MANAGING A SMOOTH MARKETING AUTOMATION SOFTWARE IMPLEMENTATION

If you've neglected the advantages of marketing automation software because you think implementation will be complex, read this.

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Only 18% of B2B organizations are currently using a marketing automation platform to manage their lead processes; but that number is expected to swell to 40% by 2016.

Implementing marketing automation software isn't an option. It's vital to ensure your company keeps up.

As with any IT project, successfully implementing Eloqua happens through planning, bringing together the people, processes, and technology.

Much of the work needed to make the implementation a success, like aligning sales and marketing processes, should be done by sales and marketing rather than IT. But as a key project member, you need to ensure that you know what needs to be done, by whom, and by when, to ensure that your investment delivers the ROI it's expected to.

Rest assured that the technical side of Eloqua implementation is simple! Integrating with your CRM system and website is easy using our out-of-the-box API integration tools. The system is intuitive to use for even the most non-technical users.

Now follow these steps to ensure a smooth implementation.

7 Steps to a Smooth Marketing Automation Software Implementation

Here are 7 steps for sales, marketing and IT departments to follow to successfully implement marketing automation software:

STEP 01. GET THE RIGHT PEOPLE ON THE PROJECT TEAM

Involving the right people from the start is imperative to making the project a success. Marketing and sales representatives, CRM stakeholders and IT decision makers will need to work together in order to think strategically and see the bigger business picture. You will also need to engage the people who are going to use the software on a day-to-day basis who will champion it to the rest of your organization.

STEP 02. GET SALES AND MARKETING ALIGNED ONCE AND FOR ALL

Sales and marketing teams will need to work through lead management processes early on as marketing automation and sales force automation systems are integrated. It is essential that these teams get talking as soon as possible to work through common definitions of lead and opportunity stages, service level agreements for handoff and follow up through the sales and marketing funnel as well as standardized reporting.

By the time roll-out day comes, the change communications issued throughout the project should ensure that everyone in sales and marketing has bought into the benefits that marketing automation software can deliver.

STEP 03. GET ON TOP OF DATA QUALITY EARLY ON

Without quality data to support it, marketing automation really can't do what it's made for. So getting in early with assessment of your existing data can help your business reap the rewards of marketing automation much more quickly. De-duplication and development of custom fields that key stakeholders will need to run their business will ensure that delivery rates will be better and reporting of campaign results in the new system will be much more accurate.

STEP 04. OUTLINE YOUR SYSTEMS FOR INTELLIGENT INTEGRATION

IT representatives should produce a diagram or data model of their systems that will integrate with the marketing automation tool. This is a key item that is critical to achieving the most fluid integration possible with existing technologies, such as an existing CRM system.

This sort of integration will bring immediate integration benefits and allow you to expand your marketing automation solution as you grow. One view across all systems will also offer better visibility of the buying journey and analysis of Digital Body Language™. Eloqua's unique AppCloud allows marketing and sales teams to capture big data from multiple technologies—including YouTube, Jive and Slideshare—and integrate it into the marketing automation system.
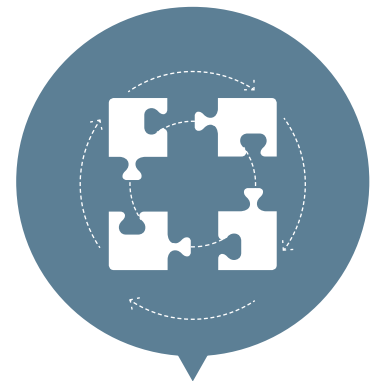
STEP 05. ENSURE THE RIGHT PEOPLE GET THE RIGHT TRAINING

Marketing automation solutions are intuitive and they offer a lot of functionality. They are a big step forward in marketing management compared to the email marketing and web analysis solutions marketers may have been using prior to the implementation. Users will definitely want to learn new skills to take advantage of the platform's capabilities. Most providers include a comprehensive training package with the solution, such as Eloqua's SmartStart, and online resources for continual development, so make sure team members have access to the support they need. Depending on the size of your business you may require more consultation or more process steps to configuration decisions—and this is where Eloqua's SmartStart packages can help.
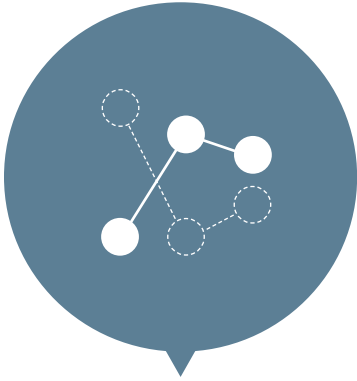
STEP 06. ESTABLISH THE RIGHT METRICS

Modern Marketing combines the best practices of marketing art and science. The in-depth reporting functions now available within marketing automation can seem daunting; until you know which metrics within this big data are important. Ensuring that these are identified and in place in time for launch will ensure that the system can start improving performance from the start.

STEP 07. ENJOY THE MEASURABLE RESULTS OF MARKETING AUTOMATION

Companies that automate lead management and send new content automatically based on Digital Body Language signals typically see a 10% increase in revenue in just 6-9 months. Share the success as your sales and marketing department develop a comprehensive content marketing strategy, targeting the business pains of their personas, mapping customer journeys, building dynamic and engaging content and designing triggered email campaigns. Ensuring that the new system is set up with a logical folder system accessible by all will allow content to easily be assigned to campaigns and lead scoring processes.

GET STARTED

As these steps show, the success of a marketing implementation project is dependent on the change of organizational processes and mindsets. It's vital that sales and marketing know what they want to achieve, and how to get there with IT's input. Addressing these issues in the planning stage will ensure that the sales and marketing teams are not only prepared for the new way of working but that they also have really identified how marketing automation will add value to their roles and the business as a whole.

That way, the transition will be seamless and both teams will benefit from the full functionality of the solution you have invested in.

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Oracle Eloqua is the leading provider of modern marketing automation and revenue performance management software that helps ensure every component of marketing works harder and more efficiently to drive revenue. Eloqua software is now the centerpiece of the Oracle Marketing Cloud. Companies across a wide range of industries rely on Eloqua's cloud-based software, professional services and education programs to help them automate marketing processes across multiple channels, target and nurture prospects and deliver highly qualified leads at a lower cost to sales teams.

**For more information, visit www.eloqua.com or subscribe to the "It's All About Revenue" blog.
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