

Why Small Companies are Turning to Marketing Automation

Large organizations and mid-sized companies have been using marketing automation for many years – and racking up huge profits from it. But these days, smaller businesses are looking to get in on the action as well. What’s driving the shift? What are marketers in these bantam-weight companies looking for? Which industries are shopping around, and why?

Small Players, Big Impact

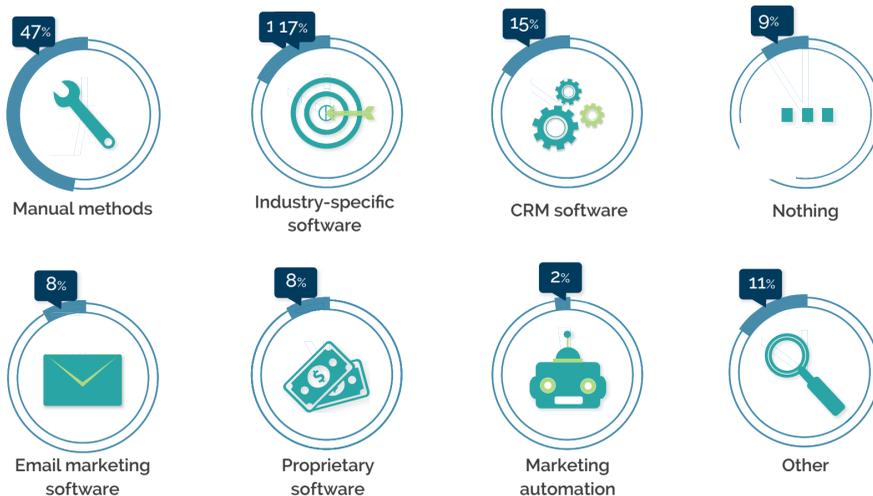
- There are 28 million small businesses in the United States
- Over 50% of the working population works in a small business
- Small firms accounted for 64% of the net new jobs created between 1993 and 2011

Source: US Census

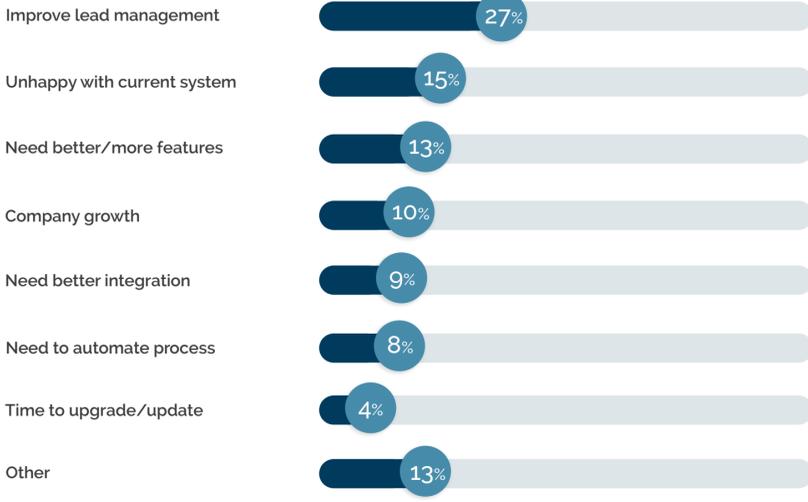
A report from [Software Advice](#) revealed the top reasons for adopting marketing automation among small-business buyers (those with annual revenues of \$50 million or less.) Here is our take on their data.

What is Marketing Automation Software Replacing?

Nearly all (98%) of the buyers in small businesses are looking for dedicated marketing automation for the first time. And almost half (47%) are currently using manual methods like pen and paper, spreadsheets, and one-off emails to market to their audiences.



No wonder these marketers are overwhelmed. That’s especially true when it comes to managing clients, contacts and leads. In fact, 27% are primarily looking for software to improve lead management.



The Features that Matter Most to Small Business Buyers



What’s most important to buyers? Contact management was cited as the most important feature in a marketing automation solution by 74%. It’s not too surprising, given that the top reason for adopting marketing automation is to improve lead management. But what is unexpected is how few buyers are looking for a way to manage their social media campaigns – only 4% requested it.



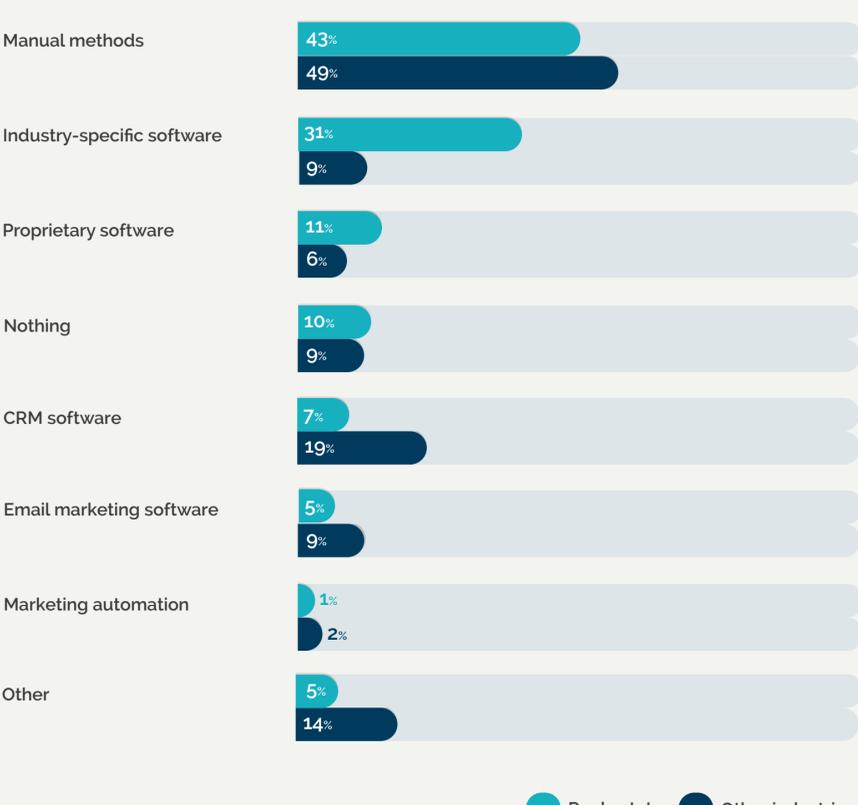
Does that mean small business marketers aren’t interested in social media? Not necessarily. A recent [Social Media Examiner report](#) showed that 92% marketers say social media is important for their business. It may be that these marketers want to make sure the basics are in place before expanding into social.

What else are they after? Email marketing continues to be the most desirable feature for small business marketers. In fact, 73% of buyers want either email marketing or drip campaign functionality in a marketing automation solution.

Industry Focus: Real Estate
The highest percentage of marketing automation buyers (37%) work in the real estate industry. It may be that the other sectors are early adopters. It may also be that real estate has traditionally focused on the personal approach.

Of course, as anyone using marketing automation knows, reducing the manual work of managing and qualifying leads increases the time that sales reps and agents can spend with customers on the phone and in person.

Real Estate vs. Other Industries:
Prospective Buyers’ Current Methods



Real estate professionals are also more likely than the rest to be using industry-specific software solutions – 31%, compared to 9% of other buyers. It makes sense, since real estate sales and marketing needs can be somewhat unique to the industry. However, marketing automation software continues to evolve and outpace the features provided by industry-specific solutions. An open marketing automation platform can be customized with best-of-breed tools, so regardless of the industry you’re in, you can work the way you want to – and generate results right away.



Is your small company ready to gear up for marketing success?
[Get tips for creating a compelling business case for marketing automation.](#)