nurture and provide relevant buyer data.

1. DEVELOP AND ORGANIZE CONTENT

Organizing content based on learning stage and type of buyer is a critical starting place when building a nurture track framework. Not only does this make space for lead scoring and assignment of points for pieces of consumed content, but also makes it clear where there are gaps and a need for more diverse content.

For early learn or discovery stage nurturing, simple pieces like infographics or short videos help build brand awareness and illuminate common pain points that your brand can promise to solve.

For middle learn or consideration stage nurturing, content like case studies become helpful in giving readers a use case for your solution to a common, real-world challenge.

For the final stage—decision—detailed information like pricing pages and vendor comparison guides or battlecards are most relevant.

Take stock of what content has already been created. Organize your content inventory by solution, benefit, and learning stage. Ultimately, your content library needs to traverse this learning progression and be varied in type and order to reach different kinds of buyers.



75%

Of buyers said winning vendor's content had a significant impact on buying decision⁶



70%

Of buyers watch a video during research⁸

2. SET UP AND AUTOMATE NURTURE TRACKS

Creating a digital nurture track allows potential buyers to self-progress or self-eliminate as they move through or fall out of the sales cycle—and your funnel. Eliminating leads in this way allows for greater focus on and success with the leads who remain.

Designing and executing your nurture tracks can be done manually, but many enterprise-level marketing automation softwares come equipped with 'set it and forget it' nurture track capabilities that allow you to load content, data, and nurture rules at the start of a campaign and automate the process for you.

With a well-designed nurture track, appropriately-leveled content is purposely delivered to prospective leads throughout their learning and buying progression. This may be based on previous content engagement or on a lead scoring system.

Consider utilizing a lead scoring framework or solution to assess your leads based on persona and content engagement, so that your sales team only needs to put forth their efforts with serious buyers that meet a scoring threshold.



20%

Nurtured leads produce, on average, a 20% increase in sales opportunities⁵

4-10x

Lead nurturing emails get 4-10 times the response rate compared to standalone email blasts⁵

3. SURROUND YOUR AUDIENCE WITH A MULTI-CHANNEL APPROACH

Solely relying on email and web content can impede your nurturing goals. Use a multi-channel approach to branch out beyond the standalone email and create more opportunities for prospects to engage with your content.

Buyers are looking for more diverse modalities to access information. **84% of C-level and VP-level B2B buyers report that social media has an impact on their decision making¹², and 80% are using a mobile device while at work⁹.** Social media platforms, display ads, paid search, etc. increase opportunities for reconnecting with a potential buyer in a holistic way without constant invasion of their inbox.



17

Meaningful interactions
before a purchase is made¹⁰

84%

Of C-level and VP-level B2B
buyers report that social media
has an impact on their decision
making¹²

80%

Are using a mobile device
while at work⁹

4. CONSIDER A SOLUTION TO CULTIVATE SELF-NURTURE

When you can, work smarter, not harder. Traditional digital nurture tracks can be cumbersome to set up. Fortunately, there are solutions, tools, and creative options on the market that are designed to deliver the same high-quality leads while eliminating some of the legwork—both for yourself and your prospects.

The use of technology to assist your company in its effort to nurture leads and close sales can go beyond the automation of the nurture track. Create a more seamless environment for prospects to self-nurture by optimizing your execution and minimizing the actions that buyers need to take.

Martech like Visionayr is designed to encourage self-nurturing by consolidating multiple tiers of content onto a single, non-gated microsite. Backend technology and analytics track prospects that have viewed multiple pieces of content and met engagement time thresholds, allowing marketers to quickly identify high-quality, self-nurtured potential buyers.

Investing in innovative solutions that support your overall B2B marketing goals rather than just traditional nurture processes will better position your brand to engage an increasingly savvy audience of modern B2B buyers.

IN A STUDY OF 38,000+ B2B DECISION MAKERS:

19.1%

When presented with a collection of ungated content on a single microsite, **19.1% of visitors** self-nurtured by viewing multiple assets¹⁵

15.73%

Of all asset views were part of a self-nurture scenario in which additional content viewed would not have been available via traditional push methods¹⁵

IS DIGITAL NURTURE WORTH THE EFFORT?

The B2B buyer is savvy and capable. When you work with the inclination and want for an independent and self-guided education cycle, you will see results. Digital nurture is the path to truly invested leads—leads that will convert into sales. Yes, the path is long, with **more than half of B2B sales cycles taking more than 7 months.**¹¹ Yet while there are challenges and hurdles to crafting an effective nurture framework, it is ultimately worth the effort.

Empower your potential buyers with purposeful content that resonates with their needs. Empower your sales team to utilize data and connect with leads who are at the appropriate phase of learning and buying. If your marketing automation isn't setup for advanced nurturing, seek a demand gen partner that can help you design and execute a robust nurture strategy. One thing's for certain—with a **20% increase in sales opportunity**⁵ from nurtured leads and digital engagement on the rise, it's clear that digital nurture is here to stay as an essential component of a successful B2B sales strategy.



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Founded in 2012, Selling Simplified Group, Inc. is headquartered in Denver, CO with offices in Auckland, Bengaluru, Hong Kong, Korea, London, Noida, Pune, Singapore, Sydney, Toronto, and Vietnam. As a controller of over 170M B2B records in its proprietary database, SSG takes a holistic, intent-driven approach to demand generation and martech solutions. All hosted under its demandcenter platform, their exclusive marketing technology stack provides innovative, intelligent, and compliant solutions to identifying, analyzing, and capturing B2B demand backed by enriched, intent-based data.



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