



MARKETING AUTOMATION FOR PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHERS

An **E-book** for professional photographers by Album Epoca

ALBUM EPOCA®
MADE IN ITALY

INDEX OF TOPICS

- ① What is marketing automation?
- ② Why use marketing automation?
- ③ How can a photographer use marketing automation?
(three practical examples)
- ④ Which software-tool should I choose?
- ⑤ Advanced marketing automation: scoring and RFM
- ⑥ Conclusions



What is marketing automation?

Marketing automation is a process that allows you, through software and specific platforms, to automate those marketing and communication activities that repeat themselves during the lifecycle of a client (whether they are new or old): starting from acquisition, retention and upselling of products and services, to referrals to get new clients. The final purpose of this process is to extract the most possible value from a potential or acquired user.

Marketing automation concerns different areas and can be implemented at different levels according to your needs and possibilities. It includes various elements like:

- tracking those who visit your website, recording the pages visited and the time they spent on them;
- creating emails, landing pages and registration forms;
- recording and storing the answers to the forms published on your website;
- managing lead nurturing campaigns (that make your leads grow into fully-aware clients), including their automatic execution and the delivery of one or more message sequences based on the different user segments and their category (instead of sending the same message to all users with a mass delivery);
- adapting the sequence of said messages based on the behavior and answers collected from each user;
- assigning a score to each client of the database, based on their actions and a set of rules defined by you directly in the software (for more info on lead/client scoring see paragraph 5);
- making a full report of these and other activities;
- connecting the analytics tool (for data analysis) used on your website (for example Google Analytics), the tools and systems for new clients acquisition (usually called UA, user acquisition, basically paid acquisition campaigns on Facebook, Google and similar), to your social media channels and CRM (the tool for the operational management of your clients and their personal data, see box below).

Note: in some cases, the tool used for CRM also has marketing automation features which means that in the same platform there are specific modules to perform both functions.

THE CRM IN A NUTSHELL

The CRM (customer relationship management) is a business process that deals with the management of the relationship with customers at various levels. The CRM is often implemented by small and big companies through tools or software that, starting from the customers' personal data registry, can divide them into segments, analyze their pre and post-sales behavior, create pre-established sales paths/funnels, apply scores and potential values to each client, act with customer care activities and implement sales actions (in addition to many other features).

Marketing automation focuses on activating the users you add to this kind of tool, but keep in mind that a basic CRM can be created with a simple spreadsheet that records the users' personal data, their contacts and some socio/economic/demographic/behavioral characteristics that are useful to carry out future actions on them, while the segmentation can be done manually by applying specific filters to the columns of this sheet.

2

Why use marketing automation?

As a photographer you know that you have many commitments and have to play different roles, you must wear different hats during your working days, sometimes more out of necessity than natural inclination. You must first be an expert in photography technique and continuously keeping abreast of the evolutions of style, technique and technology, and we all agree in defining this as your 'core' task, but then you have to hold multiple duties, often all by yourself:

1. the research and attraction of new clients

(sales)

2. the marketing management of your business

(social media, online/offline marketing campaigns, public relations etc.)

3. the operating management of your business

(rent, bills, partners, payslips, travel arrangements etc.)

4. the organization of your agenda

(professional and personal commitments)

5. the tax reporting of your company/VAT number

(often supported by experts in this field, but it still requires time...)

6. the order, printing and delivery of physical products purchased on behalf of your clients

(and on this subject Album Epoca has always been by your side)

The list is long and it could keep going; Marketing Automation helps you simplify and extract value from point 2 **(marketing)** and support and improve the action of point 1 **(sales)**. Indeed, marketing automation, as its name suggests, is a tool that automates a series of actions that are usually manual **(which causes a waste of time)** or that cannot possibly be managed by a person because they require IT tools to perform them.

With marketing automation you'll have more free time to focus on your core activities as a photographer and in the mid-long term both your earnings and the quality of your life will benefit from it **(thus giving you more time to concentrate on what you love)**.



How can a photographer use marketing automation? (three practical examples)

In this section we want to give you three practical examples of how to use marketing automation in your daily work. It's just a starting point and definitely not the end of a learning journey but it can give you great results and satisfaction in time. As for all things we learn in life, we start from the basics to evolve and improve.



1. 1. NEW POTENTIAL CLIENT AND THEIR FIRST STEPS (ONBOARDING)

Let's say you did a Facebook campaign, you brought visits to your website through Instagram posts about your work, you started a Google ads campaign for wedding planners within 60 miles of your house/office, you handed out flyers to promote your business during an event. Whatever was the marketing activity you put in place, you'll find yourself having potential clients landing on your website. Great, we're at the beginning of a journey that could be very profitable for you but it could also cost you potential (lost) work if it's not carried out correctly.

The first thing to do is pointing the users to a landing page, a special page of your website that synthetically and efficiently sums up the main aspects of your business and sell them to potential clients requesting something in return: to leave contact details (usually full name, email address and possibly phone number as well as the type of photography session they're looking for e.g newborn, wedding, portrait, indoor, etc.).

Once you get a lead (the user has filled out the form, maybe encouraged by an initial promotion/incentive), this can become a static record on your CRM (or potential client list) or an 'active record' through a marketing automation process that extracts the client maximum potential.

A classic strategy called user nurturing (development of customer knowledge) provides for each new lead an onboarding process for the new user to let them know and appreciate your professionalism, the services you offer, the quality of Album Epoca products that you provide them with, your past clients' testimonials, your sales offer and much more.

The key to this strategy is to give your potential client several good reasons as to why they should choose you over somebody else as their chosen family photographer or corporate photographer, that will follow them through a journey.

A practical example of this strategy is represented by the "email dripping" practice, a preset workflow of personalized emails to send over time. All marketing automation tools include the configuration of this flow which is pre-set and pre-determined by you for all the email deliveries.

To continue on this example, we can set a flow for new clients that have signed up on a registration form on your landing page. The journey, which starts and ends within 15 days, walks the users through their first steps (onboarding).

Day 1: thank you email for the interest shown in you and your business, possible distribution of a discount code or a promotion and, very important, announce that further emails will follow in the coming days to better introduce yourself and your work

Day 3: email to introduce the type of photography you provide (e.g newborn and maternity and/or the information regarding the studio you use for your portrait sessions)

Day 5: email to present the high-quality Album Epoca products that you usually offer and to highlight their value that is in line with your professional qualities

Day 7: email to suggest your new users to find out more about your work by following you and your professional profiles on social media channels

Day 9: email to advertise the quality of your work through the use of testimonials (you can use quotes and messages received from your past clients, show the stars of your Google my business account, and also insert video messages of appreciation that you received in the past)

Day 10: send a personal message to your clients talking in the first person about you, your professional story, your passions. Close it with your handwritten signature to give a sense of real human presence

Day 12: email to set up a call or a meeting in your studio with the use of an online tool that allows clients to easily compare their availability with yours

Day 15: email with a special promotion (i.e 10% discount) that can be used if they make an appointment within 15 days

As you can see in 2 weeks time you'll have sent 8 emails to your lead and have most certainly increased the possibility to convert this potential client into a real one.

Please note: avoid sending only text emails, mix it with images, gifs, opt for short and simple texts, use infographics and possibly links to videos. Make your message consistent with your brand identity, don't write emails that are too long, too colorful or monochromatic, use straightforward "call to actions" (buttons that link the user to your social media, web pages, forms or other actions).



BONUS TIPS

If in the registration form of the landing page you requested the type of session the client is interested in, you can customize this email dripping flow by adapting it to this information. For example, if the user selects "newborn" as their interest you can send them some of your newborn images, show them the Album Epoca products that meet their needs, give them a specific promo for this type of session.

2. OFFER YOUR CLIENTS A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE AND TURN THEM INTO AMBASSADORS

A second workflow that you can easily put into action is the one related to your active clients, people who have put their trust in you when they asked for your services.

The goal of this marketing automation flow is to offer the users an experience to cherish and remember for years to come, thus turning them from occasional clients to lifetime clients (and possibly make them ambassadors who will do free marketing for you).

Let's say there's a client who has decided to hire you for her wedding session (you can adjust this flow and adapt it for any type of work).

The first thing to do is getting the client's contact details and insert them into your CRM, database or a simple spreadsheet (this is in case you didn't already register them with an online/automated process). Then, you have to set up a mail dripping campaign for the next year, being careful to start the workflow the day after the event's date you have photographed (in this case the wedding).

Day 1: email to express gratitude to the newlyweds for having you at their wedding and for trusting you to capture this important moment, CTA (call to action) that links to a single image preview or a photo selection they can already look at

Day 30: email to encourage them to do a first selection of your images with the app and proofing gallery of Album Epoca

Day 50: email to encourage them to do a first selection of your images with the app and proofing gallery of Album Epoca

Day 70: email to confirm that the album design is ready and the order for the album printing has been placed

Day 90: email to confirm you have received the album and to set up an appointment for its delivery, using an online tool

Day 100: email with a link to a survey that will help you understand your clients' satisfaction with the images and the pre and post selling service (in case of negative feedback you may want to call the client and exclude them from the next steps of the flow)

Day 110: email to ask for a kind gesture of appreciation of your work with a simple message on your social media channels, a review on Google my business or a feedback via email

Day 130: email to offer two smaller duplicates of the main album or a wall product at a discounted price

Day 200: email with a voucher (and related text) that the client can post on their social media/messaging apps to allow their network to avail of a special discount valid for 12 months offered by their trusted professional photographer, you!

Day 365: email to celebrate their wedding anniversary with a link to a specific gallery with some unreleased/backstage images and a suggestion to print them on single prints/frames/matted prints (upselling).



BONUS TIPS

You can post on your social media some of your work and the (positive) comments of your clients; by getting likes from these clients you'll be exposed to their network and by investing a little budget in a social paid campaign you'll be able to easily reach them and increase the chances for new leads and potential clients.

3. UPSELLING TO EXISTING / PAST CLIENTS

When you have a client who's happy with your work, it's a pity not to take advantage of this situation and extract a greater value and revenues from them, always with the utmost professional fairness and the right balance between the exploration of an opportunity and the risk of being too pushy and lose the customer in the long run.

Your goal is to upsell and cross-sell your products and services to these users, without annoying them, by showing them the real added value you provide at each communication.

Let's say a client has requested a family portrait and they entered your CRM/database/spreadsheet as a user of this specific cluster.

The first step of the marketing automation strategy is represented by the date of purchase of the first product, in this scenario a medium size wall frame.

Day 15: an email to thank your client for choosing you and to suggest them to follow you on your social media (if they're not doing it yet)

Day 30: upsell email where you show the Matted Prints and they're perfect to frame their family portrait in an elegant product to place on his office desk or to offer their loved ones on special occasions. End the email with a discount/promotion in a CTA that links to the product page on your website

Day 60: Offer your client a voucher (and a basic text) to invite their social contacts to do what they have already done, a portrait of their family, choosing you as their trusted photographer

Day 120: Send an email in which you briefly present the range of your services and the main occasions when the client will be able to contact you to use your professional skills again

Day 180: do cross-sell actions by offering an Album Epoca Event Book (a professional coffee table book) to tell a family story through the photographs you've taken, offer your editing and album design service. Possibly give them a discount in the call to action

Day 250: encourage your client to fix an appointment with you via phone/Skype/in-person using an online tool suitable for this purpose, because you want to update them on new type of services, promotions and, at the same time, you want them to fill you in on what's happening in their life. Use this call to understand the possible evolving of your client's needs

Day 365: in an upselling email show, with a Pinterest-style board, how a family portrait can be creatively declined or divided into a series of panels that cover an entire wall. Add a call to action with a discount to help your client create something similar



BONUS TIPS

Change your approach based on the sex of your client: women tend to be more sensitive to storytelling and visual components, while men usually respond better to the rational component and are more attracted to limited time offers.

Which software-tool is to choose?

There's no 'one size fits all' solution valid for everyone when choosing the platform to manage marketing automation activities, as your need and current condition differ from those of your competitors.

In this choice let yourself be guided by a series of questions such as:

- *How many clients do I manage and how big is my database of historic clients?*
- *Am I already using a tool for CRM? Does this service offer features for marketing automation?*
- *How much do I want to invest, in economic and time terms, on an annual basis for this activity?*
- *Am I looking for an easy and straightforward tool but with limited options or am I going to take a series of more sophisticated actions that require a more advanced and expensive software?*
- *Am I willing to work in an environment that is not localized in my native language?*
- *Have I used similar tools in the past? Will I work alone with this software or will I partner up with other people?*

You are the only one who can answer these questions, however, we want to give you some advice on products existing on the market that meet different needs.

Hubspot: an integrated platform to manage website creation, lead generation, sales, CRM and marketing automation.

PROS: a complete and integrated solution with free training tools and a large and developed community.

CONS: it has quite high entry level costs, perhaps too high for those who have an individual professional activity.

HubSpot

There's a better way to grow.

Marketing, sales, and service software that helps your business grow without compromise. Because "good for the business" should also mean "good for the customer."

Get HubSpot free

Get started with FREE tools, and upgrade as you grow.



What is Bitrix24?



CRM

Grow your sales.

Improve conversion rates, automate marketing and serve your customers better with our free CRM. [Learn more](#)



Bitrix24: a complete platform for marketing automation, landing pages and website creation, CRM and even project and people management tools.

PROS: the service option called CRM+ at 55€/month has all the features you need and much more! Good documentation and tutorial to support user learning.

CONS: the price, although approachable, is not negligible and the learning curve for such a complete and complex service can be quite long.



FEATURES ▾ PRICING RESOURCES ▾ LOG IN SIGN UP FREE

Connect with your audience. Make a living doing work you love.

Email marketing software the way it should be.



ConvertKit: a tool that is mainly oriented to lead generation and marketing automation management, it's especially favored by the community of creative users and appreciated for its intuitive user interface.

PROS: easy to use and performs the function of mini CRM and marketing automation in a single tool at an affordable price (\$29 a month, but you can try it for free with limitations).

CONS: limited features if compared with more advanced tools.



Email Marketing >

Invia splendide email per attirare nuovi contatti e aumentare le vendite.



Marketing Automation >

Workflow pronti all'uso per dare il benvenuto ai clienti, riconquistarli, inviare loro offerte di upselling e molto altro.



Landing Page >

Genera lead grazie a landing page ad alto tasso di conversioni.

GetResponse: historical tool among the pioneers of marketing automation, it allows you to have a CRM and all the basic functions in a mature and reliable software environment.

PROS: the less expensive pack includes all the features needed by most of the photographers for an accessible price (13€/month), the platform has many languages and good documentation.

CONS: the high level of customizations and advanced options can confuse the inexperienced user.

Mailchimp: initially conceived as a service to send simple emails it has evolved quite a lot over time, now it covers many areas and is comparable to services like Hubspot.

PROS: a service that has a large user community and that continues to grow offering new features. The \$14.99/month Standard plan will suffice for most of your needs.

CONS: not localized platform, many features are new and therefore not yet fully tested by a large user-base.

EMAIL

Create beautiful, branded emails that make you look like a pro

Engage your audience with email marketing. Whether you're just starting out or you're already a pro, Mailchimp's easy-to-use email builder has the tools you need to grow your business.



Advanced marketing automation: scoring and RFM

Did you do the first experiments with marketing automation and obtained good results?

Are you ready to take a step further and increase the complexity and efficiency of your actions?

In this chapter we'll explain some advanced marketing automation practices that will come in handy if you have, in the past 12 months, a volume of active clients equal to at least 100 units, otherwise the effort needed to implement the following actions may not be justified.

User scoring is an exercise that allows to first imagine and then assign to your clients a score scale for each relevant activity they perform when interacting with you. You can arrange a scale score even for potential clients (those who are not yet active), in this we're talking about '**lead scoring**' and the main goal is to evaluate their potential. To define this scale you can set some levels (usually from 1 to 10) based on multiple parameters (e.g estimated sales potential of the user, the proximity of the user to your physical location, forecasted request for physical products in addition to services, etc.). By giving a value to each parameter and calculating the average you'll get the lead score of each potential client and you'll understand which is more convenient to focus your effort and your marketing actions on. For example, a lead with an average score of 5.5 points has a lower priority than one with an average score of 8.

Many of the tools mentioned above allow to digitize user scoring and link to different average scores different marketing automation activities. It's also possible to do this activity on a simple spreadsheet, adding the related columns and a final one for calculating the average.

Once the lead becomes a client you can keep scoring actions and base them on more real and certain facts/numbers. One of the most used methods for this purpose is called **RFM** and examines three typical aspects of customer behavior:

- **Recency:** how recently the user has purchased from you (you can assign a decreasing scale with a value of 10 for those who have bought in the last month and 0 for those who have not bought your services or products for 12 months or more)
- **Frequency:** how often the user has purchased services or products from you (even in this case you can define that a user who buys 10 times a year will get the maximum score of 10, while those who have only placed one order will get only one point)
- **Monetary value:** how much a client has spent in the last year (you can set spending thresholds that correspond to different levels of scores, for example a user who spends 8000 \$/€/£ a year gets 10 points, one who spends 5000 gets 7, one who spends 2000 gets 3 etc.)

Obviously the temporal space, the single thresholds and related scores are at your complete discretion and are based on the users expected lifetime value (the average total economic value that you expect to get from a standard client in x time, which could be a year or more based on your experience).

Once you've got the scores and calculated the averages you can define the segments of clients that behave similarly to each other and link each segment (usually called user clusters) to a precise marketing automation action or set of actions.

In the following, you find a series of possible clusters and the related marketing actions.

To make this chart we have imagined our own scale of RFM values and the related times (two years are taken into account with a focus on the first 12 months) adapts this scale to your needs and peculiarities.

USER CLUSTER	RFM CONDITIONS	PROFILE	MARKETING AND COMMERCIAL ACTIONS
STAR	Average ≥ 9	User who made a purchase recently, often and with high total value	Create promotions just for them. Safeguard from the competitors. Customized messages, Christmas wishes. Invitations to your events. Involve in content/ ambassador marketing activities with social media.
FAITHFUL	Average $\geq 7,5$	User who spends much and often with you	Do upsell and cross sell activities and flows. Safeguard from competitors. Exclusive promotions. Remarketing. Engage in activities on your social media.
RECENT	Average $\Rightarrow 5$ R ≥ 9	User who has purchased in the last 2 months and who still generates a fair amount of orders and turnover	Understand if they use other competitors. Engage with social and product marketing flows. Remarketing. Offer time limited discounts. Send post-sales surveys.
PROMISING / NEW	Average ≥ 3 R ≥ 9	New user who has recently bought, but who has not yet developed loyalty and volumes	User to be retained over time by 'linking' them to marketing automation flows as for example 2 of this document.
LAZY	Average ≤ 4 and ≥ 2	They buy little and rarely	To be encouraged with marketing and remarketing campaigns. Eventual call and survey to understand their reasons for laziness. Share marketing materials and content/product marketing. Social media engagement.
INACTIVE	F=1	User who haven't placed an order in more than 10 months	Target of inactive type campaigns to whom offer a high discount to start using your services/products again. Send survey or call.
LOST	F=0	User who haven't placed an order in more than 24 months	Final recovery attempt through one last phone call. Unless proven otherwise, remove the user from your database.

Conclusions

We've explained what it means to work on marketing automation for a professional photographer, we've highlighted the reasons why you should start, we've given you practical examples on how to start developing your marketing automation activities and, lastly, we've suggested some tools to implement this process in your workflow.

Album Epoca is glad to help you turn your professionalism into a more appropriate form that meets the challenges of our time and the requests and expectations of your clients.

Start working with marketing automation and share your success stories with us, we guarantee that, if done correctly, with perseverance and over time, you will earn new clients, additional revenues and more (free) time for your passions.

This work undoubtedly requires an initial effort and the desire to learn something new, but we are sure of its medium-long term benefits. We ask and encourage you to share the results achieved with the actions of your marketing automation with us and with the rest of the Album Epoca international community of talented photographers.

Write to marketing@albumepoca.com

Thank you

albumepoca.com

ALBUM EPOCA®

MADE IN ITALY