



Steps to Transform Cold Leads into Paying Customers



vabout



Steps to Transform my Cold Leads into Paying Customers

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Introduction

Successful inbound marketers know the strategies and techniques to convert Web users into loyal customers. They understand how to move visitors along the stages of the funnel to achieve a company's main objective: usually a sales transaction. The most effective tactics target the audience differently at each stage.

The process starts by targeting visitors early and creating good relationships with them. This is done by engaging them with relevant content and regular updates. After transforming prospects into engaged customers, additional steps are implemented to maintain the relationship and convert them into loyal followers who are more likely to purchase.

When a prospect has reached the final stages of the conversion funnel, marketers can offer discounts, free gifts, a simple check-out process, and other methods to overcome barriers that cause potential customers to change their minds before purchase. Data analytics can be used to find weak points in the funnel where most potential customers leave the process, allowing marketers to make improvements and minimize lost sales.

Chapter one

Stage 1: Turning Cold Leads into Engaged Followers

Cold leads are potential customers or prospects. Prospects are defined as those who have never purchased any of your products or services, but probably have a need for them, because they visited your website. These individuals can become customers if you know how to nurture them well through the four stages of the [conversion funnel](#).

The Four Stages of the Conversion Funnel



- **Cold lead:** A potential customer, also called a prospect, is someone who has never engaged with your brand. This is a visitor who may be aware of your brand or has a need for your products or services.
- **Engaged:** A user who is interested in the products or services and wants to learn more.
- **Brand advocate:** A customer who is loyal, has a positive image of your brand and would recommend you to others.
- **Paying customer:** A visitor who has purchased or is willing to purchase. This is the end of the [conversion funnel](#) where a sales transaction takes place.

Now we will discuss the basic tactics to consider for converting cold leads into engaged customers in Stage 1 are:

Blogging

You have probably heard this phrase repeatedly in the last few years: **Content is king**. One mistake many marketers make however, is creating content for the sole purpose of converting customers. This is not the way to use content because content does not directly lead to conversions. Instead, producing great content strengthens relationships with followers and increases brand recognition, which eventually leads to more conversions. With this in mind, there are several principles to consider when blogging:

- Blogging should entice readers to read your content.
- Your visitors should be convinced that your blog is going to answer their questions and solve their problems.
- Blogging is not going to convert your visitors into customers after the first interaction- instead it creates awareness.
- It takes time to get subscribers.

Search engine optimization

In order for people to find your website, it is critical to focus on keywords they use when researching your products and services. This helps you appear in their Google search results. The process starts with on-site SEO (search engine optimization) which makes sure your blog content follows Google's rules so that Googlebot indexes your articles through search engine spiders.

The second part involves off-site SEO, which is where other websites link to you. The more backlinks you earn, the greater the potential for higher Google search rankings.

Some actions to help you earn backlinks are:

1. Guest blogging.
2. Commenting on posts.
3. Submitting content in Web directories.

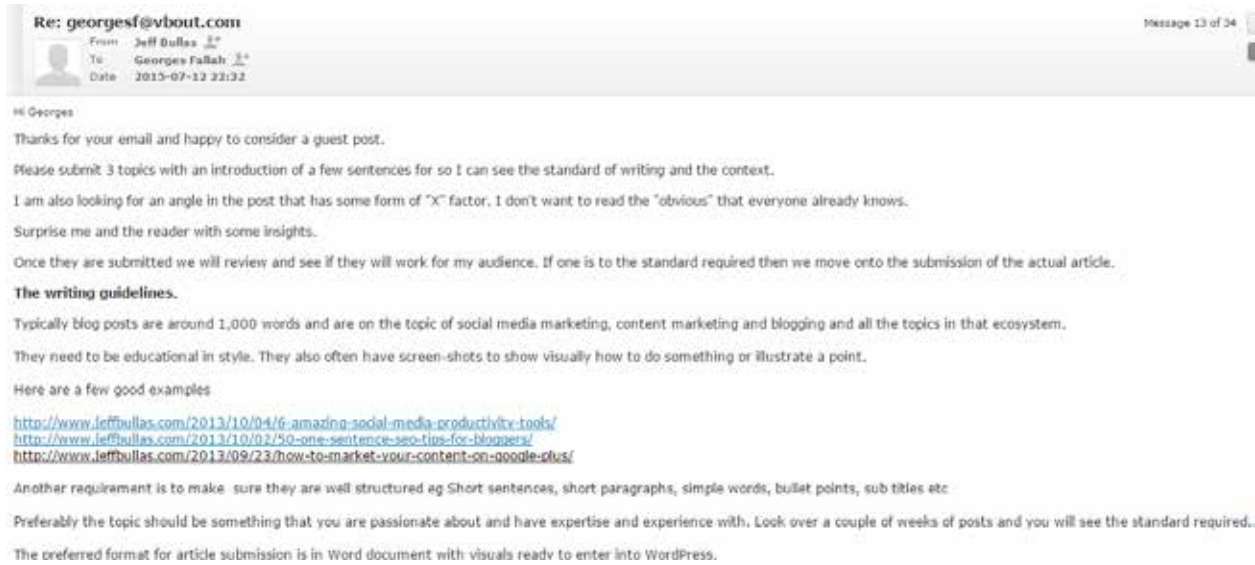
Guest blogging

A successful strategy for getting backlinks is finding contributors and influencers in your field and building relationships with them. These influencers can help you gain exposure to their significant numbers of followers. To choose the best influencers, you can create buyer personas to analyze their Twitter followers to see if they are in your target audience. To start communicating with influencers, first show them appreciation. This can be done by mentioning their [Twitter](#) handle in your posts or retweeting their content. After a relationship has been developed, you can ask them to publish your content on their website. Your content should be unique and interesting to their audience.

Here's an example of an email that reaches out to an influencer:

```
From: Georges Fallah <georgesf@vbout.com>  
Subject: georgesf@vbout.com  
  
Message Body:  
Hello Jeff,  
I'm a blogger and social media consultant for a marketing  
automation platform named Vbout.  
I would like to know if I can guest post on your blog as I really  
like your website and high quality content you write.  
Let me know how I can help as well.  
Thank you
```

And here is the influencer's reply:



Commenting on posts

Another effective tactic is joining websites or groups where topics relevant to your products or services are discussed. Read the content carefully and submit a useful tip that captures attention and directs the audience to your website as shown below:



Saurabh Kulkarni Digital Marketer, Email Marketer



Quick query - Acquiring email list for a Startup

How does one get started with Email marketing for a startup, who is yet to acquire any customer or is getting started with its website? Thanks.

Comment(11) • Like (2) • Unfollow • Report spam

2 days ago

Greg Salter and Chris Duke like this

[See previous comments](#)



Georges Fallah (Open Networker)

I suggest you deploy smart popups on your website that gets triggered according to certain user behaviors (ex: watching a video, spending 30 seconds, or upon page exit.) Ideally the popup should connect with an email marketing/automation engine that takes that data and start the nurture process. Checkout this post for more information:

<https://www.vbout.com/blog/Get-more-subscribers-using-popups/>

Like (2) • Delete

1 day ago



Ash (Ashvini) Vyas [LION]

Create an informative Blog and give subscription option. It might take time to create a long list, but the people will be your loyal readers and potential buyers

Like (1) • Reply privately • Report spam

1 day ago

Submitting content in Web directories

There are many Web directories where you can submit content for free. This is another way to increase your exposure and the potential of getting backlinks. Here are a few [websites](#) where you can submit blog posts:

Top 10 High PR Article Directory Sites

PR	Site
4	http://www.ezinemark.com/
4	http://www.articlesnatch.com/
4	http://www.articlesfactory.com/
4	http://www.articlecube.com/
4	http://www.articletrader.com/
5	http://www.articlesbase.com/
5	http://www.articlecity.com/
6	http://goarticles.com/
6	http://www.selfgrowth.com/
6	http://hubpages.com/

Collecting email subscribers

After prospects find your website through Google search, your main goal is to keep them engaged. In order to build this relationship, you will have to collect their email addresses. Using behavioral pop-ups while a visitor is on your website is a proven way to collect more emails and build a subscriber list. Afterwards, you can develop relationships by emailing regular blog updates, discounts, offers, specials and new products to your followers.

Pop-up

Opt-in and we will email you high quality content once released.

Name

Email Address

Send me blog updates

Your Information will never be shared with any third party

[f](#) [Twitter](#) [g+](#) [in](#)

Another way to collect email addresses is to ask visitors to fill in their contact information on your [landing page](#) to receive future offers and information.

Landing page

BOOK YOUR PRIVATE DEMO

Name *

Email *

Phone

Company Name

Number of Employees

Are you looking for a New Marketing Suite

REQUEST A PRIVATE DEMO

When your prospects like your blog and agree to subscribe to your newsletters, they are ready to engage with your brand. You have now successfully implemented the steps in Stage 1 that transform cold leads into engaged followers.

Chapter two

Stage 2: Transforming Engaged Followers into Brand Advocates

After your prospects have become engaged followers, you need to change different strategies, because your main objective is now keeping your followers engaged. To encourage regular communication, you must continually deliver fresh, useful information. This sends the message that your followers needs are a priority for your business.

Tactics to implement in Stage 2:

Include social sharing buttons on your website

Now you need to get your blog readers to follow you on social channels. Insert social channel icons at the bottom of your blog so visitors are directed to your social pages when selected. This helps you send ongoing updates to your followers on multiple social platforms. [Social media](#) increases the reach of your content and engagement with your brand.



Email marketing

Once your customers start engaging with your brand, they will expect regular updates about new products, blog posts, contests, specials or discounts. This happens after you develop a relationship with them by proving you understand their needs and can solve their problems. You become a trusted advisor which transforms them into engaged brand advocates. At this stage you must demonstrate that you know your customers do not all have the same interests. Targeted [email marketing](#) improves your content by allowing you to tailor messages for different audiences. This is done by segmenting your customers based on geography, demographics, behavior and interests.

Segmentation improves the relevance of your messaging and strengthens brand loyalty. Stronger relationships with your followers help to achieve your long-term objectives, which differ based on your objectives. Some examples include:




Social channels interactions

A vital part of engagement is listening. By listening to your customers express their opinions and recommendations on various [social channels](#), you gain a better understanding of their needs. This information helps you to solve their problems and predict their future needs. Keep in mind that when you prove you care about your customers, they are more likely to continue the relationship, recommend you to others, and make purchases. Listening to and answering their concerns are proven ways to increase sales.

To start the conversation on [social media](#), you can ask followers interesting questions that encourage them to respond and share their opinions. You can also share entertaining and unique posts that bring them back to your channels for updates.

Ella New City
Published by Richard Siteforbiz (👤) · January 26 · 🌐


How about choosing one of our tasty salads today?





43 people reached Boost Post

Like · Comment · Share 👤

👍 Len Jacobs, Alison Dolan and 2 others like this.

 **Angela Christopoulos Phillips** Do you deliver?
Like · Reply · January 26 at 11:16pm

 **Ella New City** We deliver for catering orders only
Like · Reply · Commented on by Richard Siteforbiz (👤) · January 27 at 7:34pm · Edited

 Write a comment... 📷 😊

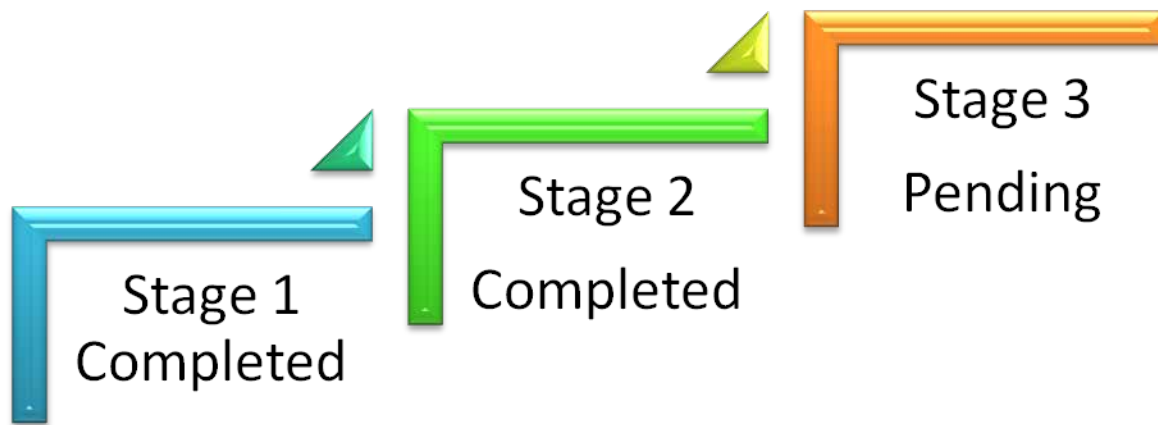
Press Enter to post.

After achieving the steps listed in Stage 2, engaged followers are transformed into brand advocates.

Chapter 3

Converting Brand Advocates into Paying Customers

Once engaged followers become brand advocates, they are less likely to end the relationship. They are enthusiastic and look forward to seeing your content and updates. The next goal is the most important and challenging step in the [funnel](#): turning brand advocates into paying customers. This is typically the final goal in achieving a return on your investment and growing your business.



The basic steps in Stage 3 are:

Running contests and special offers

Contests, special offers and discounts are some of the smartest strategies to convert advocates into customers. Offering something for free or at a discount can push advocates to make initial purchases or to sign up for trial offers with their credit card. Once the giveaway or special is over, the offer is delivered to those who participated or won the challenge. An example is offering 10 percent off your products to advocates who invite ten friends to become followers. You then give the reward and announce the winners in [email marketing](#) or social media. This encourages more of your advocates to participate in future offers and contests.

Automating email campaigns

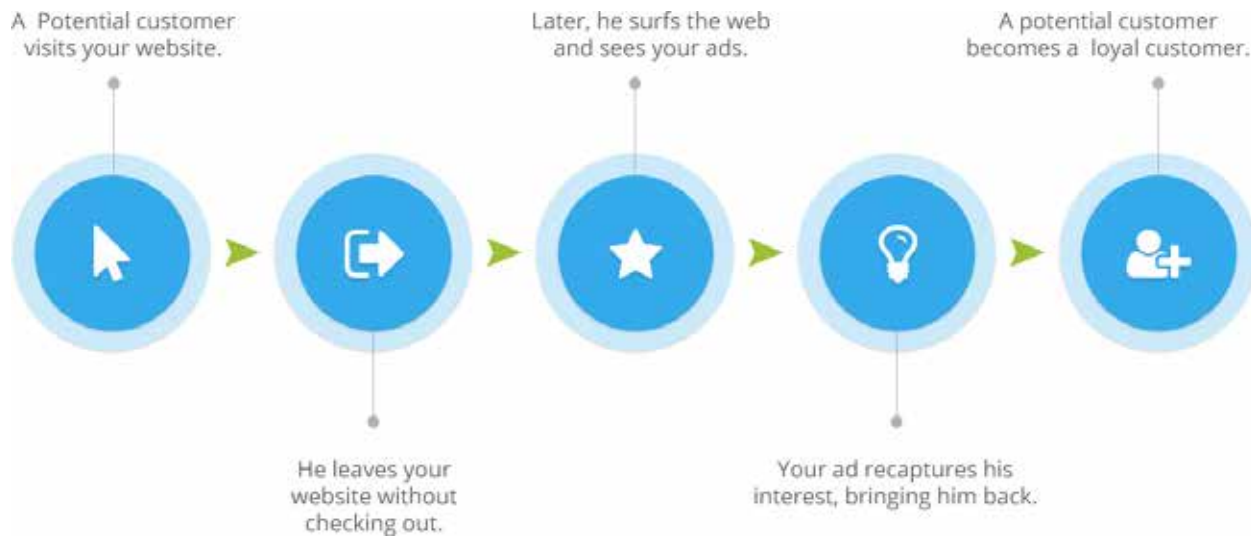
In addition to keeping followers informed, [e-mail campaigns](#) can entice customers to finalize a purchase. A good strategy is to email an incentive to customers buy the product if they have failed to complete the check-out process. Follow your customers as they navigate the funnel. It is important to eliminate any obstacles they may face.

Check out form

The image shows a checkout form with a green header. The header contains the word "Checkout" on the left and "Questions? Call 1-800-716-4851 for assistance" on the right. Below the header is a progress bar with four steps: 1 Sign-in, 2 Shipping, 3 Billing, and 4 Review & Payment. The "Sign-in" step is highlighted. Below the progress bar, there are two main options. On the left, under the heading "continue as a guest", the text says "Continue with your purchase as a guest. (You'll have the opportunity to sign up for an optional account later.)" and there is a purple button labeled "CONTINUE AS A GUEST". On the right, under the heading "registered users, sign in and continue", the text says "We'll use the information stored in your existing personal account to make the purchase process more convenient". Below this text are input fields for "Email Address:" and "Password:", with a "forgot password?" link next to the password field. There is also a purple button labeled "SIGN IN & CONTINUE".

Retargeting

Retargeting is an effective way to increase conversions. It assures that when someone is interested in your products or services and leaves to visit another website, your ads will appear on the new page. There are many reasons people leave to other sites and retargeting helps to bring them back or to keep your product in mind while they may be researching others. With most sites, only 2 percent of visitors convert during their first visit. This means the remaining 98 percent leave the page and return at a later time to purchase. The main purpose of retargeting is to keep the remaining 98 percent of users engaged and aware of your brand so they are more likely to return and complete a purchase.



Retargeting is one of the most effective advertising tactics used online because it ensures your ads specifically target your engaged audience. This drives conversions and as a result, has a higher return on investment.

Using analytics

Tracking performance should be one of your main priorities. This helps you to determine why your bounce rate is high, or why the conversion rate is not meeting your expectations. Unless you monitor where drop-offs occur, you will not know how to improve the process in a precise way. Here are some metrics to focus on when measuring your campaign performance:

Customer acquisition

In Google [analytics](#), you can determine the origin of your customer acquisitions from different sources of traffic. These sources could be:

- Direct: Those who inserted your web address into the browser.
- Referral: Potential customers who arrived from an intermediary website.
- Organic search: Customers who found you by searching for keywords in Google search.
- Social: Individuals who arrived to your website from different social channels.
- Paid search: Those who were directed to your website through Google AdWords, [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#) ads.
- Email: Customers who landed on your website by clicking a link inside of an email.

Channels

Default Channel Grouping	Acquisition			Behavior			Conversions: Goal 1: Signup		
	Sessions ↓	% New Sessions	New Users	Bounce Rate	Pages / Session	Avg. Session Duration	Signup (Goal 1 Conversion Rate)	Signup (Goal 1 Completions)	Signup (Goal 1 Value)
	1,409 % of Total: 100.00% (1,409)	40.45% Avg for View: 40.45% (0.00%)	570 % of Total: 100.00% (570)	40.45% Avg for View: 40.45% (0.00%)	6.15 Avg for View: 6.15 (0.00%)	00:09:55 Avg for View: 00:09:55 (0.00%)	0.57% Avg for View: 0.57% (0.00%)	8 % of Total: 100.00% (8)	\$480.00 % of Total: 100.00% (\$480.00)
1. Direct	814 (57.77%)	44.23%	360 (63.18%)	41.28%	6.63	00:09:15	0.37%	3 (37.50%)	\$180.00 (37.50%)
2. Referral	265 (18.81%)	24.91%	66 (11.59%)	41.13%	7.10	00:15:37	0.75%	2 (25.00%)	\$120.00 (25.00%)
3. Organic Search	240 (17.03%)	41.25%	99 (17.37%)	34.58%	4.32	00:06:34	1.25%	3 (37.50%)	\$180.00 (37.50%)
4. Social	89 (6.32%)	50.56%	45 (7.89%)	47.19%	3.82	00:07:42	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	\$0.00 (0.00%)
5. Paid Search	1 (0.07%)	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	0.00%	8.00	00:35:31	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	\$0.00 (0.00%)

Goal completions (overview)

With Google analytics, you can track the percentage of people who completed each goal and you can classify them by assigning each a value in dollars.

This captures different goals for your customers to complete such as:

- Making a purchase
- Submitting a contact information form
- Registering for a webinar

Goal completion

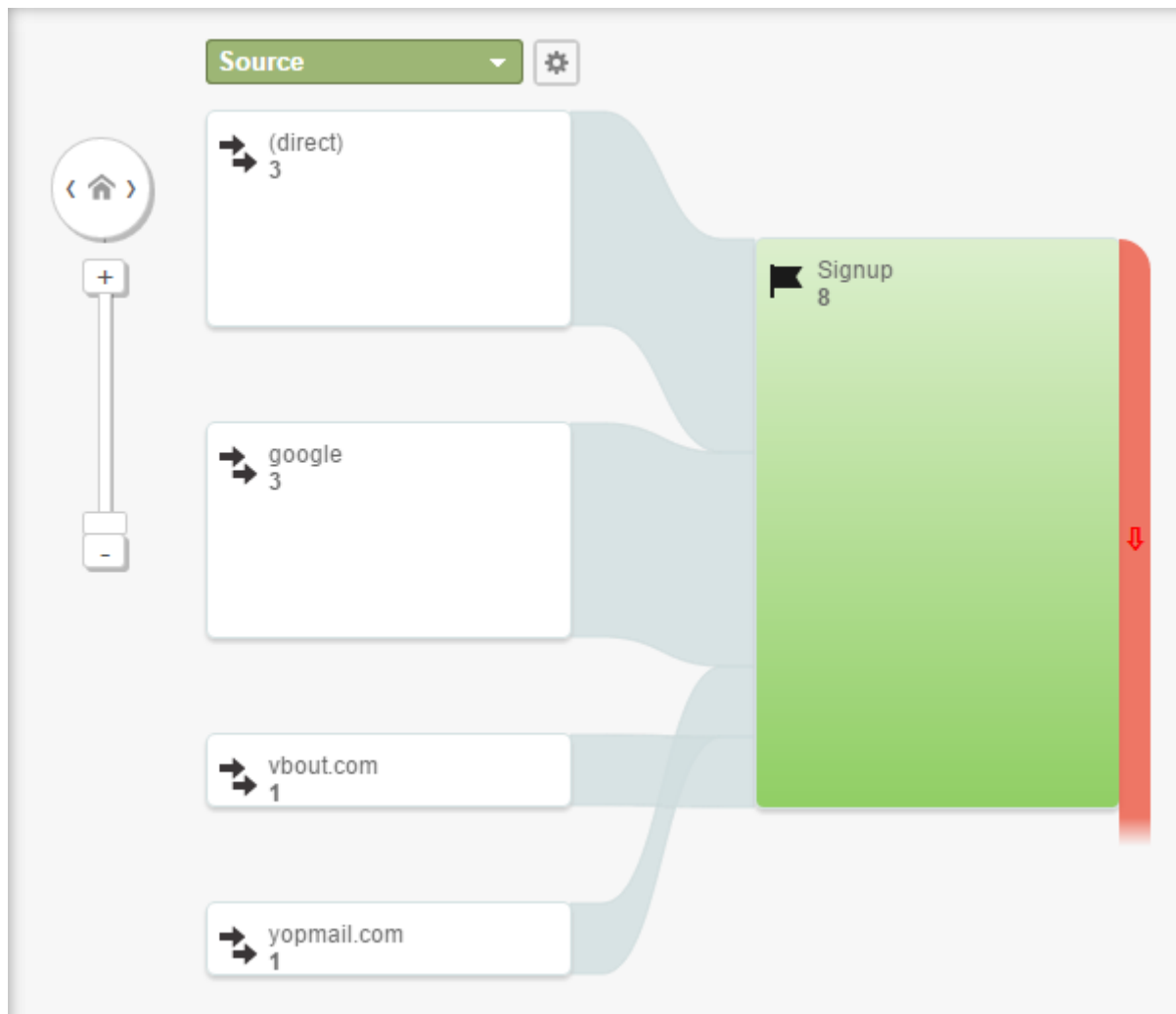
Goal Completion Location	Goal Completions ↓	Goal Value ↓
	23 % of Total: 100.00% (23)	\$554.00 % of Total: 100.00% (\$554.00)
1. /blog	14 (60.87%)	\$14.00 (2.53%)
2. /register/complete.html	9 (39.13%)	\$540.00 (97.47%)

As in the table above, goal completion location shows you the pages your customers have visited and how many pages per session. The goal value shows each completed action to which assigned a value amount in dollars. For example, "if your sales team closes 10 percent of people who sign up to get blog updates, and your average transaction is \$140, you might assign \$14 (10 percent of \$140) to a newsletter sign-up." This method allows you to estimate how much this conversion or goal is worth to your business. Consequently, you will be able to focus on the goals with the highest value conversions.

Goal flow

When you click on “goal flow” in Google analytics, you can see the number of sign-ups to your website. In this section, you can track your customers along the funnel towards conversion and identify problems by seeing where drop offs are occurring.

Goal flow



The goal flow answers the following questions:

- At what stage in the funnel do your visitors enter? Do they come in at the first step or directly into the middle?
- Are there significant drop-offs in the middle of the funnel?
- Is there a [segment](#) of traffic that is converting more or less than another segment?

If there is a problem with your content or process that is causing potential customers to exit, you can correct it and then review your goal flow report to find out if this improved the conversion rate for that goal.

Conclusion

Successful marketers know how to implement different strategies and tactics in the three stages of the funnel. Successful marketers are also aware that converting cold leads into engaged users is not enough to achieve the ultimate conversion to paying customers. You must also nurture the engaged users to turn them into loyal brand advocates and then you will achieve more sales. Sometimes in order to convert cold leads into paying customers, you have to start from the beginning and follow the entire sequence along the funnel in order to finalize conversion.

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Georges Fallah is a content marketer at marketing automation platform Vboutcom. He has been involved in social media activities for the platform since January 2013 and developed his expertise in analytics, blogging and email marketing. Georges is always seeking to create new strategies in order to become a marketing automation pioneer.

Georges earned his BA degree in hotel management from Zgharta Technical University and is currently studying for an MBA in business marketing at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences Lebanese-French ULF.



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