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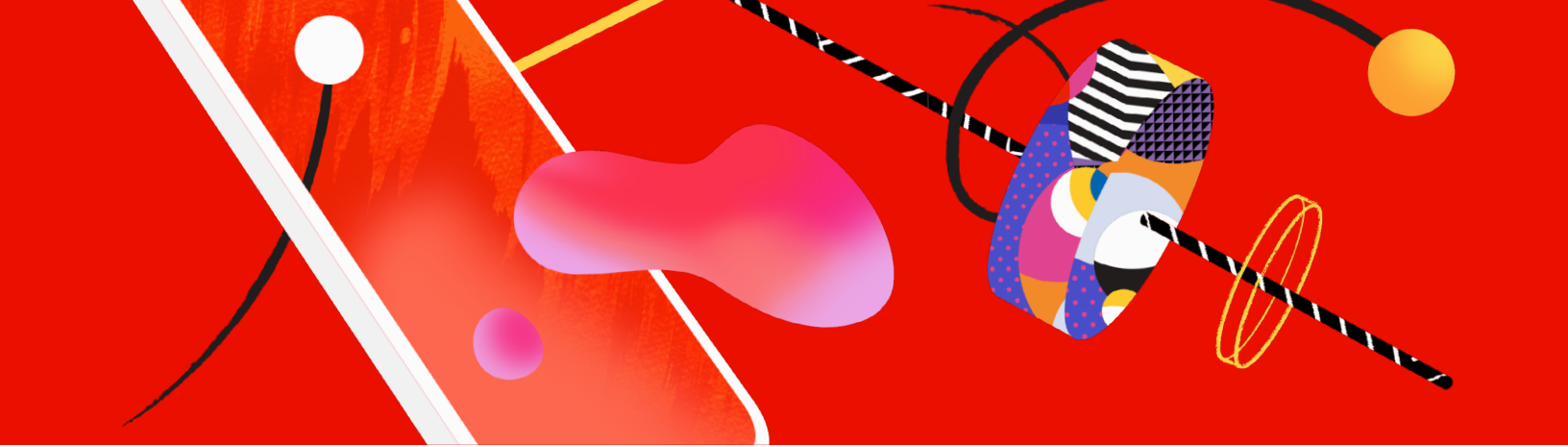
Self-diagnostic: Detect your time and money sinks.

Find out where your marketing team is losing time and money—and how to turn things around.

The only thing marketers can count on today is continued uncertainty. Perhaps that's why businesses overall are cutting their marketing spend. According to Gartner research, marketing budgets have fallen to their lowest recorded level, dropping to 6.4% of company revenue in 2021 from 11% in 2020.

At the same time, marketers are still required to meet ambitious goals. Hours are long and stress levels are rising. But there is a silver lining. If your team is struggling to do more with less, more sophisticated marketing automation can almost certainly help. And while organizations hesitate to boost their marketing budgets, investments in automation may be an easier sell. Forrester predicts that CMO investment in marketing automation will increase, even if marketing budgets keep on falling through 2021.

However, before you extend, augment, or replace your marketing tech stack, you'll have to convince your leadership team that doing so will deliver a substantial return on investment—even if your marketing budget stays the same. One way to do this is to identify manual processes and tasks that are costing your team time, money, and opportunities.

This worksheet will help you identify common time and money sinks, clarify how they're impacting your results, and make the case for more advanced automation.

Sink #1: Manual data management.

Data is the lifeblood of marketing. You need data on your customers and prospects and every interaction they have with your company. And this means bringing information from multiple business-critical systems—like your commerce platform, CRM, ERP, and more—into your marketing automation system. It also means capturing information from third parties, like media companies and event management agencies, and making sure your data collection and management practices comply with data privacy regulations like GDPR, CCPA, and so on.

Collecting, normalizing, cleaning, and integrating data while ensuring compliance with a growing array of privacy rules is a major time sink for many organizations. And because enterprises tend to have big, distributed, and complex data environments, manual data management can be particularly time-consuming for enterprise marketing teams.

Moreover, when it comes to data management, the consequences of failure can be severe. Violations of data privacy rules can damage your brand's reputation and lead to costly fines. And duplicate or inconsistent data can mean customers receive inappropriate or repetitive marketing communications, which can permanently damage relationships.

Find your sinks.

Answer these questions to estimate how much time and money manual data management tasks are costing you.

Do you have to manually import data to your marketing automation platform from spreadsheets and CSV files?

Yes   No

If you answered yes:

How many spreadsheets do you import in a typical week?

Roughly how much time does your team spend on this each week?

Do you have to manually import data to your marketing automation platform from other enterprise systems like your CRM?

Yes   No

If you answered yes:

How many systems are you importing data from?

Roughly how much time does your team spend on this each week?

Are you confident that your data management practices are fully compliant with rules like GDPR and CCPA?

Yes   No

Do you have to manually cleanse your database to remove duplicate records, inconsistent information, and more?

Yes   No

If you answered yes:

Roughly how much time does your team spend on it each week?

About what percentage of your data do you think is inconsistent or inaccurate?

Check the numbers.
After you answer these questions, add up the hours you're spending on these activities each week, month, and year. Also consider the possible costs of failure to comply with data privacy laws.
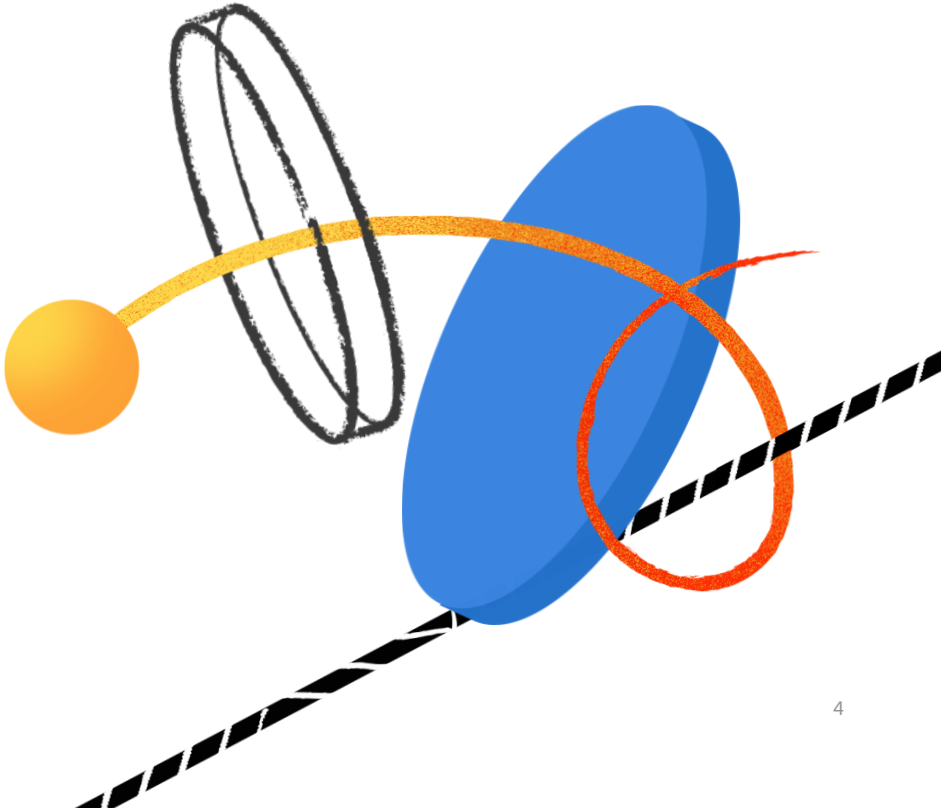
Sink #2: Slow campaign execution.

While many campaigns are conceptually simple—like sending a series of emails about a special offer to a segment of your database—they can be very complicated to set up in your marketing automation system. In fact, the complexity often starts with the campaign request itself. Often, a marketer or business development rep will submit their request to marketing ops as a spreadsheet or an email that includes only partial information.

Once the campaign request is clarified, it can take hours or days to configure it in many marketing automation systems. In some cases, it might require wrestling with a cumbersome user interface, working in multiple extensions, or even writing code.

When setting up campaigns is time-consuming, it can limit the number of campaigns your organization can run—which can curtail sales and make it more difficult to maintain relationships with existing customers.

Better automation, more campaigns.

Upgrading your marketing automation platform can dramatically reduce the time it takes to build and launch campaigns.

Altisource upgraded to Adobe Marketo Engage and increased monthly campaign volume by 360%. Learn how.

Find your sinks.

Answer these questions to estimate how much time and money slow and cumbersome campaign execution is costing you.

Do marketers request campaigns by email or Excel-based forms?

Yes   No

If you answered yes:

How long does it take to process requests?

Does marketing ops have to ask a lot of follow-up questions?

On average, how long does it take to set up a campaign in your marketing automation system?

Can you clone existing campaigns in your marketing automation system? Or do you have to build them from scratch?

Yes   No

Does marketing ops typically have a backlog of campaigns to execute?

Yes   No

How many campaigns do you run every quarter?

About how many more campaigns could you run if it only took a couple of hours to set them up?

Check the numbers.
After you answer these questions, compare the number of campaigns you currently create every month, quarter, and year with how many campaigns you could create if setup only took a couple of hours. Now estimate the pipeline and revenue your firm is missing from running fewer campaigns.

Sink #3: Lack of integration between sales and marketing tech.

At most B2B companies, marketing and sales organizations work very closely together, teaming up to create lead and account scoring models. When leads are qualified, marketing passes them to sales. And sales returns leads to marketing when they go cold or quiet. Also, marketing and sales should continually collaborate to ensure customers have a positive, consistent experience no matter what part of the funnel they're in.

Ideally, critical marketing and sales technologies—particularly the marketing automation system and the CRM—should work seamlessly together. Both marketing and sales should have a clear understanding of each customer's interaction with both teams. However, when marketing and sales tech can't talk to each other, it can lead to errors and delays that can represent a major time and money sink.

For example, if marketing doesn't have visibility into sales teams' interactions with customers, they might send an email with the call to action "schedule a demo" to a prospect who has already booked a demo with a sales rep. Likewise, if marketing has to export a list of qualified leads and email them to sales, sales reps will spend time moving data into their CRM instead of immediately following up.

Find your sinks.

Answer these questions to get an idea of how much time and money the lack of integration between sales and marketing tech is costing you.

Does your marketing automation system automatically score leads?

    Yes   No

If not, how long does it take to do manually?

Are qualified leads automatically routed to sales?

    Yes   No

If not, how long does it take to do manually?

Can sales automatically recycle leads to marketing if they require more nurturing or aren't yet ready to buy?

    Yes   No

If not, how long does it take to do manually?

Can sales teams easily see customers' previous interactions with marketing channels?

Yes   No

If not, do sales reps think this is a problem? Do they think this information could help them advance conversations with prospects?

Can sales teams easily see customers' previous interactions with marketing channels?

Yes   No

If not, do sales reps think this is a problem? Do they think this information could help them advance conversations with prospects?

Can marketing teams easily see customers' previous interactions with sales?

Yes   No

If not, has marketing ever inadvertently targeted customers in active conversations with sales?

Check the numbers.
After you answer these questions, consider how many hours you spend on manual lead management every month, quarter, and year. Also consider the value of opportunities lost because, due to manual processes and lack of cross-platform integration, marketing and sales are not perfectly aligned.
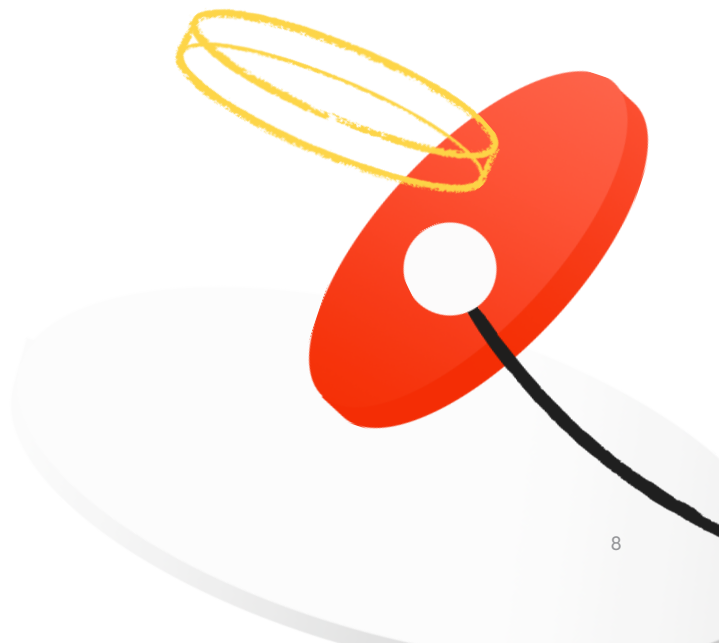
Sink #4: Manual attribution reporting.

B2B buyers get information from more places than ever—web, social media, virtual events, and more. This means marketers must produce more content for more channels and run more campaigns. And they must understand how each asset and activity contributes to revenues so they maximize their return on every marketing dollar. This is especially important when marketing budgets are static or shrinking.

However, connecting the dots between marketing activities revenue can be a complex and time-consuming process. Even many large businesses perform ad hoc attribution analysis that involves exporting data from multiple platforms, normalizing it, and making sense of it in spreadsheets. Because this can take days or weeks, marketers only get attribution reports once every quarter or so.

Other organizations may have their IT teams build custom attribution applications. However, these can be difficult to use and may still require manual data transfers. In addition, IT teams may not have time to frequently update these apps—and marketers can be stuck running a less-than-ideal attribution model.

Find your sinks.

Answer these questions to get an idea of how much time and money you're spending on manual reporting and attribution.

How long does it take to run an attribution report for a single campaign?

Does it require manually collecting data?

Yes   No

How often can you get attribution reports for content and campaigns in every channel?

Very often

Often

Somewhat often

Not often

How often would you prefer to get attribution reports for content and campaigns in every channel?

Very often

Often

Somewhat often

Not often

**How accurate are the attribution reports you receive?**

Very accurate   Not very accurate

If you answered "not very accurate," is the problem inconsistent or incomplete data? An outdated attribution model? Something else?

Check the numbers.

After you answer these questions, think about how often you adjust your campaign strategy because of attribution reports. Consider how many more qualified leads and revenues you could generate if you were able to improve campaign performance via attribution by 5, 10, and 20%.
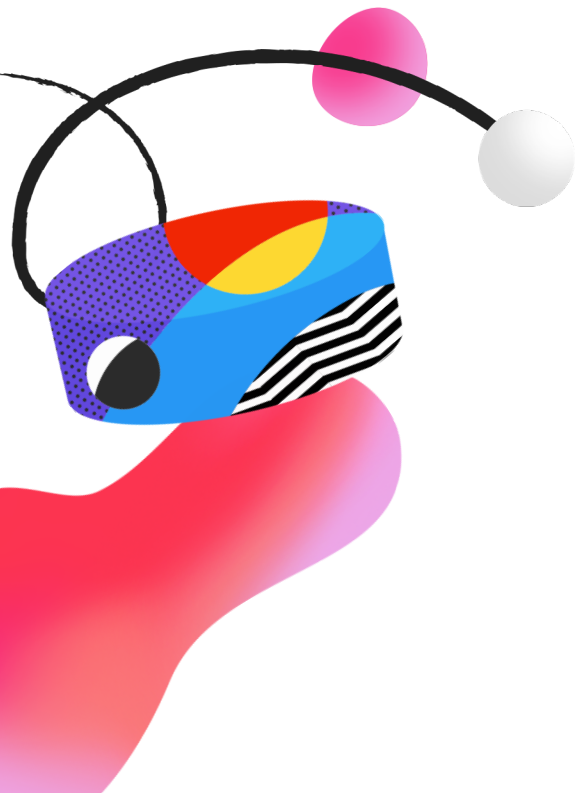
Make the case for automation.

By now, you should have a good idea of how manual tasks and processes are holding you back. Use your answers to map out how more advanced marketing automation can help you reclaim hours every month, launch more campaigns, and get more value from every dollar. Then consider sharing these insights with your leadership team and starting a conversation about your marketing tech stack and the kind of investment you need.
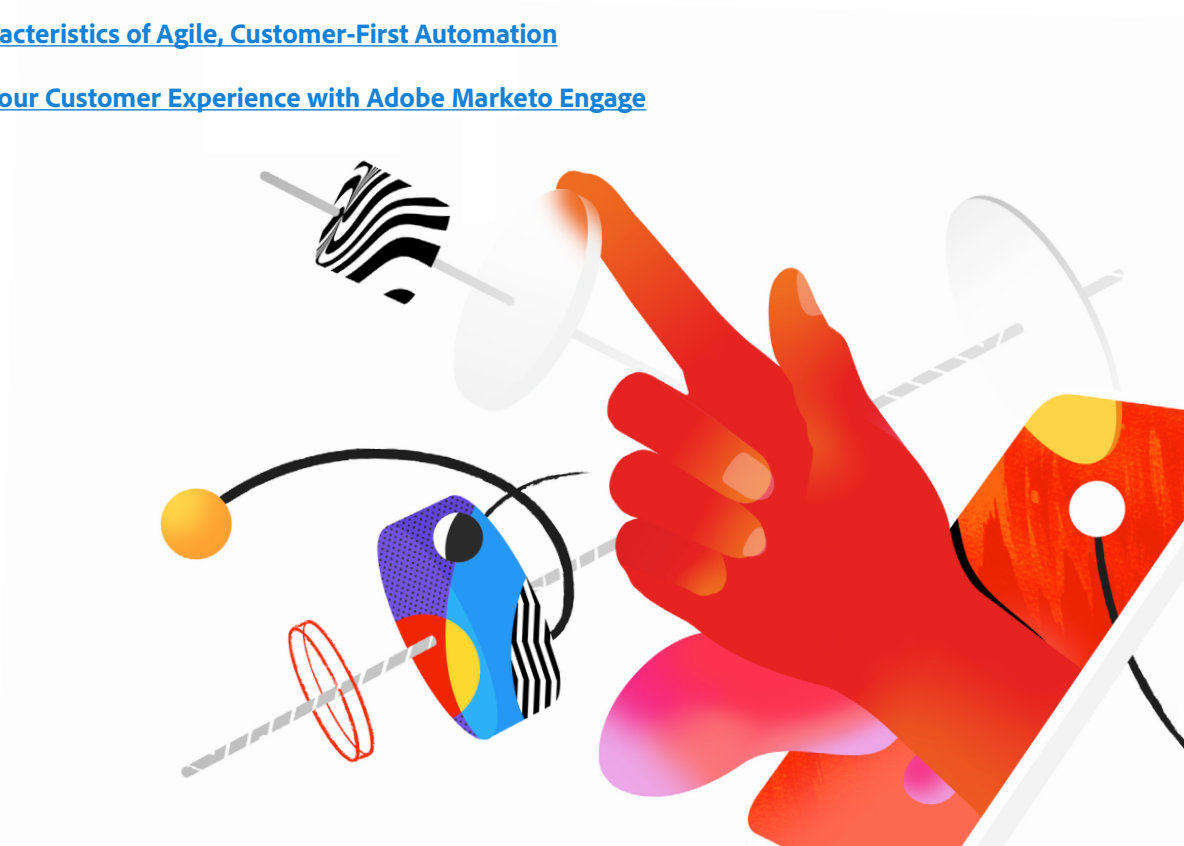
These resources can also help you make a strong case for marketing automation:

Quiz: The 90-Second Marketing Automation Health Check

eBook: 10 Reasons to Consider Marketing Automation

Checklist: Key Characteristics of Agile, Customer-First Automation

eBook: Power Up Your Customer Experience with Adobe Marketo Engage

Sources

1   "Gartner Says Marketing Budgets Have Plummeted to 6.4% of Overall Company Revenue in 2021," press release, Gartner Inc., July 14, 2021.

2   Shar VanBoskirk and Tina Moffet, "The 2020 COVID-19 Crisis Will Stun US Marketing," Forrester Consulting, May 6, 2020.