Marketing Automation

Description

Marketing automation software is designed to help marketers capture leads, nurture them as they move through the "funnel", analyze lead behavior, tailor marketing campaigns to specific prospect segments and monitor marketing campaign performance.

As the name implies, marketing automation software improves the effectiveness and productivity of the marketing function relative to the personalization of content, distribution of this content across preferred channels, tracking prospect behaviors relative to their interaction with content, qualifying and scoring leads, nurturing leads through promotion of relevant products and services, passing leads to the sales function and identification of upselling and cross-selling opportunities for existing customers.

A significant benefit of marketing automation software is its ability to coordinate communications with prospects using their preferred engagement channels. Therefore, leading marketing automation platforms manage personalized content and communication across several digital channels, including email, physical locations (interactions captured digitally), chatbots, text, social media, web sites and voice.

Major Vendors:

Adobe Marketing Cloud (Marketo)

Salesforce Marketing Cloud (Exact Target/ Pardot)

Oracle Marketing Cloud (Eloqua

Case Study:

Redefining the Customer Experience at Sub-Zero Wolf

Application

Marketing automation software works best where prospects engage with a company's products or services across multiple digital channels, sufficient prospect/customer data exists or can be captured to create prospect/customer segments and personas based on explicit and implicit preferences, tailored digital content can be distributed across preferred channels and marketing analytics can be used to evaluate campaign effectiveness. In other words, companies hoping to benefit from marketing automation will move from an intuitive sense of prospects/customers that drive their marketing campaigns to a data-based, analytical understanding of the market and engage with prospects/customers using this insight.

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Email Marketing

Email remains one of the most effective means of communicating with your audience. This makes it an excellent starting place for marketing automation. Email functionality is one of the core components of what marketing automation vendors offer, and every decent platform should include features that allow you to send emails en-mass to segmented audiences. More advanced platforms will send triggered emails after prospects take certain actions, such as filling out a form or downloading a piece of content. Marketers can also use these tools to create, edit, and embed forms on their website that they can use for lead generation and email outreach.

Lead Nurturing

Lead nurture helps companies track, segment, and communicate with leads in order to convert them from a prospect to a paying customer. An effective lead nurturing strategy requires a database that captures prospect/customer behaviors. Specifically, it tracks interaction data such as customer behavior on company websites, responses to email campaigns, shares and likes on social media, and conversations with marketing, sales, and customer service functions within companies.

With a marketing database in place, companies can then implement a "drip" campaign, which involves distributing relevant content to prospects/customers based on where they are in the sales "funnel" (i.e., offering the right content or offers at the right time to influence the buying decision). Lead nurturing also involves alerts that trigger automated and/or manual actions based on what prospects/customers do with content and offers (i.e., a phone call to qualify an opportunity after multiple, related content downloads by a prospect/customer). Finally, prospect/customer segmentation and lead scoring assess buying intent and hand-off qualified leads to a company's CRM platform for follow-up by the sales team.

Social Media

Marketing automation platforms often provide social analytics tools that enable tracking prospect/customer posts across social platforms, as well as who shares marketing content and with whom they share it. Additional social capabilities of this technology include creating polls, sweepstakes, and referral programs using a tool built into the marketing automation platform. Companies that have an active social media campaign should also consider consolidated posting and scheduling of content across multiple social media properties from a single interface.

Social media marketing isn't just about posting into the void and hoping that prospects will be so inspired by a company's content that they will immediately purchase a product or service. Social media marketing works best when it's a "conversation" over time between a company and potential or current customers. Social listening tools scour social media sites looking for mentions of a company's brand, product, service, or designated keywords to understand what is trending – positively or negatively – and using these as both a basis for a prospect conversation as well as input into changes that need to be made to content and channels (or even products and services).

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Analytics and Reporting

The greatest benefit of automating marketing efforts—after scaling personalized marketing to larger audiences—is getting in-depth analytics. Most marketing automation tools look like business intelligence platforms with dashboards that display the company's most important marketing KPIs in easy-to-understand visualizations using a single platform. These analytics platforms often include the ability to capture website analytics, channel analytics and conversion rates. Many companies analyze their website traffic through Google Analytics (because it's free and powerful) or other on-site analytics tool. Integrated website analytics tools will enable the marketing function to see the full scope of their marketing efforts and how campaigns affect your website traffic, conversions, and ultimately the ROI of marketing efforts.

SEO, Paid Media, and Digital Advertising

Mostly found in enterprise marketing automation tools, SEO, paid media, and digital advertising features help marketers run their paid campaigns from a centralized marketing tool where most other marketing campaigns live. Understanding how your website stacks up against your competitors and placing your site where you'll get the most clicks on the search engine results pages (SERPs) is a full-time job.

Marketers find increasing success with personalization through retargeting campaigns, detailed audience targeting for ads, and multi-channel nurture campaigns that make use of all the places where customers spend their time. Additionally, paid search and display media rely on an agreement between keywords, the ad, and the landing page. Most marketing automation tools will provide you with customized landing page builders and lead capture forms that teams can customize to fit your online ads to drive lead captures and provide immediate value to customers.

Gathering your website analytics, ad campaign metrics, and digital display targeting into a single interface can both make that job simpler and give your team maximum insight into campaign success.

How to Get Started

Selecting the best marketing automation software can be difficult. Defining functional requirements, defining the right integrations (e.g., CRM), the best A/B testing functions, the strength of reporting/analytics — there's a lot to consider and a lot of boxes to check. Cimphoni can assist your company in your marketing automation efforts, from defining your digital marketing strategy to selecting and implementing the appropriate marketing automation platform. Cimphoni can work with you on each of the steps below to stand-up and execute an effective marketing automation program.

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- Develop content through thought leadership, blogs, white papers, website, customer success stories, social media, and other digital marketing efforts to define the brand, inform and motivate prospects to engage.

- Compile demographic and psychographic data through various interactions with prospects, leads, and customers across multiple channels, such as emails, newsletter sign-ups, content downloads, social media, website visits, and so on.

- Use demographic and psychographic data to define prospect/customer personas. Develop journey maps (e.g., awareness, consideration, decision, post-purchase) for these personas.

- Define the functional requirements for a marketing automation platform that aligns with the overall digital marketing strategy.

- Based upon the data, personalize each marketing message and make it more relevant to its intended audience through segmentation.

- Distribute content on the appropriate and preferred channel of the recipient at a convenient time for them (according to the data) based on insights from prospect/customer journey maps.

- Reviews the analytics to see how marketing campaigns perform.

- Tweak, revise, and optimize campaigns accordingly.

Our Services

Business Agility	Digital Transformation	Customer Experience
Advanced Analytics	Artificial Intelligence	IT Performance Improvement
Technology Architecture	Interim CIO, CDO & CTO	Critical Initiative Leadership

About Cimphoni

Cimphoni is built on the premise that technology, when properly applied and led, can deliver innovative solutions that transform businesses. The Cimphoni team is comprised of technology, operations and business consultants with a thirst for innovation and a passion for leveraging emerging technologies to deliver exceptional, measurable results for our clients. Founded in 2012, Cimphoni serves customers throughout the United States from its headquarters in suburban Milwaukee. More information can be found at cimphoni.com

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