

Why Do You Need Marketing Automation?

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Marketing budgets are shifting and more dollars are being allocated to digital instead of traditional campaigns. And, more marketing budgets are being tapped for investments in marketing technology. With more of the marketing budget funding online initiatives, it is critical that marketing leadership can report on the ROI of these resources and tools. Marketing automation (MA) platforms are seen as not only a tool to manage campaigns but also as a means to measure ROI. So how does a MA platform help organizations? Will MA solve your digital campaign management problems and generate more qualified leads?

A marketer's job entails generating quality leads by publishing content that is part of lead nurturing programs, customer experience campaigns and various inbound and outbound marketing initiatives—all designed to drive conversions and revenue growth. A marketing automation platform contributes to this process by supporting programmatic content distribution and giving marketers the ability to streamline multi-channel marketing tied to lead scoring, deep metrics and ROI.

GREAT! WHAT IS THE BUZZ ABOUT AUTOMATION?

According to a recent study, 81% of all consumers in 2012 researched online before making a purchase, which means that the consumer today is more informed than ever before about an organization's products and services before reaching out directly (Retailing Today, 2013). By automating marketing processes and operations, marketers can provide the prospect with accurate and relevant information across every possible touch point and tactic such as email, social media, PPC, mobile, SEO and an organization's website or campaign landing pages. Sophisticated products ranging from Marketo and Adobe Campaign to Oracle Eloqua and ExactTarget to HubSpot and SilverPop allow a marketer to dynamically personalize the content as well. These tools fit the mantra of being able to "Deliver the right content to the right prospect at the right time using the prospect's channel of choice."

INTERESTING. THIS SOUNDS LIKE A LOT OF WORK THOUGH.

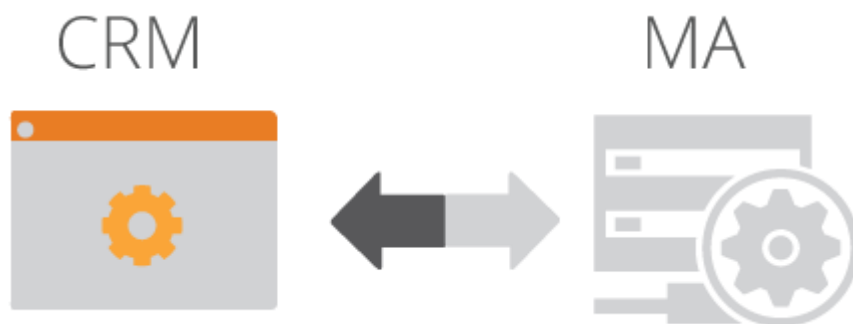
Like any marketing technology, MA requires a proper architecture and configuration, established workflow and customization as well as resource management and a marketer's (or analyst's) insight to ensure best practices are implemented. Once configured, an organization's MA tool will help capture a prospect's digital body language—website and social channel activity, KPIs

such as time spent on a page, number of emails read, webinars attended, content reviewed, tweets and Facebook posts shared. MA turns all this data into information by creating interactive reporting with filters and triggers that help target marketing content to the right audience segment, nurturing leads based on behaviors.

TELL ME MORE ABOUT HOW DIGITAL BODY LANGUAGE RELATES TO LEAD GENERATION.

Reports can be generated by aggregating information on prospects from a number of marketing channels and then segmented by demographics, firmographics, lead quality, lead behavior and lead status to name a few report filters. Reports can be near real-time, automated, customized, and integrated into data visualization tools. Consistent evaluation of meaningful reports based on real data allows marketers to continuously optimize messaging, campaigns, delivery and more to ensure that leads are getting the right experience at the right time, driving them to convert.

SOUNDS NICE. BUT HOW IS A MARKETING AUTOMATION PLATFORM DIFFERENT FROM A CRM DATABASE?



CRM databases and MA platforms are complementary yet serve specific and unique purposes. Organizations need both tools as part of a long-term roadmap toward digital maturity. A CRM database focuses on the workflow behind how an organization handles leads and opportunities. When configured properly and synched with an MA platform, a CRM database not only houses customer information but also attributes ROI from marketing initiatives on a cost per lead basis. Marketing automation tools provide operational efficiency to reach prospects along with helping marketers personalize a customer's experience throughout their lifecycle. By integrating the customer's digital profile between a CRM and MA platform, organizations are empowered to better unite sales and marketing efforts in the context of lead generation and revenue growth.

MAKES SENSE. I STILL NEED TO DECIDE IF MARKETING AUTOMATION IS A “MUST-HAVE” TOOL.

A marketing automation platform, the processes, people and integrated data components that go along with MA are an investment and most organizations are evaluating it from a “when” rather than “if” perspective. In addition to having the right team and processes in place to truly see ROI from the investment, here are a few more reasons to consider implementing MA into your marketing technology stack:

1. “There is more data being generated every two days than all data collected from the dawn of time till 2003.” – Google CEO Eric Schmidt. Increased digital activity, tons of data, and reports from multiple systems take up too much time. MA platforms solve this problem by consolidating data.
2. Marketing expenditure has become selective and channels have changed. There is an increased importance on social media and mobile access to information which has changed marketing’s approach to data sharing and user experience management.
3. The adoption of marketing automation technology is expected to increase by 50% for B2B organizations by 2015 (Sirius Decisions, n.d.). More online customers will receive targeted and personalized experiences and the brands that invest in reaching customers first will have a better chance of building long-term relationships and business growth.

Thanks to the range of MA platforms on the market, companies from small start-ups to enterprise Fortune 500 companies are able to find a solution that provides the features and capabilities that match their business requirements. The key is to realize the long-term impact of the MA investment and the value that a proper implementation will provide in helping to build relationships with customers in today’s digital world while nurturing new prospects and opportunities.

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