



How to 12x your marketing
ROI in 6 easy steps!

Force24TM
Marketing Automation

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Introduction

“Supporting marketers is paramount to our business success - everything we do is designed to make you faster, more efficient, and happier”

Adam Oldfield
Founder & Managing Director
Force24



We know how much ROI matters

The way that marketers spend their time and money, has never been under such scrutiny. The use of budget and the achievement of ROI is now analysed by various business stakeholders, which can make this a daunting world to work in.

But there have also never been so many opportunities to thrive - to generate quick wins, to encourage loyalty and to kickstart powerful, humanised conversations that take minimal effort.

The secret lies in knowing how to supercharge that ROI, without incurring any additional costs or time pressures - which is where this guide comes in.

A WARNING TO THE FAINT-HEARTED

This straight-talking document walks you through a case study, rather than providing a step-by-step tutorial. It might not be easy. It certainly won't tell you exactly what to write or what subjects to base your content on. But it will provide a framework for you to follow - think of the '12x' mentality as your new way of life!



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You should be able
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Some basic principles to understand

1. The path of least resistance

In order to be effective - and efficient - you must ensure your campaign preparation efforts are commensurate to the level of engagement you expect. So, let's consider the elements needed to run a good campaign and look at an appropriate amount of time to spend building each.

2. Campaign Content - e.g. white papers, PDF's, infographics etc

These assets should quite rightly have time spent on them, as it is this value-led collateral that will demonstrate your company's ability and knowledge. I usually work on the basis that a whitepaper takes 1.5 days to produce (inclusive of content, proofing and artwork).

3. Landing pages to serve content to users

Again, this is a handy asset to have - a good landing page can convert up to 30% of traffic, so it's important to get it right. That being said I like to ensure I'm using an existing template - one I've already built and just need to tweak for content. On this basis, for a totally new template I like to allocate 2 hours, but for the reuse of an existing template, you should work on 30 minutes maximum.



4. Emails which serve to promote the content you have already invested time into

It is important to ensure that you are able to build many email templates quickly. Rather than sending one email, in a single format, I like to push content using 3-6 different email templates (working on the basis that I open 1 in 6 commercial emails that I receive). With this in mind I should be able to build each email in less than 10 minutes (but preferably no more than 5 minutes!)

5. Campaign Execution

Admittedly this is the crucial bit but that doesn't mean it needs to be time hungry, To send each campaign, ensure the data is suppressed for active sales discussions and remove any contacts that have already seen/downloaded the content, should ideally take less than 10 minutes.

So, in short, you should be able to execute a 6-week marketing campaign comfortably within 1 day,





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A lead score will help you establish which leads to push through to the sales team.

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To 12X your marketing efforts you must...

1. Be able to measure

Measurement is not just a case of understanding email opens - focus on the metrics that matter (see our 'killer metrics' guide)

2. Have the right tools for the job

So ask yourself - can you lead score, can you escalate opportunities to the sales team and can you build microsites and personalised journeys in only a couple of clicks? If not - and if training isn't on offer from your provider to help you do this - you don't have the right marketing automation platform in place.

3. Do the squint test

OK, the basic principal is to squint, but the overriding aspect is to look at your comms with a fresh pair of eyes and, in the position of your target user, think - "would I engage?" **If the answer is no, there's more work to be done.**

4. Get to know your base, i.e. understand optimal send windows

For B2B communications, we favour a slow and steady delivery window during the working week, i.e. 08:00-16:00 Monday to Friday. Our stats show that emails sent before 08:00 receive a lower inbox position when the user arrives at work so, as a result, open rates are slightly down. Also, at the end of the day we find a 16:00 cut-off is optimal.

5. Embrace your email delivery role

An email provider is responsible for 33% of the deliverability mission, but the rest - list hygiene, engagement segmentation, mailing practices and delivery speed - is down to you.

You must send slowly, as there is very little point creating an excessive volume of leads in a single batch. It is far better to calculate the number of leads you would like to attract per hour, for example, so that you can then deliver opportunities in to the sales team in a calm and ordered manor. For some clients this equates to 2-3% of the base per hour. Our general advice is to send all non-time-critical email during the hours and days that your sales or support teams are on hand to talk.

Continued...

Many marketers are lulled into a false sense of security that all emails arrive in contacts' inboxes within a few moments of a mass batch send. This is not the case! Firstly, your sending ESP (i.e. Force24) will ensure your emails are being well received by the receiving ESP (such as Microsoft or Google), because sometimes the receiving ESP will put the brakes on due to poor contact engagement or content issues. In this case, the sending ESP will 'back off' a little and start to instead send emails very slowly to avoid compounding the problem.

There may therefore be a delay of up to 24 hours, which you may not have otherwise been aware of. Of course these restrictions aren't very helpful, especially if the email lands at an ineffective time or is blocked altogether! However if you can control the delivery rates and the hours of the day, you should encourage a comfortable delivery speed, by default.

Other tips for optimum email delivery include:

- Developing regular and consistent mailing practices (as sporadic send patterns can lower your conversion rates)
- Crafting great engaging content
- Segmenting data to ensure the best message is sent to the best user
- Cleaning your data to remove the unengaging contacts as soon as you deem it appropriate.

6. Decide on your approach to split testing

During demos, we are often asked how we go about split testing. Well it's very easy and the Force24 platform make this very straightforward. But this whole topic is a huge bugbear of mine!

Personally, I have two issues with the traditional form of split testing (where we send two or more styles to an audience to see which performs best)



Issue 1 - You're duplicating effort!

I personally don't feel I have ever been 100% torn between two subject lines or creative approaches - I've always been able to sit back and decide which is best. Also, if I had been so torn, surely this means the campaign is good enough so, instead of 'plan B' never seeing the light of day, it should be used in another stage of the journey.

Issue 2 - It's not always the case that a higher open rate gets the higher number enquiries.

We ran a test in 2015 to prove this, and sent a commercially-focussed email with a strong subject line vs a killer 'pending heat wave' email designed for maximum open and click rates! Guess which got the best 'results' and guess which generated more business.

So how should split testing be done?

I prefer to test as I go, and fortunately for me I have the Force24 platform to play with throughout. I use an automated journey to send campaigns, and I tend to push the same topic on email between 3-6 times before moving on.

Then, I have an even more intelligent feature which enables me to tag all of my stages with the 'test feature'. For example, I can tag all emails as using a certain CTA, and later, when I have used that particular CTA in a number of campaigns, I can look at the performance of the tag as if it were an email campaign before comparing it to other tags where I've used different CTA's. This allows me to remain on track, reduce effort and still gain the insight I need to improve my campaigns.

7. Get the sales team on board

A perfect harmony between sales and marketing is essential, and clear open channels of communication are a must. Speed is of the essence, as warm sales leads will only remain warm for a small amount of time, say 24-48 hours.

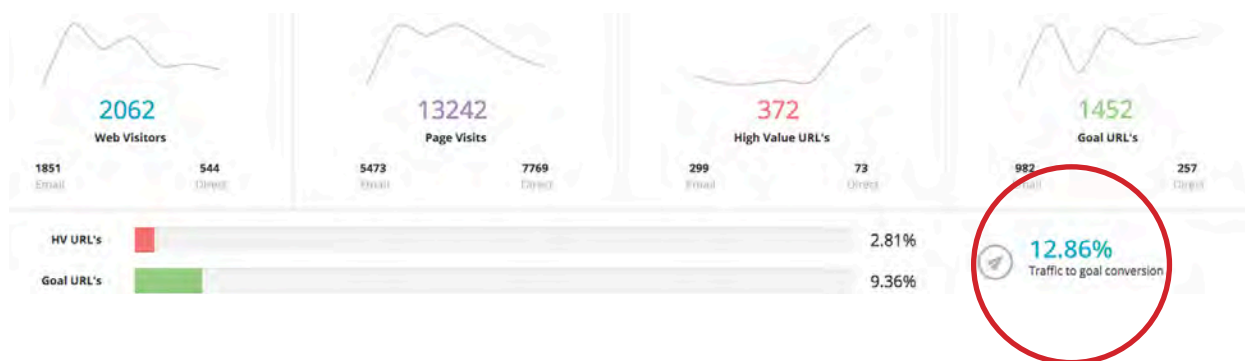
A lead score will help you establish which leads to push through to the sales team, and I've written many guides on this topic, including *The Ultimate Guide to Marketing Automation*). Some people prefer direct-action escalation, whereby all contacts that show any engagement whatsoever are pushed through to the sales team. But we should want to encourage all contacts to browse freely and download content at their leisure, without being hounded by the sales team.

Early evidence

Prior to our complete comprehension of these initial pieces of advice, we achieved an average conversion rate of 1.23% in any particular period. Not bad, not amazing, but it's nonetheless typical of what many people see.



Fast forward to the stats we see now, and that 12x ROI is certainly a reality!





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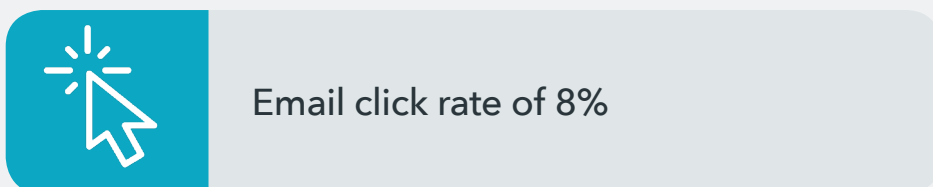
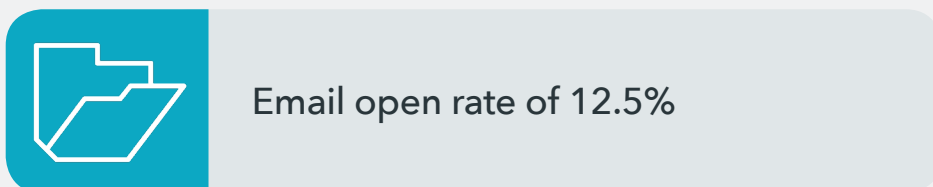
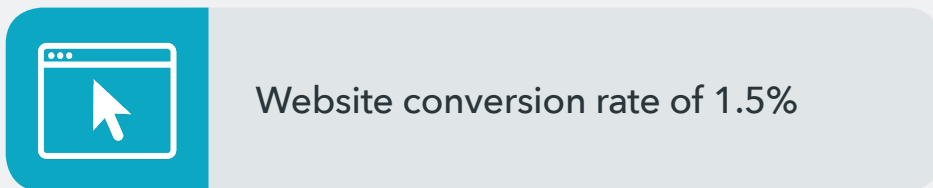
If you establish a consistent lead score escalation point for your brand, you can fall back on this for every campaign

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The 6 steps you need to take, to 12x your ROI

12x'ing your marketing ROI is not going to be a walk in the park, but the good news is that there's a path to follow! The aim of this guide is to distil the steps down and deliver them in a simple, prioritised checklist.

In order to achieve the '12x' result, we need to have a starting position. So, let's assume that, at the moment, you are achieving the following:



These are fairly normal for any company performing basic marketing operations without marketing automation in place.

Step 1: Your Objectives

Like all good projects, the foundations are critical – they help you remain focussed on what you need to do. In the case of a marketing campaign, the foundations are actually really simple but commonly overlooked.

The biggest question you're likely to forget to answer is – 'what do I want you to do?' But, by spending a few moments understanding this objective, you can make sure you offer your contacts a direct path to achieve it!

There are occasions when the objective is very clear. For example, you may want to educate your lapsed customer base about your new product launches.

But quite often, the objective is a rather woolly 'get more leads' or 'sell more stuff'. It's therefore important to look at the specifics. Who do you want more leads from and what constitutes a lead? What do you want to sell more of and to who? Answer these questions and you can be a little more direct in your data segmentation.

Taking a generic business example, my objective may boil down to something like:

- Demonstrate our technical ability in the field of marketing automation, by offering a detailed guide about our capabilities.
- The objective is to promote the guide and encourage marketing contacts to download the guide.
- Contacts downloading the guide will trigger follow up reengagement communications and grow their lead scores.
- We expect 3% of the base to opt to download the guide, while seeing approximately 1% of the base grow a lead score to greater than the desired lead score threshold.

Step 2: The Sales Funnel

We then need to understand what happens to people when they complete the objective.

For example, if the objective is for them to download some gated content, we will probably want to use some retargeting to pull them back to the site later on. Or, if the objective is to download a price list, we should probably call them straight away.

But ultimately, the sales funnel will help you understand the point at which you should act to optimise the opportunity.



Bottom of the funnel - lead score

If you establish a consistent lead score escalation point for your brand, you can fall back on this for every campaign.

For example, in the Force24 marketing department, any contact reaching 40 points is escalated for a gentle exploratory call, as these are users that have gone a little bit further around the site than just downloading the content.

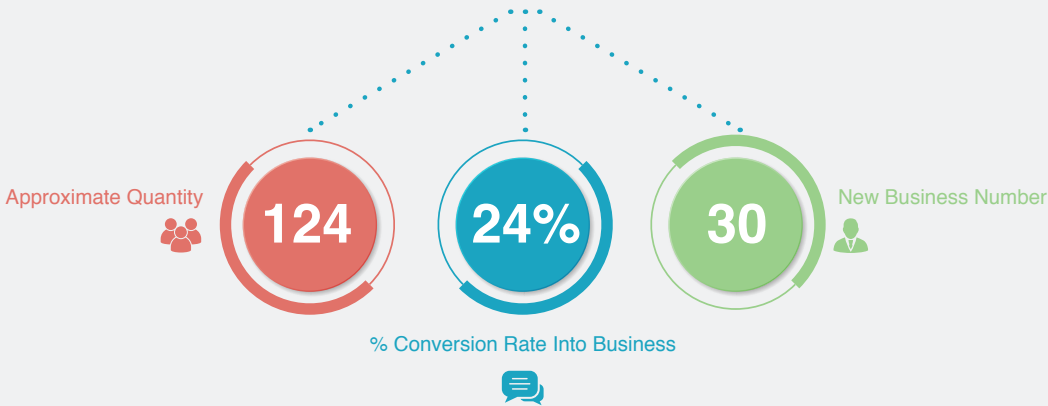
When a contact hits 70 points, we know they have spent significant time reviewing our content, so we expedite them for an immediate call back. We tend to find these contacts have an active project and welcome the chance to open the dialogue.

Let's put this into perspective to see how it will increase ROI...

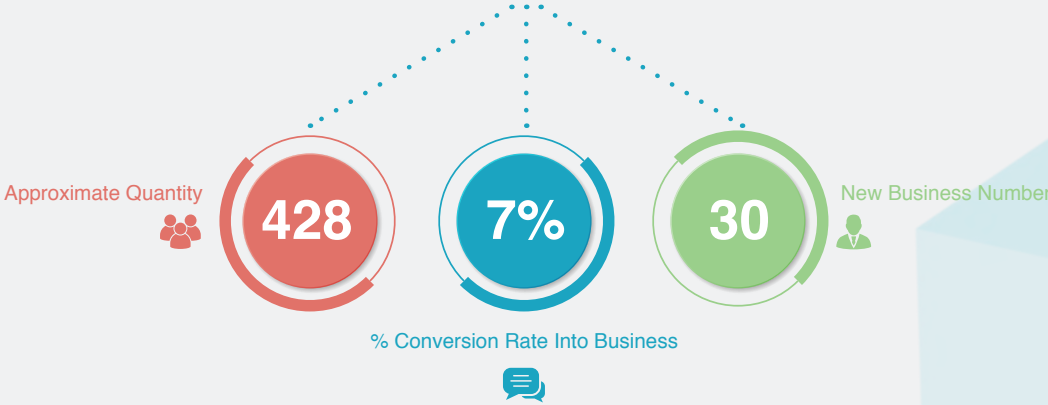
Our primary objective is to drive demo bookings.

So, let's compare the contacts escalated to the sales team based on lead score, with the contacts requesting a demo:

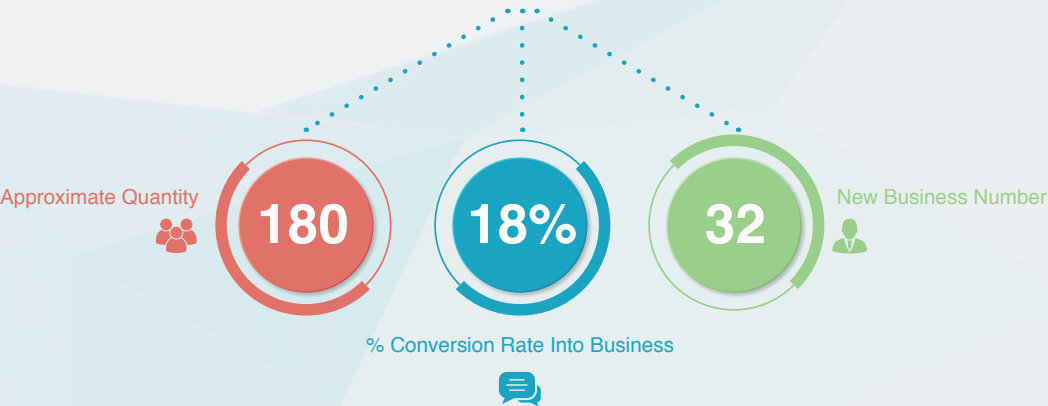
Source
Demo Booking From Website



Source
40 - 70 Lead Score



Source
70+ Lead Score



As you can see, without lead score lead escalation we would have missed approximately 62 new customers - and this was just from one month! But, by using a lead score to identify our hot targets before they convert, we already have 2x our ROI in one easy step!

Step 3: Data

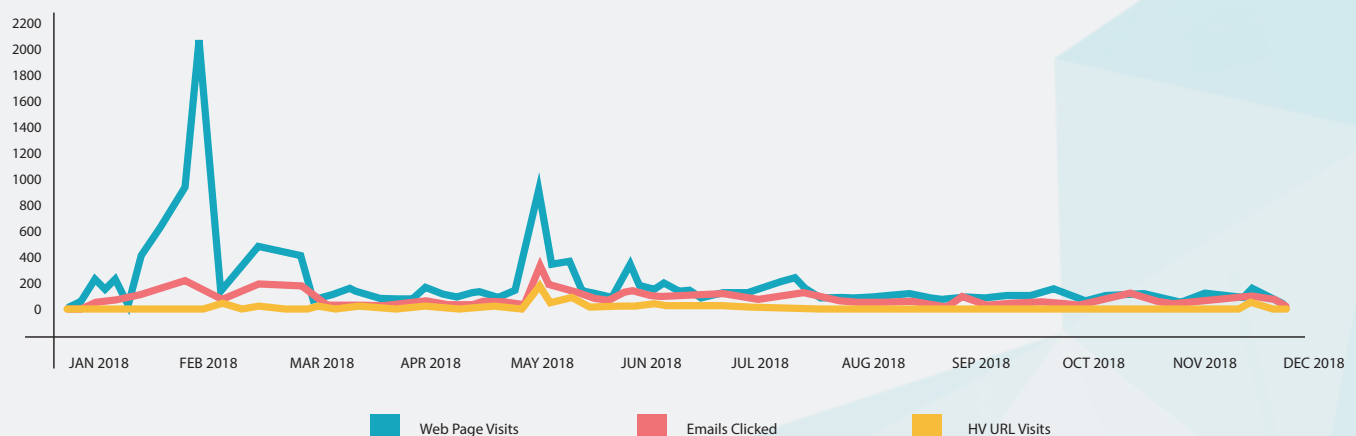
As marketers we sometimes forget about our data subjects' lives. However, we need to remember we are all human and the real world influences our business decisions.

The problem is that not all factors influence all contacts in your list. It's almost impossible to create segments for all types of people to counteract this which suggests you can't entirely focus your message to the right people at the right time. That's why we work on the basis of historic engagement, to direct our content focus and campaign calendar.

For example, we have observed particular times of the year when certain audiences are more proactive than others. The chart below demonstrates this seasonality across the Force24 prospect base:

It shows the varying types of actions, from email clicks and website visits through to enquiries. This chart is produced at a segment level, so - whilst we probably don't have any control over these peaks and troughs - it does make it easy to identify who to talk to and when, for maximum conversion success.

We have seen open rates vary from 8% in bad times through to 18% in the peak time, and consequential next-step metrics typically follow these ups and downs. We simply adopt a common-sense approach and release our best content during the high periods, but this doesn't mean we stop sending altogether during quieter times.



Continued...

REMEMBER -

this guide is called "How to 12x your marketing ROI in 6 easy steps!" So, let's try to quantify the benefit...

Since we can drive our focus to the audiences that are showing engagement, we have been able to drive the average lead score up by 20%. This means we are pushing approximately 20% more people through the sales funnel. In Force24 this would represent 22 new customers in an average month.





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Step 4: Content and Messaging

This step will count towards your 12x, but it represents a totally unquantifiable amount of uplift unfortunately!

It all boils down to empathy - you need to understand your audience and think about how you expect them to respond. That way you can craft the right content and messaging.

I often ask the Force24 marketing department "Would you engage with that campaign?" Sometimes we forget we have to appeal to the human element of our audience and the offer itself is just not enough.

So, assuming you are talking to the best segment at any given time, you need to try to understand how to attract their attention. And by asking yourself if you would engage in their position, you have a nice simple acid test.

Take this guide as an example! The title is "How to 12 x your marketing ROI in 5 easy steps!"

- We've tried to empathise with the audience and create content that our key segment is interested in
- We've gone for a killer headline that is guaranteed to 'pull'
- We've kept the artwork clean and remembered the 'squint test' to ensure the message stands out! Single columns work brilliantly in this respect - in fact we stick to a single column approach for all emails and landing pages. This gives the reader a very clear path to follow without confusing the eye.

Continued...

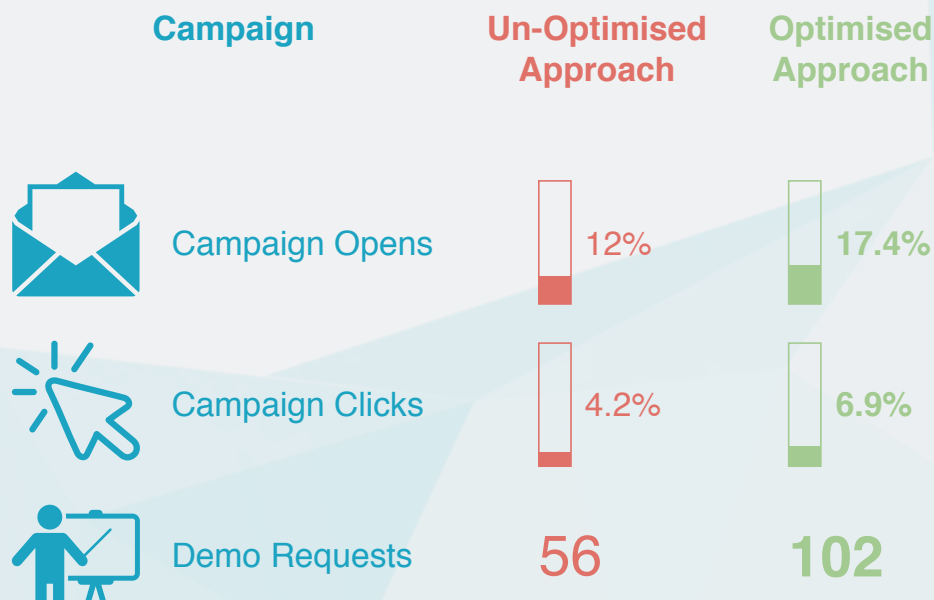
Some people opt for multiple columns in email newsletters, thinking it's the only way to cram various stories in. But surely a more effective method would be to do the thinking for your contacts, hand-pick the best articles for them, and display them in an appropriate order? Alternatively, you could spread the load and send one focused email each week, rather than a single email once a month with many articles squashed in!

Let's also not forget the role of an email - it is bait. It should alert the user of the content, but it doesn't need to be the content. By releasing the burden from the email, you can become more focused and give the reader an easier experience.

So how do you quantify the impact of effective, well-ordered messaging? In this instance I will rely again on Force24's own marketing evidence to support the ROI uplift.

During 2017/ 2018, we have been running in-depth message construction analysis, looking at both Force24 as well as other organisations' artwork, and we have seen a significant impact on campaign performance.

In fact, we were able to demonstrate a 42% increase in email marketing performance by ensuring it was fully optimised. (an initial cold acquisition average campaign open rate of 12% was lifted to an average of 17.4% with message optimisation.)



(please note, lead score escalated contacts have been ignored in calculating this ROI uplift as many messages may have contributed to the engagement thresholds).

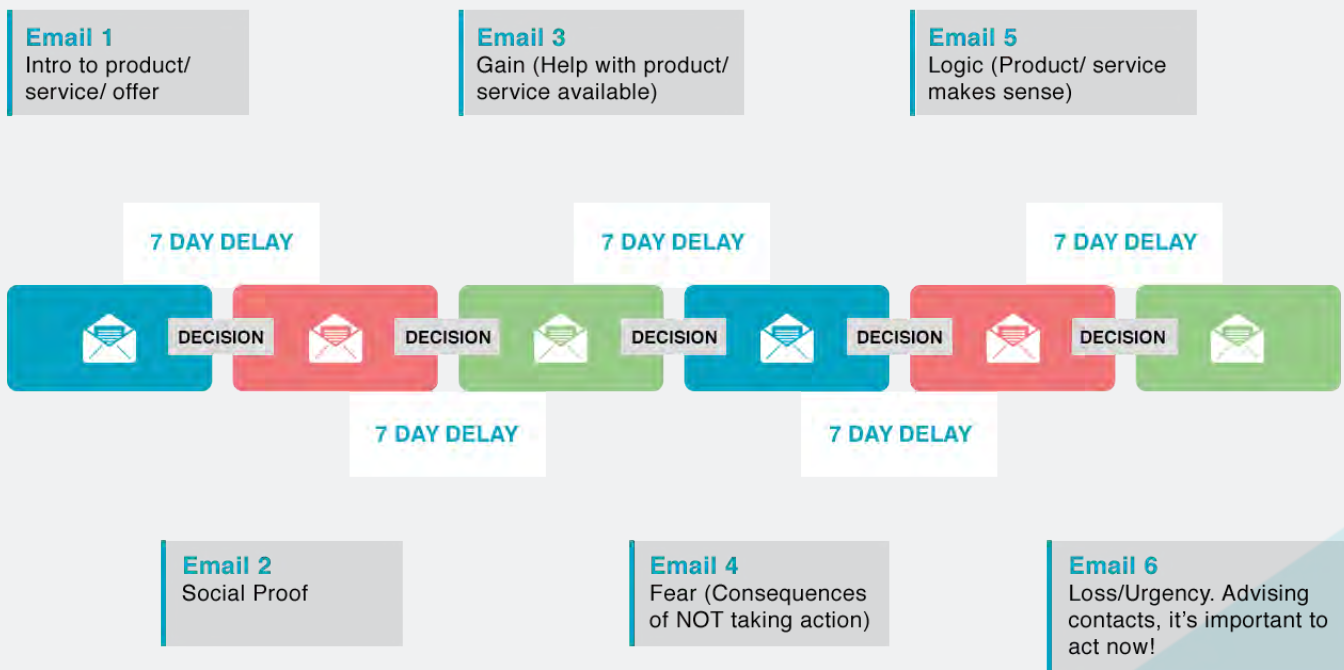
Even when being very conservative, it's clear to see that this is another simple way to 2 x your marketing ROI in 1 easy step!

Step 5: The Execution

Whilst every step in this guide matters - otherwise we wouldn't have included it - this is undoubtedly the big one!

On average, we open only 1 in every 6 commercial emails. We have been desensitised to marketing messages - I mean, how many commercial emails can you remember from yesterday's inbox?

So, when attempting to achieve that all-important cut-through it is important to cover off the basics of the human argument.



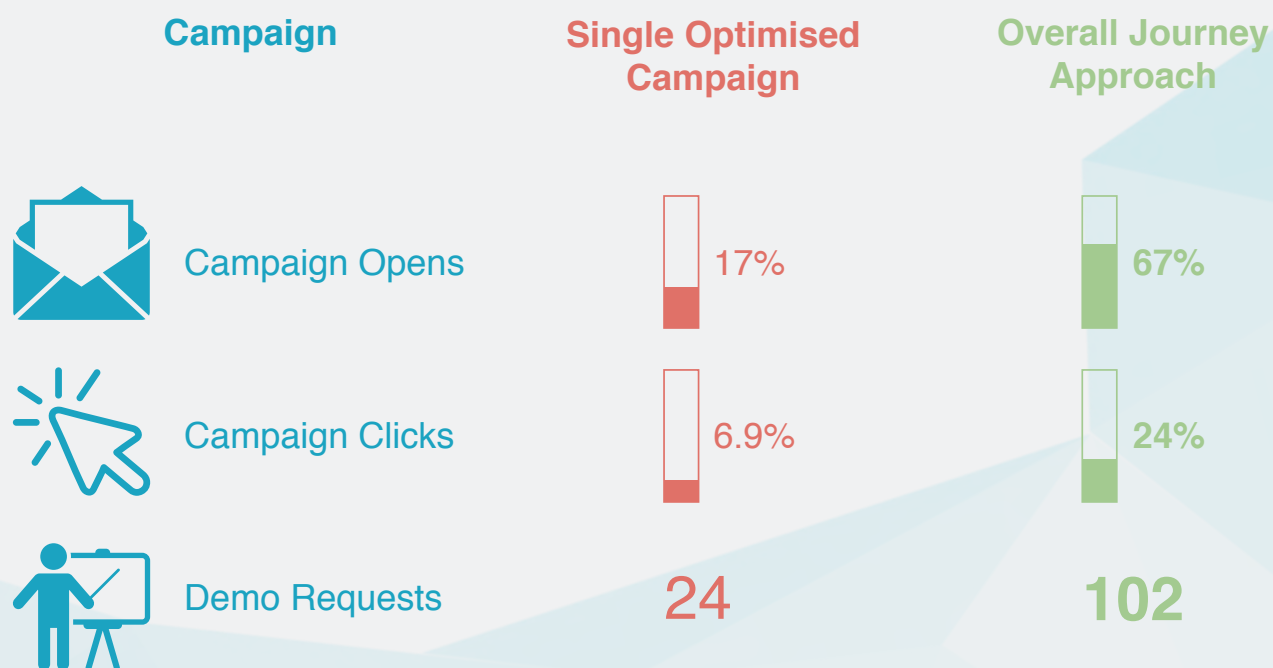
Continued...

Create the campaign to reflect each stage and aim to run it over six weeks or more. This sounds like six weeks of effort, but with the right tools (marketing automation!) in place, technology will work to your rules and you can be very hands off!

Calculating the benefit of a well-structured journey is relatively simple:

AND, that's before we've quantified the benefits of a hands-off marketing team, with more time to spare on other matters!

It's therefore safe to say that's another 4 x your marketing ROI in one easy step!



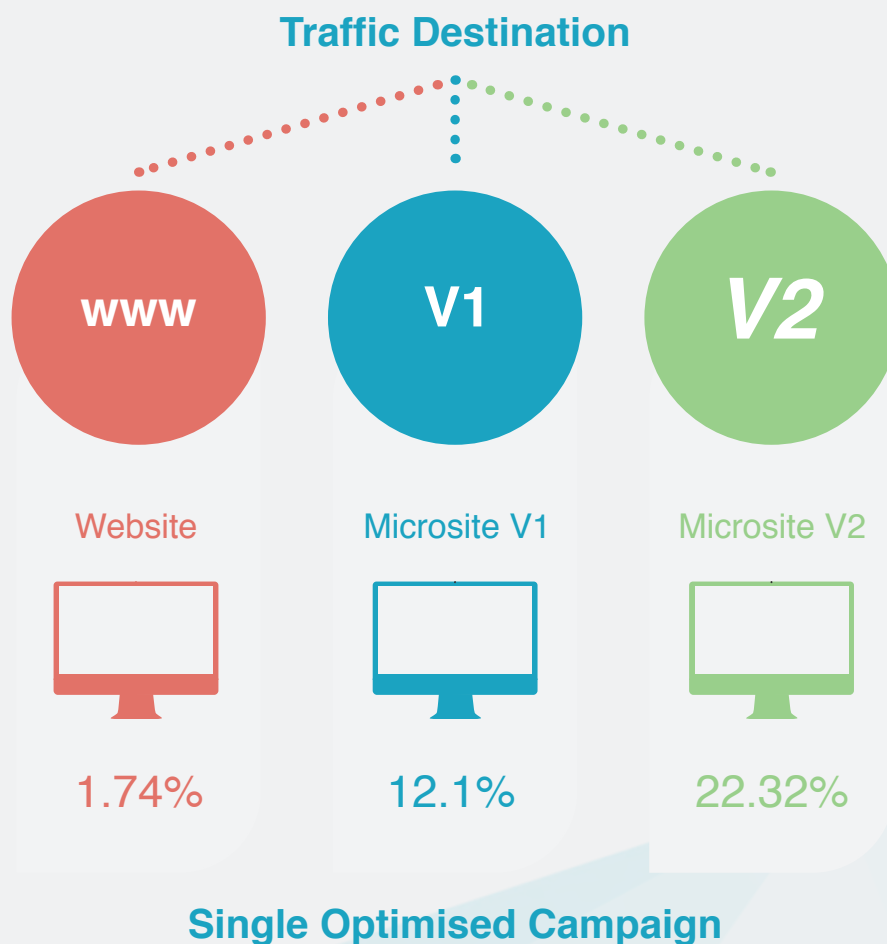
Step 6: Landing Pages

OK, I know this is a weighty guide and so if you've reached step 6 you really mean business! You'll be pleased to know however, that I've kept this final piece of advice very straightforward.

I talked on page X about the importance of landing pages, and their impact is best illustrated visually!

- In 2016, we launched the new Force24 website. I was delighted with it.
- In 2017 we launched our microsite editor
- In 2018 we launched an even more dynamic V2 of the microsite editor

With each release came the ability to craft ever-more personalised landing pages, with content tailored entirely to our website visitor. So, whilst I may have originally loved our website as it stood in 2016, it wasn't enough on its own, as the evidence shows. Yet another example of how to 4x your ROI in 1 easy step!



Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes, spanning most of the page width. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the page.



Get in touch

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