Questions to Ask When Evaluating Marketing Resource Management Vendors

Vya

When evaluating marketing resource management solutions, there are many aspects to consider beyond comparing features and functionality. It is critical to ask questions regarding services, scalability, ease-of-use and marketing fulfillment. Your ROI could be negated if you end up growing your staff to support the technology or spend more than expected in incremental support costs.

Whether searching for a marketing resource management solution for the first time or looking to replace a solution that has fallen short, here is a checklist of considerations you need to address up front to avoid marketing technology pitfalls:

IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME.
It is important to understand whether an out-of-the-box solution will be acceptable for your purposes or if your solution requires any development work (either in-house or in coordination wtih the vendor's staff). Be sure to clarify time for rollout and internal resource requirements. How many hours will be required of IT? How much time will marketing staff spend mapping out processes? Does the vendor provide resources that share implementation best practices and configure the MRM platform for you?

SOFTWARE ADMINISTRATION.
It's also important to reasonably estimate the amount of internal time required to administer and manage the marketing resource management software (set up and manage user permissions, upload content and data, and run reports) after rollout. This will be dependent on the complexity of the solution and the service orientation of your prospective vendors. What software administration/management services are provided by the vendor? Will you need to dedicate someone as a full-time administration resource or distribute administration responsibilities to a team of employees? If your administrator(s) needs to be certified, what is the cost? Finally, if you are unable to dedicate a full-time resource to administration, will you need to grow your staff?

USER INTERFACE AND TRAINING.
It may be helpful to create a set of criteria to measure user-friendliness of the technology solution. Additionally, you should clarify with your prospective vendors what training will be included with the cost of technology implementation and the costs and timing of any incremental and/or specialized training. Depending on how intuitive the solution is, more training may be needed for knowledge transfer, for instance if there is a long lapse in time between user logins. What complimentary training and support for software updates will be available? If ongoing training is not complimentary, what is the cost?

NUMBER OF USERS.

The number of users on a platform will not be static, and it's important to consider how scalable the solutions you're evaluating will be over time — both from a licensing standpoint and also from the perspective of training and supporting users. Consult with cross-functional leaders in the beginning of your evaluation process and plan early on for what kinds of licenses may be needed in the future. Your users may each require different license permissions and different annual fees may apply (e.g. administrators versus users who can only interact with content). Be sure to clarify with your prospective vendors up front what kinds of user licenses will be needed and budget accordingly.

MARKETING FULFILLMENT.

Marketing resource management systems need to link to fulfillment providers to execute the production of marketing pieces. Do your prospective vendors provide marketing fulfillment services — campaign design, printing and fulfillment, execution and end-to-end production management? What services are provided in coordinating final pre-press review before brand materials go to print to ensure the integrity of printed colors? How will print campaigns be managed end-to-end? If there needs to be a hand-off to a 3rd party, will it be seamless?

ASSET AND CAMPAIGN MANAGEMENT.

Marketing resource management systems provide a robust toolset for managing and standardizing marketing messaging, but the extent to which users capitalize on the full benefits of an MRM system is also contingent on investing time before rollout to upload templates (HTML and print) and prospect lists to the system. What support do your prospective vendors provide during this process?

SUPPORT OPTIONS.

No matter which group owns administration, support beyond initial training and basic support will inevitably be required in the future. Evaluate all vendors against the cost of support options, channels available for support (website, tier 0/self-help, tutorials, email, phone, and chat), and your business support needs. Other important considerations include the location of your vendor's support team (U.S. versus abroad) and how intimately your vendor will know and interact with your account. For example, will you have a dedicated account manager or team for support?

Learn more on how Vya is creating order and simplicity in a space that is filled with complication. Visit **vyasystems.com** or call **+1-800-426-7921.**

Vya
Simplified Marketing Systems