FINALIST 2014

B2B AWARDS



HARTE HANKS

CONNECTIONS MADE
IMPACT DELIVERED

Category number: 10

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Programme/initiative name: Enhancing Cisco's commercial contact strategy

Agency: Harte Hanks

Brand or client: Cisco International Limited

URL or microsite: n/a

Word count: summary (190), main submission (985)

[Summary page]

Intelligent insights deliver 18:1 contact strategy ROI plus by-product leads cover data planning investment four times over

Challenge

Cisco wanted to square-up to the increasingly self-initiated buyer market by enhancing sales and marketing alignment.

Marketing needed to become a customer-led, demand-generating, revenue-producing machine. But historically the sales team didn't value marketing generated leads.

Dual action was needed to enrich marketing with better insights and maximise generation of high-quality leads that had strong synergy with commercial objectives.

Solution

Harte Hanks' data planning team was enlisted to deliver focused, insight-rich data precisely aligned with marketing and business goals.

A multi-tactic approach saw relevant contacts fed to marketing on a per-campaign basis according to their individual needs and characteristics. Research and analysis enabled better 'point in time' communications based on factors such as purchase patterns and online behaviour.

Results

Activity delivered a projected ROI of 18:1 in terms of sales accepted leads handed from marketing to sales.

What's more, desk research by profiling agents uncovered a raft of prospects which were quickly converted to sales qualified leads. These leads represent a total pipeline value four times greater than the total data planning investment.

[190 words]

[Main submission]

About the client company

Cisco is a technology company. It's the worldwide leader in networking that transforms how people connect, communicate and collaborate.

Strategy – broader business issues the company is facing

Context: a changing landscape

The B2B buying process has changed: it's transformed into a self-initiated market. With buyers' increasing tendency and capacity to research purchasing decisions online, the pressure is on for marketers.

Cisco acknowledged that in this environment, better sales and marketing alignment was essential. To adapt to the changing landscape, marketing needed to become a customer-led, demand-generating, revenue-producing machine.

Data planning supported that shift in the EMEA region. It delivered insights and highly-relevant contacts to drive an effective customer-led contact strategy.

Challenge: sales / marketing disconnect

Contact strategy targets can only be met when sales professionals have confidence in the leads provided. Cisco faced significant barriers to this:

1. Cynicism about value and contribution of marketing, especially surrounding demand generation and leads created.

2. Perception that marketing qualified leads (MQLs):
    - are low quality
    - don't meet goaling expectation
    - are already accounted for.

3. Insufficient engagement for sales to understand when a marketing campaign is running, when/how they should follow up and why.

4. Contact details provided with lead information deemed as inaccurate/low quality.

Solution: bring in the data experts

To maximise commercial success in the new buyer landscape, the marketing team responded deliberately and proactively to sales' concerns.

Harte Hanks' data team, operating in-house at Cisco, was enlisted to facilitate data-driven marketing aligned to revenue marketing. They were tasked with delivering focused data precisely aligned with pre-planned campaigns, enabling marketing to generate high-quality leads synergistic with commercial objectives.

Activity focused on relevant client accounts falling outside sales' bandwidth, and included 'Did You Buy' audits, inference and account intelligence as well as a warm-up process. The outcome was a contact strategy optimised to focus on the 'right contact at the right time' with qualified details.

Objectives of the campaign

The aim was to provide marketing with sufficient quality and quantity of contacts to generate leads against targeted high-value accounts.

Contacts needed to be strategically selected in terms of their relevance to pre-planned campaigns, so they would have a higher propensity to convert to sales accepted leads.

Target: 45% uplift in quality contacts.

A second aim was to enhance 'contactability' by increasing available contact points for clients, e.g. direct phone number and email.

The target audience

Technical decision makers within organisations defined as ‘high-wallet’ in terms of potential Cisco spend were the primary audience.

There is a high (30%) rate of degradation associated with data for these individuals. So the focus was key accounts, precisely aligned with the marketing plan and activity was sustained over a period of time.

Media, channels or techniques used

An innovative, intelligence-led approach was devised by the data planners.

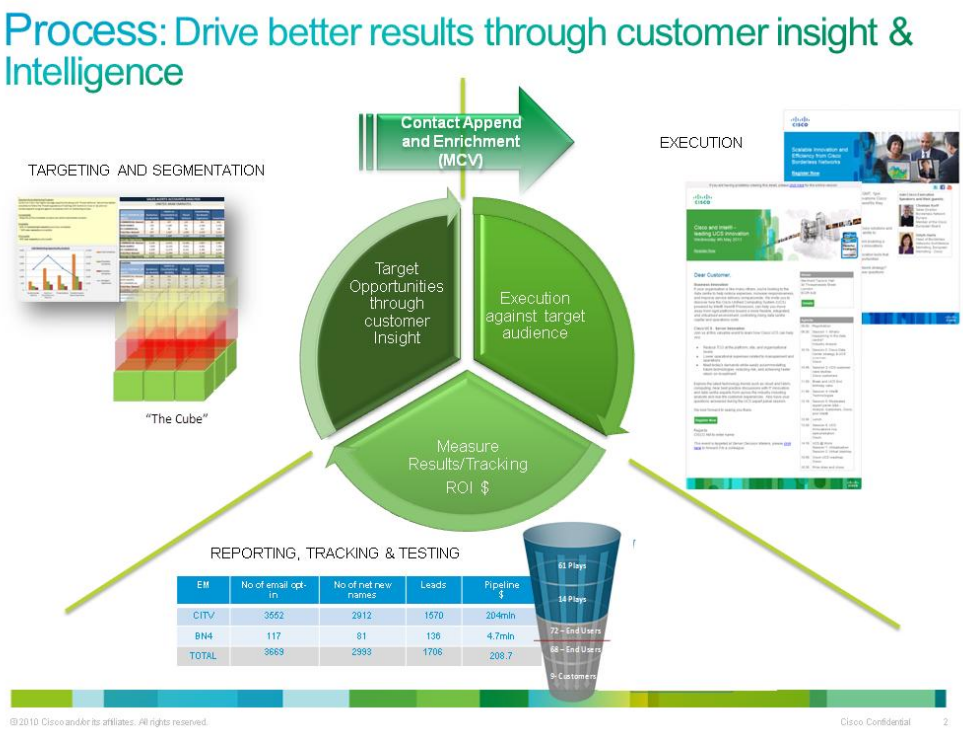
Activity was firmly aligned with business goals, facilitating a focused contact strategy for orchestration by the marketing department. Targeting and segmentation were greatly improved and a robust multi-tactic approach to contact acquisition was deployed.

Actively seeking insight

Previous purchase behaviour was analysed to establish firms’ propensity to invest in a given product or solution at specific points in time. This facilitated more intelligent cross-sell and up-sell activity. Desk research by profiling agents was also pivotal, focusing on the behaviour and actions of individual decision-makers, such as White Paper downloads and use of industry forums. Strategic ‘append and enrich’ activity further enhanced customer insight and data quality.

Techniques included:

- Data planning, data interrogation, audience and company segmentation, systems architecture, targeted campaign execution and reporting
- Consolidation, enhancement and delivery of Tableau dashboards covering all aspects of marketing through to ROI and lead management, for better EMEA marketing planning
- Communication management and training
- Gap analysis between marketing objectives and data available to drive appropriate strategies.



A virtuous cycle

The basic premise was to focus data planning efforts to deliver insights that could achieve a clear and vital commercial impact. Emphasising high-value commercial accounts linked to demand generation activity and/or fed into Global Virtual Sales helped achieve this. The outcome was a virtuous cycle with customer insight enabling ever-improving commercial impact.

To deliver maximum financial return from data planning, the team leveraged investments already being made by Cisco where improved data should be a by-product. This included online and offline information, structured and unstructured data and behavioural data overlaid with transactional information.

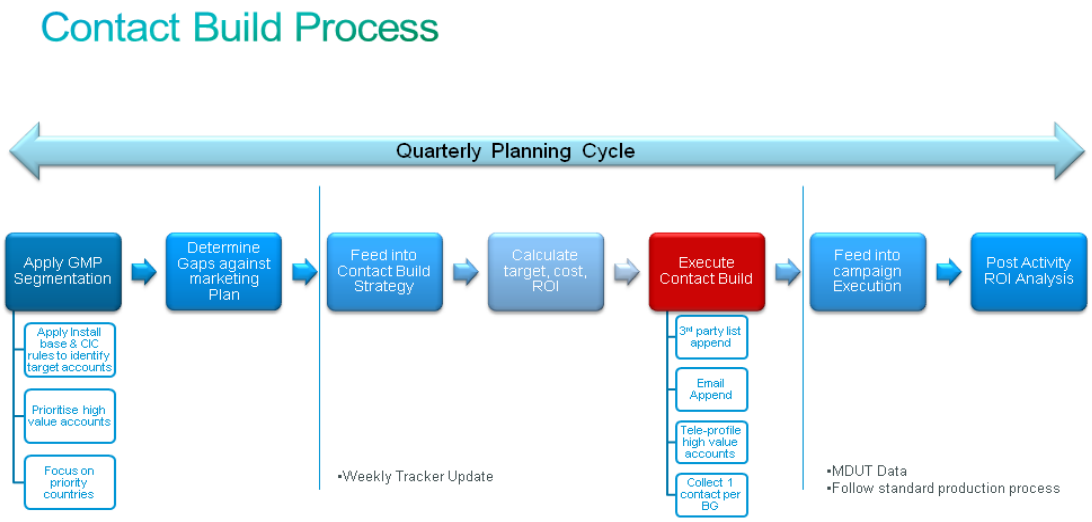
Insight delivers optimisation

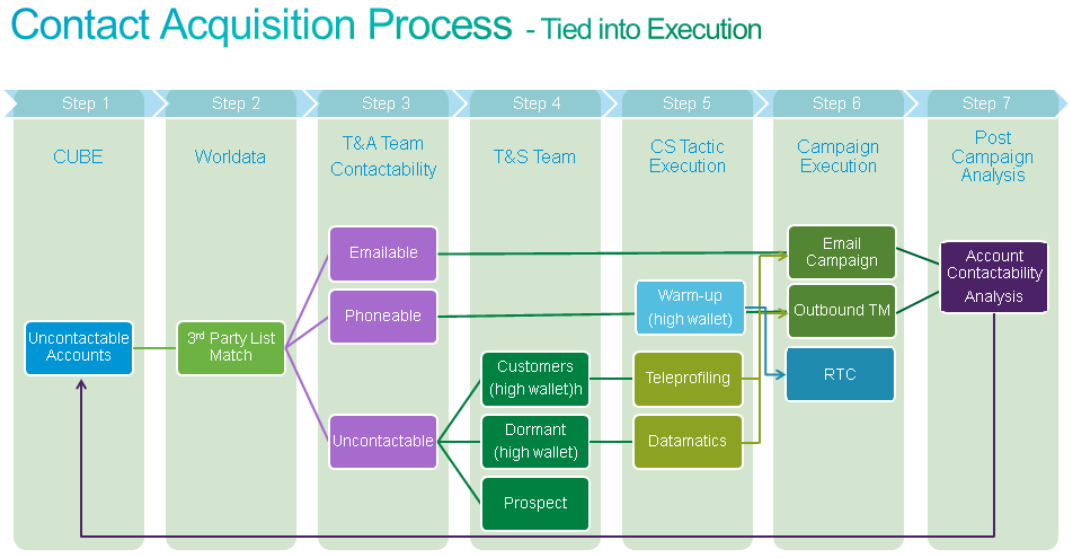
The outcome was better depth and breadth of information on decision-makers and high-wallet accounts, as well as intelligence on prospects' propensity to be interested in a given solution at a specific point in time. This knowledge optimised activity such as email and telemarketing, with contacts fed into relevant marketing programmes according to their individual needs and characteristics.

Timescales of the campaign

Activity covered two fiscal years, culminating in August 2013.

Throughout the 24-months, data planning was managed on a quarterly basis with budgets allocated in line with the anticipated wallet size of target businesses.





Budgets

These details were provided to judges in the original submission but are commercially sensitive and therefore confidential. However, the budget broke down as follows:

Account acquisition and activation:	39%
Teleprofiling:	22%
List acquisition:	10%
Service list append:	9%
Service provider list append:	9%
Email append:	6%
Data enrichment:	5%

Results

Activity led to a **60% uplift in quality contacts** for target accounts (aim: 45%).

It also achieved a **72% rate of contactability** (phone and / or email details available).

Based on sales accepted leads delivered from the insight-enhanced contact strategy, this initiative has delivered **projected ROI of 18:1**.

As a by-product of this initiative, SQLs were identified and handed from profiling agents to pre-selling agents. Consequently, the project paid for itself four times over even without the long-term benefits realised by the formal contact strategy.

Client testimonial

This was a truly leading-edge approach and the data team's focused efforts have significantly progressed and enriched Cisco's commercial contact strategy. The targeting and segmentation work was particularly noteworthy and is now being held up as best practice at a global level. Within the context of a changing, increasingly challenging buyer landscape this level of customer insight has enabled us to take our contact strategy to a new level, enabling better cohesion between sales and marketing to deliver tangible commercial impact. ***Jon Sullivan, Marketing Manager at Cisco***

[985 words, excluding headings]

Submission ends