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MRM & MAM: Marketing Technology's Dynamic Duo

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Rainer Gawlick remembers a simpler time in marketing—a time when marketing channels were few, email marketing was a new concept, and actions were physical. Back then, managing marketing activities from something as rudimentary as a series of spreadsheets was acceptable. But if his company attempted that today, "we'd be toast," said security software vendor Sophos' CMO.

Instead, Gawlick relies on Neolane, a comprehensive marketing resource management (MRM) system, to manage workflow, create and manage event-triggered campaigns, and measure market performance.

"We bring in hundreds of thousands of leads each year, and we need to be able to quickly figure out if it's a new prospect or someone we've dealt with before, and get that lead to the right salesperson," Gawlick told CMO.com. "At this point, doing it manually is completely unrealistic, not to mention expensive. This way, we can do it timely and cost-effectively."

The system also ensures that the data is clean, and that all information and interactions associated with a specific customer are kept in the same record. This method allows Gawlick's team to more efficiently market the right things to the right people at the right time.

In addition, Sophos relies on the system for lead management, nurturing, and scoring.

"As leads come into the system, it makes sure they get to the right person, and once they are in the system, we can use it to nurture the leads. We get a lot of people into the system, but they aren't necessarily ready to buy on Day One. The system allows us to build that relationship with that person to get them to the point where they are ready to buy," Gawlick said.

The Ultimate Marketing Organizer
What Sophos is doing with MRM is becoming more common among marketing departments. These tools, also developed by market leaders Eloqua, Aprimo, Marketo, and Alterian, combine campaign management, content management, and market measurement to encapsulate the life of a lead and campaign. Such a tool could, for example, track development of a multichannel, multitouch email campaign, including content, schedule, and list, cost associated with various activities, and people involved with the campaign. At the end of the campaign, the tool would track costs to determine business impact and cost per lead.

To be sure, MRM is just one of a growing cadre of technology tools used by marketing leaders, who see the value in organizing and managing vast stores of complex, interrelated data. Another popular tool is the marketing asset management (MAM) system, which manages the growing stores of digital assets and print collateral a company collects over time—data that traditionally has been in systems as rudimentary as SharePoint drives. These systems, from vendors such as Saepio, MarketingPilot, and Enterworks, usually have sophisticated metadata indexing and search capabilities, and allow users to customize collateral.

They also offer comprehensive workflow and reporting capabilities. With a tool like this, a user could, for example, determine what has been spent, down to a very granular level, on production, agency hours, mail, and paper on a specific direct mail campaign. It also allows a marketing department to create workflows that help with stakeholder engagement, approvals, and compliance.

About one-third of top-performing companies have implemented MAM systems, according to Aberdeen Group, which surveyed a group of about 500 CMOs and marketing vice presidents around the world, across a variety of industries, geographies, and sizes. According to senior research analyst Chris Houpis, the best-in-class companies are using these systems far more frequently than lower performing companies. The Aberdeen study also found that top-performing companies saw a 15 percent improvement in speed of getting content to market, and have reduced their marketing-related costs by 9 percent.

Santander Consumer USA, for example, an automobile finance company based in Dallas, needed the functionality of both MAM and MRM. Since it had already standardized on Salesforce.com, the IT department chose to leverage that platform to gain the capabilities it needed, even though Salesforce.com doesn't traditionally fall into either category. The company, which has about 3,500 employees, bases its internal platform on Salesforce.com's Force.com, using it to keep track of outbound marketing efforts, including lists, collateral, Web site changes, and anything else related to a marketing project. For Santander, the system also functions as a MAM system, storing all creative content.

"We boost our search engine traffic for our direct-to-consumer product, Roadloans.com, by publishing thousands of articles on our Web site about car- and finance-related topics, and we use the platform to store and manage all of them," director of marketing Will Stacy told CMO.com. "And if we do a Facebook campaign or a tweet, or link to an article from another site, that goes in the repository also."

The implementation of marketing automation is a fairly new endeavor for Santander, which just two years ago had a smaller marketing team and managed everything via a SharePoint drive. But as the marketing organization and the channels it used grew, the situation became unmanageable,

noted Matt Fitzgerald, Santander's senior vice president of sales and marketing, in an interview with CMO.com.

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