

Marketers demand effective measures

Under intense pressure from senior management to prove the performance of marketing campaigns, b-to-b marketers are demanding more sophisticated measurement services from their agencies and media outlets. They want to see tangible results from their marketing and advertising-online and offline-including leads generated, sales closed and behavioral data (such as where the prospect is in the purchasing cycle).

When it comes to marketing dollars, "My bosses feel I'm just wasting money," said Arthur Vogel, SAP program manager at Unisys Corp., Blue Bell, Pa. "From a marketing perspective, unless an activity or event is generating leads or closing deals, it isn't worth doing."

Vogel said he needs to prove direct results from every marketing activity he engages in. "If I say I'm building brand awareness, they're not interested," he said.

To get the performance data he needs, Vogel has been using TechTarget, an online publisher and marketing services company that delivers advertising to narrowly defined IT audiences, including SAP users, and tracks results in real time. Unisys uses a TechTarget program called TargetROI, a lead guarantee program that was rolled out two years ago. It includes several integrated elements, such as banner ads, e-mail and Webcasts, targeted at users who have opted in to receive information about specific products or services.

At the heart of the program is an offer, such as a white paper download, which is accessed from a landing page. Interested users must answer detailed questions, which then are used to qualify them.

During a recent campaign for its ES 7000 server, one of Unisys' qualifying questions was, "How many concurrent SAP users do you have?" The company was seeking organizations with 500 or more users, which helped target prospects.

"[Advertising] clients can ask questions about where [users] are exactly in the purchase consideration of a technology or service," said Marilou Barsam, director of client services for TechTarget, Needham, Mass. "Then they can figure out exactly who the audience is and what level of interest they have."

Real-time reports

TechTarget analyzes the lead generation data and provides real-time reports to clients, which helps them evaluate the ongoing performance of marketing campaigns and make adjustments if necessary.

"if a white paper on SAP CRM doesn't do so well, we can change it," Vogel said. "Real-time measurement is very important to me. Now I can look at any one of my campaigns or events and see how many deals I actually got.

Molly Hislop, VP-research services at marketing effectiveness research company Dynamic Logic Inc., New York, agreed that marketers are demanding more specific performance data from integrated campaigns.

"The economy is tighter and profit margins tend to be shrinking, particularly in the tech sector," Hislop said. "There is a lot more pressure to show ROI for marketing."

Hislop said two key metrics for bto-b marketers are purchase consideration and purchase recommendation, both of which indicate a propensity to buy a product or service.

To provide this kind of information, Dynamic Logic conducts research, asking survey respondents which brands they are considering buying. It then uses cookies, which are digital tags used during browser sessions, to track Web activity, including what ads users are exposed to.

Other b-to-b marketers say they need to evaluate every level of campaign performance to show ROI on current campaigns and to improve performance in future campaigns.

"The pressure is intense," said Bob Gutermuth, marketing programs director at Dell Computer Corp., Round Rock, Texas.

"If you can't measure it, you can't manage it, and you can't improve it," he said, referring to marketing campaigns. "At Dell, we are fanatical about making sure, as we enter any new direction or program, that we have a solid suite of metrics around that."

Dell uses Tocquigny Advertising, Austin, Texas, to measure its interactive marketing campaign performance. Using a service it developed called Online Metrics Reporting Tool, Tocquigny tracks four specific metrics: Completeness of database (in which key decisionmakers are identified), opt-ins and opt-outs for e-mail, responses and revenue generated.

The results are delivered in real time, which Gutermuth said is critical for marketing efforts.

"It allows people on my team to make decisions on what's happening in the future based on what's happened in the past," he said.

For example, during a campaign last year called "Summer Splash," which targeted the education market with multiple products, Dell sent direct mail to deans and department heads.

"We found out the functions in administrative computing were responding much better to the direct mail piece, so the next mailing we sent out had a much heavier weighting toward administration," Gutermuth said.

He said Tocquigny helps Dell test different messages and creative executions in real time to see how offers and other programs are working, so they can adjust them as necessary.

Behavioral data sought

Beyond actual performance data, marketers are looking for more behavioral data and audience profiling information, provided by companies such as Tacoda Systems Inc., New York.

"There is no marketer that is not having his feet put to the fire by the CFO and having to justify dollars," said Robert Tas, VP-sales and marketing at Tacoda. "The market is asking for ways to spend money that equate to leads, qualified opportunities and buyers."

Tacoda, through its Audience Management System, creates audience profile data, including demographic data and company data, such as where a user is in the purchase cycle for a specific product. Tacoda then integrates the audience profile data with actual Web activity and provides custom reports to clients via a Web-based interface.

Chris Whalen, senior director of client solutions at B2BWorks, Chicago, said it's important for b-to-b marketers to create and measure multiple interactions over e-mail, banners, microsites and other formats to enable prospects to select information that's important and relevant to them.

"If you're spending human capital on a lead, it better be worth it," Whalen said.

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