

The 30 Minute Campaign Makeover Guide

Force24™
Marketing Automation

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Force24™
Marketing Automation

1 Introduction

Welcome

Let me start by reiterating one of the most important quotes I have heard in a long time. It was said by James Skellington (Force24 Head of Travel Business Development) during a Swiss Innovation day interview:

"People make technology great"!

This should really set the scene for this guide - platforms like Force24 are simply a tool, like a hammer. It's how you use the tool, and when in the right hands, the tool can create amazing things.

Force24 has always believed this, which has set the charge for everything we do…

Force24 was established in 2010 by Managing Director Adam Oldfield.



Adam Oldfield
Managing Director

He saw a need to bring advanced Marketing Automation capabilities to ALL businesses. On the path to doing so, he noted a significant issue with the Marketing Automation industry, the fact that even given the tools, this brave new world took confidence and a new way of thinking! So he added free training and support for life on a 2min SLA for all clients.

Fast forward 9 years and Force24 has over 3000 users and is one of the fastest growing Marketing Automation platforms on the market.

Having a deep understanding of the issues most marketers faced, Force24 was born to specify a solution that was not a "me too" approach, but an actual answer to the needs of modern marketers.

Force24 as a company and a product continues to push forward with a constant thirst for innovation and an unrelenting passion for client support and training. 97% + of Force24 clients can feel this passion running through the organisation and decide to stay after the first year.

Objective of the guide

We all know downloading endless free templates isn't actually going to make a difference to the ROI your company sees, and just like all things Force24 does, we don't just follow, we define a new and better path.

This guide is no different - it is designed to give you a number of objective points to focus on, to allow you to understand the strengths and weaknesses of your current campaigns.

No 'one size fits all' email or landing page in sight – we promise!

Why the name?

The other important aspect of this guide is to help marketers readdress the balance of work. The title of the guide is "The 30 Min Campaign Makeover", this is not just a clever title, it has meaning.

This process of appraising your work should take no more than 30 min and should be done as often as possible, and not performed as a one-off exercise.

Marketers tend to be a little too busy on the whole, our objective is to try and remove load, while you work on what matters! The problem is quite often we are busy focusing on the wrong things.

For example, most marketers report that building an email takes between 30 min - 50 min and building a landing pages takes up to 2 hours (this is assuming you know what you are doing and know how to use the software) and a large percentage report they don't bother as they don't have time.

In our world we have designed the Force24 platform to enable you to cut these times down dramatically. Internally we set the guideline:

- Email build no more than 5 min
- Landing page build max 15 min

If anything takes more time than this we tend to find its been overengineered, and conversions start to dip.

Obviously it's very important to understand what we are talking about here, we am not for one second suggesting you reduce the quality of your creative output or quality of your content. In fact this is quite the opposite, we're saying spend all of your time building stunning images and content, and don't waste time fiddling with emails and landing pages. We will elaborate on this point in the Assets section of this guide.

Why should I do this and not just look at the reports?

Many marketers rely on reporting to tell them when things aren't hitting the mark. Well this is fine, but how did you know you were optimised in the first place? Also many marketers see ups and downs in reporting based on seasonality, audience engagement or simply the quality of offer we have. When reviewing the stats we miss the most important information of all:

- Was the audience just not engaged enough? It could be a bad time of year.
- Was the artwork not good enough? Or didn't it make sense?
- Was the content on offer weak?

So, we believe empathy is the best asset we as humans possess. It's this that means the AI bots will never take the marketer's job, it's the ability to relate to how the recipient may be "feeling" at the moment.

This guide shows you how you can empathise with your recipient and make sure you are on point with every aspect of your campaign.

Let's get started.

> "I'm saying spend all of your time building stunning images and content - don't waste time fiddling with emails and landing pages."

2 Content Value

Although this section is not necessarily about how to design emails and the types of content you should send, I always want to make a point of reminding marketers of their role in the "sales chain". In all scenarios (excluding online ecommerce retail), marketers are educators. We educate the audience, sometimes to offers, sometimes to new products, sometimes to new ways of thinking.

But we do not sell! The selling is done by the sales team or the website. When we are clear on this it helps us decide the best content, and even how best to create subject lines and calls to action i.e. learn more, read… etc..

Content value is a key aspect many marketers don't usually focus on. The value of your content helps you understand lots of things about your campaign dynamics.

So, how do we assess the value of our content? Well its tricky, how can you understand what content is worth to a recipient? It goes back to our point of empathy mixed with a little – 'how long did it take to produce?'

In this section we will discuss the **Content Value Policy and a Content Exposure Policy** - two simple tables to help you plan your campaign and ensure you are on track.

It all starts from a title

We have a simple process at Force24, all new content starts with a title, just like "The 30 Min Campaign Makeover". From this title we understand how exciting this will be for the recipient (in our case a professional marketer). Once we have a title we imagine how we would engage with this content.

This allows us to quickly come up with loads of interesting content titles and only create the content that's going to get people excited!!

We would like to urge you to think – "are my recipients getting enough value from the content I produce?"

Tip:
Quite often we are relying on directors or other busy people in the business for the content for marketing departments to push, so we end up recycling old content. This is fine! But you must reassess the content title, the introduction, and creatively how we will promote the content. It's the role of the marketer to make it sound exciting, like it's new and full of great new insight! Think of it like cooking the left overs of a Sunday lunch, you still want to enjoy it, so this time we create "bubble and squeak" which is often better!



> “Content value is a key aspect many marketers don’t usually focus on. The value of your content helps you understand lots of things about your campaign dynamics.”

Often we are asked to look at clients' existing content, and usually with a big yawn we start to review the white papers, guides etc.. 10 min in we usually read something super exciting and all of a sudden we are re-enthused. That is the bit that must be the focus! Unfortunately we can't expect the recipients of our emails, viewers of paid display or social media posts to invest that 10 min, as they simply will not. We must find the golden nuggets for them and make sure they see it.

So, now we have some content worth sharing we need to understand its value. Its value will dictate the amount of effort we invest into its promotion.

There is no exact science to this bit, so let me instead show you how Force24 has valued its content, in our **Content Value Policy**:

Content Type	Approx. time invested (hours)	Cost to business (£)
SEO content blog	1	£30
High value blog article	3 - 5	£90 - £150
Low value content PDF download	10 - 15	£300 - £450
High value content PDF download	30 - 40	£900 - £1200

Remember:
This is a benchmark. If you spend much more or much less, you may wish to readdress. This is because the following **"Content Exposure Policy"**, is mapped to our own ROI. So if you spend weeks producing content at a high cost to the business, you must be sure of your ROI model to ensure it is profitable or reassess the **"Content Exposure Policy"** to ensure you can gain ROI over time.

So, assuming we have followed the previous steps and identified or created a piece of content the audience will love, and we know its production cost, we can take a look at how we should use that content.

Below, we have detailed the Force24 **Content Exposure Policy**, which shows our standard process to ensure we extract value from content without the danger of our audience becoming "over penetrated".

Content Type	Gated	Emails	Social Media Posts	Paid Search Media
SEO content blog	No	0	0	No
High value blog article	No	2	5	No
Low value content PDF download	Yes	6	10	No
High value content PDF download	Yes	6	18	Yes

Geek Term: *Gated means the content is hidden behind a data capture form, allowing only people who have identified themselves to you to enjoy your wonderful content.*

Remember: *People open on average 1 out of 6 commercial emails from you. So don't be afraid to work on the basis you have to say things 6 times for people to understand your message.*

Looking at this, we are suggesting for every high value blog you should send 2 emails, it should be open and not gated, and receive 5 social media pushes from the brand's social media channels.

Tip: *We have to distinguish SEO content from quality output, we have no need to broadcast SEO content unless you feel it's exciting and vibrant.*

Tip: *Use employee advocacy to give an authentic push on the content by asking key members of your sales teams, tech teams or whoever you feel to share the content on their own personal social media accounts (where is appropriate)*

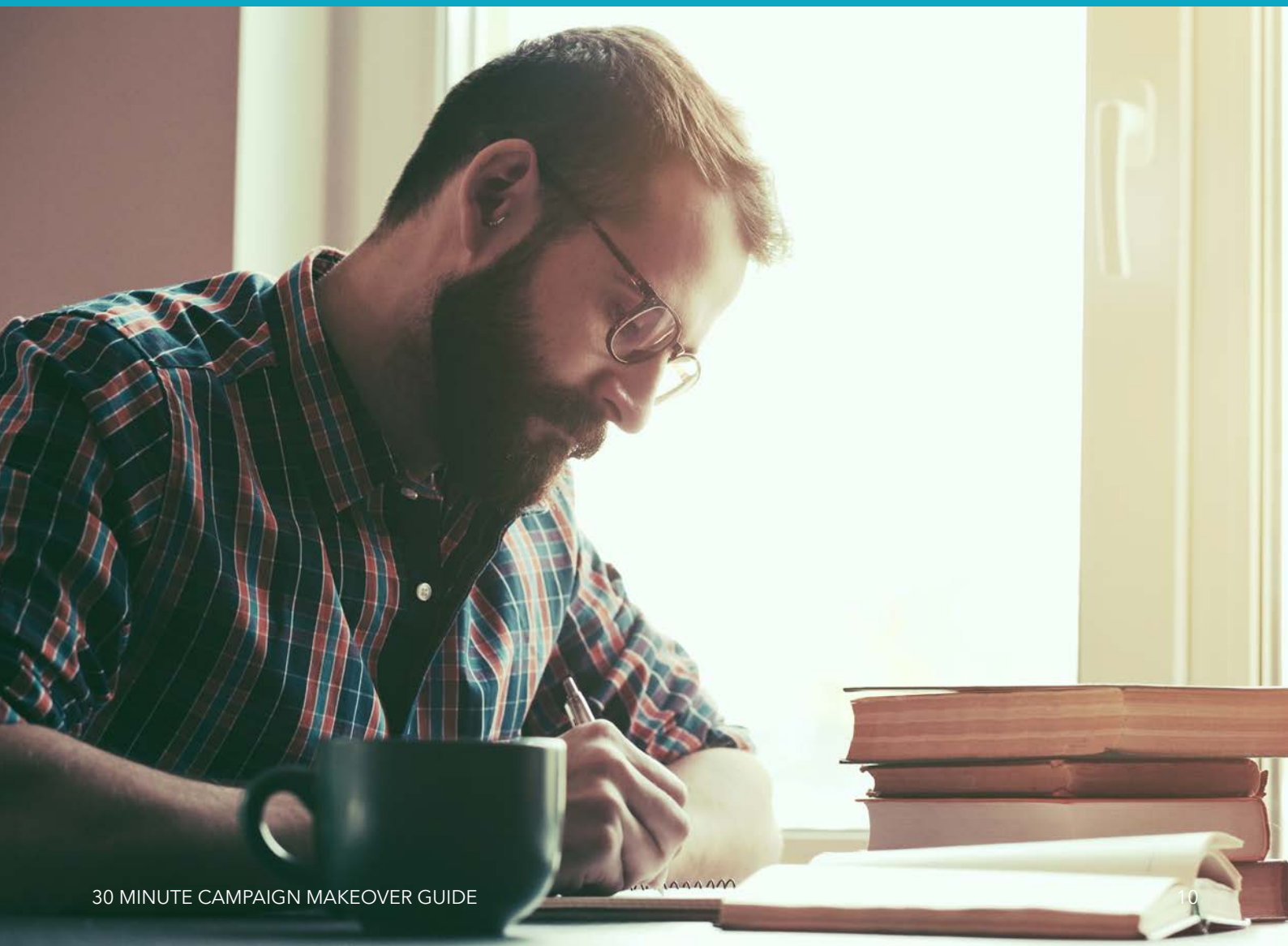
The 30 Min Campaign Makeover Check 1

We would like to urge you to be more selfish and constantly question – "Am I getting enough value from the content I produce?". Am I working in line with the **Content Exposure Policy and Content Value Policy**?

Our experience shows - if you are not pushing your content as proactively as we have suggested in our **Content Exposure Policy** you are probably not getting the value from your content you could be.

Now you understand the value of your content to both yourselves as a company and the recipients, you can benchmark what we are doing.

Note:
In the **approach** section of this guide, we will address how to use content gates effectively and how to ensure you do not over burden contacts which have already downloaded or decided they are not interested.



3 Insight From Data

Thanks to GDPR, data has had a great deal of focus in recent years! And as we have written many times, this was a much needed overhaul of the data protection act and was ultimately a great thing.

That being said the effect GDPR has had on marketers needs a little attention. We have witnessed a strange mentality we call "overcompliance". This mentality is like driving at 40mph on the motorway, just to be sure we don't go over 70mph. The road is designed for up to 70 and you should use it as such.

The GDPR is exactly the same. The rules are explicit and are now well understood and you will earn no extra customers by overcomplying. A classic example of overcompliance was the B2B business sending the pre GDPR email asking if clients still wanted to remain on their mailing list.



We all know now how silly and unnecessary that was! So, the aim is to understand the GDPR and work with professionals that both understand it and your need to TALK to your customers and prospects.

That all being said, **this section of the guide really is not about the GDPR**. It's more about how you use data, how you gain insight from data and how you should carve data up to get the most out of it.

Data is one of the aspects of your day that should be automated. Other than analysing data, if you find yourself managing spreadsheets, uploading or downloading lists from your email platform, you are wasting your time. This is all work that should be fully automated, it should be connected to CRM to allow automated rules to move contacts from segment to segment.

A few years ago, we could safely say to any marketer who was managing data manually, "don't worry too much – your competitors probably aren't doing this effectively either". Today the level of sophistication we see in marketing departments is drastically greater. To the extent: if you are managing data manually, you are either over staffed and need to create jobs for the team (said nobody ever), or you will be wasting valuable time. Time you could be using to think up or create new killer content, enhancing search, tweaking display, or just not leaving work late feeling you have loads to do with not enough time!


“Other than analysing data, if you find yourself managing spreadsheets, uploading lists and downloading lists from your email platform, you are wasting your time.”

How you gain insight from data

So, not forgetting the title of this guide "The 30 Min Campaign Makeover", these are the important insights you can get from the data you hold to help you improve and refocus.

We would like to urge you to see the value in segments. Often data segments are not there just to send varying content to, but to help you understand how that segment is performing against others.

So what data should you be looking at and how can you use it?

Let's take an example data segment: prospects in small businesses north of Newcastle where the contact is director level.

So we have a simple data filter to find the contacts we need. Yes – we understand not every marketer has data that supports that sort of query but let's not dwell on that now. we just need a sample segment.

Now we have the contacts, we can see a snapshot report of the data, this snapshot may look like this TODAY:

Total number of contacts in segment	1000
Total number 'active for email'	900
Total number 'active for SMS'	200

And then tomorrow:

Total number of contacts in segment	1050
Total number 'active for email'	902
Total number 'active for SMS'	198

Geek term: *'Active for email' or SMS means they both have a valid email or phone and we have permission to contact them. As contacts we email bounce or unsubscribe this number will reduce.*

Geek term: *A snapshot report refers to a report that view the data only in its exact current form and does not consider evolution.*

So, at this point the savvy marketers will see where this is going!

We added 50 more recipients to the list but managed to lose 48 contacts 'active for email'. Even worse, we actually reduced the number of contacts 'active for SMS' by 2.

> ***Remember:*** *For every email and SMS we send out to my base, we WILL receive both a bounce and an unsubscribe rate. It's just a fact of life, but we need to maintain a keen eye on my data to ensure we are not losing more than we collect each week.*

Obviously this is a really clear example, but in most businesses a segment (perhaps one you don't even consider at the moment) will look like this, we will have low data collection rates with high bounce and unsubscribe rates.

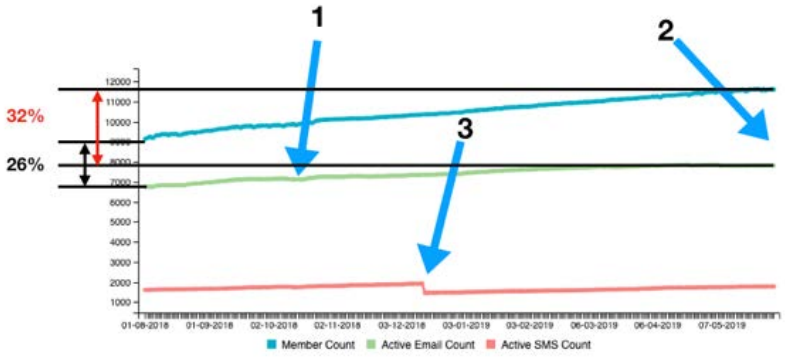
So, how can this have happened? It's quite simple, if you are underserving an audience (not sending enough email) you tend to get sudden shocks each time you use the data, and in our example above we may not have sent to the contacts recently.

We may have sent a campaign that really didn't hit the mark with the audience, or the audience was just not engaged.

So let's go one step further and start to look at how the data evolves over time and plot these stats on a chart every day for the last year. **Obviously we don't do this manually, computers do it for us...**

Note: *Force24 has little need for SMS within its lead gen marketing, so while the red line being so low may be a red flag warning to state we are not collecting enough, we will focus our point on the active for email line.*

The narrative of the chart:



1. In this point you can see the green line takes a dip, meaning we experienced a sudden loss in active members. This was followed by sudden growth, as a reaction by our marketing team to the loss previously experienced by focusing on data capture and refining the messaging.
2. This shows a period of stability - we have managed to give a consistent delivery and therefore a consistent pro ile.
3. This demonstrates what a catastrophic campaign may look like - in this instance we culled a number of suspect phone numbers which had the effect of deactivating the channel.

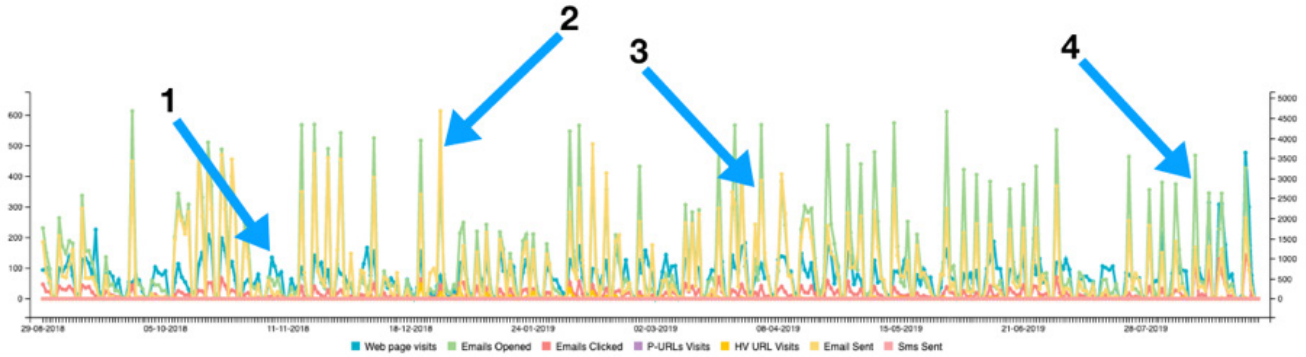
This chart now reveals we have expanded the gap between total contacts and contacts 'active for email'. This is still only a marginal increase - 26% at the start of the graph and 32% at the end, obviously this is not ideal. But is to be expected in b2b lead gen activities, this is something we will pay very close attention to.

So now we understand how segment size evolution can help us, let's try focusing on a few more stats around the same data segment, to help us understand how the audience is reacting from both a positive and negative point of view. Let's include this time:

- Total number of emails sent
- Total number of SMS sent
- Total number of email opens
- Total number of email clicks
- Total number of pages read on the website

As in the last example lets plot this data daily for the last year. Then we have a super exciting view of the activity of the audience.

The Chart below is displayed on the data reporting page within the Force24 platform and is a great example of how data can drive your insight.



One of the most important observations here is that you can easily identify seasonality in the base by looking for naturally quiet periods, like Christmas.

NOTE:

1. The blue line protruding above all others means we were drastically underserving the audience, the contacts in the segment were proactively searching around within our website without provocation. This means we could have sent more emails without experiencing high unsubscribe rates.
2. When the yellow line is the greatest of all we are overserving the audience, sending too many emails to the contacts.
3. This area represents a healthy mailing pro ile, where the green line is about 30% higher and the blue line is about 20% of all. This means when we send emails, people open and then go on to look further.
4. This demonstrates how further optimisation can reduce send volumes, while massively increasing engagement and leads (look closely at how the blue line extends to become almost as high as the click line). That is the power of targeting.

There is one more really exciting metric within data segment reporting you can and should be focusing on and that's **Lead Score**.

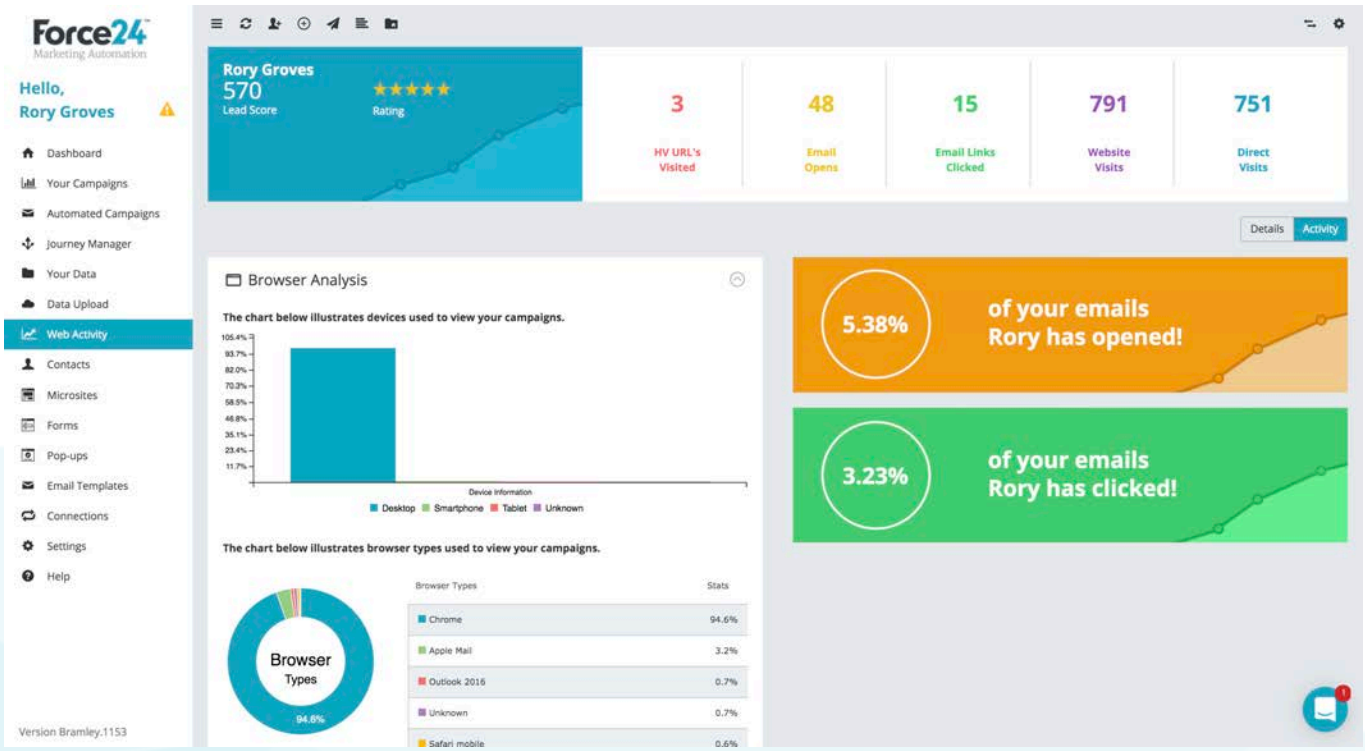
We have written many guides on how to lead score, which are available in the content lab on our website. The interesting thing about lead score is that it must be just what it says … a lead score.

We decided to score contacts in numbers (that's how scores work right?) so, a contact will be observed and for every action they take (opening emails, clicking emails, looking at pages on the website, downloading content, etc), these actions are observed and then points are added to the contact's profile. After 30 days have elapsed the points are removed accordingly. This means any contact with a high score is hot right now!

Ok, but imagine we have a score of 29, is that good or bad? The point is, lead score only works as a relative measure. Well, 29 may be amazing if your average customer buys from you with a score of 15. Or terrible if your average customer buys from you when they reach a score of 300.

But it's really easy to look up a few customers and get to know where there score was when they bought from you, so make this quick piece of research a top priority.

The comparison can also be drawn relative to date. So again a score of 29 today, is that good? Well if you were 10 yesterday – yes not bad. But if you were 300 yesterday, so you are slipping away.



So let's imagine how that would look for a segment of your data. Let's take the demo segment we looked at earlier, work out the average lead score of the contacts in the base every day and plot it on a chart to show how lead score varies over time.

The blue line is the line of note for now. Essentially the average lead score, presented in this way gives you a visual measure of audience rapport. How hot is this segment?



Within Force24 we have identified a strange phenomenon. When the audience average lead score (blue line) drops below 22 points on the left axis, everything seems dead - all other stats, such as email opens, clicks, web activity and goals are disproportionally low, enquiries are low and guide downloads are low.

That's why our marketing team are highly motivated to maintain all segments above this magic level. As you can see, each time the audience reaches this level, the team acts quickly and begins to really support the audience.

Let's look at the narrative and what the green and blue lines actually mean.

1. At this point you can see the team established a stable relationship with the audience with strong content. The blue line is stable. But you see the green line fall of a cliff. The green line which denotes total lead score - acts as an early indicator, which can help predict how the stats will start to change. When the green and blue lines separate, it denotes a significant trend shift. Where they are tracking close together and agree with the trend direction, nothing imminent is going to change.

2. As predicted by the green line, the blue line reached a low point around early Jan. This dip was likely caused by the Christmas shut down. The important thing to note here is the amount of time needed to return the audience back to the state of rapport we had previously achieved - almost 3 months in fact.

3. This point illustrates that when you reach a top limit, your audience is super engaged, and you can alter messaging to be more conversion focused. Education becomes the selling point.

The 30 Min Campaign Makeover Check 2

Spend some time getting some standard reports set up in your Marketing Automation platform. Obviously, all Force24 customers have access to these reports straight out of the box, including lead score.



You need to check your campaigns are:

- Increasing the average user lead score.
- Increasing or maintaining the active contacts count, if this figure drops it shows poor content and targeting.
- Understand if opportunities exist in your data to push harder where browsing engagement is high vs low email volume.

The right tools make this easy for you to see and understand.

This check should also include understanding if you need more metrics to support your activities.

If you are struggling to implement all of the above suggestions, concentrate at the very least on monitoring the segment size evolution - imagine finding out that your marketing department are killing more data than your sales team is collecting.



4 Refining Your Assets

One of the most obvious aspects of running marketing campaigns is the assets you create to output your message. We have many approaches for building campaign assets.

Some marketing departments may use creative agencies to build emails, landing pages and PDF content downloads, some may have an in-house creative team and others may build it all within the marketing department.

We cannot profess to know the best solution for each business but what we can confirm is, whatever approach you do you use, you should always run this check on your assets.

The Role of the Campaign and It's Assets

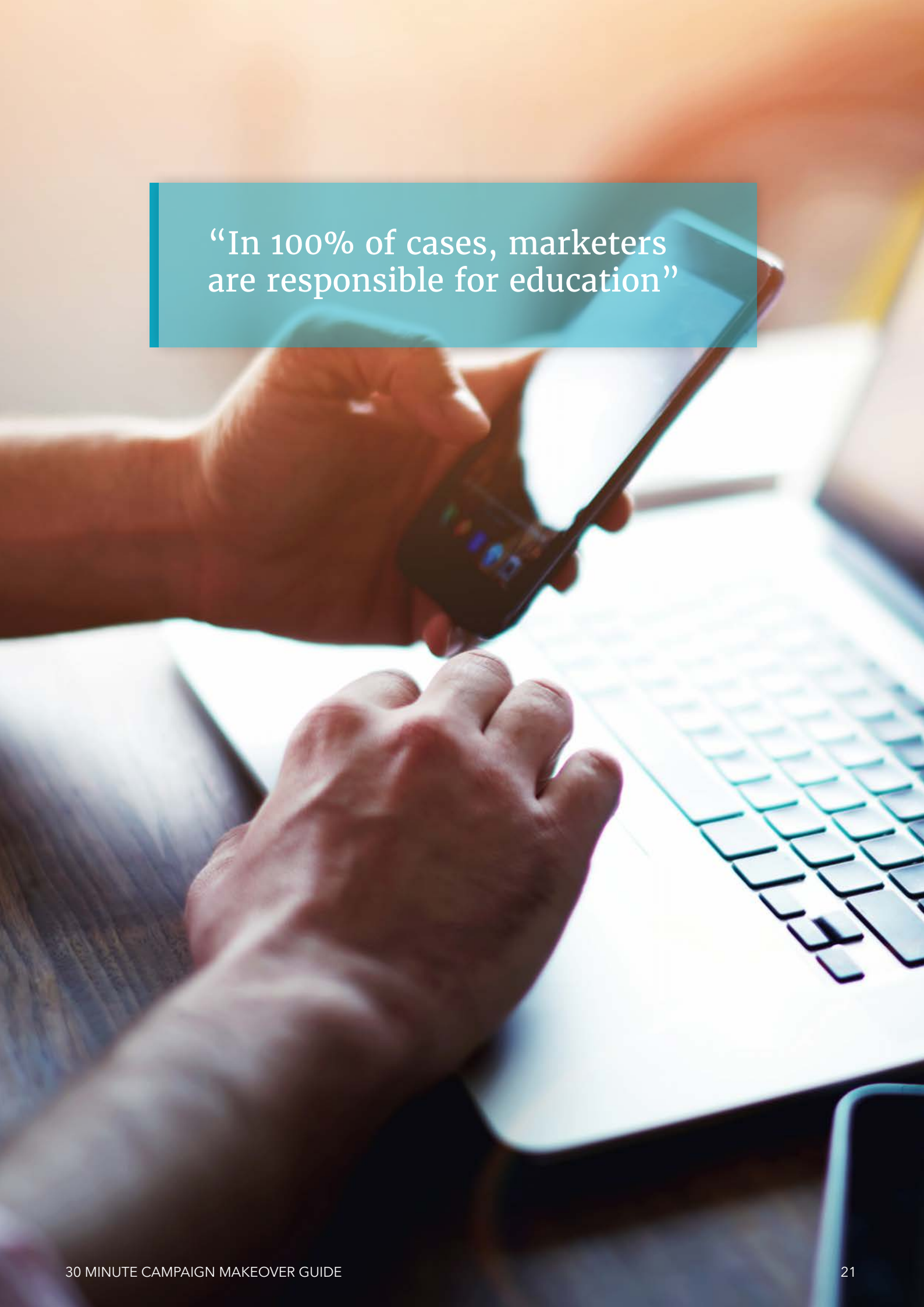
To establish this, you must have a clear objective. Once you have an objective you can tailor your assets to ensure they fully play the role in which you need them to play.

100% of cases marketers are responsible for education. Education can come in many different flavours, but essentially we must always strive to be educating our contacts.

So, an objective may be:

- Sell more widgets on your e-commerce website. The marketer must educate the contacts as to why your widgets are better, faster and more cost effective.
- You have a discount on your widgets. The marketer must educate the contacts around the sale purpose and what they can expect.
- Sell more photocopiers. The marketer must attempt to educate the contact base as to the benefits of your particular photocopier.

No matter what the scenario, from B2B to B2C, the fact remains the same - we educate. Selling is done by the sales team or sometimes the e-commerce website.


“In 100% of cases, marketers are responsible for education”

So with this in mind, we can drive our creative effort to reflect this, using clear language on our assets to make sure our contacts understand we are here to help them with informative content and not simply request a credit card (even though that may be my ultimate objective).

Now we understand our role in the world, we need to consider the role the various assets will play. To demonstrate this point we have broken the assets down into categories and outlined our view of their objective within Force24.

Asset Type	Examples	Role
Attention	Banner adverts, emails, social media posts, direct mail	The role of attention assets is, to tap the contact on the shoulder and say, "hey have you seen this?"
Action	Landing pages, websites, blog posts.	The role of Action assets is to, continue to carry the education matter and encourage a further action. So for example "We have an amazing formula to save you time and money, would you like to download it? It's free and will only take 2 min of your time. Others that downloaded it reported a 15% saving in their spend on XX"
Content	Pdf's, white papers, blog content	The role of the content is to be the reason for the engagement.

Note: More experienced marketers will be used to splitting their marketing effort as 'above the line' and 'below the line' comms. Since the evolution of digital marketing and the power of Google, social media channels and marketing automation, we now blend above and below communication strategies into the Attention (I am not saying 'above the line' is no longer a thing, just that a technical difference between TV and YouTube or Google advertising is hard to find).

Attention Assets

In the instance of attention assets, the most important aspect is the clarity of the message we have to distract you from your busy day to look at what we have to say. Sometimes from the marketer's standpoint it feels obvious, and they say things like “of course my contacts want to read this, it directly affects them”. Well that may be the case, but my emails will still not get a 100% open and click rate.

Let’s liken it to real life. You are busy at your desk, and a colleague comes over and distracts you, but instead of getting to the point they waffle and ask how your day is. Contrasted with a colleague that comes over with all of the politeness in the world and simply conveys a short succinct request, the latter is far more effective and will probably get a response.

With this in mind, we feel it’s paramount that you condense the message you wish to convey and limit the attention campaign asset to as few words as possible. We have written about the “squint test” before in many of our guides - to perform the squint test, simply sit back in your chair, look at the artwork and squint. This gives you the ability to appraise artwork with the same amount of attention a possible recipient will give. While you are squinting if the message jumps out and is clear, you know you have done the best you can. If not – it's back to the drawing board.

The use of calls to action in attention assets is also key - remember we are educating. So the terminology you use in your buttons must reflect that. We like to use verbs on CTAs to further convey this message. For example:

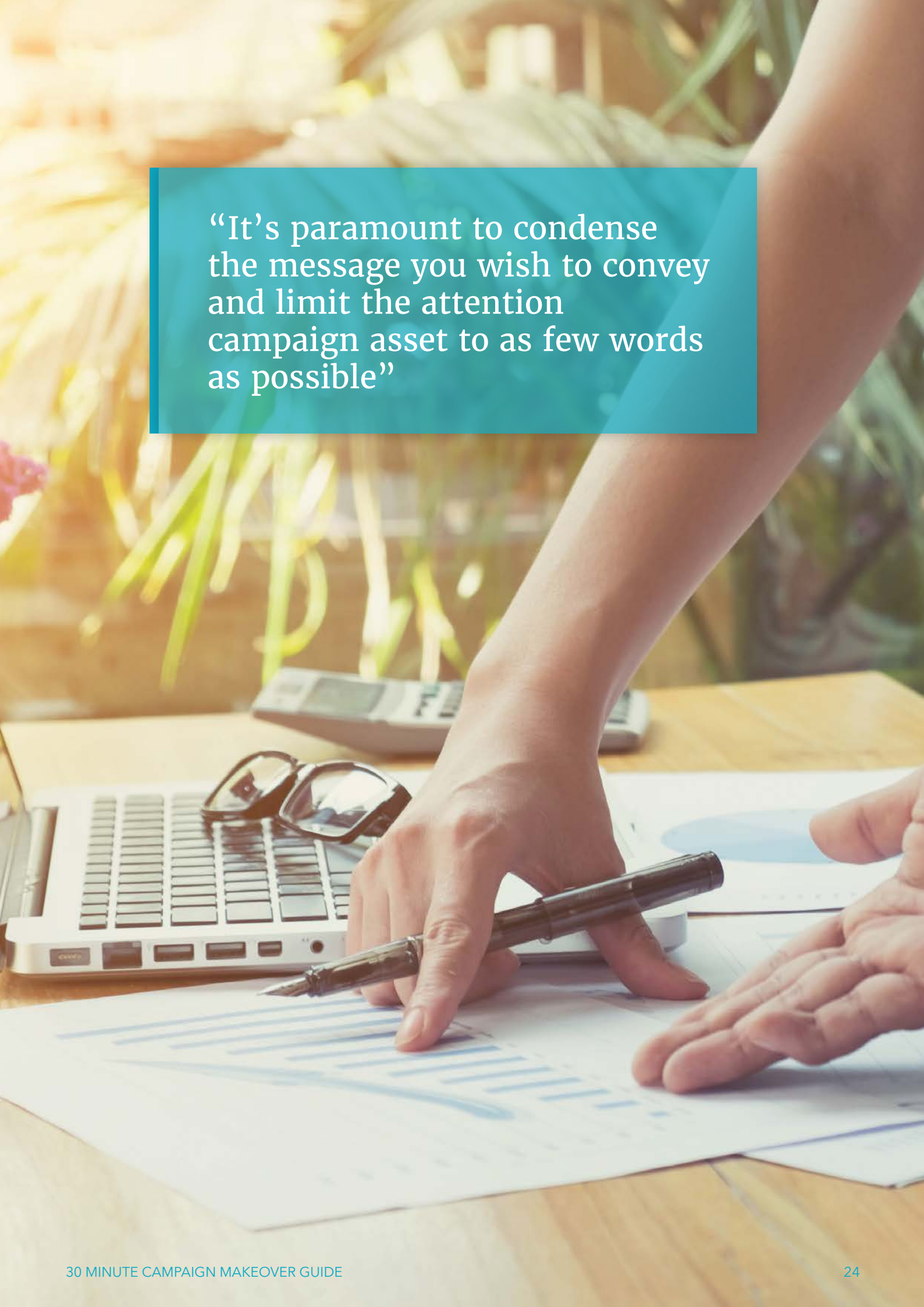
READ THE GUIDE HERE

LISTEN TO THE PODCAST HERE

WATCH THE VIDEO

DOWNLOAD THE GUIDE HERE

SEE OUR SALE PRICES HERE



> “It’s paramount to condense the message you wish to convey and limit the attention campaign asset to as few words as possible”

Tip: *Another important tip when building artwork assets or appraising the work of others, is to look at the column structure. In attention assets it's quite important to stick to a single column approach. Multiple columns disrupt the message hierarchy and are usually due to poor targeting or not understand which message you audience would like to see first.*

Not only is this approach optimal for mobile, it makes life so much easier when building your assets.



This becomes less of an issue on the action assets, which often split the message to support the click of the CTA.

Action Assets

Remember even action assets fall part of the marketing department's responsibility and should therefore be educating rather than selling. But fear not! Through education you are actually selling.. (shhhh don't tell anyone but that's what we're doing here!)

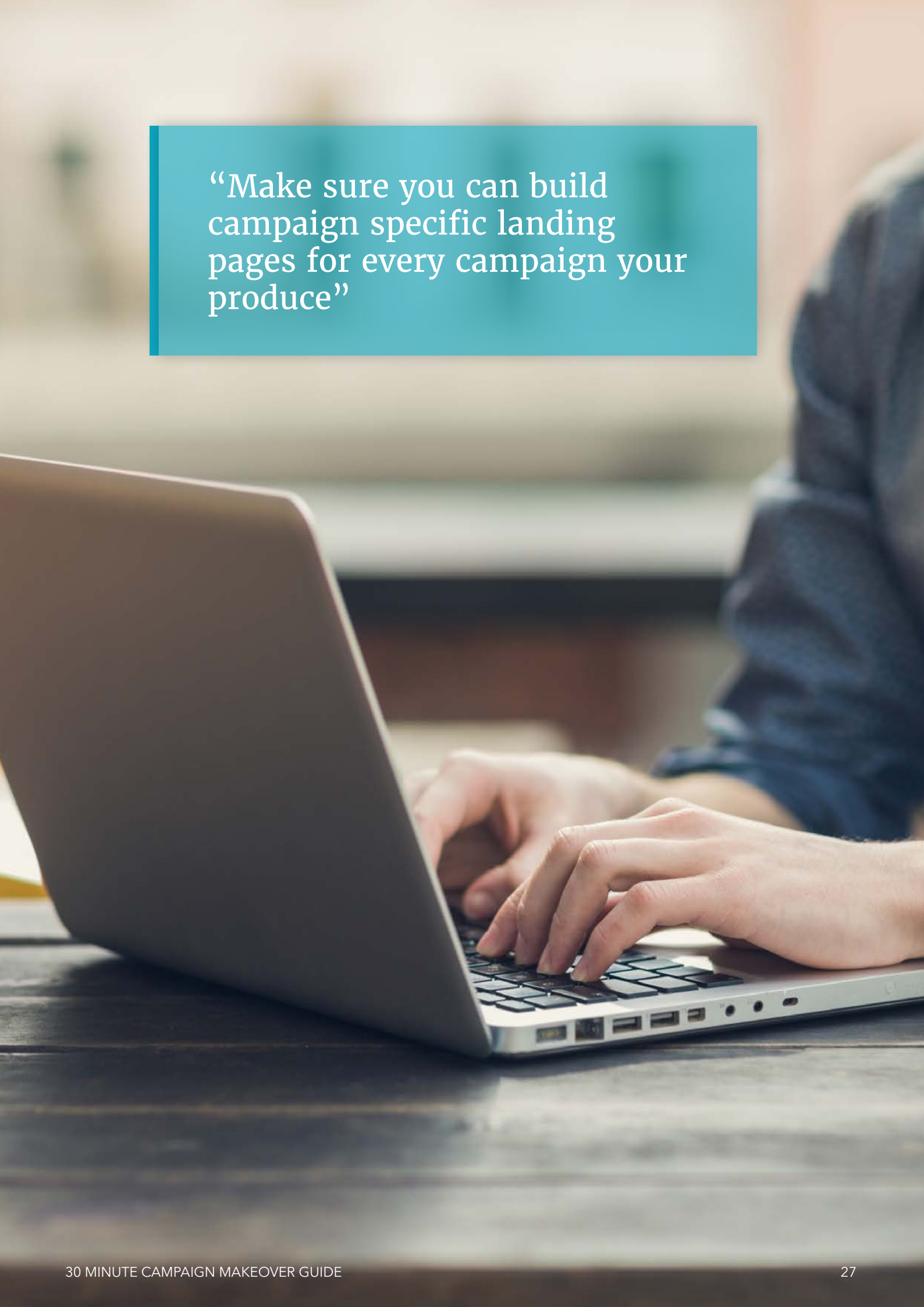
Action assets must be focused and strip out any unnecessary content to make the contact's path to a goal as simple and clear as possible. Our biggest tip here is to make sure you can build campaign specific landing pages for every campaign your produce. Why? It's really simple maths.

At Force24 this is what we see:

Action Asset	Conversion rate	Bespoke per campaign
Website	4.3%	No
Blog pages	2.0%	No
Custom landing page	11.2%	Yes
Custom dynamic landing page	27%	Yes

As you would expect, generic assets like our blog and website, convert at much lower rates. But that's because we allow traffic to leak off all around the website and eventually fizzle out.

However, when we use a custom campaign landing page, we can be very specific in asking the user to do exactly what we need them to do. This allows the marketer to strip out unnecessary content and make it easy for the contact.



> “Make sure you can build campaign specific landing pages for every campaign your produce”

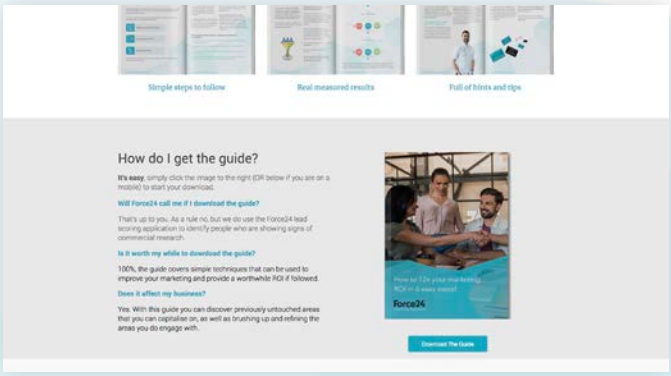
Ok, so what on earth are Custom Dynamic Landing Pages?

Custom dynamic landing pages look exactly the same to the user as a normal landing page, but the difference that the user sees content specifically tailored to them. So, let's take the example of a PDF download data capture page, where contacts are requested to download a PDF. Ordinarily, they must first enter their details into what we call a gate (form), we could get quite complicated here and show content specifically to people based on their industry sector, (which is a great idea) but we prefer to keep it much simpler. But if the user has arrived at the page from an email, (or has a Force24 cookie – this means we know who they are) we obviously already have all of their details therefore we can simply offer the content up to them without the need for a data capture gate. Obviously, we still wish to capture the information of contacts coming from external sources such as paid search or social media, so the dynamic landing page will understand that and will only ask these people to complete the data capture form before receiving the content.

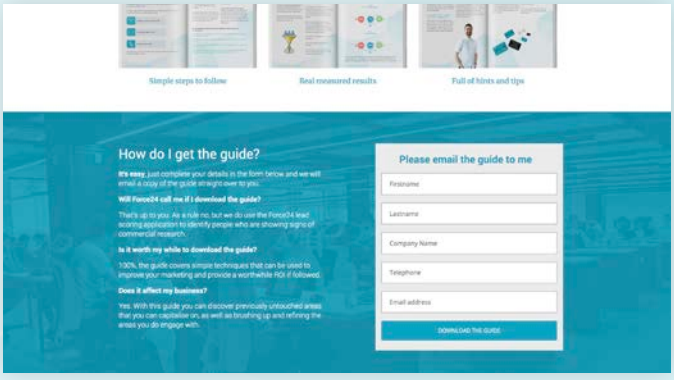
As you can see this extra effort is worthwhile. Per 100 people we received six times the number of leads to custom dynamic landing pages then we receive from our website.

So, we hope it's clear and makes sense to you that using clever technology can really impact the number of leads you receive.

Returning user - Non-gated guide download (no data capture form)



New user - Gated guide download (data capture form)



Content Assets

Many marketers fall down on this step as they feel the quality of the content asset isn't important. Why make it worthwhile? You already have the contact's details, you already have the conversion, why waste valuable time creating amazing content?

Well this is a valid train of thought, but not one we subscribe to. The simple fact is - the attention and action assets are long forgotten but the value of the content lives on a long time. So if you want to have a positive relationship with your contacts, to the point where they enjoy your content, you must continually invest in your content and make it meaningful.

We genuinely believe you should be prepared to give away your deepest secrets on these content assets, OK, not sensitive information, but hints tips and support should be readily available.

We understand it's not always easy to enlist the help of people in the business to create great content. So instead don't be afraid of recycling old content and giving it a fresh new look. Referring back to the content value chapter of this guide, make sure you recognise that you get out what you put in.





"If you want to have a positive relationship with your contacts, to the point where they enjoy your content, you must invest in your content and make it meaningful."

The 30 Min Campaign Makeover Check 3

Now we understand our role in the world as educators rather than salespeople we can perform our third campaign makeover check.

- Are we educating? Do we feel the attention, action or content assets are educating our audience?
- Do we feel like our attention assets are focused on gently attracting the attention of our audience?
- Do we feel like our action assets are clear and directly demonstrate to the user the benefits of our content, and make it as easy as possible for them to access it?
- Do we feel like our content is worth downloading, would you personally engage with this content?

With the exception of dynamic landing pages this check is entirely non-technology specific - it simply asks are you happy with what you're doing?

Perhaps the best way would be to mark yourself out of 10 on each of the above bullet points. It's acceptable to say that anywhere you rate yourself greater than 7 you're doing okay, anything less than 7 should really be addressed.



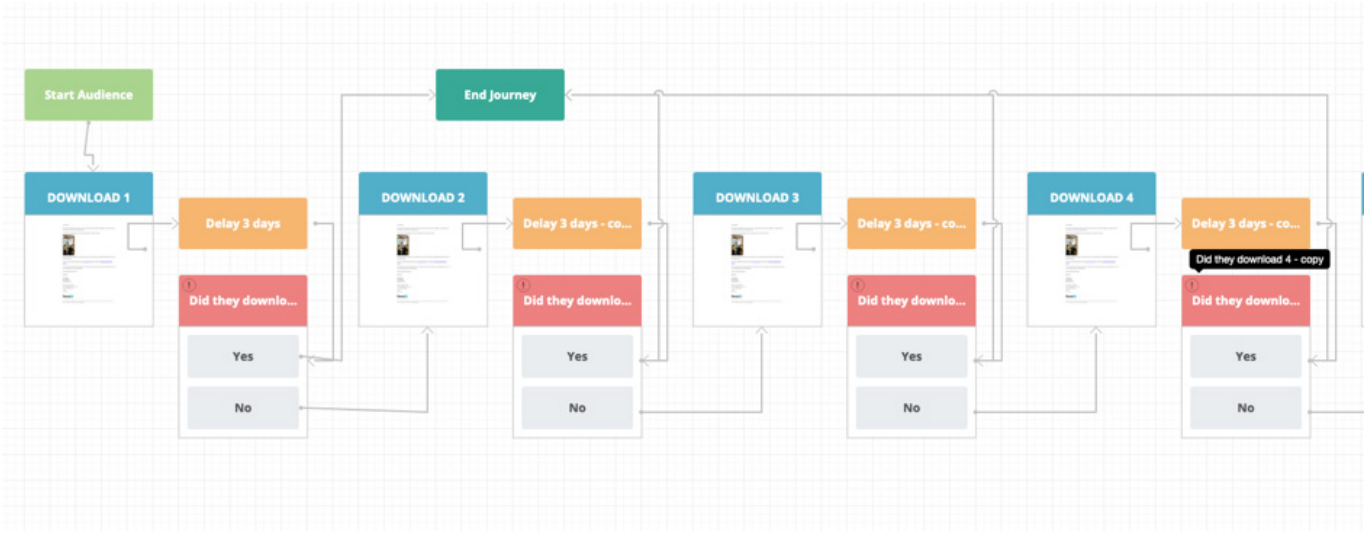
5 Campaign Approach

Some say your approach to executing campaigns is as important as the content itself. The approach dictates how are you going to do it. I.e. how you'll going to convey your message to the hundreds or thousands of contacts in your segment.

What do we mean by approach? Well, the approach is our methodology to ensuring the best possible ROI from our efforts. We understand only one in six of our commercial emails will be opened and read, so what's our strategy for maximising our output.

This is where marketing automation comes in - automation allows us to plan out the best times of the day, week or year to speak to our audience and using the content value section of this guide we can understand the number of emails and social media posts needed to promote our content. Marketing automation helps us execute these communications automatically.

Let's work this through. If I were to run a six-stage email sequence promoting a guide we had written to an audience of 1000 people, the first thing we would have to do is build an email, then take our 1000 people and press send. That's nice and easy! However, when it comes to the second email it gets a little trickier, for this second email we need to remove everybody who looked at and downloaded the guide from the first email, this adds at least 30 minutes of admin to a simple process. And we've got to do this six times! It also means we need to do this in the future… we can't set it up and press send all on one day. We need to check the data next week before the next email is sent, and do this each week for each email.




“Marketing automation allows us to plan out the best times of the day, week, year to speak to our audience”

Let's imagine we work in a busy marketing department, where we have lots of other things going on. Imagine how easy it would be for us to miss a week or two and actually not send the campaign at the optimal time for the contacts but at the time that we had spare!

Now let's flip that into a world of marketing automation, where we spend 10 min ahead of time setting each of the six emails stages up, along with delay components and make decision components.

> When done properly a six-week automated campaign can be built in less than 10 minutes

The 'delayed components' enforce a wait time after each email, where the 'make decision components' then check to see if the user should receive the next email or not.

Whilst we understand that initially automation looks daunting, within a matter of days it becomes as important as your right-hand. Your whole way of thinking adapts around journeys and conversations rather than single execution campaigns.

The 'make decision' components hold a great amount of power and enable you to determine the best course of action for each particular contact - do we carry on sending the same email chain, or do we move to a new track where we begin to discuss something altogether different

At Force24 we very quickly learnt how powerful marketing automation was, and noticed that clients were struggling to adapt to this new way of thinking, so, we decided to tackle this issue head on! We give every single user of the Force24 platform free training and support for life. With this, we find clients go further and do more with marketing automation - it's all about confidence.

When done properly a six-week automated campaign can be built in less than 10 minutes. Obviously time to building emails, landing pages and content sits on top, but this 10 minutes is a massive reduction on the old-fashioned week by week approach.

Not to mention the reduction in admin time - there is a significant additional saving when considering marketing automation and the use of journeys. Imagine we were to ask you to bake me a cookie, let's assume it will take you 30 minutes and cost you £5. Next we ask you to bake me five cookies, we expect it will still take you 30 minutes and still only cost you £5! The same is true for campaign assets, if we build an email one by one vs building a batch of emails in one go I'm wasting a huge amount of valuable time. Not to mention my message becomes more consistent, when we're building things one by one we make a few more adaptions and changes and we forget some of the details. However building a batch of six emails is an extremely efficient route to achieve the same objective.

The benefit to the recipient of course, is a more standardised approach and emails they recognise - and begin to relate your brand to the quality of your output.

Now let's think about testing improvement, we have personally had a big bugbear with split testing for a number of years. In our MD Adam's 25 year marketing career he has only on a few occasions been presented with a dilemma as to which approach he should take in a particular campaign where he could not have just guessed which was better. On these occasions attempting to use split testing is futile. If you can't see the difference then I'm certain the audience won't either.

So what is split testing? Split testing is where we take a proportion of the base say 10%, and send them creative A, before sending another proportion of the base creative B. Now, bearing in mind we personally was not able to decide which was better, we're now going to rely on a fragment of the audience to decide… Let me tell you if you can't decide the stats will not support anything meaningful either. Don't worry.. we have an answer coming up soon.

> Don't even get me started on the sheer waste of time spent on A B testing… Why do anything twice?

A/B split testing is usually the tool of a lazy marketer - it encourages the marketeer to test random things and form no formula behind the outcomes and thinking. For example, in a classic A/B test, we will vary our subject line, simply to decide which is best, whereas the savvy marketer would develop a formula for the building of subject lines, and was keen to know if the formula would help improve conversions over the next few years.

Don't even get us started on the sheer waste of time spent on A/B testing… Why do anything twice? Especially if we serve to audiences, where we knew the content was bad, but we tested it anyway… Urgh!

Instead we prefer a much smarter iterative testing approach. Iterative testing in some regards is similar to A/B testing, we want to know what works best. But iterative testing is where, out of a six-email nurture sequence (or journey), the first three emails will contain iteration A and the following emails will contain iteration B. Okay why is this better? The most important reason is volume - quite often in split testing we see insufficient volumes of data to make it statistically robust. With iterative testing we allow the full campaign to execute three or four times, which gives us a significant statistical improvement in the data we collect. This then allows us to make solid decisions moving forward.

It also forces the marketer to think more about what they're doing and any approaches they are using. No more random testing but scientific approaches to success.

So, as you can see, iterative testing supports more methodical scientific approach where the statistics are more meaningful, and the outcomes are there to drive insight.

Again going back to the benefits to the recipient, hopefully by understanding more about the audience and what they like you can deliver a more relevant message.

The 30 Min Campaign Makeover Check 4

The quick check to take away from this section of the guide “am I doing this the hard way?”

If you think it’s hard to understand what technology can bring to your marketing department and your process, and you’re hiding from new technology in the fear it will consume too much of your already very precious time, then you must tackle this and speak to Force24. Or else it simply won’t be possible to keep up in the future.



6 Am I Too Busy?

What's that we hear you say, someone who is actually looking at the practical aspect of your day? Yes, we know the most important aspect of any marketing department is the people.

We're all too familiar with the pressures imposed upon marketing to move mountains on a daily basis. There's a constant battle between resource and budget, and even busy profitable companies often fail to see the benefits of a well loved and supported marketing department.

It amazes us on a regular basis how many marketers have learnt how to use software packages such as Photoshop, Dreamweaver, WordPress, Google Ad-Words, amongst other technical products when each of these products has been designed for a specific competent technical user who focusses solely on that product. Marketers have done so, to get stuff done!

But here is the problem - as we expand our capabilities we spread ourselves thinner and thinner, the business in which we seek so we eagerly to please, demands more and more and more! An ever-growing cycle of supply and demand which we as mere mortals just simply can't compete with. We start to pinch time from our mornings and our evenings and as we do so we start to neglect more and more.

The first evidence of this neglect comes in being left behind, what do we mean by being left behind? The Martech world is one of the most fast-paced in the business services world when new technology, new approaches, new techniques are being honed and improved by the day. As soon as I begin to ignore innovations occurring around me in favour of getting work done, I start to miss out obvious answers the Martech world is creating from my benefit.




“The most important part of any marketing department is the people”

It's important to take a breath and look around and see what's changed!

The second piece of evidence of being too busy, is when we start to ignore the statistics in front of my face, in fact we start to do even worse than that, and not even look! The reason being we know that when we dive under the hood of the statistics we know we're going to have to make changes! That is something we don't want to see right now.
It's really scary to admit this, because it means admitting losing control. But as they always say the first step to recovery is to admit the problem.

Usually, if you can identify with this it typically comes as a result of seeing something within your statistics you didn't want to see, for example a diminishing the open rate your email campaigns, a high bounce rate on your landing pages. Whatever the issue is we all know ignoring you won't make you go away.

The third piece of evidence in being too busy, is a drop in the quality of my outputs. We used to be passionate about the creative we produced, we were proud of emails, we were proud of the landing pages and we could sit back and ensure my friends the work that we were producing was quality. Today we're a little bit embarrassed at the quality of the output from our marketing.

The fourth and final piece of evidence of being too busy, is the worsening relations with the individual within the organisation. Signs such as sales teams who were once filled with glee at the thought of your next campaign now seem to not allocate the appropriate time to calling the leads that you provide them. With this diminishing effort from the sales team a constant battle of ROI attribution ensues, with ever ongoing disagreements after the origination of every lead.



So what can we do?

We've got to get back to being the people we once were - as the world progresses around us we've neglected a lot of the answers. We must break from the norm and identify technical solutions that can help mitigate our load whilst enabling us to focus on what matters.

We can develop protocols within marketing to ensure we give a consistent output for the rest of the business standard approaches for campaigns which mean there's no more ambiguity and we will know how long things will take.

> We reduced our creative and campaign execution burden by eight hours per week.

At Force24, we're adamant about defining a process for everything - how long it should take you to build an email, what the email should look like, what the subject line should be. These process spanned every single action the marketing department undertook. Meaning we know how much time to assign to activities. We've also been focused on killing any complexity, and where complexity existed we eradicated it. If complex matters exist in the marketeer's world, it will simply serve to kill conversions. Your contacts don't care, if it's not easy they won't listen.

We also developed our content value strategy as discussed in this document, which enabled us to understand how long things should be taking.

We've streamlined the production of all our work assets every email and landing page was templated, all data was pre-segmented and kept constantly in check with marketing automation, and all content was templated and designed specifically for its rapid deployment. We reduced our creative and campaign execution burden by eight hours per week. We subsequently wrote a guide on how to save these eight hours which is available in the content lab on our website.

We understood our greatest allies in marketing are the sales team, so we established a technical solution of escalating leads directly to the sales team. Using lead score we discussed together what a good lead looks like, we identified what score these contacts achieved and began to automatically pass them into the sales team as soon as they reached the score. This exposed a greater number of sales opportunities to the sales team far sooner than never before.

The net result of escalating leads directly to the sales team was a threefold increase a new business. Now 70% of all new business can be attributed to escalation to the sales team based on lead score.

The 30 Min Campaign Makeover Check 5

The final check of this guide, is the 'am I too busy' check. In theory this is one you can do in your own time, but possibly the most important check.

We want you to periodically ask yourself the following questions:

Do I manage to take my full lunch break?

If you do, well done! This is an important break in the day. But does the world fall down around you when you do? Or even worse does nobody notice?

Do I start my day and go home at the proper time?

Again, if you do, well done! One of the key aspects of working effectively is managing to allocate your time correctly. If your working day spills over into the next day and you are forever falling behind and hoping work "disappears" you need to improve your process. You need to look at areas in which you can create efficiency and educe time spent on unimportant aspects of your role.

What happens when I take a day off?

Does the world collapse, do you wish you had never bothered? Or again even worse, does nobody notice.

It is our sincere hope that you can all honestly answer that you are not too busy, but we're absolutely sure you'll be able to recall times in your working career where you have been! You must keep that in focus!





Get in touch

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