

Advanced Internet Marketing With Web-based CRM

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Introduction

The Marketing Need for Information

Most marketing organizations need to find ways to improve their ability to target prospects and customers. They feel, "If only I could know more about who they are, and what they are interested in. Then we would be able to hone our marketing efforts by appealing to each prospect's specific interests."

Marketing also knows that the best way to communicate with a prospect and customer is to be respectful — respectful of their time, respectful of what is important to them. So Marketing wants to collect information about each sales contact, information that helps to understand who they are, what is important to them, and what their interests are.

Today, this information is usually maintained in a CRM system or in a database.

To get more information, Marketing may enrich the data about the company by purchasing commercially available information to augment the data about the company. Good information may be available about the size of the company, its sales, products, etc. It is much more difficult to obtain information about the people who work for the your target company. Sometimes Marketing asks Sales to help in getting data about the sales prospects. Usually this does not work. The sales team has other things they must give priority to (getting the deal). And salespeople are usually not very good data gathering types, anyway.

Marketing always needs more information. CRM systems with the ability to take advantage of the Internet give marketing new ability to collect information directly from your customers and sales prospects.

New approaches with the Internet change what is possible. And these Internet approaches use the contact's own efforts to collect data about their interests. The contact does the work.

Not every CRM system offers these capabilities. One of the few is *Soffront CRM*.

Getting More Information, using the Internet

The Internet provides a means to find out interest information directly from the contact. The techniques discussed in this paper provide a big step forward in the ability to gain this vital information.

In this paper you will learn how to gain more knowledge about your customers and sales prospects, knowledge that you can use to improve your marketing and sales targeting, knowledge that can supercharge your efforts and dramatically improve your success.

Using Email to Gather Contact Interest Information

Email Response Tracking – The key ingredient

Email Response Tracking tracks the behavior of the email recipient with the email. Did they read it? Did they click a link? Did the email bounce back?

A well-designed email campaign system will automatically monitor this critical information, and track this data with the record of the contact to whom the email was sent.

This data enhances what is known about the contact and their interests. This is among the most important information you have about any contact that is a sales prospect.

Email Response Tracking within the CRM system provides a means of collecting actionable data about the interests of your customer and prospects.

This greatly improves your ability to target marketing and sales efforts.

Many email campaign systems have this capability. The problem is that most of these are stand-alone systems, and not integrated with the CRM system. Without this integration, getting the information from the email system into the CRM system can be a big job, and one that is beyond the ability of many companies, particularly companies that are small to medium businesses.

There is one CRM system, though, that has this capability, *Soffront CRM*.

Why is Email Response Tracking important?

Email Response Tracking is important for three reasons:

Immediate use by the Sales team

A recipient who clicks on a link might indicate specific product interests. A well-designed CRM system can immediately notify the Sales Representative assigned to the account. Sales is then able to immediately follow up to develop the interest and turn it into a sale. In today's "business at the speed of the Internet," this is vital.

Improve the effectiveness of subsequent campaign steps

Different marketing campaign steps have different costs. Email is low cost. A phone call or mailing has a higher cost. Before a high-cost step, you may want to have a good idea that the person is

interested. If they opened your email, they are much more likely to be receptive to a telemarketing call. If they click through a link, they may be interested in a specific piece of collateral that provides more information. Use the email behavior to determine what to do next.

Improve your ability to segment prospects and customers

Segmentation is used to improve marketing results. Marketing efforts are focused on groups of prospects or customers that have similar attributes, perhaps the same industry and company size. Once this is done, different marketing messages can be sent to each segment. Often segmentation is done based on information about the company: industry, company size, sales, location, and such. Additional segmentation is often done on the title of the contact; you might send a different message to the CEO than to the Director of Engineering.

When you have more understanding about the specific interests of your contacts, the segmentation can be based on their specific interests. This is an important element in segmentation; some would say the most important.

Email Response Tracking can provide information for immediate sales response, to improve marketing campaign effectiveness, and to improve your ability to segment your customers and prospects.

This is more important in the present environment, since people are barraged by many marketing messages. To be effective, the message has to be respectful and relevant.

Sending messages about subjects (or products and services) that are of no interest is not effective. They either delete the message, or they may mark you as a source of spam, and then no longer look at *any* of your email messages.

Segmenting that takes advantage of the information you have collected about the real interests of the prospect or customer means your messages can be more targeted and can relate better to the actual interests. This kind of segmentation produces significantly better marketing results.

Most CRM systems do not provide Email Response Tracking capabilities. *Soffront CRM* has pioneered this CRM capability.

Measurement

Measurement helps improve campaign effectiveness, and provides a means to test different messages.

Marketing always needs information, and the information about what interests their customers and prospects is among the most important information. A well-designed marketing campaign system tracks campaign data, and allows Marketing to measure each campaign. Email Response Tracking allows detailed

measurements: How many messages were sent? Opened? Clicked though? How did this message and offer compare against others? How did this email subject line work in comparison to others? How did this email list compare with others? If different marketing messages are tried, how does the response to these marketing messages compare? These measurements allow the marketer to optimize the marketing program to achieve better results.

Marketing's ability to measure performance is a key to improved results. Email Response Tracking provides a new means of testing marketing messages and offers, and can provide immediate results and data.

Measurement capability adds significantly to Marketing's understanding of what works with their customer and prospect base. With Email Response Tracking, Marketing is able to get more quality information, and get it more quickly, due to the speed with which people receive and respond to email today.

You cannot measure what you cannot track. *Soffront CRM* tracks the behavior of the email recipient. Since this is tracked, it can be measured.

Marketing Campaign Example, Using Email Response Tracking

ABC Manufacturing has a new product, and they want to start generating interest quickly. They were able to find a commercial email list for targeted prospects. Telemarketing is important in the sale of the product; it needs a personal 'touch' to help sell the product. Telemarketing is not inexpensive, though.

If an email is sent prior to the call, and only those people are called who opened the email, the effectiveness of the Telemarketing effort will be much greater.

Email Response Tracking gives new capabilities to improve the performance of telemarketing campaigns, by first using an email to 'prequalify' the sales suspect. Telemarketing results are much higher if the person is interested.

So here, ABC Manufacturing might design and execute a two-step campaign where everybody on the email list is emailed, and then a Telemarketing call is scheduled two days later – but only to those who opened the email.

ABC manufacturing might also be trying two different sources for the email list. Running two campaigns with the same message and offer, then looking at the measurements that are

available for these two campaigns will quickly show which list source is more effective.

Because *Soffront CRM* tracks the behavior of the recipient of the email, this information can be used to optimize subsequent marketing and sales activities.

Internet Surveys

Another new way to use the Internet to gain insight into the interests of your prospects and customers is through the use of Internet surveys.

Internet surveys are a means to add to the information you have about your sales prospects, and it uses their own efforts to collect this information, so the data is obtained for a minimal cost.

Soffront CRM allows the company to create a survey, define the questions and possible answers, then collect the survey information and update the contact record.

After the survey is designed, the system can automatically generate an HTML page. Then an email campaign message can be generated and sent to the survey targets. When the recipient clicks on the link in the email, he will be taken to the HTML survey page. He does not enter any identity information (the system knows who he is, due to hidden links in the email).

When he is finished with the survey and clicks "submit," his answers will update his record in CRM.

Internet Surveys provide one more way to leverage the Internet and gain valuable information about your customers and prospects.

Remember, they need a reason to participate. Be creative.

It may be that you will need to offer some kind of prize or incentive to encourage participation. If so, this is a small cost. If you do this, make sure that the incentive is actually one that will motivate your target audience. Awarding the prize is easy, since your CRM system has collected the information as to who has participated in the survey.

This survey information not only updates what you know about individual contact, it also allows you to better understand the interests of groups of prospects. Since the survey data is collected for each contact, and the contact is associated with a company, you can even analyze survey results based on company information, like company size, or industry, or by region of the country or world.

Soffront CRM offers integrated Internet surveys to add power for the Marketing team.

Conclusion

The Internet can provide new ways to get some of the most valuable data possible — information about the actual interests of your customer and prospects. This gives marketing significant new power, if the CRM system has this capability.

The Internet allows a company new ways to become more effective with its customers and sales prospects. Two approaches that provide great power are Email Response Tracking and Internet Surveys.

Both of these approaches use the contact's own behavior and efforts, and collect usable data about their interests. This data allows for improved ability to measure and understand your customers and sales prospects, and more effective marketing and sales targeting.

Not many CRM companies offer these capabilities. *Soffront CRM* is one CRM solution that offers them.

If you want to know more about how to add Internet power to your marketing efforts, call Soffront Software at 510-413-9000, or email sales@soffront.com.

About Soffront

Soffront Software Inc. has the experience, technology, and focus for mid-market companies seeking a CRM software solution.

Soffront CRM is powerful, flexible and affordable. With Soffront you can have the exact CRM solution you need to get the results your business requires.

A pioneer in the CRM market since 1992, Soffront offers web-based, end-to-end, fully integrated CRM solutions. These solutions are available either as a hosted/ASP or as On-premise software.

With more than 500 CRM installations worldwide, Soffront's installed base includes Fortune 500 companies, mid-sized businesses, federal agencies and local/state governments. Soffront is privately held, debt-free, and profitable since 1995.