

# For Marketers, Shiny New Automation Tools Cannot Replace Good Old Relationship Building



By Jim Ries

Marketing automation is everywhere these days, and will only continue to proliferate. In fact, researchers at Forrester forecast that by 2023, organisations will be spending over \$25 billion annually on marketing automation tools.

A more practical – and potentially troublesome – prediction would be what kind of return all that investment will bring. As seasoned business development professionals know, no tool can replace human relationship

building. Technology can expedite certain elements of the job (e.g. researching leads or managing contact details), but it does not alter the nature of business development.

Automation, including that powered by artificial intelligence, is no different. One cannot establish relevance, usefulness and value solely through automation, and professionals who over-rely on this technology sabotage their own efforts to connect. An advisor who spams her LinkedIn contacts with three automated messages per day, for example, is alienating much of her audience. For every contact who

takes the bait, a dozen more think, 'this person doesn't know me or understand my business, and is either too busy or does not respect me enough to try'. Or, just as likely, they assume the message came from a robot.

In today's hyper-competitive world, business development professionals cannot afford to look like robots. People are inundated with automated texts, calls, tweets, and alerts.

Humanity carries an even greater premium. When someone actually commits to communicate with a new contact, they want to know who that person is - their hobbies, family, community involvement - not just their accomplishments or job title.

In order to demonstrate their humanity, professionals need to be willing to go slowly, make mistakes or show vulnerability. From attracting interest to building connections to closing deals, these human, manual traits are precisely what relationships are built on.

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community. In support of this and in tandem with the firm's marketing team, he develops and manages outreach programmes designed to educate business owners and entrepreneurs at every stage of their business and personal lives, as well as provide resources to families who wish to protect and pass on their wealth.

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