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# Get personal with marketing automation

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In today's digital world, dates meet on social platforms instead of coffee shops. People go online to order dinner instead of going out to a restaurant. It would appear that things are going in an increasingly impersonal direction - however, people seem to be craving a personal touch more than ever in their brand experiences.

Customers have so many options to choose from when it comes to buying a boat, and more access to those options than ever through online channels. Connecting with customers and prospects on a personal level and giving them a unique experience can go a long way.



How do you offer a personalized experience to everyone? There are digital tools that can help. Marketing automation software stores information about the people who visit your dealership website and tracks the actions that they take on your site. Marketing automation can set up follow-up messages via email marketing that accommodate customers' needs based on their actions.

For example, if a site visitor fills out a form on your website for a boat but doesn't take additional action for three days, Marketing Automation software could trigger a follow-up email that gives him or her details about other similar boats that you have in stock. Using stored information about each visitor, the email could even contain a personalized greeting: *"Hi \_\_\_\_! We*

saw that you might be interested in a \_\_\_\_\_. Check out these other \_\_\_\_\_ that you might like!"

To take the personalized experience to another level, marketing automation also allows your business to have conversations with customers in real-time. Accommodating the needs of your customers at any time without opening a 24/7 customer service center is only possible with marketing automation. If a prospect submits a lead on a boat at 3 a.m., your sales rep isn't likely to respond until 9 a.m. the next day. But marketing automation assures that the prospect will get an immediate response. In this case, maybe that means the prospect will receive a follow-up email five minutes after they submit a lead inviting them to the dealership for a test ride. This automated interaction eliminates the gap in time when your customer is not being served.

Consider the amount of leads that never convert and the sales that fall through – how many of those could be saved with the right follow-up tools? Build and foster customer relationships by meeting them where they are - with the information that they need, personalized to their own interests, on their own time.

As a business, the question you should always be asking is - "How can we better serve our customers?" marketing automation can play a big part in answering that question.

*Lauren Labunsky is the public relations manager for Dealer Spike, a company that provides innovative websites as well as a suite of powerful online advertising solutions that help marine dealers help increase sales and service profitability. For more information, visit [www.DealerSpikeMarine.com](http://www.DealerSpikeMarine.com) or call 800-288-5917.*



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