



# Demystifying Marketing Automation and Email Marketing for Distributors



It's no secret distributors struggle to create and maintain effective marketing programs. The root of the problem?

## You're distribution pros, not marketing gurus.

You can run circles around sales management, SKU management, margin performance, logistics, and the KPIs that keep your business running. But keeping up with modern marketing techniques and tools is often foreign territory. Oftentimes, distributors stack their sales team before building a marketing department, rightly so, but this makes it even more challenging to have a consistent marketing program.



## No marketing team? No problem.

Whether you have a designated marketing person, a whole department, or a part-time-marketing-hat-wearer, thankfully, there are tools readily available for distributors to empower your team.

**The goal of this guide is to demystify two main components of modern marketing:**

- ① Email marketing
- ② Back-of-the-house marketing automation

And then, we'll provide guidance on **selecting the right tools that help drive revenue for your organization.**

## PART 1

# Distributor challenges when it comes to marketing

It's not uncommon for small or mid-market distribution companies to have little or no staff dedicated solely to marketing. While this presents several potential challenges, it also creates an opportunity to rely on technology to fill the gap and become a workhorse in your tech stack.

**Here are some common challenges we hear from customers when it comes to marketing support:**



### RESOURCES

Finding and retaining talent is always a top priority. In this era of “The Great Resignation” and people shifting careers, staffing shortages are happening in almost all roles in the distribution industry. However, leaning on the efficiency of technology solutions can help ease the burden with easy-to-use tools that provide a tangible return.



### TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION

As distributors evolve and embrace the need for more advanced technology, there's always a healthy skepticism toward change. Often, this skepticism sets up the introduction and success of new technology for failure. The way to combat low adoption rates is to involve users in the decision-making process. That can mean polling team members prior to a solution search to better understand how they work and including them in the demo process. It's human nature; those who feel included will feel valued and will adapt to change better than if they are simply told what to do.



### FINDING THE RIGHT SOLUTION

For decades distributors have been using CRM, business intelligence, and pricing software that were developed for any business. Stop making do with solutions that are designed for others. You have unique challenges. Match that with a unique solution built specifically for your industry.



# Marketing Tools

## So many options, so little time.

There's a daunting and ever-evolving dearth of marketing tools available today for distributors. In the last 20 years, with the rise of digital marketing and social media, there's no shortage of apps, websites, programs and platforms that might help you grow your business. However, no distributor has time to waste on solutions that don't work.

One of the biggest challenges distributors face is adoption of new technology. And it's often coupled with a lack of resources. It's no uncommon for distributors to have little or no designated marketing staff, leaving sales holding the bag when it comes to email marketing. There are ways to *successfully adopt new technology with a well thought out plan.*

**Let's dive into two tools that are critical to creating successful, sustainable and manageable marketing programs, no matter the size of your marketing resources.**

### TIPS FOR DRIVING ADOPTION

**Get early buy-in from stakeholders:**

When considering adding new tech, like a CRM (or in the case of White Cup CRM, it's a CRM with built-in marketing capabilities), make sure you get the right people in the room from the start. That should be someone from the leadership team, sales management and a few influential sales reps who will be using the tool every day.

**Set clear expectations:** There's no magic bullet when it comes to successful email marketing. It takes time. Set the expectation that this is a long-term investment that will serve as a solid foundation that sets the sales team up for success by providing better, more qualified leads.

**Track and share early wins:**

Tracking activity and wins will help demonstrate an ROI across the company. Don't be afraid to generate excitement about wins that can be tied to marketing activities.



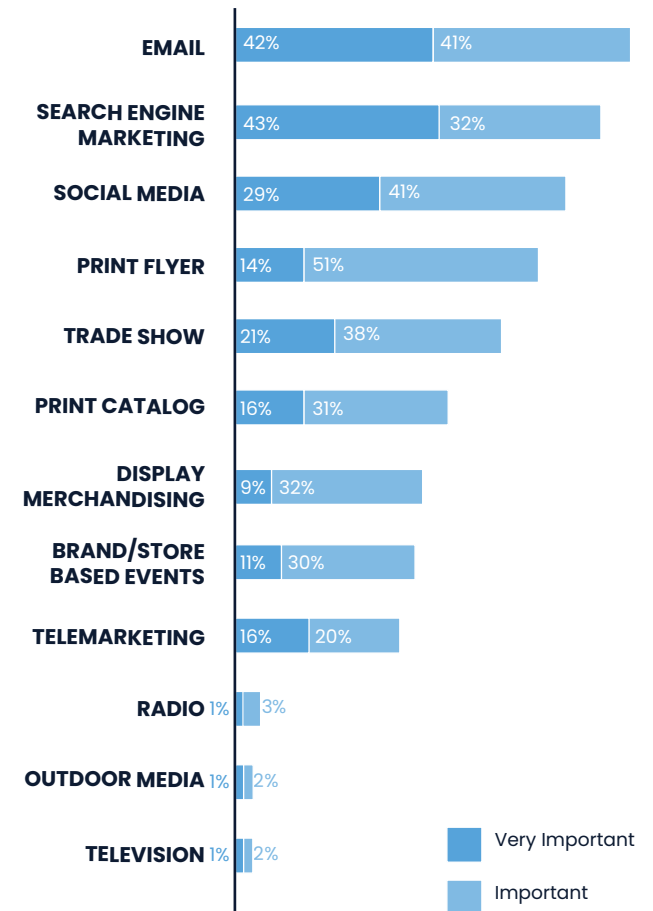
## Everyone does it, but is it worth the time?

Email marketing is everywhere. Chances are, there's some waiting in your inbox right now. Anyone can blast emails in mass to their customers, but the goal is to be effective with your email marketing campaigns. That starts with a solid strategy and is supported by thoughtful follow-through. This combination is the key to driving revenue that wouldn't be possible without the right email marketing tool set.

Year over year, statistics show that email marketing is the most effective use of marketing dollars for B2B companies. In the most recent survey of more than 300 distribution industry executives, email ranks *highest in importance over all other marketing outreach tools.*

### IMPORTANCE OF MARKETING VEHICLES

Distributors said email was either very important (42%) or important (41%), more than any other marketing vehicle in the survey



\* Source: [State of Distributor Marketing, Pt. 1: Combine Digital with Traditional Marketing to Grow the Revenue Pie](#) by MDM

Additionally, even with ever-increasing digital marketing channels, email continues to reign supreme, **delivering an ROI of \$36 for every \$1 spent in 2020** according to [an article by Litmus](#). It's the ideal channel for not only driving brand loyalty and customer retention, but also for increasing awareness and creating new customers.

So, to answer the question of whether email marketing is worth the technology investment, **the answer is a resounding YES.**



# Five Keys to Successful Email Campaigns

## PERSONALIZE THE MESSAGE

Simple, but powerful. People want to know they are more than just a number. Statistics show that emails with a personalized subject line are opened 14% more often than generic versions. Additionally, **personalization contributes to an 11% higher conversion rate.**

## CREATE MOBILE-FRIENDLY EMAILS

Keep it simple. Patience wears thin quickly if an email has large graphics that don't load automatically or, worse, if there's a document attached, like a sales sheet. It's hard enough to get anyone to open and read an email, don't make it harder by sending something that's not mobile-friendly.

## MAKE YOUR CALL TO ACTION (CTA) CLEAR

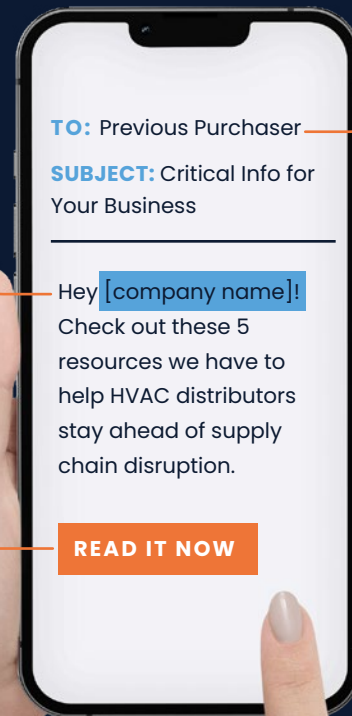
Make it easy for customers to take the desired action from your email. Whether that's a link to product info or meeting calendars, make it obvious.

## SEGMENT YOUR CUSTOMERS

Depending on the promotion or product you are offering; you can easily slice and dice your customer email list to ensure you're hitting the right customers with the right message.

## AUTOMATE ACTIONS

When email marketing is combined with automated marketing tasks, it's a one-two-punch of effectiveness and efficiency. It's possible to set up an email campaign so that when a customer takes an action (i.e., clicks on a product link) that triggers a new action. It could mean a sales rep is notified, or they automatically receive an additional email regarding the product they clicked. The options are endless, but also hyper-focused to target your efforts to make the most of your time.



Sources: [demandgenreport.com](https://demandgenreport.com)

## What is marketing automation and why should I care?

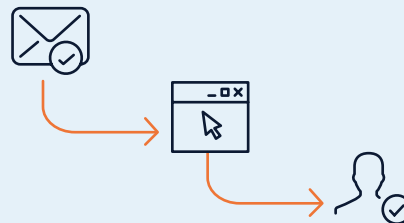
### Marketing Automation serves two main purposes for distributors:

- 1 Automate and streamline marketing and sales tasks into workflows that make it easier to stay in touch with customers and drive engagement.
- 2 Nurture sales leads—automatically.

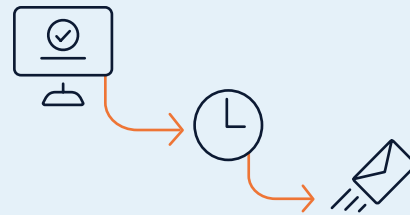
### AUTOMATION

The distribution business will always be based on relationships, but given today's competitive marketplace, it's critical to eliminate busy work, especially if it helps speed up sales cycles. Marketing and sales automation processes do just that.

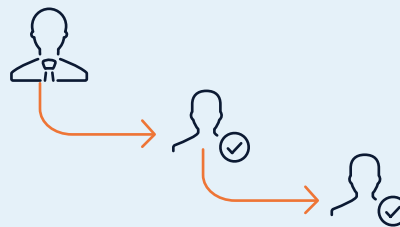
#### For example:



Let's say you send an email blast to all your existing customers. There's a link to a new product in the body of the email. With marketing automation, it can be set to trigger an action of a specific sales rep to follow up with that customer the following day.



Or, if you want to create more long-term campaign awareness, you can automate the software to send an additional email, maybe with more product information on a predetermined day after the initial mailing.



Similarly on the sales side, actions can be automated to keep the sales process moving forward, whether that's a trigger that notifies a sales director there's a quote to approve or notifies accounting that a purchase order has been signed.





## What gets measured gets done.

Marketing automation and email marketing are two elements on the spectrum of marketing tools that have quantifiable results, which means they should be measured. More esoteric areas of a brand, like brand awareness, is harder to track impact and performance, but if you can put quantifiable number on activity, set a benchmark, monitor it and look for ways to improve month over month. Even incremental increases will help move the needle!

# Finding the Right Marketing Solution for Your Business

Like the age-old fairy tale of Goldilocks and the Three Bears, finding the right marketing solution is critical to building a successful program (and, ironically, to your ability to sleep at night knowing you are continually creating pipeline for future sales).

With that in mind,  
let's find the right fit.

## TOO LITTLE Not Distribution-specific

Email marketing solutions in this category are usually free or inexpensive have some useful benefits, if you're expectations are low.

In addition to being budget-friendly, they are usually very easy to set up and use.

However, the downsides quickly outweigh the initial small price tag. These solutions are often limited in their integration with a CRM, Business Intelligence, ERP or other systems. Additionally, the cost goes up as your email distribution list grows.

These low-end solutions usually serve a purpose early in a company's life, but are quickly outgrown.

### BENEFITS

- + Inexpensive
- + Easy to use

### CHALLENGES

- Limited capabilities
- Stand-alone

### EXAMPLES

MailChimp, ConstantContact

## JUST RIGHT Designed for Distributors

White Cup CRM has a comprehensive suite of email marketing tools built-in, that's designed specifically to fit Distributor's needs.

The email marketing capabilities that are included with the CRM offer pre-made templates and list-creation tools to make it easy to build and send highly targeted emails using CRM data. Additionally, it's easy to track who opened emails to help prioritize follow up outreach.

White Cup CRM is also integrated with White Cup BI, our business intelligence solution, so you can easily create action plans around real-time sales data.

### BENEFITS

- + Comprehensive
- + Integrated
- + Easy to implement and use
- + Designed for Distributors

## TOO MUCH Not Distribution-specific

On the other end of the spectrum are the behemoths, where the email marketing tool is one small component of a much larger ecosystem.

While these solutions offer more bells and whistles than you could ever use, the downside includes a hefty price tag, implementation requiring a third-party, extensive training and often, the need for a full-time admin person to manage the data.

There's no doubt this is a good fit for organizations that have the resources, in both people and budget, to effectively manage to solution with so many complicated components.

### BENEFITS

- + Comprehensive
- + Integrated

### CHALLENGES

- Extremely expensive
- Requires extensive training

### EXAMPLES

Salesforce, Hubspot



# Resources

## [White Cup CRM Marketing Tools Overview](#)

For a quick overview of the marketing tools that are built-in to White Cup CRM, watch this brief video.

## [White Cup CRM Full Product Overview](#)

For a closer look at how White Cup CRM is designed specifically for Distributors, this webinar walks you through some of the most popular features.

## [CRM Buyers Guide for Distributors](#)

This is an excellent reference if you're looking to invest in a CRM for the first time or if you're considering new options.



# About White Cup

White Cup is a platform designed specifically for the distribution industry. Our CRM, BI, and Pricing software is the complete revenue engine for distributors, laser-focused on driving more and better revenue. The White Cup platform includes:

## **WHITE CUP CRM**

Our CRM offers a comprehensive set of distribution-focused features to drive sales, automate marketing activities and keep deals moving to close.

## **WHITE CUP BI**

This powerful business intelligence solution marries ERP and sales data into dashboards and reports that uncover customer insights, buyer trends, and visibility into your sales process.

## **WHITE CUP PRICING**

An analytical powerhouse that improves both top-line revenue and bottom-line profit. With White Cup Pricing, complex customer and product segmentation and pricing analysis that used to take weeks now take minutes.

[Contact Us Today to Learn More](#) →