



interlinkONE

White Paper

Transitioning to
eMarketing



Prepared by
interlinkONE, Inc.
www.interlinkONE.com

interlinkONE, Inc.
200 Jefferson Road, Suite 207, Wilmington, MA 01887
phone 978.694.9992 **email** sales@interlinkone.com
web www.interlinkONE.com

eMarketing is the term used to describe the strategies and methodologies involved in marketing products and services through electronic channels (such as email, banner advertising, online sponsorships, webinars, e-newsletters, and search engine optimization). While eMarketing has proven to be a powerful means of marketing communication, traditional marketing activities remain fundamental to modern businesses.

Marketing professionals have realized the benefits of eMarketing as a low cost alternative to traditional methods. Organizations are struggling with transition from traditional marketing to eMarketing specifically because of the lack of software and technologies supporting both methodologies in an integrated fashion. Currently, the most successful marketing programs are those which rely on a delicately balanced marketing mix – involving multiple marketing vehicles – which are supported by technology that drives both traditional and eMarketing based initiatives. eMarketing software should provide an integrated collection of tools designed to support both electronic and traditional channels allowing for marketers to gain a clear picture of which channels are the most effective and providing insight on which methods best optimize the marketing mix.

More importantly, over the past few years marketing professionals have noticed a degradation of results associated with traditional marketing initiatives. Investments in traditional marketing strategies have yielded disappointing results when compared to historical averages. During the same period, eMarketing initiatives have demonstrated improved results at a fraction (5-10%) of the cost of traditional methods. We foresee this trend continuing and growing. As this trend continues it becomes more important to have systems in place to support the changing times. Companies that are slow to react to this paradigm shift will encounter serious marketing challenges as they go forward.

Consequently, eMarketing software supporting the transition from traditional marketing channels to electronic channels have been touted as the “next big thing” in the technology universe. Many successful mid-sized organizations have already adopted and implemented sophisticated marketing automation software to support

growth and help gain a competitive advantage. Successful implementation of eMarketing software helps to evaluate the effectiveness of complex, multi-tiered marketing campaigns and identify enterprise-wide benefits. The organizations that have made an investment in these comprehensive marketing tools, have demonstrated both short and long term results, and have been able to better target sales opportunities and drive additional revenue.

CONVERGENCE OF TRADITIONAL AND ELECTRONIC MARKETING

Marketing strategies and the solutions designed to support them continue to evolve and improve. Because marketing strategies are rapidly evolving to include both traditional and electronic marketing methods organizations need to prepare for the transition by adopting marketing systems that support both methodologies. Every aspect of a marketing system must have the ability to support both traditional and electronic marketing initiatives.

Integration of separate marketing systems that individually support different marketing methodologies has proven to be a complex undertaking. High levels of integration and customization play a key role in reducing the risks associated with implementing separate systems.

In the end, selecting individual and separated solutions can only take you so far and will result in islands of automation, which will often require a significant resource investment to integrate. The need for the latest and greatest technology should be balanced with the dependability of knowing that your system was designed to accommodate every type of marketing initiative, while allowing room for growth and expansion in the future.

MARKETING VIA THE INTERNET

One of the biggest challenges facing marketing professionals today is improving campaign results with a lower budget. Recent economic conditions resulted in organizations slashing marketing budgets. However, it is expected that marketing initiatives would continue to generate similar, if not better, results.

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What many marketing professionals have learned is that limited budget does not necessarily result in ineffective campaigns. The most successful organizations realized that by targeting marketing initiatives using low cost means would improve results. The key became consistent tracking and measurement using software systems designed to track multi-tiered marketing activities.

Every day thousands of different marketing messages hit every part of an organization. Because of the scope and number of touch points involved, a primary objective of a successful marketing strategy is high availability of the software selected to support marketing processes and track which segments, channels and vehicles are the most successful.

Tracking marketing activities is a function that must occur around the clock – 24 hours a day, seven days a week - and information supporting marketing initiatives needs to be available and shared on a worldwide basis. Collaboration between marketing teams is a fundamental driver behind any successful marketing strategy. Therefore, the software supporting marketing activities needs to be universally accessible in order to support interactions with prospects and team members who may be dispersed over great distances. Users who have successfully implemented Internet based marketing solutions have realized several benefits, some of them include:

- Improved communications with qualified opportunities
- Reduction in the number of missed opportunities
- Improved ability to respond to marketing requests
- Improved competitive advantage
- Real time results enabling campaign modification anytime
- Improved collaboration between marketing team members

The Internet, combined with software used to support marketing processes, is the delivery vehicle best suited to increase the availability of marketing information. Using the Internet, organizations attempting to support multiple marketing campaigns will benefit from the ability to access centralized information and increase collaboration.

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The cornerstones of every marketing strategy are your results and how you use results to improve performance. Organizations with successful marketing strategies concentrate on improving results by facilitating rapid access to timely and relevant data and information. Individuals who respond to your campaigns expect greater access to information and organizations expect greater control of interactions with relationships. Therefore, the heart of a marketing system is connectivity and collaboration – the Internet is the channel of choice for this solution.

SELF-ADMINISTRATION AND CUSTOMIZATION

There has been a great deal of talk in the recent past about the benefits and drawbacks of customizing any type of enterprise wide software system. To clarify, we believe software customization falls into two categories – both of which are critical components to effectively supporting a marketing strategy. The first is administration of the look and feel of the application and of some of the functionality within the system. The second involves adapting the processes of the system to meet the specific business rules of your organization.

One of the most important components of a successful marketing strategy is the ability to self-administer the system to meet changing business needs and marketing messages. A great deal of money is invested in accomplishing simple administrative functions using third party consultants. This has included relatively simple tasks that range from changing field names and drop down menus to incorporating the organizations look and feel. A potential benefit to include in the evaluation process of a marketing software system is the ability to empower users to make these modifications themselves. This benefit should be a requirement of marketing software because of its ability to significantly lower development and configuration costs, which are often associated with rolling out complex software. Additionally, the content of your marketing software, and of your marketing materials – including your website - will need to be modified to accommodate new content, such as company news or a change to corporate messaging. Your marketing software will serve as a centralized communication hub for all marketing activities including information such as news, bulletin boards, updates, events, corporate communications etc. Therefore content and graphical modifications need to be easily modified within the system and

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be easily integrated into your website for maximum flexibility. The ability to empower users to accomplish this on their own puts control of the application in the hands of your users.

The second level of customization involves incorporating your business rules within the application to meet the way you handle your relationships - your competitive advantage. As a rule, the system should have 80% of the functionality you are looking for "out of the box" and your marketing software vendor should be willing to customize the remaining 20% to further meet your requirements.

SUMMARY

The rewards of executing a effective eMarketing strategy are largely self evident: improved marketing results, increased revenue opportunities, improved lead flow, improved collaboration of your marketing team, and higher profitability. As the breakdown of traditional marketing methods becomes more and more apparent, organizations will be forced to migrate to electronic initiatives. A transition we believe will be the foundation for streamlined marketing processes and reduced costs. The benefits of this shift are both profound and simple to understand:

- \$1.50 to send direct mail vs. \$.05 for an email,
- Elimination of printing costs using electronic methods,
- Instantaneous delivery of materials,
- A strong preference on behalf of consumer to work in an electronic world.

Transitioning to an eMarketing strategy will result in the ability to make better decisions based on knowledge gained. The most powerful eMarketing solutions are those, which are:

- **Integrated** – Those which include the necessary functionality to support both traditional and electronic marketing activities,
- **Internet-based** – Solutions which are available over the Internet,
- **Customized** – To meet the unique business rules and processes of your organization,
- **Administrable by users** – Empowering users the ability to modify look, feel and content of the application in real-time without the need for previous programming experience.

For more information on interlinkONE's eMarketing software solutions or to register for interlinkONE's eMarketing Webinar series

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