MarketingSherpa

Top 7 B2B Case Studies for 2010:

Practical and proven marketing strategies and tactics on SEO, content, lead generation, sales conversion, and ROI

Special Report

MarketingSherpa

MarketingSherpa's Top 7 B2B Case Studies for 2010

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Contact
Pamela Seiple
PR Manager, HubSpot
One Broadway, 5th Floor
Cambridge, MA 02142
pseiple@hubspot.com
908-347-2963

FACT SHEET

On the Web

- HubSpot Website: http://www.hubspot.com
- HubSpot Internet Marketing Blog: http://blog.hubspot.com
- HubSpot Company & Product News Blog: http://www.hubspot.com/blog

Overview

HubSpot is an Internet marketing startup whose software helps businesses get found online, generate more inbound leads and convert a higher percentage of those leads into paying customers. HubSpot's software platform includes tools that allow professional marketers and small business owners to manage search engine optimization, blogging and social media, as well as landing pages, lead intelligence and marketing analytics.

- HubSpot was founded in 2006 by CEO Brian Halligan and CTO Dharmesh Shah and is based in Cambridge, MA across the street from MIT, where the company was conceived.
- General Catalyst provided $5 million in VC funding in 2007.
- Matrix Partners provided $12 million in VC funding in 2008.

Products

- HubSpot offers inbound marketing software that allows you to:
  - Generate more qualified traffic to your website
  - Capture more visitors as qualified leads
  - Convert more leads into paying customers
  - Analyze and optimize every step of the process
- With the HubSpot inbound marketing software, you can:
  - Quickly and easily edit your website
  - Generate traffic by adding a business blog
  - Improve search engine relevance, ranking and traffic
  - Collect intelligence on prospects
  - Analyze your lead generation trends
  - Analyze search terms and traffic referrals
- HubSpot requires no technical background or IT support, allowing everyday business and marketing people to easily generate leads and take advantage of Web 2.0 Internet marketing techniques. HubSpot's integrated approach allows for a more efficient way of tracking/measuring the success of your online marketing programs.

Resources

- HubSpot is a leader in all topics inbound marketing and regularly provides free resources such as webinars, whitepapers, eBooks, marketing tools, videos, communities, blog articles, studies and reports, etc.
- HubSpot offers free online tools at Grader.com that measure a variety of marketing initiatives' effectiveness.
- HubSpot manages an inbound marketing community at InboundMarketing.com.
- HubSpot offers an ongoing marketing retraining program called Inbound Marketing University at InboundMarketing.com/University.
- HubSpot produces a weekly Internet marketing video podcast called HubSpot TV at http://hubspot.tv.

Events, Accolades & Coverage

- HubSpot regularly speaks at, sponsors and participates in industry conferences and events such as OMMA Global, PubCon, Business of Software, Search Engine Strategies, SMX, Venture Summit, IMS, etc.
- HubSpot has won awards and been recognized by a number of organizations such as NEDMA, Mass High Tech, MassTLC, AlwaysOn, Red Herring, MITX, ad:Tech, etc.
- HubSpot has been featured in various media and publications including *The Wall Street Journal, Boston Globe, The New York Times, ABC News, Mashable, TechCrunch,* etc.

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INTRODUCTION:
MARKETINGSHERPA'S B2B CASE STUDIES

It's one thing to pick up a workbook that provides you with best practices. But, it's an entirely different challenge to implement those best practices into the real world.

Our friends at MarketingSherpa know this better than anyone. Sherpa's reporters spend much of their time scouring the business world for marketing case studies. And not just any case studies – but the ones that offer marketers practical solutions for their companies.

These case studies are published in Sherpa's many newsletters, which come out weekly – but after ten days, are only available to registered MarketingSherpa members. What we've done here is review the case studies published in the Business-to-Business Marketing Newsletter and handpicked seven of the best B2B selections from their archives.

In these case studies you'll learn how companies improve ROI while increasing their leads, how they generate content for search engines and build up leads in their funnel, and more.

As you read, we hope you find inspiration as well as practical, proven solutions to help you with your marketing efforts.

Enjoy!

The HubSpot Team

Budget Cut Prompts Marketing Performance Review:
7 Tactics to Reduce CPL and Boost Leads 12%

SUMMARY: There's nothing like a 40% budget cut and staff reduction to make a marketing team focus on activities that have the biggest impact for the lowest cost.

Read how a team analyzed its marketing performance to determine which programs were really working – and which weren't. Adjusting strategy based on those trends boosted total leads 12%, while increasing the value of opportunities in the pipeline by 65%.

CHALLENGE

In 2009, Thomas VanHorn, CMO, Application Security, got word that his budget and staff were being reduced by about 40%. There was no choice but to examine his team's past marketing activities, and then make hard choices about the specific tactics and channels they were using.

"I think it's real easy to get sucked into a mentality of, 'I have to do all of these things: I have to do events, I have to do print, direct mail, social media...' the list goes on and on," says VanHorn.

With less money to spend, VanHorn and his team needed to discover which programs were really contributing to the company's sales. And with fewer staff members and outside help to perform early-stage lead development and qualification, they needed to automate as much of their processes as possible.

CAMPAIGN

VanHorn and his team analyzed all past marketing activities to determine their ROI. Based on the trends they saw, they either reduced or increased their use of certain channels, or changed their objectives for specific activities.

Here are seven tactics they used to perform their analysis and adjust their marketing strategy:

Tactic #1. Measure each channel's cost-per-lead

The team had a system in place that tracked the originating source of each lead in their database. They then compared how much they spent in each channel to the number of leads the channels originated. This calculation determined a basic cost-per-lead.

Immediately, they saw that some channels were costing the team $100 per lead and more, while others were only costing them $4 to $5 per lead.

Tactic #2. Measure the value of opportunities created by each channel

A basic cost-per-lead analysis didn't factor in lead quality. So the team conducted further analysis to determine the dollar value of the sales opportunities created by each channel.

- Working in their marketing automation system, they traced each opportunity back to its initial lead source, mapping every marketing touch along the way.
- Then, they took the dollar value of the opportunity and divided it equally among each marketing channel with which the lead had interacted before becoming an opportunity.

For example, if an opportunity was worth $x.xx, and the lead had engaged in 10 specific activities – such as a downloading a whitepaper, attending a webinar, etc. – each of those activities received one tenth of $x.xx.

Although imperfect, the analysis gave the team insight into how each marketing program was contributing to closed deals.

"When we checked the dollar volume of opportunities created we found no correlation to the cost-per-lead of the program," says VanHorn. "In fact, some of those [higher cost tactics] resulted in the lowest contribution to pipeline."

Tactic #3. Dial back on high-cost activities

Once the team could see how much they were paying for leads from specific programs, they made decisions on what they could – and could not – afford to do.

For example, they saw that major trade shows and other large events were generating some of the highest-cost leads, which also took the longest to become opportunities. So VanHorn and his team reduced their participation in major events.

They did not eliminate events entirely. Instead, they looked for more opportunities at smaller, local events. They also maintained a presence at a few major industry trade shows, but changed their objectives for those activities.

Rather than viewing the trade shows as a strong lead generation opportunity, they approached them as ways to build brand awareness and buzz. They also used the events to meet with partners and existing customers – recording those contacts in the marketing automation and CRM system, so the channel would get attributed a portion of any future revenue from that customer.

Tactic #4. Expand use of low-cost activities

Limiting activities with a high cost-per-lead allowed the team to increase use of channels that delivered lower-cost leads. Here are a few examples of activities they created or expanded:

- *Informal email updates*
  The team wanted to expand its use of email messages that revealed the personality of the company, and positioned it as a trusted advisor. So VanHorn created an informal email program to send a quarterly update to a large list of prospects. The messages were personalized with VanHorn's signature, and did not contain sales pitches. Instead, they offered insights into important database security issues, alongside a touch of entertainment. For example, a message sent early in 2010 contained a belated "Happy New Year" message and links to two company web video projects (more on those below).

- *Email drip nurturing*
  The team also expanded its use of automated drip nurturing for prospects that downloaded content from the website.

- *Thought leadership-oriented virtual events*
  They began hosting more virtual events that were not product or sales-oriented. For example, when a researcher discovered vulnerability in a particular type of database software, VanHorn's team worked with the company's technical experts to develop a free fix for the problem, and then hosted a free webinar to explain how to implement the solution.

Tactic #5. Use CPL benchmarks to negotiate sponsorships and other paid marketing efforts

Thanks to the team's cost-per-lead analysis, they were able to determine optimum CPL for various programs. Then, they used their optimum CPL to set limits and get guarantees from vendors for sponsorship or other paid-media campaigns.

For example, when the team set a limit on its cost-per-lead for a whitepaper hosting deal that was significantly lower than the vendor's offer, the vendor responded with several new options to guarantee a number of leads at a cost that would meet the team's goal.

"They made opportunities available to me that I otherwise wouldn't have known about," says VanHorn.

Tactic #6. Try new things

Despite their focus on tactics with a proven ROI, the team continued to test new tactics and creative approaches.

"I don't think you can base everything on past results," says VanHorn. "We spend fair amount of time trying new stuff to see what sticks."

Here are a few examples of new activities:

- *Online film series*

  In 2009, the team created an online film series called "The UnProtected." The six-episode miniseries dramatized the importance of database security and risk management through the fictional story of a financial services firm that failed a database security audit and had its credit card files hacked.

  The team hosted the videos on a microsite, which they promoted through email, social media and public relations. Besides the videos, the microsite included sections dedicated to the company's security solutions, including:
    - Trial-version software downloads
    - Data sheets
    - Online demos

- *User-generated video contest*

  The team also ran a contest called "The Database Security Video Smackdown," which asked users to make their own creative, entertaining online videos about the importance of database security. A panel of security experts would then choose three to five finalists to receive $500 prizes.

Tactic #7. Review numbers regularly

After conducting their initial analysis, the team began reviewing key program performance metrics on a weekly and monthly basis.

VanHorn personally reviewed the previous week's reports each Sunday, then held a weekly meeting with the company's executive sales staff, CEO and other executives to review the company's current pipeline.

He also held monthly meetings with the marketing team to review performance metrics and decide whether to adjust programs and activities based on emerging trends.

RESULTS

The team's marketing ROI analysis and shuffling of activities paid off in 2009:

- Even with the 40% budget cut, VanHorn and his team increased the number of leads generated by 12% year-over-year. And they did it while also tightening the definition of what they considered a lead.

Previously, the team considered any name associated with a particular marketing effort a lead. For example, if they attended a trade show and received a list of 1,000 attendees, they considered all 1,000 of those names viable leads.

But VanHorn raised the bar for lead definition by requiring a lead to have proactively engaged with the company, such as by downloading a whitepaper, registering for an event, and so on.

- They boosted the value of opportunities in the pipeline by 65%.
- They reduced their average cost-per-lead "significantly," says VanHorn.
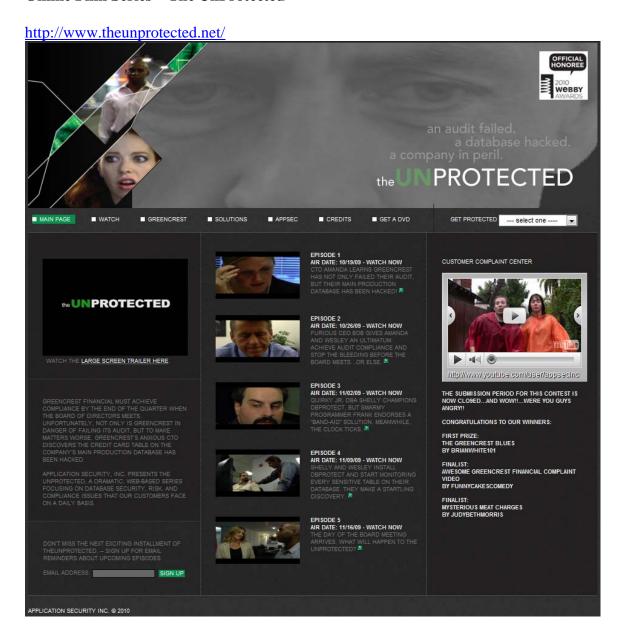
"That's also about setting the bar for what you're willing to pay for a lead, and then saying 'Sorry, you're not going to come in at right number,' when something is too expensive to justify."

The team's willingness to test new ideas also delivered strong results:

- 45% of the visitors to the "UnProtected" microsite became qualified leads when touched with other marketing programs.
- 12.5% of the visitors to the Database Security Video Smackdown page became qualified leads when touched with other marketing programs.

CREATIVE SAMPLES

Online Film Series – The UnProtected

http://www.theunprotected.net/

User-generated video contest - The Database Security Video Smackdown

http://www.appsecinc.com/videosmackdown/index.html

Generate Leads with Social Media Strategy:
6 Steps to Fill Up Sales Funnel

SUMMARY: Slightly more than a year ago, Pam O'Neal, VP Marketing, BreakingPoint, shared her team's success using a wide-ranging social media strategy to generate leads. We've asked her to present an update on their tactics – with a focus on integrating email and social media – at our upcoming Email Summit.

In advance of this session, we're highlighting the original case study that first demonstrated how the team tested and measured activity from several social media channels. The results included 55% of all leads coming from inbound Web visits, and 75% of marketing-influenced pipeline coming from inbound Web leads.

CHALLENGE

Pam O'Neal, VP Marketing, BreakingPoint, didn't want to adopt a typical demand generation strategy after she joined the networking-equipment testing system provider in April 2008. The startup company had a limited budget, and their target audience of security and quality assurance professionals in R&D laboratories wasn't merely skeptical of marketing – they hated it.

O'Neal and her team wanted to supplement traditional PR, events and demand-generation campaigns with a social media strategy that created strong relationships with hard-to-find prospects. But they wanted to make sure those efforts were reaching the right audience and turning them into leads.

"It was either going to work big or be a huge failure," says O'Neal. "We didn't know, but we wanted more than anything to have a good solid case study and have metrics that prove social media could work in this climate and with this audience."

They took six steps to develop their social media strategy and measure its impact.

CAMPAIGN

O'Neal and her team tested several social media channels while revamping their public relations tactics to drive visitors to the company's website. They tracked growth and engagement metrics from those initiatives. They then correlated those results to traditional metrics, such as unique visitors, leads, and pipeline activity.

See the six steps they took:

Step #1. Create blog to start and join online conversations

O'Neal's team began its foray into social media by launching a company blog. They

didn't wait to finalize a blog strategy before launch, however. Their blogging approach evolved over time, based on observation of online conversations related to their network equipment testing niche.

First, the team set up an online monitoring system that scanned the Web, the blogosphere, online forums and communities to find conversations relevant to their industry and their technical audience. The results were consolidated into an RSS feed that a team member could review each morning.

Scanning tools included:
- TweetScan, for Twitter posts
- Google Alerts for industry terms, such as "security threats" and "equipment testing"
- Boardtracker.com, which monitors technology forums and message boards

When the scanning tools found a relevant conversation, such as a blog post about cost of network equipment-testing tools, a team member would join that conversation. They would comment on the blog post and point readers to content on the same topic at the BreakingPoint blog.

The team also used their blog to break stories with the potential to go viral. For example, the company's security research team published tests and research related to click-jacking – a recently discovered security flaw within websites that takes clickers from a legitimate-appearing button to an illegitimate site.

Those stories generated links from other industry blogs and articles in major trade publications.

Step #2. Establish a Twitter account

The team supplemented their blog with a company Twitter account. It allowed them to post shorter, more frequent updates to their niche audience.

Company "tweets" included:
- Notices of new blog posts, webinars
- Fun entries (e.g., trivia questions, quizzes)
- Informal focus group questions (a poll of Twitter followers about potential names for the company newsletter)

As they did with the blog, the team used their scanning tools to find and participate in Twitter conversations relevant to their industry. They were particularly interested in community members asking for advice about equipment testing, so they set up alerts to find key terms, such as:
- "Bake off," an industry term for a head-to-head equipment test
- "Test methodology"

- Competitors' names (along with the word "sucks")

"People are complaining a lot more on Twitter than in the blogosphere," says O'Neal. "It's a place people go to vent, as well as search for solutions."

They also retweeted relevant information found through their scans, such as reports about equipment testing results or interesting industry news. "It gives us a reason to stay in front of our followers and stimulate conversations."

Step #3. Create LinkedIn group

To explore an array of social media channels, the team created BreakingPoint groups on LinkedIn and Facebook. They quickly realized that their target audience wasn't well represented on Facebook. But the LinkedIn group began attracting members with the right professional backgrounds.

The team established the group as an open forum to discuss issues related to network test equipment and security – not to the company or its products.

Group members took the lead in starting conversations among themselves. Typical topics included:
- Advice on vendors
- Reviews/suggestions for industry events
- Feedback on new testing approaches or programs

O'Neal's team acted as hosts, joining discussions when they had a pertinent point to contribute, or sharing relevant industry news, blog posts or other content to keep members engaged.

Step #4. Modify press release strategy for blogger coverage

The team revamped its press release strategy to encourage more online coverage for the company. Actions they took:

- Release at least one new press release each week.
- To encourage inbound links, press releases were shorter and contained more links to sections of the company website.
- Shift their release time from 8:00 a.m. EST to late morning/early afternoon, when West Coast bloggers were most likely to begin scanning for news.
- Publish press releases using a service called PitchEngine, and post releases to social media channels, such as their Twitter feed and LinkedIn group.

Step #5. Promote social media channels on company website and in email signatures

To encourage customers and prospects to participate in their social media channels, the team included links to different accounts from the company's website and in their email signatures.

The news section of the website, for instance, included links to the company's Twitter feed and LinkedIn group under a "join us" headline. They also included updates from the company Twitter account in the right-hand column of the company blog.

Employees' email signatures could include links to the blog, Twitter account or LinkedIn group, along with name, email address and phone number.

Step #6. Measure growth of social media accounts and Web traffic

O'Neal was determined to measure the contribution social media efforts made to the company's marketing and sales activity. So, they tracked metrics to determine the growth of their various social media channels, such as:
- Unique blog page views
- Twitter followers
- LinkedIn group members

At the same time, they tracked a series of marketing metrics, such as:
- Unique website visitors
- Traffic generated by SEO
- Leads
- Leads by source (inbound Web, email, trade shows, seminars)
- Marketing-influenced pipeline activity, by source

When comparing the metrics side-by-side, they looked for correlations between activity in social media outlets and an increase in leads and sales pipeline activity.

RESULTS

"After six months, we saw some amazing results," says O'Neal.

The team's analysis showed a dramatic correlation between the use of social media channels and the growth of the company's Web traffic and leads. (See creative samples for a chart illustrating growth trends.)

By the end of Q3 2008, their social media campaign resulted in:
- 10,230 unique blog page views in Q3
- 280 Twitter followers
- 141 members of their LinkedIn Group
- 155% increase in unique Web visitors

Most important, that Web traffic is now contributing the majority of the team's leads and pipeline activity.

Leads by source:
- 55% inbound Web
- 23% trade shows
- 20.5% email
- 1.5% seminars

Marketing-influenced pipeline by source:
- 75% inbound Web
- 17% email
- 4% seminar
- 4% trade shows

The amount of leads and pipeline activity generated from Web traffic demonstrates to O'Neal that their social media strategy is reaching their marketing-averse audience.

"In my prior position, I felt like I was on a treadmill when every quarter I had to come up with more and more clever campaigns to drive demand generation," says O'Neal. "I'm not saying that there isn't a lot of work that goes into social media, but I'm not constantly [doing] these elaborate demand gen campaigns anymore."
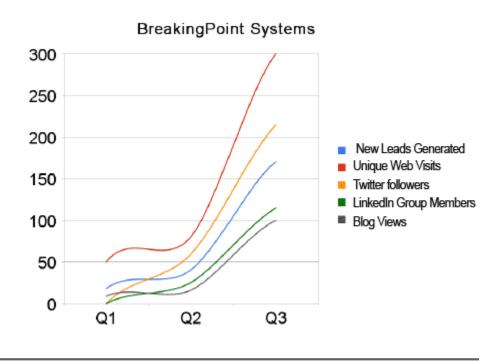
The team's social media efforts also support their ongoing search-engine optimization strategy. By engaging in conversations about industry issues, they're generating more links on non-brand search terms that help boost their search engine results positions. Non-brand search terms are typically those used by prospects when searching for testing equipment.

When O'Neal joined the company, the ratio of Web traffic from brand terms to non-brand terms was 2.5 to 1. "That's really bad. It means more than twice as many people were searching for our company name versus their own pain point."

Now, the ratio of brand to non-brand search traffic is 0.6 to 1.

CREATIVE SAMPLES

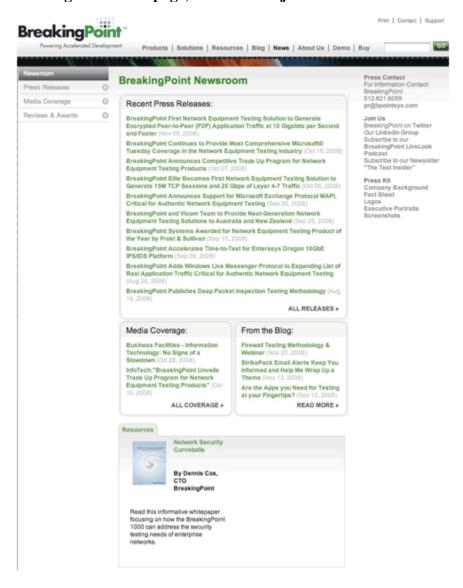**Chart showing growth of social media channels, Web traffic and leads**

BreakingPoint Systems

Legend:
- New Leads Generated
- Unique Web Visits
- Twitter followers
- LinkedIn Group Members
- Blog Views

BreakingPoint blog, with Twitter updates in right column

BreakingPoint Twitter homepage

BreakingPoint News page, with links to join online communities

Share-to-Social Buttons Increase Newsletter Interaction:
6 Steps

SUMMARY: This year saw a surge in interest for social sharing features, which let subscribers post email content to their social networks. If you haven't yet added social sharing to your email newsletters, check out this case study from our archives and consider testing the tactic in 2010.

We spoke with a B2B email newsletter publisher to learn how they implemented social sharing this year. The early results showed a 25% boost in reader interaction, and a surge in inbound traffic from social networking sites. Includes tips on:

- Choosing the right networks
- Designing a template
- Launching the program
- Measuring results

CHALLENGE

Like most email marketers, Rob Birgfeld, Director, Audience Development, SmartBrief, could not ignore the rise of social media. Subscribers to his team's B2B email newsletters were increasingly asking questions about the value of social networking. And in late 2008, Birgfeld and his team expanded their own social media efforts, through a new email newsletter and blog dedicated to understanding the channel.

The more the team interacted with social media, the more they wanted to create closer ties between their newsletters and those networks – particularly around content sharing.

"We created a blog and Twitter account that started showing some interesting results and value to readers. But our newsletter "share" button was only giving the option to email articles," says Birgfeld. "We realized that for a publication in the social media space, we had to relate to those networks."

CAMPAIGN

The team had followed the development of share-to-social functionality that allowed users to click an icon that automatically uploads a link to their social networking accounts. So they developed a plan to include social sharing as an option alongside their existing button that let subscribers email newsletter articles to their colleagues.

Here are six steps they took to develop their social sharing functionality and measure reader interaction:

Step #1. Identify the most relevant social networks

The team didn't want to clutter their email design with too many social sharing buttons – especially if those networks weren't popular among their B2B audience.

"We don't want a brief to look like NASCAR, with buttons and logos everywhere."

So before adding share buttons, the team identified which social networks were most relevant to their B2B audience:
- They sent an online survey to the 80,000 subscribers of their SmartBrief on Leadership, asking them which social networks provided the greatest business opportunities.
- The team also examined inbound Web traffic to see where subscribers were already posting article links on social networking sites.

Data from both sources showed that the top three social networks among their newsletter subscribers were:
- LinkedIn
- Facebook
- Twitter

Step #2. Point shared links to article summary pages

Next, the team established a sharing methodology that was aligned with subscribers' interests and the company's goals for reaching a broader audience.

SmartBrief daily newsletters feature a collection links to current news articles related to a specific industry or operational focus, such as Advertising, Manufacturing, Retail and HR.

They decided to place share buttons at the end of each article summary, rather than creating one share button that posted the entire newsletter to a subscribers' network. That way, subscribers could choose which stories they found most interesting and worthy of sharing.

They also made the share button upload a link to the article summary page, rather than the original source of the story. That way, the team could generate traffic to its own website, and introduce non-subscribers to the value that article summaries provide to their newsletter audience.

"Some would argue that from a user-experience point of view, driving people to a summary is an extra step," says Birgfeld. "But our readers have shown, year after year, that they appreciate the summaries."

Step #3. Use focus group to test new newsletter templates

The team created a few mockups of new template designs that incorporated share buttons alongside the existing email forwarding button. Their goal was to create an understated design that still made it easy for subscribers to share content with their networks.

Then, they showed those mockups to their in-house reader-advisory panel. They asked for feedback on social sharing in general, and asked them whether:
- They recognized the icons
- They had interacted with similar buttons in the past

The majority of readers understood the concept and recognized the icons.

Step #4. Stagger social sharing launch across newsletter titles

With more than 100 newsletter titles on their roster, the team did not want to roll out the social sharing feature to all subscribers without first testing the concept further. Instead, they rolled out the feature gradually to specific newsletter titles.

They first added social sharing buttons to their SmartBrief on Social Media, because they figured there would be significant interest in social networking among that subscriber base.

Next, they added the feature to other SmartBrief-branded newsletters, including SmartBrief on Leadership and SmartBrief on Entrepreneurs.

Shortly after adding the feature to their own newsletters, the team began receiving requests from its trade industry association partners to include the social sharing buttons on co-branded newsletters.

Each time the team added social sharing to a newsletter, they sent a note to those subscribers highlighting the new feature and providing instructions on how to use the buttons.

Step #5. Track shared article metrics

Once buttons were active on newsletters, the team monitored how subscribers were using the feature.

To determine how many subscribers were interacting with the social sharing feature, they tracked how many times users clicked on share button. This metric was easy to calculate, as it was no different than measuring clicks on other links within the newsletters.

Measuring subsequent activity once a user had shared a link with their social networks proved more challenging. But for articles shared to subscribers' Twitter accounts, the team used its own URL shortening system, which allowed them to track how many times

a day their articles were accessed from links that had been posted to the microblogging platform.

(The team is currently working on additional technology to help them monitor what happens with a link that's been shared with a subscriber's Facebook or LinkedIn network.)

They also measured in-bound traffic from their three featured social networks to help gauge the impact of shared articles.

Step #6. Use sharing data to provide additional content

Social media sharing also became another source of content for newsletter subscribers.

Clicks on social media share buttons became another element that factored in to a "Most Clicked" story feature. The editors of each newsletter compile a list of most-clicked stories – typically on a weekly basis – which are then highlighted on each newsletter's homepage.

Editors also encouraged readers to provide feedback on specific stories, or to provide suggestions on articles that could be included in future newsletters or the company's SmartBlog on Social Media.

RESULTS

Although the program is still in the early stages, the team is excited by the impact they've seen so far.

"It shows innovation, and it shows relevance, because this is what everyone is talking about," says Birgfeld. "For the most part, it's about visibility and showing the value of your publications, because this is the way people are sharing information with each other."

Overall inbound traffic from their featured social networks increased dramatically. The team compared statistics from the month before launching social sharing to the month after adding the feature and found:
- Visits from Twitter increased 1,680%
- Visits from LinkedIn increased 2,070%
- Visits from Facebook increased 1,351%

Overall subscriber interaction with newsletter articles also jumped the month after adding social sharing buttons. Users clicking any of the share buttons (Email, LinkedIn, Facebook or Twitter) increased about 25% when social networks were included, compared to clicks to forward an article via email only.

85%-90% of the team's newsletters now include social sharing buttons.

The next step for the team is measuring the conversions (in the form of new subscribers) generated from articles shared to social networks. The SmartBrief on Social Media newsletter attracted more than 17,000 subscribers in five months, with no additional marketing investment. Birgfeld says that much of that growth came from word-of-mouth and visibility within social networking sites through features such as content sharing and the social media blog.

One important task to encourage more conversions for all newsletter titles will be redesigning the article summary pages, which serve as the landing page for links shared to social media sites. Those pages are currently designed for existing newsletter subscribers, and Birgfeld envisions adding content that tells new visitors more about the story summaries and which newsletters they came from.

"I don't think marketers have a choice any more," says Birgfeld. "This is the way people are sharing information now, and it's important to adjust to where your readers are."

CREATIVE SAMPLES

Sample SmartBrief on Social Media, showing share buttons

Email note introducing the feature to subscribers of a co-branded newsletter

GMA SmartBrief

GMA SmartBrief is going social.

Notice something different today? Readers like you have been asking us for easier ways to share our content with your social networks, and voila! At the end of each news summary, social-media share buttons now enable the sharing of interesting stories from GMA SmartBrief via your Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn networks.

SmartBrief developed and tested these buttons in SmartBrief on Social Media, the daily digest of social-media news for marketers, and now we're bringing them to you.

We invite you to try them out on your favorite social network and let us know what you think. If there are other ways we can innovate to meet your needs as technology evolves, say the word.

Best regards,
The GMA SmartBrief Team

Don't be the Next Casualty!

April 22, 2009   News for the food, beverage and consumer packaged goods indus

GMA SmartBrief

GMA
The Association of Food, Beverage
and Consumer Products Companies

Sign up for this newsletter | GO Read more at **SmartBrief.com**   Search past news

Company Watch   Sponsored by: **Cargill**

100-calorie Miller Chill ready for launch

MillerCoors is revamping its lime-flavored Miller Chill, shaving 10 calories and changing the packaging. The 110-calorie Miller Chill did well when it was first introduced in 2007, but sales dropped when the weather cooled. Brandweek (4/21) , American City Business Journals/Milwaukee (4/20) Share: [in] [f] [t] [E-MAIL] [RELATED STORIES]

Kozy Shack rolls out Hispanic desserts
Flan and arroz con leche are among the desserts in Kozy Shack's new Kozy Shack la Tradicional line. The Latin-themed, ready-to-eat desserts will be backed by radio and online ads, as well as events and sampling in retail venues. Advertising Age (4/21) Share: [in] [f] [t] [E-MAIL]
[RELATED STORIES]

Frito-Lay offering more snack per pack

Video Ebook Revives Whitepaper:
7 Steps to Repurpose Content and Attract 8x More Readers

SUMMARY: The concept of turning an existing whitepaper into a video eBook was one of the most intriguing examples of content repurposing mentioned at MarketingSherpa's recent B2B Marketing Summits. Based on positive audience response, we developed a detailed case study about the campaign.

See how a networking communications company turned a technical whitepaper into a multimedia eBook that featured short video interviews with company experts alongside links to a host of related downloads. The eBook attracted eight times as many readers as the original whitepaper – including hard-to-reach C-level executives.

CHALLENGE

Ben Bacon, Segment Marketing Manager, Level 3 Communications, wasn't satisfied with the content his team used to market the company's Ethernet technology and services.

Their primary marketing asset was a technical whitepaper that offered great details on industry trends and the company's capabilities, but – which Bacon admits – was a "pretty dry read." They also had a collection of miscellaneous collateral such as a network map, industry-specific brochures and technical specification documents that, on their own, were not "terribly compelling," says Bacon.

"We felt like we had a story to tell, but the question was how to tell that story using a lot of this information we already had."

The team wanted to repurpose these content assets in a format that made the information more accessible for prospects. At the same time, they needed to provide information that would appeal to a range of key personnel in their target companies, from CIOs all the way to network engineers.

CAMPAIGN

The team combined these disparate pieces of content into a new type of collateral: A video eBook that featured highlights from the technical whitepaper alongside short video clips of company experts providing commentary and customer examples on the subject matter.

By breaking the content into eight chapters, they also created opportunities to include links to supporting content, such as network maps, technical specifications and industry-specific marketing collateral.

They made the video eBook the central offer of several marketing efforts, including a direct mail outreach and email campaigns.

Here are the seven steps they took to create the piece and use it to generate leads:

Step #1. Select whitepaper to repurpose

The team wanted to base the video eBook on a high-value asset from their content library. They selected a technical whitepaper, written in partnership with a third-party industry analyst group, Heavy Reading, which provided two major marketing benefits:

- It provided an overview of the use of Ethernet technology by enterprise businesses.
- It featured Level 3 as the analyst firm's "Ethernet service provider of the year," offering highlights of the company's technical capabilities and flexible service offerings.

Step #2. Edit whitepaper into sections for company video commentary

To repurpose the Heavy Reading whitepaper as a video eBook, the team divided content into several chapters. The chapter format offered opportunities to include video commentary and links to additional relevant resources.

They looked for natural breaks in the whitepaper content and ways to drill down from broad, industry trends to company capabilities and detailed analyses of specific customer needs. The result was three main sections and sub-chapters.

Ethernet services market drivers and trends:
- Emergence of business class Ethernet
- Enterprises embrace Ethernet but want rich features
- Heavy Reading's 2007 user survey results
- Taking Ethernet service types to new levels

Level 3 Communications Ethernet profile:
- Level 3's strengths in Ethernet services
- Level 3's portfolio of Ethernet services

Addressing requirements of key industry verticals:
- Financial services
- Health care

Step #3. Tap company subject matter experts to provide commentary

The team wanted the video portions of their eBook to highlight the expertise of the company's key personnel.

"We have a lot of really smart people who are really in tune with how the Internet and networking works," says Bacon. "One of the things we struggle with in marketing department is how to take these smart people and showcase them."

They looked for good candidates to sit down for video interviews related to sections of the eBook. These subjects would have deep understanding of the company's technology and services, along with experience from the field and direct knowledge of customer applications.

They chose four executives in different product management roles:
- Paul Savill, VP, Long-Haul Transport
- Russell Shriver, VP, Data Services
- Chris O'Toole, Sr. Director, Financial Services Segment Management
- Carolyn Reuss, Director, Healthcare Segment Management

Step #4. Film Q&A sessions with subject matter experts

The team planned a filming session with their in-house video production department. One week prior to that appointment, they sent each subject matter expert a list of questions they planned to ask them on camera. They also provided bullet points of key information they wanted experts to cover in their answers.

The document gave the participants time to prepare notes on their topic areas. However, Bacon's team encouraged participants not to read from prepared notes, but to answer questions in a natural, conversational style.

They set aside one day to film the four participants discussing their areas of expertise. For example:

Paul Savill spoke on broad industry trends, to be paired with the chapters:
- The emergence of business class Ethernet
- Taking Ethernet service types to new levels

Russell Shriver spoke on the company's specific network capabilities, Ethernet experience and service offerings, to be paired with the chapters:
- Level 3's strengths in Ethernet services
- Level 3's portfolio of Ethernet services

Chris O'Toole provided insight and customer examples from the financial services sector, to be paired with the chapter:
- Addressing the requirements of financial services

Carolyn Reuss described the role of Ethernet in the health care sector and shared customer examples, to be paired with the chapter:
- Addressing the requirements of health care

The interviews took between 15 and 30 minutes to complete. Then, the in-house video staff edited out the moderator's questions and assembled short two- to three-minute clips that focused on the most compelling information from each session.

Step #5. Combine text and video into eBook platform

The team built the video eBook in Flash. Their goal was to break the content into easy-to-consume sections and provide intuitive navigation that let prospects find the sections that were most interesting to them.

The design included Level 3's logo and brand colors along the top of the eBook screen. Heavy Reading's logo was included on the bottom of the screen.

The eBook used a two-page layout. Text was placed on the left page and video on the right. Arrows on the edge of each page let users flip forward or backward through the material.

The table of contents page included clickable chapter titles that took visitors directly to the corresponding section of the whitepaper.

Step #6. Include links to related content

In certain sections, the team included links to existing, ancillary collateral that viewers could download for more information related to that chapter.

The chapter on Level 3's strengths in Ethernet services included links to:
- Level 3's network map
- A timeline of Level 3's achievements in Ethernet technology

The chapter on Level 3's portfolio of Ethernet services included a link to the company's service technical specifications.

The chapters on addressing the requirements of financial services and health care included links to overviews of the company's expertise in those industries.

Step #7. Use video eBook in multichannel promotions

The team made the video eBook a central offer in several lead generation campaigns. For example:

They developed industry-specific direct mail campaigns for the financial services and

health care sectors. The packages directed recipients to a microsite that featured the video eBook.

They also developed geo-targeted email campaigns to reach prospect companies close to their networks. The messages included links to a landing page that featured the video eBook.

RESULTS

The video eBook helped to breathe new life into the team's existing content:
- The eBook attracted eight times as many readers as the downloadable whitepaper
- 65% of all microsite visitors viewed the video eBook
- The average viewer spent eight minutes interacting with the video eBook
- Response to the direct mail promotion exceeded forecasts by 80%

The team was particularly pleased with the direct mail promotion, which was aimed at C-level executives and put what otherwise would have been dry, technical information in front of key decision makers.

"No CIO is going to take the time to read an 18-page whitepaper," says Bacon.

The success of this foray into using video resulted in a new focus for the team's content development efforts. Not only do they continue to offer the video eBook from their homepage, they've since created additional video content, such as:
- Video case studies
- Video brochures

"We started investing [many] more resources in creating videos where we can tell our story," says Bacon. "It really changed the way we think about ourselves."

CREATIVE SAMPLES

Video eBook Table of Contents page

Sample chapter screenshot with Paul Savill video

Sample chapter screenshot with Carolyn Reuss video

Video eBook thank you page

Direct mail package to Financial Services sector

Lead-Gen Revamp with Automation and Scoring: 7 Steps to 190% Increase in Sales Conversions

SUMMARY: Segmentation, lead scoring and automated nurturing campaigns are crucial elements of a sophisticated B2B marketing organization. The benefits compound when all the parts come together in a fine-tuned lead generation machine.

See how a software company combined these tactics (and more) to develop robust prospect profiles, segment their database and deliver the most relevant information to prospects. Through better lead qualification, they've seen their sales conversion rates jump 190%.

CHALLENGE

Nick Halsey, VP Marketing, Jaspersoft, says his smaller software company has the house database of a much larger business. Visitors have downloaded 10 million copies of the company's open-source business intelligence software, and there are 105,000 developers registered on the company's community site.

The company also has more than 11,000 paying customers who have bought a professional edition and support services. And then there are prospects who fall somewhere in between – currently using an open-source version, but may transition to a paid platform at a later date.

"It's a real challenge," says Halsey. "We need to communicate effectively to all those segments, and we need to be respectful of their desire to receive different categories of information based on different user profiles."

Open-source developers don't want to receive sales promotions. But the team couldn't ignore commercial prospects. They needed a better way to segment their database, and automate as much of their marketing communications as possible to deliver the most relevant information.

CAMPAIGN

Halsey and his team undertook a major overhaul of their marketing strategy that involved new technology and processes. The goal was to create a powerful combination of:
- Customer profiling
- Database segmentation
- Automated/triggered campaigns
- Outbound promotions
- Lead scoring

Here are seven steps the team took to develop their new approach:

Step #1. Merge databases and systems into a unified platform

A lack of integration between existing marketing, analytics and communications platforms hampered the team's ability to segment, personalize and automate marketing processes.

They were using:
- CRM software to deliver commercial leads to the sales team
- A separate database for their open-source developer community site
- An email tool to provide bulk email messaging about events and new products
- Web analytics to track visitor behavior

Before they could change their marketing communications strategy, they needed a new infrastructure plan:

- First, they implemented a new marketing automation platform.
- Second, they integrated their CRM and web analytics systems with their marketing automation platform.
- Third, they automated much of their ecommerce system and tied it directly to their accounting platform and marketing database.
- Finally, they upgraded their online community platform.

The result of this work was a single database that tracked and recorded all key customer, prospect and community activity.

Step #2. Segment database according to profile and activity

Working from that unified database, the team began to segment each contact based on their activities and demographic profile.

Halsey describes a two-phase segmentation process:
- Coarse grain
- Fine grain

Coarse grain segmentation defined in broad terms whether a contact was a commercial prospect or an open-source community member. For example, users who registered on the community site were considered non-commercial prospects until further actions or demographic information indicated otherwise.

The team also let visitors self-segment by specifying what type of application they were interested in. Website visitors were invited to click on three product segments:

- Standalone BI
- Embedded BI
- SaaS BI

Those segments helped the team decide what type of information was most relevant to a contact in their database. For example, a Standalone BI customer might be more interested in data warehousing information, while an Embedded BI customer might be more interested in how to integrate dashboards into a CRM or ERP solution.

Fine grain segmentation occurred as contacts engaged in different activities on the website or responded to marketing campaigns. The team tracked each action and looked for behavioral patterns that placed contacts into a demographic segment.

For example:

- A contact who downloaded a technical whitepaper might be tagged as a developer
- A contact who downloaded a whitepaper on the benefits of building a BI system vs. buying one might be tagged as an economic buyer
- Further actions could specify contacts' roles within organizations, such as IT architect or business manager (see section on registration forms, below, for more information on gathering profile information)

"Over time, we get a pretty good matrix of information about each contact," says Halsey.

Step #3. Customize outbound communications for contacts' preferences

The team applied its segmentation strategy to a series of outbound email communications.

They sent four editions of their quarterly newsletter, "The Jasper Source," based on a prospect's profile:

- Customer
- Community member
- Corporate Europe Edition
- Corporate North America Edition

They also sent a monthly events email that promoted:

- Webinars
- Meet-ups
- Conference schedules

They sent a new products email roughly three times a year.

Registered users could manage their email preferences through an online subscription management center.

Step #4. Create automated drip campaigns for specific actions

The team also created automated drip marketing campaigns that were triggered by prospect actions.

For example, the team created an automated email campaign for users who downloaded a 30-day trial version of the company's professional software edition:

The automated campaign featured five scheduled emails over the course of the 30-day period, which were designed to help prospects install and use their software.

Messages included:
- A thank-you/welcome email
- Links to tools that helped them use the software
- Links to online documentation and online forums to help answer questions
- A final email asking if the prospect would like to speak with a sales representative about the professional edition

Recipients who clicked on a link or otherwise took action related to one of the five automated messages were sent into automated sub-campaigns that built on their previous activity. There were roughly 40 paths email subscribers could take based on their response to a given message.

The team fast-tracked leads to the sales team if prospects took an action that indicated a readiness to buy. For example, a prospect in the 30-day trial campaign who purchased documentation or signed up for a training course might be immediately forwarded to a sales rep.

Step #5. Use dynamic registration forms to develop prospect profiles

Prior to implementing their new strategy, the team was using the same registration form for nearly every piece of content a prospect downloaded. But new technology allowed them to use a dynamic registration form system that asked prospects for different information depending on the action they were taking, or the information already contained in the database.

Entry-level actions, such as joining the online community, only required users to submit a name and email address.

Subsequent actions by community members triggered additional questions, such as:
- State or country
- Company name

- Business role information – i.e., developer, project lead or executive

Downloading high-value assets, such as the 30-day trial version of the professional edition, required more detailed information, such as:
- Company size
- Status of BI initiative

"We build out our knowledge base around prospects over time, based on specific behavior," says Halsey. "Now we know what you're consuming, your profile, your sequence and timing."

Step #6. Implement lead scoring

The ability to track and record a host of online activities, demographic information and email response rates in one database gave the team a chance to implement lead scoring. The scores were especially helpful in identifying commercial prospects emerging from their developer community.

"We have hundreds of thousands of names of people just simmering in the background," says Halsey. "Scoring helps to make you aware when their behavior shows signs of life."

For example, a prospect may have entered the database by downloading the open-source edition of the software. These names were considered "community" members, and assigned a low score (Halsey declined to share specific scores for actions, calling those his "secret sauce"). But those leads were not placed into a commercial marketing or sales funnel.

Over time, the database would record other activities, such as downloading a whitepaper, attending a webinar, or purchasing advanced documentation. Each of those actions would receive a score that reflected the likelihood of becoming a commercial lead.

Only when a prospect's score reached a set level would the name be forwarded to a sales representative for follow up.

Step #7. Route leads to the appropriate sales person

The team used a combination of factors to control the flow of leads to the sales team:
- Lead scoring
- Response to automated drip campaigns
- Clear indications of sales-readiness, such as calling or emailing to speak with a sales representative

When a prospect hit one of those thresholds, the team used the demographic information in their database to route the lead to the right salesperson, based on factors such as:

- Location
- Company size
- Type of customer (OEM or direct install)

Members of the sales team were also free to examine names in the marketing database for likely prospects, such as companies in their territory, or new contacts at companies that are already using the team's software in another division.

RESULTS

"Marketing automation is a must-have for us, it's not a 'nice-to-have,'" says Halsey.

Since implementing the new strategy, the team has achieved a 190% increase in conversion rate from qualified leads to closed sales.

Prospects who asked to be contacted by a sales rep represent the team's highest close rate.

"What we're able to do with marketing automation is manage people so far through the funnel, fulfilling product information and letting them evaluate their own needs, that they say, 'Yes, please call me with pricing information,' or 'I have a specific question about different versions of your software.'"

Prospects who enter the automated drip campaign for the professional evaluation 30-day trial represent the team's second-highest close rate.

Prospects who have purchased something from the ecommerce store, such as advanced documentation, represent the team's third-highest close rate.

The key for Halsey and his team is being able to monitor all those activities and deliver the best leads to their sales representatives.

"We've got this huge funnel. Plenty of people know us and use our software," he says. "My challenge is not to increase the number of leads, but to get improved conversion rates throughout the funnel."

CREATIVE SAMPLES

Sample "The Jasper Source" newsletter

Whitepaper registration form

Webinar registration form (with additional required fields)

Sample email from the 30-day trial edition drip campaign

Thanks For Downloading
The Jaspersoft BI Suite Pro 30 Day Eval

JASPERSOFT

Download Now!

Dear zhigang xu

Thank you for downloading the Jaspersoft BI Suite Professional 30 Day Evaluation. There's plenty to see and try, but (naturally) you're busy — so, for the next thirty days, we'll be send you occasional tips and resources to make the process efficient, informative and rewarding.

First up: check out the **Evaluation FAQ**. It's short, but packed with answers and ideas that speed the evaluation process and help you learn more with less effort. Topics include:

· How to run JasperReports against Oracle and other databases
· Where to find resources on ad hoc reporting, Web services integration and more
· Differences between JasperServer Community and Professional versions
· How to access APIs and supporting documentation

Another great resource to check out is the recently published report from leading industry analyst firm IDC, **Improving Organizational Decision-Making Through Pervasive Business Intelligence: The Five Key Factors That Lead to Business Intelligence Diffusion** and the accompanying on-demand webinar, hosted by Dan Vesset, Vice President of Business Analytics at IDC. In this white paper and **webinar**, you'll learn:

· **How the deployment of Pervasive BI can enable companies** to automate, reinforce, or (when needed) dramatically change the way decisions are made in an organization
· **Why five key factors** — training, design quality, performance management methodologies, non-executive involvement, and data governance — are critical to success
· **Six indicators worth monitoring** to track your organization's progress toward Pervasive BI

You'll also see and hear how these best practices were successfully implemented at telecom industry leader Revol Wireless. George Mehok, CIO of Revol Wireless will discuss how his team was able to significantly — and measurably — improve business performance in sales, marketing and operations units, while earning positive end-user feedback at every level of the enterprise

There's a lot more, and you can quickly find what you want and begin putting the Jaspersoft BI Suite Professional through its paces. So take a look, and ... we'll be back soon with more help. Safe journey!

Best regards,
The Jaspersoft Team

What Do Our Customers Think?

"Besides providing better decision-support, the new BI solution has helped reduce development and data management costs, and has provided the unexpected benefit of higher morale among employees previously engaged in highly repetitive report creation process."

- George Mehok, CIO of Revol Wireless

Download Now!

Lead Gen Overhaul:
4 Strategies to Boost Response Rates, Reduce Cost-per-Lead

SUMMARY: This week at our B2B Marketing Summit in Boston, Brian Carroll, CEO, InTouch, gave a tutorial on lead nurturing. In his presentation, he shared a creative sample from this past Sherpa case study as an example of a well-written lead nurturing email. So, we thought we'd share the entire case study again as inspiration for marketers working on their own nurturing programs.

Check out how a software company boosted campaign response rate from 0.5% to 17.5%. You'll see how their segmented, three-touch nurturing response program delivered more than double the open rate of traditional, multi-touch campaigns to the entire house...

CHALLENGE

Like most marketers, Dave Laverty, VP Marketing, IBM Cognos, was experiencing changes in the B2B lead-generation landscape. Factors, such as lengthening sales cycles and expanding buying committees, were making traditional tactics less effective at generating demand for the company's business-intelligence software.

Rented email lists weren't performing as well as they once did. The company's house email list was being bombarded with offers, and as a result, open and clickthrough rates were dropping. Laverty and his team needed to work differently.

"A couple years ago, we took on an initiative we called Marketing 2.0," says Laverty. "It was a challenge I gave to our Web team to think about how we reach, engage and deliver more information to prospects that could be out there that we hadn't touched yet."

CAMPAIGN

The team's Marketing 2.0 initiative examined their marketing strategy in the context of three major goals:
1. Presenting the company as a thought-leader
2. Generating demand
3. Supporting and enabling the sales team

They saw a lead-nurturing strategy as the common thread connecting those three goals, and developed a new process to shape outreach efforts, engage prospects, and qualify them for the sales team.

Here are four key strategies they used to refine their lead-nurturing process:

Strategy #1. Revamp website with additional offers

Laverty and his team first examined how well their website functioned as an entry point into the lead-nurturing funnel.

"We looked at [our website] as a demand-generating tool," says Laverty. "We have a lot of people passing by our window, so to speak. What are we doing to encourage those people to come in, browse and engage with us?"

With engagement in mind, the team overhauled its website to provide additional offers and features for prospects. Their goal was to appeal to a wide range of prospects and to determine which types of offers or content strategies created the most interest.

The result was a site that included:

Varying types of content, such as:
- Whitepapers
- Online demos
- Events
- Online communities

Information organized by product line or business task, such as:
- Performance management
- Budgeting and forecasting
- Measurement and reporting
- Scorecarding

Information organized by industry, such as:
- Finance
- Government
- Retail
- Manufacturing
- Health care

Prospects who wanted to download content or register for events were required to fill out a Web form, which helped establish a prospect profile.

Key fields included:
- Name
- Company
- Industry
- Department
- Job title

Strategy #2. Create lead-nurturing program based on prospect profile

The website served as the entry point for the team's new lead-nurturing program, which sent additional relevant offers based on the prospect's profile and previous activity.

Information from registration forms was sent back to the team's central data warehouse. There, the data was analyzed for variables, such as:
- New or returning prospect?
- Frequency of visits?
- Additional contact within company?
- Previous actions taken?

Each prospect then received an initial follow-up response that was relevant to the offer to which they had responded. For example, if a prospect viewed an online demo on reporting, they would receive a follow-up offer for a reporting whitepaper.

Two more follow-up emails pointed prospects to additional relevant content, and invited prospects to contact a member of the sales team, or sign up for an email newsletter.

The follow-up touches were automated to deliver a flow of offers based on three major categories:
- Key marketing program, such as promotions around an annual event, a product launch, or a campaign aimed at prospects using SAP or other software
- Key industry, such as retail or banking
- Job title targets, such as IT or line-of-business managers

Within each of those three primary categories, the team created a custom sequence of messages that were further organized according to three major product focus areas:
- Reporting
- Scorecarding
- Planning

The result of that segmentation strategy was 1,460 unique lead nurturing paths for prospects to enter.

Strategy #3. Conduct statistical analysis of marketing interactions

To further refine their lead nurturing program, the team examined historical data for correlations among variables in the marketing cycle and their outcomes.

Working off a database of more than 200,000 marketing interactions, the team conducted a statistical analysis to help them prioritize their marketing tactics and investments.

Trends uncovered during this analysis included:

- Online demos had the highest rate of opportunity creation.
- Face-to-face events had the largest impact on increasing deal size and close rate.
- The conversion rate from lead-to-opportunity virtually died ten days after the prospect first engaged with an offer or piece of content.

"We were finally getting some definitive answers to those questions about response rate and types of offer to provide," says Laverty. "We saw that the faster we can get someone in front of an online demo, [it generates] the highest success rate for opportunity creation."

Strategy #4. Test response time for three-touch nurturing program

Statistical analysis gave the team a new hypothesis to test with their automated three-touch email protocol.

Historical data indicated higher lead-to-opportunity conversion rates when prospects had repeated interactions with the company within 24 hours of registration. So, the team decided to condense the time between its automated response emails.

The tested the following nurturing schedules:
- First response email – two days vs. four hours after registration
- Second response email – 10 days vs. 24 hours later
- Third response email – 20 days vs. 10 days later

RESULTS

The team's adoption and refinement of its lead-nurturing strategy has yielded dramatic results.

Thanks to the new website, roughly 11% of website visitors now complete a registration form. That compares to an average industry capture rate of 3%.

The team compared results from its segmented, three-touch nurturing emails to those of traditional multi-touch campaigns to the entire house list. The improvement was remarkable:
- Open rates increased from 13.2% to 33.3%
- CTR increased from 0.09% to 15.5%
- Response rate increased from 0.05% to 17.5%
- The team has reduced its cost-per-lead 30%-40%

Better alignment between sales and marketing goals means that Laverty's team generates 30% of the company's pipeline per quarter.

"We've been able to hold our investments relatively flat, as well as increase our productivity," says Laverty. "I would say that's a pretty big contributor to marketing

having a seat at the table."

Laverty notes that the changes reflect an ongoing process that's not yet complete. Their approach requires a series of smaller steps and tests, which can then be rolled out across the enterprise.

For example, the team adopted shortened response times for their three-touch nurturing program after testing it against their standard schedule.

The four-hour/24-hour/10-day schedule achieved:
- 100% increase in open rate, compared to the company average
- 1,600% increase in CTR, compared to the company average

"It's a combination of all these things – having the data in place, the systems in place to execute, and then staying on top of the data – that's turning our marketing efforts into a science."

CREATIVE SAMPLES

Sample first response email, sent four hours after registration

IBM | Cognos Software

FirstName,

We'd like to thank you for your interest in reporting. I trust you found the information useful in helping you learn about the benefits and value of reporting when delivered through a simple and proven business intelligence (BI) platform like IBM Cognos 8.

To get a clear idea of what that "complete" solution should look like, and how IBM Cognos delivers it, I think you'll find it interesting to also download and read "**The Full Promise of Business Intelligence**," an IBM Cognos white paper.

This white paper is a great way to extend and share what you've begun to learn about IBM Cognos 8 BI. I encourage you to download and read "**The Full Promise of BI**" at your first opportunity.

Thanks again for your interest in IBM Cognos solutions.

Regards,

Dean Harrison
Marketing Manager

P.S. If you'd like more information or want to ask a question, **please click here to get in touch with us**. Or, you can call us now at **1-866-601-1934**.

Information Management

Cognos.
software

Sample second response email, sent 24 hours after registration

IBM. | Cognos Software

FirstName,

The journey to performance management begins with a simple click. Recently, you began that journey on our Web site when learning about reporting capabilities.

With that in mind, I invite you to download and review "**The Right Architecture for BI: The Foundation for Effective Enterprise BI**", an IBM Cognos white paper.

This information is an excellent complement to what you've begun to learn about IBM Cognos 8 BI, and will be useful for discussions of BI with your users. I encourage you to download and review "**The Right Architecture for BI: The Foundation for Effective Enterprise BI**", at your first opportunity.

Thanks again for your interest in IBM Cognos solutions.

Regards,

Dean Harrison
Marketing Manager

P.S. If you'd like more information or want to ask a question, **please click here to get in touch with us**. Or, you can call us now at **1-866-601-1934**.

Information Management

Cognos.
software

Sample third response email, sent 10 days after registration

IBM | Cognos Software

FirstName,

We'd like to thank you for your interest in IBM Cognos solutions.

Did you find everything you were looking for? If you'd like more information or want to ask a question, **please go here to get in touch with us**. Or, you can call us now at **1-866-601-1934**.

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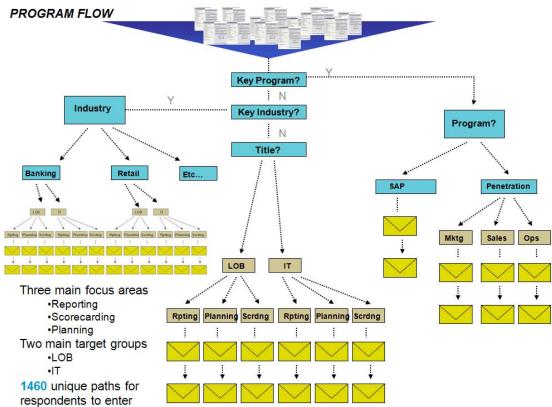
Regards,

Dean Harrison
Marketing Manager

Information Management

Cognos.
software

Lead Nurturing Program Flow Chart

Combine SEO and Social Media to Generate Web Leads: 5 Steps

SUMMARY: Your prospects are using search and social media to evaluate potential vendors. Are you doing enough in those channels to demonstrate your expertise?

See how the marketing team at an accounting and consulting firm shook up their staid marketing tactics and adopted a new, online thought-leadership strategy. Besides revamping their website for SEO and lead generation, the enlisted their firm's partners as subject matter experts to create new blogs and participate in social networking groups.

CHALLENGE

Elizabeth Hailer, VP Client Development and Marketing, Caturano and Company, says that for most of her 25-year career, clients did not choose an accounting or consulting firm by going on a website. But prospects' habits are changing. More and more, they are using search, social media, blogs, and corporate websites and find and assess professional services firms.

The problem was that Hailer and her team were still relying on traditional marketing tactics, such as print advertising and direct mail. Those tactics were very expensive, hard to measure, and becoming less effective.

"Traditional marketing has changed, period," says Hailer. "Anyone doesn't understand that or believe it shouldn't be in marketing."

The team needed to shake up their marketing strategy. They realized that online outreach and a revamped website were needed to generate new leads – and gain additional business from existing clients.

CAMPAIGN

Hailer and her team focused on their website as a new hub for outbound and inbound marketing based on thought-leadership content. Then, they looked to SEO and social media as channels to reach prospects and customers, engage them in conversations, and bring them back to the firm's site.

Here are five steps they took to raise their profile and start generating web leads:

Step #1. Redesign website to capture leads

The team needed a complete website overhaul before making a push into online marketing channels. Their existing website read like a brochure, Hailer says, and offered little customized content to appeal to specific prospects. Worse, it had no online lead

capture mechanism.

The team implemented a new content management system. Then, they developed content that demonstrated their expertise in specific accounting and consulting services and provided value to customers and prospects.

New content included:
- An article assessing the impact of a new state tax incentive program for life sciences companies
- An article outlining tips on lowering estate tax for its wealth management practice

They also added more ways to contact the firm's partners, adding the appropriate partner's name, phone number and a request for information link on pages dedicated to specific services or industry focus areas.

They added lead generation capabilities by creating online tools that required prospects to register and provide information about their needs.

For example, they added a Rapid Assessment tool for their management and IT consulting divisions, which offered prospects a high-level analysis of their current operations and suggested areas for potential improvement.

Step #2. Use SEO to attract more visitors

Prior to the redesign, the company's website rarely landed on the first page of search engine results for their top keywords. So as the team developed new content and revamped their site architecture, they optimized those pages for roughly 25 key terms, including:
- Boston tax firms
- Boston CPA firms
- Management consulting Boston
- IT outsourcing Boston

They made sure those keywords were represented in the website's content, page titles, metatags, and other elements.

They also increased the number of links pointing back to the firm's website. The firm's professional alliances provided dozens of linking opportunities:

The team created a new "Sponsorships and Affiliations" page that linked to the websites of major partners and organizations the firm sponsored, including:
- The Association for Corporate Growth, Boston
- The Family Business Association
- The Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce
- The Smaller Business Association of New England

- The Massachusetts Society of Certified Public Accountants
- The American Institute of Certified Public Accountants

They asked each sponsored organization or partner to also put a link to the firm's site on their own Web pages.

Step #3. Create thought-leadership blogs

The team bolstered the firm's online presence by adding several new blogs on topics related to their key service areas. Their goal was to supplement the broad-based information about firm's capabilities with in-depth, highly targeted content that presented firm personnel as thought-leaders in specific areas.

"Auditing, accounting, and tax are so general and broad it's hard to blog about them" says Hailer, "So we assigned content leaders around discreet service areas."

For example:

- Jeff Korzenic, Chief Investment Officer, created the "Inefficient Frontiers" blog to discuss topics related to "less-than-efficient markets" and dealing with risk in the investment world.

- Jack Notarangelo, Director, Information Management, created an application engineering blog to discuss software development techniques related to project management, estimation, resourcing, and communication.

- Mauro Cardarelli, Director, Portals and Collaboration, created a blog focused on using Microsoft technologies for collaboration and Business Intelligence.

Each blogger was free to cover their niche content area in ways they deemed appropriate. Typical posts included:
- Industry trend and news analysis
- Links to contributed articles and other press mentions on external sites
- Opinion pieces on topics of interest to the audience
- Advice and how-to on specific tasks
- Links to relevant company whitepapers and webinars

Step #4. Participate in social networks

Next, the team looked for social networks where CFOs congregated. They wanted to join those online conversations and develop new channels to promote articles, webinars, whitepapers or other relevant content.

The firm's existing clients were an invaluable resource for finding the right social networks to join. They asked clients where they spent time online, and looked for their

clients' profiles on social networking sites.

LinkedIn, the business networking site, proved to be one of the most popular sites with the team's clients and prospects. They looked for relevant discussion groups to join, including:
- The Chief Financial Officer Network
- CxO Community

They also created their own groups, such as:
- New England CFOs

The team encouraged partners with expertise in specific practice areas to join relevant groups. The goal was to establish individuals as thought-leaders in the industry, while also demonstrating the firm's expertise with certain industries or service areas.

For example:
- Jim Cashin, Partner, Consulting Practice, joined groups such as Worldwide Management Consultants
- Bill Krakunas, VP Technology, joined groups such as Boston's Future Leaders (Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce)

Following best-practices in social media engagement, participants in LinkedIn Groups did not simply post information about the firm's events and resources. Instead, they participated in online discussions as community members and provided relevant answers and opinions that weren't self-promotional.

However, they looked for opportunities to share notices about upcoming events or company content that were relevant to ongoing discussions.

Step #5. Monitor social media conversations and Web traffic

The team began using monitoring tools to help them broadly track conversations happening in social media channels and on other websites.

They set up a monitoring service that sent real-time alerts related to specific phrases or conversations of interest, such as:
- Key services the firm offers
- Competitors' names
- Problems or questions about professional services providers

Once a team member received an alert, they examined the context to see if there was a way to join the conversation, or steer the original commenter toward a content offer. For example, if the team received a Twitter conversation about how to choose an IT consulting company, they might send a link to their IT management Rapid Assessment.

The team also used their web analytics tool to assess whether their social media efforts and SEO were driving prospects back to the company website to engage with content.

They monitored standard metrics, including:
- Unique visitors
- Page views per visit
- Referring sites
- Keyword performance

RESULTS

The new strategy has raised the firm's profile and is capturing the attention of prospects using the Web to seek out professional services firms. Their once-static website that generated no leads is now generating 10-15 leads a month and already resulted in some closed sales – especially for their consulting division.

"We have more than covered our investment," says Hailer. "More important to me, we keep cranking up that investment so everyone wins."

Web visitors have increased 68% since adopting the new strategy.

SEO efforts have landed the company on the first page of search results for its 25 targeted keywords
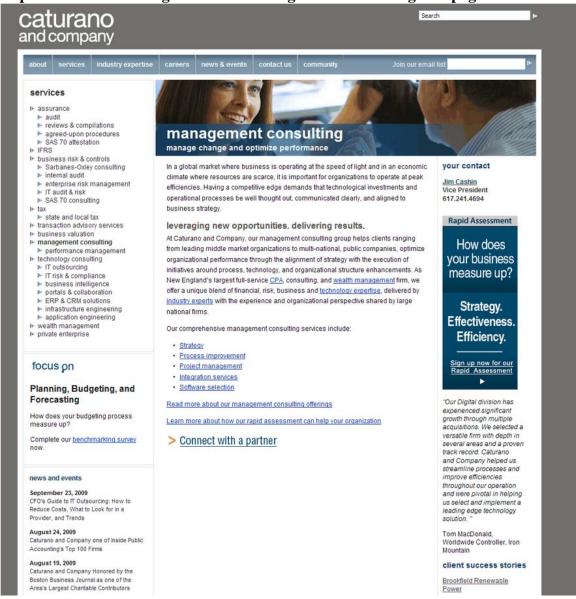
The niche blogging strategy is paying dividends. Jeff Korzenic's "Inefficient Frontiers" blog alone drives roughly 4%- 5% of monthly traffic to the firm's website.

Now, the team is planning to refine their strategy in 2010. They plan to adopt a more rigorous measurement methodology to analyze which points of entry to the site (LinkedIn, blogs, SEO, etc.) are driving the most visits and leads. They also plan to develop additional landing page strategies to customize the experience that visitors have depending on their referring channel.
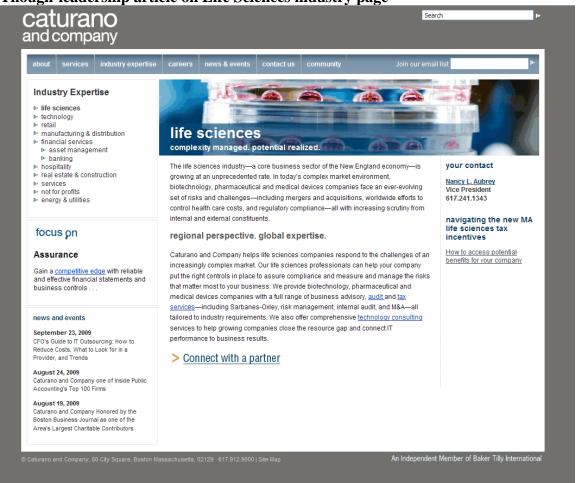
"We want to know very specifically whether a content offer on LinkedIn generates as much response as another channel," says Hailer. "We know the overall strategy is working – leads are coming in at a good enough rate to justify the campaign – but we need more granular detail. We need to know more."
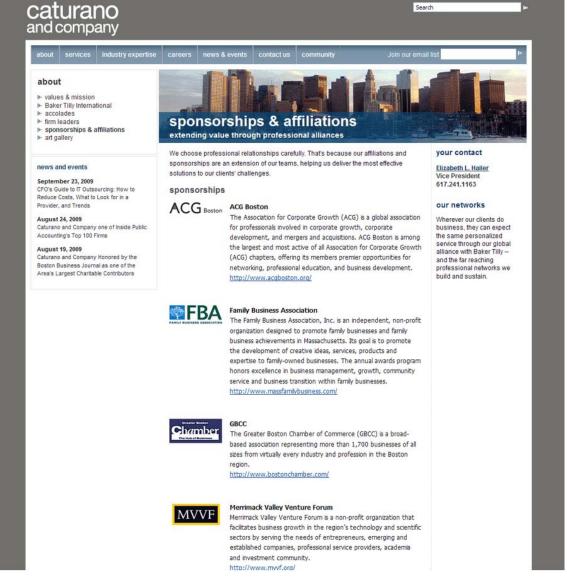
CREATIVE SAMPLES

Rapid Assessment lead-gen offer on Management Consulting web page

Though-leadership article on Life Sciences industry page

Sponsorships and Affiliations page for link-building

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