

Recapturing the Buzz

Coffee company employs retargeting tactics to retain customers

by WILLIAM KENDY

All successful businesses have one thing in common: a solid qualified customer base.

But some customers stop participating or buying, for different reasons, and businesses have to reach out to new prospects just to deal with normal attrition. And of course, all businesses want to grow, which make targeted and effective acquisition efforts more critical.

In today's online marketplace, email is the generally accepted method for prospecting and making customer "touches" to open a dialogue and extend an invitation to take action. It is the challenge of advertising and promotional campaigns to reach those contacts and prompt them to "opt in" to agree to receive email correspondence. The goal is to fill the sales funnel in a manner that results in an acceptable response rate.

There are thousands of sources available for advertising and promoting to generate email addresses, and determining how to use resources and spend marketing budgets is an involved process. Once responses are received they must be validated and qualified to determine if they have a legitimate need for what is being offered before adding them to a database.

Unfortunately, not all sources deliver the same quality of prospective customers' email addresses; that impacts subsequent email campaigns and programs, increases client risk and affects projected response levels, which ultimately affects return on investment.

'BRIDGING THE GAP'

Jim Fosina founded Amora Coffee because he saw that customers would be interested in an opportunity to enjoy coffee that was fresher than what was available on the retail level due to long shelf times. To that end,

Fosina set up a direct-to-home system designed to quickly deliver fresh gourmet coffee and tea.

"We really wanted to deliver the freshest cup of coffee as quickly as possible," he says, "and we work very hard on setting up customers on a subscription."

Amora subscribers need to fill out a form to join, but there are no minimum purchase requirements or terms of agreement. Subscribers can change coffee selection, quantity and delivery frequency whenever they wish.

"At any time they have the opportunity to change what they are receiving or change their interval. It is definitely a service that the customer can control," Fosina says.

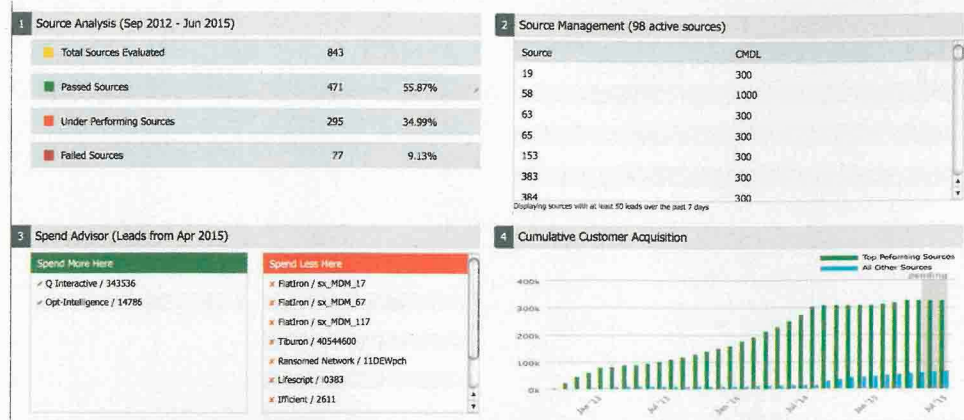
Lori Clure, president of business-

to-consumer marketing firm CertainSource, says Amora Coffee "noticed that there are people that started to fill out their form to get a pound of coffee a month and, for whatever reason, they didn't finish the process."

"We started working with them to re-target those people who failed to complete the form, and even customers who participated in the program for a few months and then dropped out," she says. "We try to pull them back in."

According to CertainSource, up to 98 percent of purchased leads abandon the sales process prior to completing a transaction, but many provide email addresses. CertainSource provides marketers a platform for managing omnichannel customer acquisition,





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optimizing lead sources across all channels.

"We designed our software platform to bridge the gap and make sure that the respondent and the lead is qualified," Clure says. "It is really an acquisition management platform that clients can use to improve performance and reduce risk for their email campaigns."

ENGAGING PROSPECTS

When prospects agree to receive information and submit their email information, their addresses are sent to CertainSource where they are run through a series of internal and external filters.

Once the addresses are validated and qualified, prospects receive a series of three to five emails thanking them for their interest and letting them know they will receive additional correspondence. The goal is to engage prospects, building rapport while making them familiar with and receptive to the client. Unlike direct mail campaigns that had long lead and evaluation times, CertainSource's system runs in real time.

"We are nurturing the person along," Clure says. "Once we know that they are on board we send them to the client, who then enters them into their customer relationship management system.

"Imagine it like a funnel," she says. "At the top you have a lot of people entering the funnel and because we initially qualify and engage them, they

progress further down the funnel and the net result for the client is [a reduction in] cost per acquisition," she says.

This validation and qualification process allows CertainSource to more accurately verify and score the sources.

"We can go back to the client and tell them which sources are giving them the lowest risk and the highest engagement factor. That allows them to better determine where they should devote their acquisition efforts and funds," Clure says.

In addition to "funnel management," CertainSource recently designed a re-targeting feature that allows clients to engage prospects who have abandoned the sales process prior to becoming customers, or those who haven't responded to email correspondence or efforts within a certain time frame.

By recapturing these prospects, clients can increase sales and grow their database without having to increase their new acquisition media budgets.

Publishers Clearing House is a CertainSource client, "and they have a long form that a prospect needs to fill out to have a chance to win money," Clure says. "While they have given us their email address, not all of them complete the conversion process. We identify these individuals, create an internal pool and send them emails to trigger activity and drive them back into the funnel."

She emphasizes that special atten-

tion needs to be given to what is sent and when, in order to recapture these individuals.

"We just don't send them the same old offer," Clure says. "We send them relevant content in a timely fashion to bring them back in and convert them to a subscriber, registrant or buyer."

OPTIMIZING COMMUNICATION

"CertainSource is very ethical and responsible and that is important to us," Fosina says. "They have helped us target sources, and once we receive permission from individuals to email them, CertainSource has done a great job in helping us optimize points of contact and customer communications."

If a potential customer doesn't complete an order form, "CertainSource will email them," he says. "If someone has been a customer for a period of time and for some reason they cancelled their subscription, CertainSource will communicate with them.

"They reach out to customers on multiple points and knock on the door with respectful and courteous, clear, well-timed messages."

As a result, "Amora Coffee can now identify valued prospects who expressed initial, real interest in our services and convert them to customers. We've seen an increase in retargeting rates and we're just getting started," Fosina says. **STORES**

William F. Kendy writes, consults and speaks on retail, marketing, advertising, sales, customer service and best practices.