

How could marketing automation impact the business performance of Comexposium?

MARKETING AUTOMATION

A Work Project, presented as part of the requirements for the Award of a Masters Degree in Management from the NOVA – School of Business and Economics.



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Abstract

Comexposium continues to exhibit strong growth through global acquisition of key events. However, the company identified the need to increase the renewal rate of its exhibitors. In order to do so, Comexposium determined marketing automation software could have enormous value. However, the company currently does not have the appropriate data to determine to specific returns the software could provide. Thus, this report focused on assessing the impact of marketing automation on the business performance of a B2B enterprise and the best methods to implement and measure it. The main findings were that the software could be of immense value to Comexposium, if the company is ready to invest in internal resources and take the time to adapt to the changes the tool will incur.

Keywords: marketing automation, lead, revenues, ROI.

Table of Contents

1. PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT - GENERAL OVERVIEW	4
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	5
2.1. ADVANTAGES	5
2.2. CHALLENGES	7
3. COMEXPOSIUM'S NEEDS	8
3.1. DATA	8
3.2. CONTENT	9
3.3. AUTOMATION	9
3.4. MANAGEMENT OF PROCESSES	9
4. METHODOLOGY	10
4.1. PRAGMATIC RESEARCH APPROACH	10
4.2. SECONDARY DATA COLLECTION	10
4.3. QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH	10
4.4. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH	10
5. RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH	11
5.1. THE ACTORS OF THE MARKET	11
5.2. PRESENTATION OF THE COMPANY INTERVIEWED AND SUMMARY OF THE INTERVIEWS	11
5.3. FINDINGS OF METRIC SURVEYS, IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS AND DEMAND METRIC REPORT	12
5.3.1. PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS	12
5.3.2. THE IMPACT ON BUSINESS PERFORMANCE	12
5.3.3. THE IMPACT DEPENDING ON THE PROFILES	14
5.4. THE CHALLENGES OF MARKETING AUTOMATION	16
5.5. MEASUREMENT OF MARKETING AUTOMATION'S ROI	17
5.5.1. KPIs TO BEST MEASURE THE ROI OF MARKETING CAMPAIGN	17
5.5.2. KPIs TO BEST MEASURE THE ROI OF MARKETING AUTOMATION	18
6. RECOMMENDATIONS	20
APPENDICES	23
APPENDIX 1: RESULTS OF THE QUANTITATIVE SURVEY	23
APPENDIX 2: ROI OF MARKETING AUTOMATION – COST PER CLIENT BY NORMAN PRACT	24
BIBLIOGRAPHY	24

1. Purpose of the Project - General Overview

Based in Paris, France, Comexposium is the 4th leader in the world of trade fairs and shows organisation (and 1st in the digital branch), generating a turnover of \$15 billion per year. Its portfolio includes more than 176 events worldwide, including a range of both BtoB and BtoC events.

The company is relentlessly growing through acquisition of events and other organisers, enabling it to firmly establish itself on a worldwide scale with events and offices all over the United States and South America, but also in each country of the ASEAN and India, Australia and New-Zealand, North Africa and in the Middle-East.

Driven by the thrill of innovation, growth promotion and by being ahead of the market by decrypting the upcoming trends, each of Comexposium's events are the market leaders of their respective sector. Each year, its events gather a total of 45 000 exhibitors from which, 40% are international, and welcome 3.5 million visitors.

The 450 employees thoroughly study the market to constantly adapt and create the surprise for each edition of the events.

Recently, Comexposium has decided to address some of its main challenges, which are lead conversion and renewal rate of their exhibitors for their B2B events. Indeed, it has been several years since the B2B events are struggling with attracting brand new exhibitors, meaning that most of the exhibitors for each edition are attracted based on a loyalty rate.

In order to best address these challenges, the company wants to consider investing in a marketing automation software.

With a 60% growth rate per year, marketing automation is one of the software growing the most rapidly in its industry (Lamont, 2015). Moreover, one quarter of all B2B Fortune 500 Companies are currently using marketing automation as well as 76% of the biggest SaaS companies (Salesforce, 2013). This software enables companies to operate in-bound marketing on a large scale. It allows to engage in a personalized way with customers in a cross-canals and cross-devices manner based on data (Kantrowitz, 2014). Meaning, it can send personalized messages in an automatic way, based on behavioural data collected before-hand. Additionally, it allows to segment not solely on demographic criteria but also on behavioural digital attitudes that the prospects have. It

centralises all the prospects and campaign data into one and only “repository tool” (Bailor, 2005). Lead-wise, the software manages the acquisition, scoring, prioritizing and nurturing of the leads. Campaign-wise, it includes the design, creation, management, execution, tracking and analysis of the campaigns. Finally, it includes the creation, testing, optimization and integration of landing pages (Durga, 2015).

However, Comexposium’s strategic marketing and development department needs to assess how this tool could increase Comexposium’s business performance, by converting prospects into leads into exhibitors, in order to know if they should purchase a software or not. But also, how the company can assess the ROI of this tool and how it should be implemented.

Therefore, throughout this research project, I will analyse what are both the advantages and risks of marketing automation on the business performance in the B2B market and assess Comexposium’s needs. I will continue with an analysis of data acquired via interviews and an online survey answered by marketing experts who have experienced the implementation of this kind of software. From there on, I will highlight the main challenges that marketing automation raises. Finally, I will provide the best KPIs which will enable the company to assess the efficacy of the software, thereby, enabling them to prove the efficiency of the investment.

2. Literature Review

"Without a doubt, the analytics tools that were once considered ‘nice to have’ have become the new ‘must have’ in effective marketing" according to David Raad, vice president of optimization and analytics (Left Brain DGA, 2012). Over the recent years the industry has seen extensive growth and is expected to keep on growing (Kumar, 2011). However, scholars do identify significant drawbacks related to the marketing automation software, not solely advantages. In this section, we will discuss the views of numerous scholars to determine if marketing automation is really the future, or should be a thing of the past.

2.1. Advantages

On overall, marketing automation software is key to the digital platforms and campaigns for four reasons that are all linked to one another, leading to the same result: an increase in revenue.

Firstly, on overall, marketing automation's core ability is about nurturing leads and lead conversion, thereby increasing performance and revenues. Kumar (2011) certifies that marketing automation increases marketing revenue by 10% within the first 6 to 9 months following the implementation. Scott Kosciuk's point of view, director of marketing programs at Symantec, saying that marketing automation is a crucial part of an integration marketing campaign. Phil Hernandez, president-CEO of Marketo Inc. has noticed a strong increase in lead conversion after implementing the software, leading to an increase in sales thereby generating more revenues. To conclude, Scott Kosciuk noticed that the cost of lead generation and management was perpetually diminishing, which also contributes to an increase in revenue (Hosford, 2010).

Secondly, in a B2B world that is becoming increasingly complex, marketing automation software provide analytical tools that have been proven to be essential to better measure the different component of a campaign, such as revenues and leads' behaviour, reveal Left Brain DGA (2012) and Hosford (2012).

These tools strongly reinforce the lead nurturing process, that PR Newswire (2015) reveals being the marketers' key driver in the B2B marketing automation. Jao (2015) and Luke (2013) jointly add, that in the acquired information, behavioural activities and interactions are included, allowing for high quality segmentation, a quick grasp and engagement of the prospects on a multi-level and large scale. Thanks to these insights the marketing and sales teams can reach out to prospects and leads with highly customised messages depending on their persona during the buying cycle, say Stoppress (2015) and Aquino (2013). After tailoring their email subject line to their prospects, the open rate escalated from 12.9% to 15.9% adds Aquino (2013). It is an undeniable lead nurturing factor as Kumar (2011) notices that 81% of prospects do not purchase until they have been contacted at least five times.

Thirdly, Bailor (2005) identified a current trend in B2B, which is to centralize all marketing-related data into one single tool. Thereby, marketing automation is addressing this trend by fully integrating the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software and Sales Force Automation. In doing so, it allows the marketing and sales departments to manage all the processes in one single workflow (Lamont, 2015). Providing this complete "lead view" is necessary to align the processes of both departments together, increasing the tool's output, adds Bailor (2005). In doing so, it

addresses the issue of a divisional misalignment that Kumar (2011) has found to cost several million dollars per year. By cooperating, both departments increase the quality of the customer experience and offer a more personalized and successful communication highlight PR Newswire US (2014) and Lamont (2015). In the event industry, thanks to the integration, Marilyn Cox could obtain numerous insights and information about new opportunities and booth visitors. Because, most of the time, the bottleneck is the lack of cooperation from the sales rep who do not provide leads inputs into the CRM. Concluding, 55% of events companies say that their ideal event marketing automation package would include a deep integration with the CRM systems (Hosfort, 2011).

Fourthly, marketing automation enables the measurement the ROI of marketing campaigns, including its share in revenue, in a quantitative and qualitative manner *e.g. brand visibility and real revenue flow*, explains Kumar (2011). In addition, Bailor (2005) highlights the fact that it allows the company to perform a "Closed Loop ROI" analysis, enabling the company to know which campaign was the most and least effective in terms of lead conversion and engagement. Hosfort (2011) highlights that 58 % of marketers say that the fundamental benefit is its event ROI.

2.2. Challenges

However, as mentioned earlier, marketing automation also has drawbacks.

First of all, the automation is not truly 100% automated, continues Jao (2015). Indeed, the tool solely helps to carry out campaigns on a large scale, but is not a truly one-to-one personalization. Additionally, it needs a consequent amount of work upstream, in order to enable the automation to be completed, such as setting up triggers for the campaigns. By involving people, it leads to other issues: errors and unprepared workforce. As Lisa Arthur, CEO of Aprimo says, most of the marketers particularly feel unprepared to work with such technologies and struggle to understand it, which can lead to mistakes (Hosford, 2010). And Stoppress (2015) highlights the fact that these errors in this domain lead to considerable consequences.

Second of all, the implementation of the software is a challenging process. Justin Grey explains that the marketing automation software does not function together with processes already in place in the organisation (Hosford, 2012). Meaning that the current software's value output will decrease. Additional, it is a costly tool. Therefore, most

B2B organisation (67%) admit not being able to use it due to budget constraints and a shortfall in resources (54%), adds Hosfort (2011).

In conclusion, we can state that the advantages clearly outweigh the disadvantages. It seems scholars do agree that marketing automation is the future of marketing. In the end, the main challenge that marketing faces is not about the tool in itself, but rather, the people, processes and strategy in place, concludes B&T Magazine (2015). Finally, as Kumar (2011) states, companies who do not have marketing automation are truly missing out on an opportunity to convert their website visits into sales. This tool is mainly intended to be used as a preparatory device of lead conversion, preceding the event, comments Hosfort (2011). He adds that 65% of marketers saw the most value in the email invitations and personal email invitations (53%) and event reminders (52%), with all the activities intended to promote attendance and booth engagement.

3. Comexposium’s Needs

In order to best address Comexposium’s main issues of attracting and transforming new leads into exhibitors, the marketing department determined the organization’s needs. The needs can be categorised in four different categories complementing each other: the data, the content, the management and the automation.

3.1. Data

First of all, Comexposium does not enrich and continuously improve its database sufficiently. Indeed, the trade shows’ respective database do not lack of volume of contacts, but instead of volume of qualitative and up-to-date contacts. This means that the data needs to be treated, sorted out and cleaned up more effectively.

Second of all, the company needs to use predictive analytics in order to increase the efficiency of its inbound marketing campaigns. Indeed, they enable the company to collect crucial behavioural information and therefore allow for better segmentation and targeting.

Third of all, the trade shows need to be able to work with the most up to date and fresh data possible. This means that the sales teams need simple and time saving processes to update the information of each contact when they change it in the CRM software, which is Sales Force. It will also address the last need, which is to decrease the amount of hard bounces for each emailing campaign and to optimize the sales funnel.

Fourth of all, the sales teams need to be able to have a unique reading of the prospects' information in Salesforce throughout the whole sales cycle, thereby also participating in a decrease in time spent.

3.2. Content

Content-wise, Comexposium's main idea is to allow the sales teams to be independent from the communications teams. Currently, the communication department is generating content for both departments, as the sales team simply does not have the time to do so, nor the knowledge and adaptability when it comes to creating content for their target market. To be able to do so, the sales teams need to be able to create tailored B2B content in an effective way. This change in processes means that the company culture will have to change in terms of organization. However, one of the advantages of the B2B events is that they already have sufficient content. Therefore, the main issue is about how to manage and organise this content rather than creating it.

3.3. Automation

Automation-wise, Comexposium needs an automated and organized solution, as the departments currently lack reactivity and targeting, leading to inefficient marketing campaigns. Consequently, the company needs to be able to create sub-segments in order to better target and address content to their audiences as well as shortening their sales cycles.

3.4. Management of Processes

Management-wise, the processes lack of homogeneity. Indeed, the marketing campaigns' quality, which are mostly e-mailing campaigns, depend on the time and expertise of each sales employee. Consequently, the campaigns are not homogeneous among within the database of the trade show.

To conclude, due to the lack of processes and systems in place to address the needs mentioned above, Comexposium is unable to supplement its current database with new relevant prospects. As a result, for every trade show, the sales team consistently bases the marketing campaigns solely on one third of its database. Additionally, the teams experience a lack of secondary income through sponsoring and additional sales and are therefore heavily dependent on the sales of square metres of exhibition booths, which is currently the main source of income. By addressing the needs mentioned above, Comexposium should be able to increase its business performance.

4. Methodology

4.1. Pragmatic research approach

The pragmatic research approach is applied to cases where a combination of research methods best suits the research problem (Alzheimer Europe, 2009). As Comexposium defined a practical business problem of which one of the main challenges was the limitation available data, the pragmatic research approach was adopted. By combining quantitative and qualitative research, while applying both primary and secondary data collection, a solid data set was created from which substantiated conclusions could be drawn through data triangulation.

4.2. Secondary data collection

Secondary data was collected via web research and through the review scientific article. This data was collected in order to form a baseline to design the rest of the research.

4.3. Quantitative research

The quantitative research was based on primary data collection with the use of a survey. The survey was designed in a way that the results could be converted into numerical data, from which general conclusion could be drawn. The survey was sent to 220 businesses that currently use marketing automation software and had a response rate of around 11,4% (25 companies). The survey consisted of thirteen closed-ended questions and one open-ended question. It is important to note that the respondents had to be high profiles (marketing or sales directors and CEOs) within each company, who are the key people in a marketing automation project. These people are extremely difficult to contact. In order to maximize the response rate, the survey solely focused on the bare essentials, several mail outs were sent by acquiring the company names via tool providers and finally by subscribing to a LinkedIn Premium account in order to directly contact marketing/ sales directors and CEO of the companies.

4.4. Qualitative research

The qualitative research was based upon primary data collection in the form of in-depth interviews with companies currently using the software. The interviews consisted open and close-ended (or a combination) questions, which resulted in both qualitative and quantitative data. A total of 5 interviews were performed: one of a user, one of an inbound agency and three of software providers.

5. Results of the research

5.1. The actors of the market


Before revealing the results of the interviews conducted, one must highlight the three actors in the marketing automation market.


- 1- **An inbound agency**, which is in charge of the content creation (white books, articles, infographics...) that will be automatized by the tool. It can be used if the company does not have the resources internally, but it is not always necessary.
- 2- **An integrator**, which is often chosen by the tool. The integrator has the most complicated job as it has to integrate the processes already in place in the company with the marketing automation tool.
- 3- **The marketing automation tool provider** itself, which is in contact with the company in the beginning of the process, but then the whole communication is done between the integrator, the agency and Comexposium.

5.2. Presentation of the company interviewed and summary of the interviews

1min30 is a web marketing digital 360° agency specialized in inbound marketing. The interviewee was Gabriel Dabi-Schwebel, the founder of the agency. The main fact he highlighted was the fact that a strategy has to be developed before implementing the software (Dabi-Schwebel, 2015).



 GRDF, the French gas provider, is a client of the marketing automation software Neolane from Adobe, one of the leaders in marketing automation. Valérie Maillet, the marketing director and the interviewee, highlighted what were the key stages and the challenges she was faced with prior implementing the tool, such as writing the specifications. Specifically, because if one detail was forgotten, adding it back after the integration would be a very tiresome process (Maillet, 2015).

Webmecanik is a marketing automation tool. The interviewee was Norman Pracht. This tool is well for being one of the cheapest  solutions available with a cost of 0.50€/contact. He drew special attention to the fact that the cost per contact was the centre of marketing automation's efficiency. (Pracht, 2015)



Plezi, a new marketing automation tool recently created is exponentially growing. The interviewees were Loïc Bavencoff, sales manager and

Renaud De Lacotte, R&D manager. Both of them insisted on assessing the performance of a content (Lacotte, 2015).

Oracle operates the tool Eloqua and is one of the biggest competitors of **eloqua** Marketo in France (another tool). The interviewee was Florence Garsault, a **ORACLE** sales representative. She strongly highlighted the difference between the automation of the content and the scoring of the leads that both are part of marketing automation (Garsault, 2015).

5.3. Findings of metric surveys, in-depth interviews and Demand Metric Report

In order to gain a 360° perspective of the marketing automation market, a quantitative analysis across marketing automation users was conducted, in combination with the qualitative interviews and secondary data analysis.

5.3.1. Profile of the respondents

The majority of the respondents were using Act-On marketing automation software, followed closely by Marketo and Hubspot. The company size of respondents differed as indicated in figure 3: small (from 11 to 50 employees), medium (51 to 250 employees) and large (more than 250 employees). Regarding their type of clientele, the majority was operating in the BtoB sector or in both BtoB and BtoC.

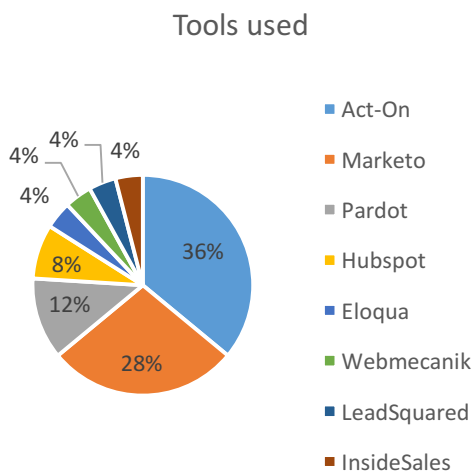


Figure 1 - Tools used

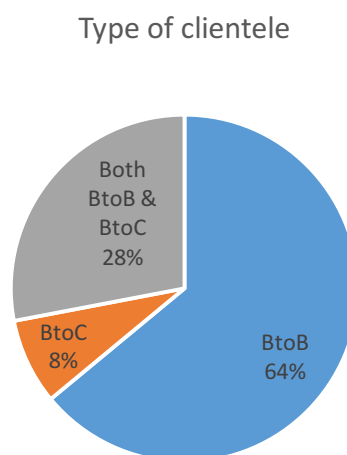


Figure 2 - Type of clientele

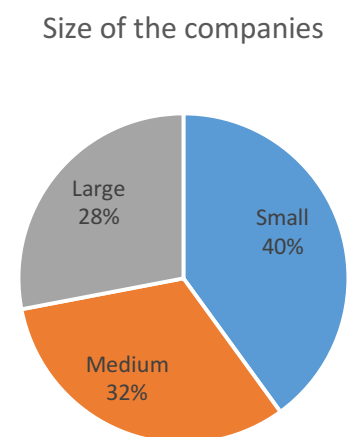


Figure 3 - Size of the companies

5.3.2. The impact on business performance

On overall, every user recognized that marketing automation is an undeniable tool to possess. Indeed, 72% of users would recommend using marketing automation software to another colleague or to another business. Solely 28% of the respondents were just passive users and no detractors were registered. However, the tool is solely

recommended for companies that are mature enough to implement the tool. Thus, when companies do not have a strategy, sufficient internal resources and a competent pilot in place automation is then not recommended (*please refer to appendix 1 for all the graphs*). David Raab, CEO at Raab Associates found that the biggest achievement in marketing automation was the improved quality and the quantity of leads generated (Raab, 2014).

Lead generation-wise, the results are pretty disparate, though the largest segment of users (32%) saw their rate of new leads increase by 35 to 40% after the implementation of the tool. On overall, 92% of the users observed an increase and 68% noticed an increase superior to 20%.

Lead conversion or lead scoring-wise is still positive for 92% of the users. The largest segment (20%) saw an increase of 15% to 19%, however 40% noticed an increase higher than 20%. Building on these findings, Hidalgo (2012) states that companies using marketing automation generate 451% of qualified leads.

Regarding the **acquisition of new clients**, it positively changed again for 92% of the users. 56% of the users increased their acquisition of new clients by more than 20%.

In terms of an **increase in the total revenue** after the implementation of the tool, 12.5% of the users did not notice any change. However, 45.8% of the users noticed an increase superior of 25%. Supporting these findings, Salesforce (2013) shows that marketing automation increases the total revenue by 77% and increases the amount of closed deals by 9.3%. In continuity, (Demand Gen, 2014) has found out that 67 of B2B marketers saw their sales opportunities increase by 10% thanks to lead nurturing. Finally, a study made by Sirius Decisions (2013) shows that, a company that has 50 000 contacts and uses marketing automation with weak processes in place could increase its revenues by 60 000\$ and by 250 000\$ if it would have average processes. On the other hand, if the company would not use marketing automation and still launch a marketing campaign, it would generate 50 000\$ in revenues.

The **quality of the database** in terms of qualified leads, update of the contacts' information and cleaning of contacts surely increases. Indeed, 76% of the respondents confirmed their database's quality became greater.

Finally, the first impact of marketing automation can be measured after 3 months of the implementation according to Gabriel Dabi-Schwebel (2015), however Valérie Maillet (2015) stated that she needed 6 months to be able to know if the tool was effective and one year to measure its ROI on a campaign.

5.3.3. The impact depending on the profiles

As highlighted previously, the profiles of the respondents were different. Therefore, one must analyse the impact of the different criteria on the marketing automation efficiency. The base-line for the comparison was 25% for the lead generation, 20% for the lead conversion and acquisition of new clients and 15% for the total revenues.

Per software:

The amount of users for Eloqua, Webmecanik and LeadSquared being very small, makes them irrelevant for assessing their individual performance.

Coming in first position in terms of software used by the respondents, Act-On also encounters the best results in terms of performance at all stages apart from increase in revenue, whether it is in lead generation, lead conversion and the acquisition of new clients. Most of its users are B2B businesses of a small or medium size. It is closely followed by Pardot, a tool mostly used by small enterprises from every sector (BtoB, BtoC and both). This software has striking results in revenue increase, which outperforms every other tool as it generated more than 15% more revenues for 100% of its users. In last position among the top 3 software's used by the respondents, Marketo is more efficient in lead generation and increase in revenue rather than lead conversion. It is mostly used by medium and large companies, which operate mostly in every sector with a higher tendency in the BtoB sector (*see figure 4*).

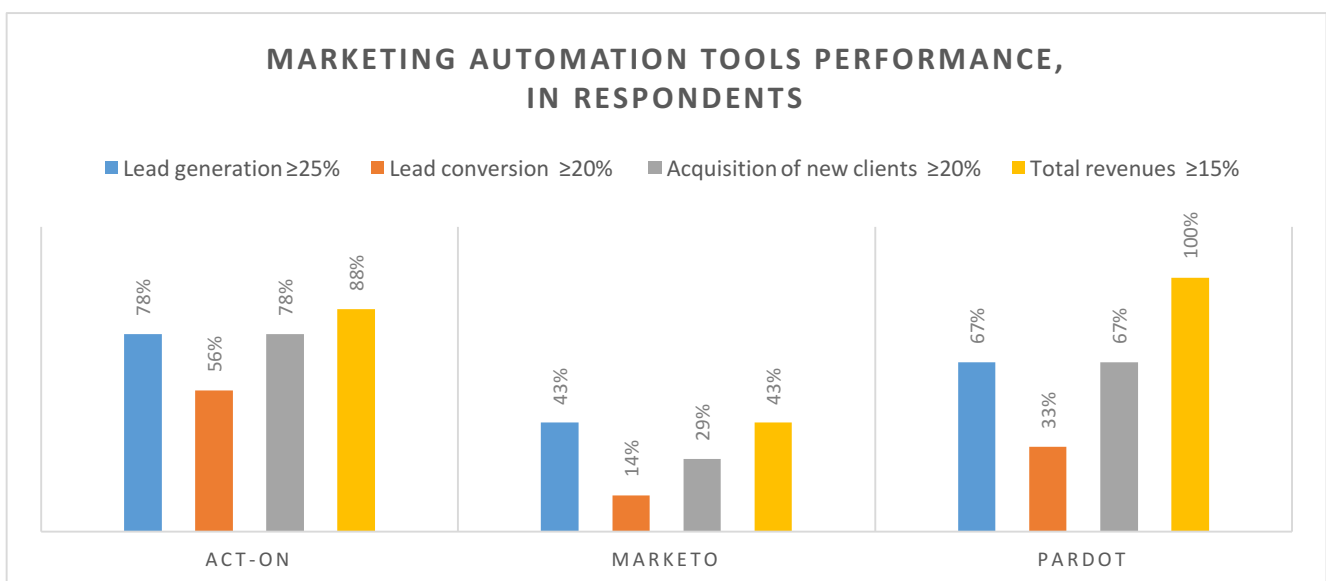


Figure 4 - Marketing automation tools performance, in respondents

Per business profile:

The results are very homogeneous between the BtoB and BtoB&BtoC sectors with a slight difference in lead generation and acquisition of new customers that is higher in BtoB and BtoC. They both experienced an increase superior of 60% in lead generation and increase in revenue. The lead conversion and acquisition of new clients are much less effective in the BtoB sector. The BtoC sector has not been included in the comparison because of a low amount of responders (*see figure 5*).

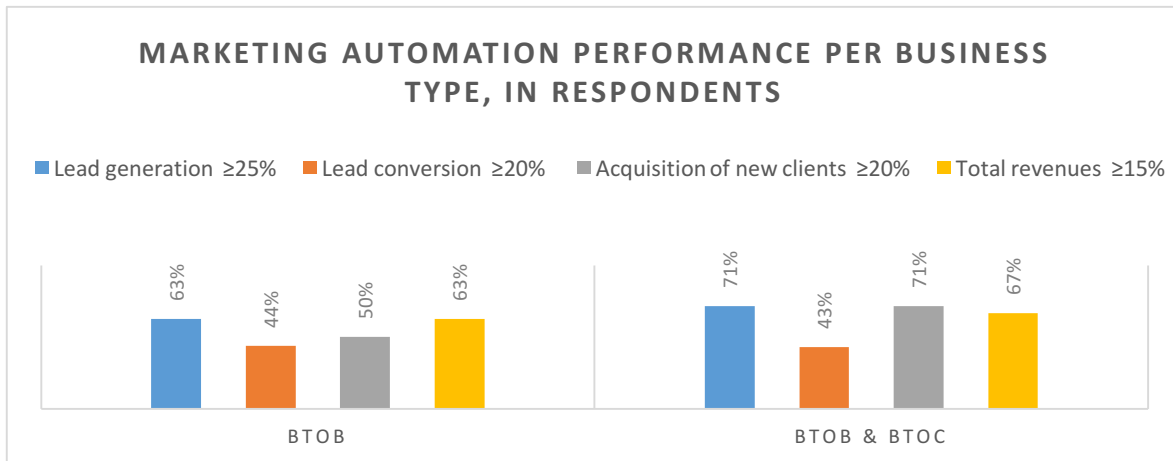


Figure 5 - Marketing automation performance per business type, in respondents

Per company size:

The bigger the enterprise, the lesser the ROI of marketing automation is. We can assume this is due to the fact that small companies truly start from scratch; therefore the ROI is higher and more substantial. Whereas big companies already have processes in place and other software, therefore the return is less impactful but still positive for 86% of the users in lead generation and for 71% in the three other categories. The highest increase in acquisition of new clients can be observed for small companies and regarding the revenue, medium companies are the most positively impacted (*see figure 6*).

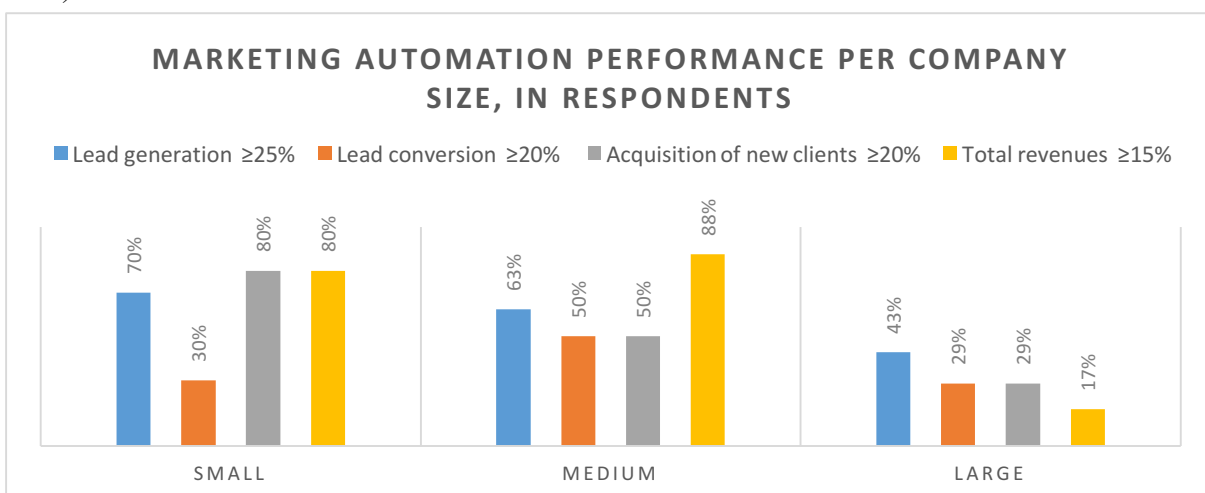


Figure 6 - Marketing automation performance per company size, in respondents

5.4. The challenges of marketing automation

The main challenges in marketing automation are regarding the work it requires upstream, the integration with the processes in place and the adaptation to the changes it initiates within the company.

The main and biggest challenge in marketing automation is **the upstream preparation**, which is the heaviest and most time-consuming part for the users and the most important from all the interviewees' point of view. Several sub-challenges have been highlighted.

First, the user needs to **create an entire strategy** and respect it throughout the whole set-up and implementation. Within the strategy, the user needs to write the specification of the needs in detail without omitting any processes, which will allow the enterprise to save a lot of work and costs once the tool is implemented. Any changes in access and programming after the tool is launched will be very costly, explained Valérie Maillet (2015). Additionally, it is crucial for the company to define, with high precision, the scenarios as well as to define what is a good and qualified lead for its business.

Second, the company needs to **have the right resources internally**, including processes and skills, in place before using marketing automation. This means that the company needs to first assess if it has the right people, the content and the time in place to manage the tool. If it does not, the company will end up automating processes that do not exist and therefore the outcome will be a flawed performance, therefore it may experience a negative ROI. As shown earlier (*p.13*), the increase in revenues in dollars over for a company with over 50 000 contacts before using marketing automation and using marketing automation with weak processes, solely differs by 10 000\$. However, with average processes, it can increase its revenue by more than 200 000\$ (Sirius Decisions, 2013). This truly shows the importance of having the right processes in place.

Third, enterprises need to **choose the right system from the beginning** that is robust enough to grow with them. A software that covers all their needs from the beginning will grow at the same time as the company does. Thus, the companies will not be forced to keep a tool that it has outgrown because changing processes and management will incur high costs.

The second challenge is **the integration** even though all the tools interviewed said it was not, all the clients confirmed it was one. It is key to successful implementation and alignment between the sales and the marketing departments (Claire Price, 2014). The integration needs to be seamless in order to be effective and thereby, better empower both departments. An alignment of all the processes and scenarios between both departments is also crucial in order to keep a homogeneous way of how the data is processed by the tool.

The third challenge is being able to **start small and grow slowly**. Companies tend to rush through the first months of the implementation in order to generate ROI as fast as possible. However, the first 12 to 18 months are often needed in order to experiment the tool and define what works best from the users 'point of view. Before that time, the enterprises need to constantly adjust their methods, their scenarios and persona and adapt to the changes made regarding the leads 'reactions result from the tool's implementation.

The fourth challenge is the **alignment between the marketing and the sales departments**. The marketing department is the one that will be changed the most by the tool, then comes the collaboration between both sales and marketing departments. They will have to strongly communicate together and have an aligned vision. This alignment will also have to be taken into account to calculate the ROI of the tool as 69% of the top performers say that the cooperation between both departments is the factor maximising the most the ROI of marketing automation (Lenskold Group, 2013).

To conclude, marketing automation is expected to be highly time-saving for the marketing and sales departments and strongly increase the marketing campaign's ROI. However, before doing so, the software requires a high amount of work and time, which the companies need to be prepared to invest in.

5.5. Measurement of marketing automation's ROI

5.5.1. KPIs to best measure the ROI of marketing campaign

To measure the ROI of a marketing campaign after the implementation of a marketing automation tool, the majority of the users and tools prefer to use the number of new leads before the increase in sales and the email engagement, including, open rate and

hard bounces. In general the sales funnel (visits, downloads, leads) remains widely used and recommended as the increase in traffic and in total revenue. The decrease in outgoing call and increase incoming call can also be used.

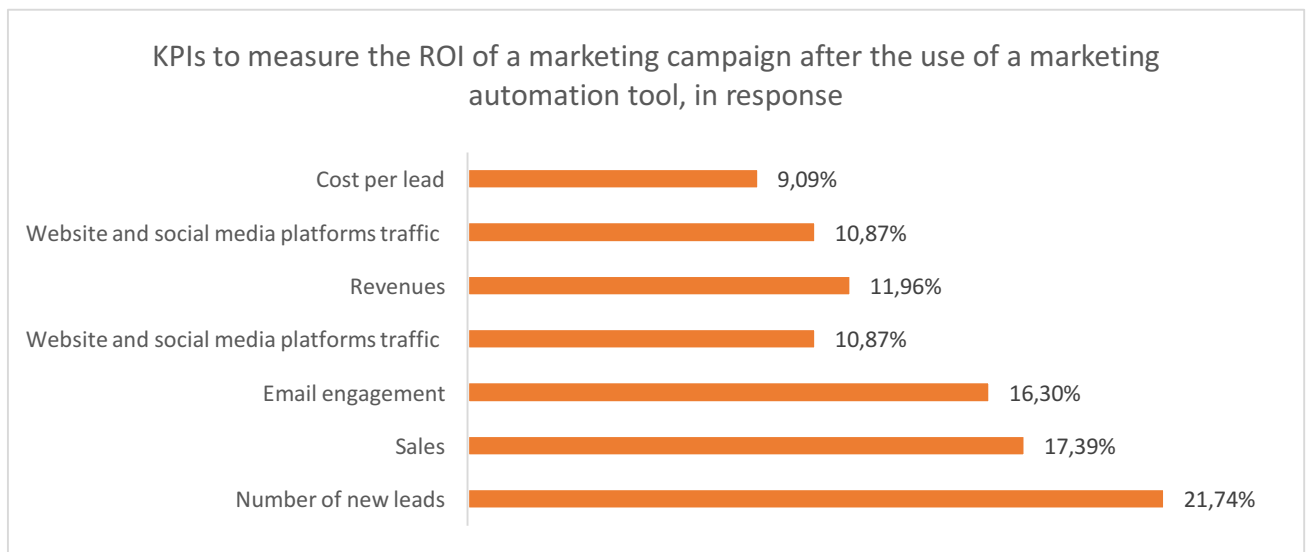


Figure 8 - KPIs to measure the ROI of marketing campaign after the use of a marketing automation tool, in response

5.5.2. KPIs to best measure the ROI of marketing automation

The ROI of a marketing automation tool can be measure 6 to 12 months after its implementation. Additionally, out of the 291 businesses that answered to Demand Metric's questionnaire, more than half (57%) said that the lead conversion metric was the most useful metric in marketing automation. (Demand Metric, Ascend2, 2014)

This supports the fact that most of the users that answered the questionnaire preferred to asses the efficiency of the tool with the number of leads converted. Email engagement and sales tend to be equally chosen, much before the revenues.

Other KPIs can be the time saved by the marketing and sales departments in their daily activities and the revenue increase.

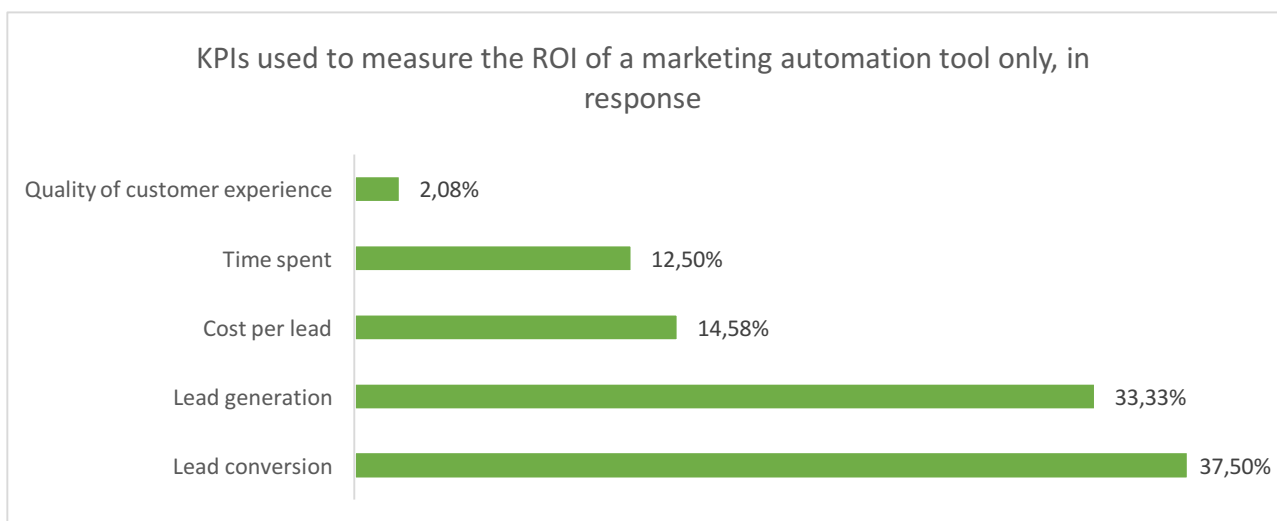
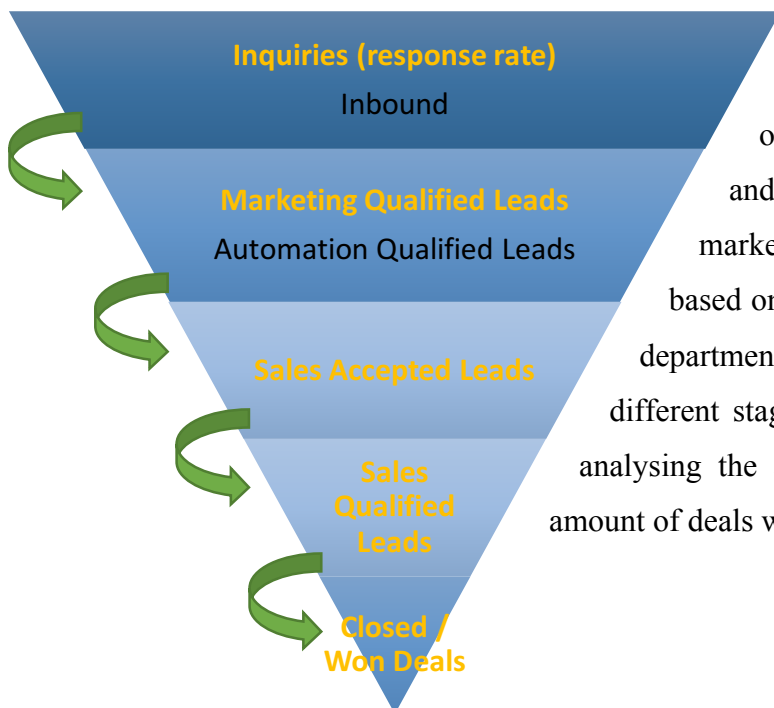


Figure 9 - KPIs used to measure the ROI of a marketing automation tool only, in response

On overall, the marketing campaign using a marketing automation tool and solely the marketing automation tool are mainly measured in the same way: the number of leads. However, the cost per client is also a very effective way of calculating the ROI of a marketing campaign after the implementation of marketing automation tool. This KPI is calculated by comparing the average shopping basket of the clients with the amount spent on a marketing automation campaign through a funnel (see appendix 2). Content-wise, the cost per content and the number of generated lead by one content only allow the enterprise to analyse its inbound efficacy.



Finally, Sirius Decisions (2012) uses the “Demand Waterfall” model, based on several stages shared by both marketing and sales departments. It shows that marketing automation should be measured based on the fact that the marketing and the sales department will have to collaborate around the different stages of the lead’s maturity. It consists of analysing the amount of leads available down to the amount of deals won.

Figure 10 – Sirius Decisions Demand Waterfall

6. Recommendations

First of all, marketing automation has proven to highly increase all segments: lead generation, lead conversion, acquisition of new clients, revenue and quality of the database. Furthermore, Comexposium is willing to partner with an inbound agency, meaning that it will have the resources to be mature enough to operate the tool efficiently. Therefore, I strongly recommend Comexposium to **purchase a marketing automation tool**, which will enable the company to catch up with the digitalisation of the enterprises and enjoy a new upcoming and strong performing tool.

Second of all, with numerous tools available on the market, I recommend Comexposium to **take the time to choose the right tool** from the beginning. Choosing the one that covers all the enterprise's needs from the start will avoid Comexposium to stay with a software that it has outgrown. Solely because changing of software would create too many costs, changes in management and processes.

Third of all, in order to maximise ROI delivered by the software, I recommend Comexposium to **increase its marketing resources internally**. Taking into account the fact that marketing automation impacts mostly the marketing department and that the company does not have any operational marketing team in place, recruiting an inbound agency and a digital director per division would enable the strategic and development marketing teams to continue working on their daily tasks. On the other hand, the digital team and the agency will be experts in the field of marketing automation and will therefore be able to focus on the tool and on the communication with the sales department. To conclude, the technology alone cannot perform if the processes and the resources internally are not good and prepared enough « good processes, good performance ».

Fourth of all, I would recommend Comexposium to **strongly focus on the upstream work** requirements. The company should complete an internal audit to know exactly what resources could operate with the tool, create processes to facilitate the communication between the marketing and the sales department and most importantly, take the time to create an entire digital and editorial strategy.

Fifth of all, I recommend Comexposium to **follow the subsequent steps to implement the marketing automation software** in order to facilitate and protect the processes in place. First, create the digital and editorial strategy. Second, define the persona to target, and define the objectives for each of these personas. Third, build the scenarios that will best bring the target from point A (such as the website's welcome page) to point B (the contact page). Fourth, centralise the contents and identify each one of them and see if they match the scenarios. If some contents are missing, Comexposium will need to create new contents. Fifth, publish the contents, promote and animate them using marketing automation. Sixth, then the marketing will pass on to the sales department, which will take care of scoring the leads.

Sixth of all, the company is currently under a high pressure to generate revenues. However, marketing automation needs to be considered as a long-term project. Therefore, after the implementation of the tool, I recommend Comexposium to **take 1.5 year to assess thoroughly the leads' reactions** to the automation and the contents. By taking the time to do so, the company will be able to gradually adapt the methods until it finds the best ones and to adapt to the change in processes. Then, the company will be able to grow fast and truly maximise its ROI. Additionally, Comexposium should **start small and grow from there** by using 20% of the software's capabilities and then building out on the rest. These 20% will give 80% of the results.

Seventh of all, in order to best measure the return on investment of the tool, Comexposium should **adapt its sales funnel to the collaboration between the sales and marketing departments** that the tool will bring. By including the collaboration in the funnel, the company will be able to assess the ROI of the tool as well as if both departments are well aligned. Comexposium should also use the cost per client funnel, enabling them to have a detailed view of the lead's different maturity levels. Thanks to the funnels, Comexposium will be able to identify any possible bottleneck quickly.

To conclude and to summarise, unanimously, all the agencies and clients interviewed have confirmed that **marketing automation tools would positively impact** the quality of the database, allow the enterprise to create sub-segments as well as automating efficiently processes and managing them uniformly. However, regarding the content creation, the tool is solely able to automate it.

Furthermore, the most performing software among the three studied is Act-On on all levels apart from the revenue increase which is led by Pardot. The marketing automation has higher impact on the businesses operating in both BtoB and BtoC, which fits Comexposium’s activity. The small and medium companies are the ones that generate the highest ROI thanks to marketing automation. Even though, large companies see the least ROI, they are still impacted positively. Comexposium currently possesses the amount of resources similar to what a medium company has. Therefore, it can expect an ROI comparable to medium size enterprises. Thus, marketing automation software exhibits potential to be aligned with Comexposium’s needs.

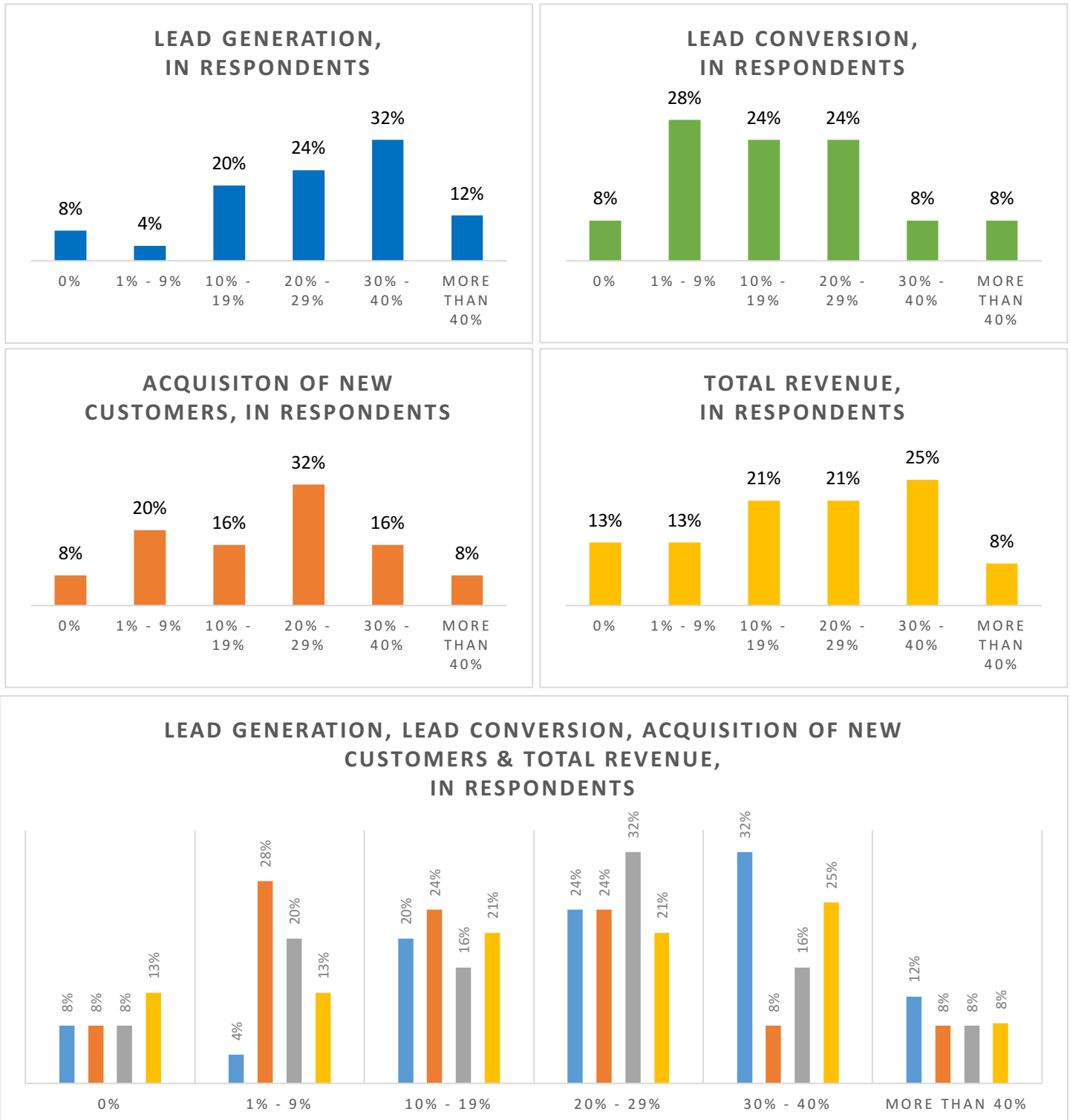
In the end, marketing automation has been proven to be a tremendous tool to have for companies having the right internal resources. However, it has been observed that the results from the tools and the users highly differ. Therefore, Comexposium, being a large company, needs to keep in mind that its ROI will be smaller than for small companies.

Marketing automation will create several changes in terms of processes and resources. The company will have to adapt to them in order to get a positive outcome from the tool. If Comexposium rushes through the steps whether it is before, during or after the implementation of the tool, the performance of the tool will be flawed. The company will truly save time 1.5 year after the implementation was done, meaning once the company selected the best methods and processes.

Finally, Comexposium should schedule additional meetings with software providers and inbound agencies in order to determine which one would best suit the organisation’s needs.

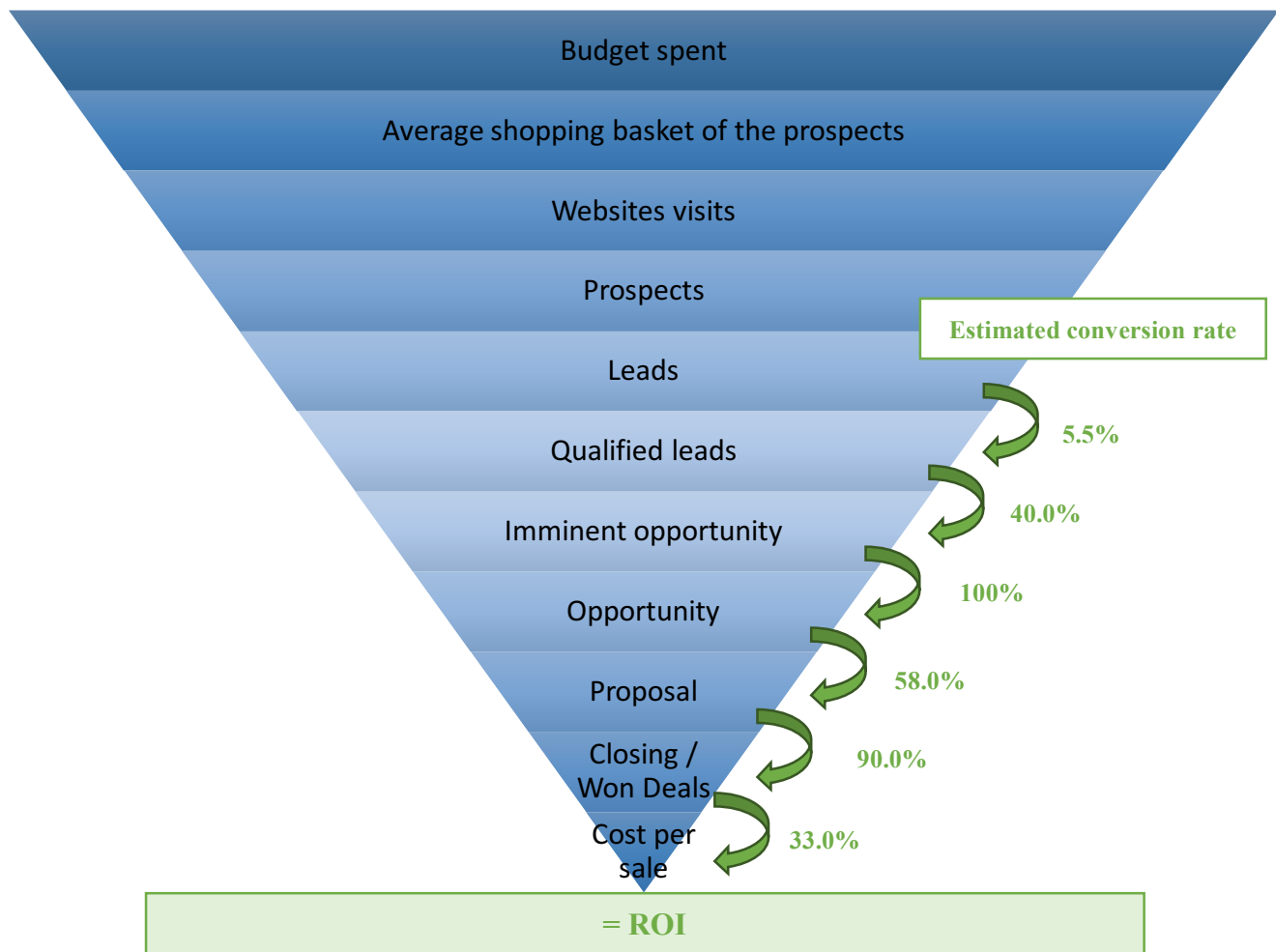
APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Results of the quantitative survey



Reading example: 32% of the respondents generated 30 to 40% more leads after the implementation of a marketing automation tool. 28% of the respondents converted 1 to 9% more leads after the implementation.

Appendix 2: ROI of marketing automation – Cost per client by Norman Pracht



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