

HARTE HANKS

The 4 Biggest Challenges Facing B2B Tech Marketers Today (Part Three)

Maximising ROI with fewer resources and smaller budgets

by Chris Ronald

Head of B2B Global Teleservices, Harte Hanks

If you've been following my four-part series on the biggest challenges impacting B2B tech companies today, you'll have already picked up some tips on maximising your tools and technologies and generating high-quality, real-time data.

In this post, I'm going to address one of the most pressing and urgent pain points that marketers face today: how to show an increased ROI for marketing activities despite shrinking headcounts and budgets.

CHALLENGE #3:

How do I maximise ROI with fewer resources and less investment?

With the rise of data analytics, there is more pressure to measure results and account for ROI. At Harte Hanks, we've found two complementary solutions that work best for driving ROI without hiring a team of marketers or straining existing budgets: Marketing Automation and Centralised Teleservices Programs.

Marketing Automation:

Marketing automation platforms help plan, coordinate, manage and measure all of your marketing campaigns, making them more personalised, effective and efficient. The best part is they are executed just as the name suggests—automatically, with minimal need for resource oversight.

Marketing automation has been a buzzword for a few years now, but according to SiriusDecisions, in 2014 85% of B2B marketers using marketing automation platforms feel they are not using them to their full potential. My colleague Anthony Figgins recently wrote about creating more relevant, personal customer interactions using marketing automation as well as some tips for getting started, which I've summarised here:

Obtain Quality Data (Data Remediation)

1. **Pick the tools that best suit your business needs:** Identify a tool that fits your goals and budget. We suggest tools that prevent unhealthy data and support better conversion rates, progressive profiling and social integrations.
2. **Select the right team:** Because of the complex nature of many marketing automation systems, training will be crucial to success. Empower your team to know, understand and follow best practices and spend an adequate amount of time with vendors to fully immerse with the systems.
3. **Integrate your automation marketing platforms with a CRM system:** Many brands use marketing automation solely as an email platform and then sync data with a CRM system. Your marketing automation platforms should work in tandem with your CRM to tell a holistic, cohesive story to and about your customers.

© 2015 Harte-Hanks, Inc. All rights reserved.

4. **Engage your sales force:** Your sales team is the eyes and the ears in the field. They know what is happening with your customers. They can be an excellent source of knowledge about what is working and what needs to be re-evaluated.

5. **Have a plan, process and goal for your tools:** Integrate and build processes early to ensure the success of your marketing automation systems. Take a crawl-walk-run approach: Start with an email, then test and refine based on real-time data.

Centralised Teleservices Program:

While automating your marketing processes is a sure path to increase ROI, a complementary hands-on approach through a consolidated telemarketing program can also contribute to the bottom line. By simplifying engagement through a central point and single CRM, companies can drive and support both inbound response management to ensure quality customer experiences and outbound lead generation to drive new business. I'll give you an example.

> One of our B2B tech clients was challenged with a waning sales pipeline and declining brand awareness. They had a decentralised model with multiple local agencies, which led to inconsistent service, process, pricing, training, reporting and management. With all of these inefficiencies, the sales pipeline was clearly suffering and the customer experience was fragmented and inconsistent.
>
> Harte Hanks collaborated with the client to design and execute a centralised telemarketing program. The new program offered marketing efficiencies and a commonality of process through a single CRM. Customer experience and sales ROI improved dramatically through simplified engagement with one central support system that drove inbound response management and outbound lead generation.
>
> Through handling 128,000 calls and 30,000 customer and prospect interactions in a centralised manner, the client increased its sales pipeline 300 percent and qualified leads to pass to sales by 500 percent.

With marketing automation and centralised teleservices, marketers can save money and time while still driving ROI.

Join me next week for our final installation of this series: How to unify communication strategies across channels to drive customers through the buyer journey.

Email lets.talk@hartehanks.com to learn more.

HARTE HANKS

© 2015 Harte-Hanks, Inc. All rights reserved.