
Automate This

By: Michael Mejia

Marketing Automation has become the adhesive element between Service and Sales organizations. Lead acquisition and management has matured to a point in which it often crosses and surpasses its own limits, bringing the prospects to the point of sale, and sometimes it closes the sale right there.

With budgets that ever increasingly have to justify ROI, marketing organizations have taken several steps ahead from where they were not to long ago. It is not long ago that a marketing's organization job description was to simply make the product and its benefits be known to as many people as possible. It included identifying market segments and the John and Jane does in that segment. It used to involve creating a profile, which was expected to closely resemble the average buyer, so that advertising and other campaigns would be effective.

Today, Marketing organizations (and by that virtue Marketing Automation software) is expected to deliver a wider definition of goals in more than just one environments. Yes, marketing automation software is now expected to deliver in B2B, B2C, B2I and other environments. It is expected not only to identify market segments, but also to target them in as many ways as possible, online and offline. It is not only expected to create a "profile" of its average prospect (middle-age, middle-income, white female, some college ….) ; it is expected to know exactly who that prospect is by name, where it is, where it buys, what it buys and why it has or has not become a customer yet.

Sophisticated and powerful operational and analytical components are required in order to have software that can accurately report and predict this type of consumer behavior. The challenges to marketing automation are not as much in the people side, but rather in the proper integration to other systems within the organization, so that the data needed flows into the marketing piece. A successful marketing campaign is now measured not only in terms of response rate, but also in its ability to analyze its own success or failure, making itself smarter, or cheaper, or faster for the next round. Its ability to perfect its criteria next time around makes it an ideal scenario for the use of advanced software proposition, yet, so man of the software offerings are merely beginning to plug in analytical components, as if a patch can fix the lack of marketing substance.

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