

**ENTERPRISE MARKETING
PLAYBOOK SERIES**

REVENUE SUCCESS:
**LEAD GENERATION
CAMPAIGN TESTING
AND OPTIMIZATION**



Introduction

With larger sends and bigger budgets, it is imperative for enterprise marketers to run A/B tests when trying out new techniques, layouts or messaging for campaigns. Optimizing and improving conversion rates can make a big difference in marketing ROI and lead to proven tactics and techniques organizations can adopt over time.



REVENUE SUCCESS: LEAD GENERATION CAMPAIGN TESTING AND OPTIMIZATION

WHAT CAN YOU TEST IN YOUR LEAD GENERATION CAMPAIGNS?

When it comes to lead generation, the more you test, the more you know. You can't optimize your lead generation unless you test it first. But many marketers don't know where to start with testing—you need a clear plan of attack.

First, use control groups. Apply the program or treatment that you want to measure to only one subset of your target buyer group, and leave the rest of the group as-is. All other factors being equal, you'll be able to attribute any difference in buyer behavior to the program.

You can also test almost anything:

- Programs and tactics. Did a particular webinar have an impact on conversions?
- Messages. Which message and/or copy resonated the most with our target audience?
- Contact frequency. How often should we send an email?
- Spending levels. What happens if we double investment in display advertising?

It's also possible to measure combinations of "touches" (actions taken by your company to engage leads) rather than individual touches. This is a great way to test lead nurturing tactics—it allows you to test and measure the effectiveness of an entire lead nurturing track, rather than the effectiveness of individual emails or offers. Should you want to test multiple campaigns at one time, you can use multivariate testing methods.

"When it comes to optimizing websites for lead conversion, the biggest mistake people make is not running tests based on both quantitative and qualitative data. By understanding why your visitors aren't converting before you create new A/B tests, you are more likely to boost your conversion rate."

– Neil Patel,
Co-Founder, KISSmetrics



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TESTING TYPES

The two most common types of testing are A/B testing and multivariate testing; you can run either (or both) on your lead generation programs. Services like Visual Website Optimizer (VWO), and Optimizely can help you take your testing to the next level. But first, you'll need to know how you want to test.

A/B Testing

A/B testing, or split testing, compares the conversion rates of two assets (such as landing pages, emails, or website pages) by splitting the traffic or email send between both, and then comparing results. You can also perform A/B/C tests and A/B/C/D tests.

A/B testing your lead generation assets and campaigns is inherently simple, as you're only testing a single variable at a time. This makes it easier to form actionable conclusions. A/B testing is also the ideal choice for smaller companies with less traffic or smaller databases—as the amount of traffic or leads couldn't handle a more complex test.

Multivariate Testing

Multivariate testing compares a much larger number of variables, and produces more complex information. With multivariate testing, you can compare a combination of multiple designs, CTAs, imagery, and copy choices. To run a conclusive multivariate test, you need to show statistically significant numbers of leads your different combinations. Because high traffic or large databases are needed to run a multivariate test to its full potential, they are best for large companies.

How long should you run an A/B test?

According to Neil Patel at KISSmetrics, you should run A/B tests for at least a week: “Even if you hit statistically significant conversion rates, these will vary a lot during the first few days of a test. Also, your variations should produce at least 100 conversions before you consider running them off.”

REVENUE SUCCESS: LEAD GENERATION CAMPAIGN TESTING AND OPTIMIZATION

THE 5 STEP TESTING PROCESS

According to Optimizely, a website optimization platform and leader in online testing, here are the five steps every company should take before launching a test.



Step 1: Define Success

Determine what you want to achieve through testing. What are your ultimate success metrics? What will you improve through testing and optimization?

For lead generation, consider the successes that turn into clicks, conversions, and leads—think of these as macro-conversions. Next, consider microconversions—smaller steps you want leads to take, such as clicking a button, watching a video, or sharing a blog post.

Step 2: Identify Bottlenecks

Identify what isn't working. Maybe you're getting a lot of traffic to a key website page, but people aren't actually converting or downloading your gated ebook. Ultimately, it's the bottleneck that you will want to test.

Step 3: Construct a Hypothesis

Determine a possible solution. If no one's filling out your form, maybe you need to shorten the number of fields, move the form to a different part of the page, or change the download button color. Your first hypothesis might be that your forms will work better with three fields instead of five. This is only your starting place—experiment, continually validating or invalidating your hypotheses to form new ones.

Step 4: Prioritize

Prioritize your hypotheses based on predicted impact. For instance, you might predict that moving your form will have more impact than shortening your form, so test the new form location first. Depending on your resources, you can always run multiple tests.

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THE 5 STEP TESTING PROCESS

Step 5: Test

Time to test! Read on for a series of best practices for running accurate, conclusive tests.

Isolate Variables, Identify Your Control

Your control is the unchanged version of your email or landing page—the version you’ve already been using. For an A/B test, choose one variable of the control to isolate and change; for a multivariate test, isolate multiple variables.

Marketo recently ran a simple email marketing A/B test, in which we changed a single aspect of our “From” address. In this test, we used our usual “From” address (“Marketo Premium Content”) as our control, and tried a personal “From” address with half of our emails in a particular campaign:

With approximately 1000 more opens and 500 more clicks, the personal address was much more successful. Our confidence level was 99%, meaning that our results were 99% reliable, rather than due to chance. For a test like this, a confidence level above 95% is commonly considered “statistically significant”. And because we isolated only one factor, we were able to easily identify the reason for the higher number of clicks. Marketo now uses personal names in our email sends whenever we can.

Control:

From: **Marketo Premium Content** <ryanh@marketo.com>
To: Miles Gotcher
Cc:
Subject: TEST | [New Gartner Report] The 2013 Leaders in CRM Lead Management

Test:

From: **Ryan Hammer** <ryanh@marketo.com>
To: Miles Gotcher
Cc:
Subject: TEST | [New Gartner Report] The 2013 Leaders in CRM Lead Management

Marketo's email marketing A/B control and test

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Use a Large Enough Sample Size

The larger the sample size, the stronger your results will be. That being said, you obviously want to use the winning version as soon as you can. If you start too big, you'll expose half of a huge group to a less effective email, landing page, or website page. The best practice is to start out on the smaller side, keeping in mind that you can always repeat the test if your company needs extra convincing. Or you can leave the landing page test running a little longer to build the sample size.

Eliminate Confounding Variables

Be sure to control for any extraneous factors that could be affecting the results. To reduce these factors, you don't just need to leave your control unchanged—in an A/B email test, for example, you'd also need to send your test emails at the same time, have your two versions of your landing page running simultaneously, and make sure that the test is randomized. If you're using Marketo, you could send the two versions of your email to a random sample of 50% of your designated email list. You could also equally split the traffic to your landing page URL between the two different versions of your landing page.

Draw Appropriate Conclusions

Once you have your results, determine whether a statistically significant difference exists between your two versions. Instead of performing the significance tests yourself, you can simply search online for "A/B testing significance calculator", or "email testing significance calculator". It's never a bad idea to use two different online calculators to double-check your results.

QUICK CHECKLIST: 30 THINGS TO A/B TEST FOR LEAD GENERATION

Calls-to-Action

1. Buy now? Purchase? Check out? Add to cart? Change your CTA text on your buttons to see which word or phrase converts the most visitors.
2. Vary the location of your CTA button—make some more prominent than others.
3. Test different colors, shapes, and sizes for CTA buttons on your website.

Content

4. Test gated content against non-gated content. Find out which gets more downloads and whether users are willing to fill out forms.
5. Test how your content is displayed. Do users prefer to scroll down the page, or click through to another page to learn more?

Copy

6. Test different headline texts. Try headlines that are more straightforward, goofy, or creative.
7. Test paragraphs vs. bulleted lists.
8. Test shorter vs. longer copy on your website, emails, and landing pages.

Visual Media

9. Test different types of imagery on your landing page—people vs. products vs. illustrations are a good place to start.
10. See how stock images stack up against images of your employees or customers in action.
11. Test auto-play against click-to-play.

Site Navigation

12. Test the order of your menu items in your site navigation.
13. Test the display of your navigation bar. Do visitors prefer a horizontal or vertical orientation?

Forms

14. Test the length of sign-up forms.
15. Try a special offer, discount, or promotion to increase signups.
16. Try asking for different information in your form fields.

Mobile Site

17. Try different displays and navigation options. Blinds, buttons, and blocks are a good place to start.

Ads

18. Test the headlines on your paid campaigns to see what gets more clicks.
19. Try changing the display URL on your ad.
20. Try different landing page variations—copy, image, CTA, and form.

Social

21. Change the size and placement of your social icons to see what compels users to share more often.
22. Test different images in social ads. See which ones get the best results.

Email

23. Test length and copy of your email subject lines.
24. Test personalized vs. un-personalized emails by using the recipient's name in the subject or email text.
25. Find the optimal time to reach your audience by measuring open rates on different days of the week and at different times.

Personalization

26. Test different page designs and messaging for new vs. returning visitors.
27. Test auto-filling form fields related to a visitor's site location.
28. Create seasonal or location-based offers and test them on visitors living in specific locations.

Pricing and Shipping

29. Test a free trial offer vs. a free demo offer for short-term and long-term conversions.
30. Test annual billing vs. monthly billing on your pricing page. Which generates more subscriptions?

**About Marketo:
Marketing Software.
Easy, Powerful, Complete.**

Marketo (NASDAQ: MKTO) provides the leading cloud-based marketing software platform for companies of all sizes to build and sustain engaging customer relationships. Spanning today's digital, social, mobile and offline channels, the Marketo® solution includes a complete suite of applications that help organizations acquire new customers more efficiently, maximize customer loyalty and lifetime value, improve sales effectiveness, and provide analytical insight into marketing's contribution to revenue growth.

Marketo's applications are known for their breakthrough ease-of-use, and are complemented by the Marketing Nation™, a thriving network of more than 190 LaunchPoint™ ecosystem partners and over 40,000 marketers who share and learn from each other to grow their collective marketing expertise. The result for modern marketers is unprecedented agility and superior results.

