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The following piece was ghost-written for Jonathan Herrick, CEO of Hatchback. You can access the live article [here](#).

Getting Personal: 3 Steps to Personalizing Your Automated Email Campaigns

You'll win more business with personalized automated email campaigns -- here's how to do it.

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Today's top marketers have moved beyond the cold, dry, one-size-fits-all email campaign. Instead, they're turning to machines to deliver highly relevant emails based on a variety of factors, such as clients' latest purchases, abandoned shopping carts, recent page views and more. Indeed, IDC and Criteo recently surveyed 459 marketing executives and found that [34 percent](#) were currently using marketing personalization technology to win more business.

In particular, 32 percent said they use digitized marketing to a great extent, and 10 percent said they use this technology exclusively. More companies are augmenting their marketing strategies with intelligent technology because when armed with the right information, you can carefully segment your messages to address your most valuable prospects' needs. And the good news is that personalization is available to all businesses -- large and small.

The following steps will help you design and implement an automated, personalized email strategy that resonates with prospects and whisks them through your sales funnel.

1. Segment your data like a pro.

Your message is only as good as your data, and your data is only valuable if you segment along the right lines. It may be tempting to

segment by [industry or geographical region](#), for example, but these broad factors alone will never give your emails the level of personalization they need to stand out.

Related: [4 Unconventional Ways to Use Your CRM Software](#)

Picture this scenario: You're browsing the internet for HR management software, and you end up on two separate mailing lists. You receive a generic message from Company A, which makes a passing reference to your industry. Then, you receive a message from a sales rep at Company B who references the e-book you downloaded, mentions your website, offers an additional resource that fits your needs and gives you a link to her calendar to make an appointment for a demo.

Which message would grab your attention and push you to the next level of engagement? If you answered "Company B," you're not alone. According to [Forrester](#), we're well into the "Age of the Customer," in which consumers expect brands' interactions with them to be personalized, immediate and valuable.

It behooves businesses to deliver on these expectations. According to Harvard Business Review, personalization can bring a [return on investment of five to eight times](#) your marketing investment, and it can boost sales by 10 percent -- sometimes more. A small business customer relationship management system is ideal for collecting the type of data that allows for this level of segmentation, and you'll see results if you send the right content at the right time.

2. Predict what customers want -- and when they want it.

This is where the science of segmentation meets the art of marketing. Prospects will give you clues that tell you where they are in the sales cycle, and you can analyze that data to better understand buyer behavior.

For example, if customers spend the majority of their time viewing high-level webpages that talk about the fundamentals of your product or service, they're likely in the information gathering stage. If they go

straight to the pricing page, they're probably further along in the sales cycle. Design your campaigns accordingly.

Related: [The 7 Elements of an Irresistibly Compelling Offer](#)

Businesses use [intelligent chat tools](#) to capture prospects' data. At Hatchback, we work to gather this information as quickly as possible. Shortly after a prospect visits our homepage, our chatbot "HatchBot" pops up and asks, "What brings you here?" The prospect can either leave a message or click on one of three options: "Book a Demo," "Schedule a Chat" or "Just Browsing." Based on the answer, HatchBot asks for additional information and moves the prospect along the sales cycle.

Keep in mind that HatchBot is not out to fool anyone -- it's obvious our visitors are talking to a machine. Rather than imitating a genuine human interaction, our goal is to give our visitors immediate control over their online experience. In return, they give us data that helps us pinpoint our marketing message.

The technique is so effective that a number of large corporations, including [Facebook, Unilever and CNN](#), use chatbots in various capacities across their organizations. And in fact, an Aspect Software Research study found that [44 percent of American consumers](#) would prefer to interact with a well-designed chatbot.

3. Test automation triggers and stick with the best ones.

According to a 2017 [MarketingSherpa survey](#) of 2,400 consumers, 26 percent of them unsubscribe from email lists because they receive too many emails in general, and 19 percent unsubscribe when they receive too many emails from a single company.

The lesson here is to limit your emails to those that will truly benefit your prospects, and the best way to do that is to choose the right automation triggers.

Related: [The Face of Intelligent Marketing? Your Customer.](#)

This might include sending an email about a free e-book if the prospect read a blog piece on the same subject, or it could mean sending a message to a client who started to fill out a form but gave up halfway through. Experiment with different triggers, note each prospect's response and see what works.

In the end, personalization is equal parts art and science. Combine your intuitive understanding of your customers' psychology with the hard, factual data that their online behavior reveals. It takes time, effort and a fair bit of tweaking, but a carefully planned and implemented personalization strategy can pay off in the long run.