

TAPPING the conversation

Getting inside their own heads gave a social media monitoring firm the profitable lead gen program it needed

Everybody listens. But not everybody hears.
The difference? Enormous.

That's why listening in on the conversations that occur in social media don't always reveal the most accurate insights. Someone may have said this, but what they really meant was that. And that's where our social media monitoring client made a difference – by sorting through countless discussion threads and comments in social media, parsing and analyzing every statement to determine the writers' intent, and enabling its corporate customers to respond in close to “real time” to resolve problems, seize opportunities, and understand how consumers, partners, observers, and critics truly felt.

But this wasn't helping the client itself. Though their own products allowed them to know about the market's emerging awareness of, need for, and opinions about social media marketing (and even engage with prospects through Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, and many other social resources), the client didn't know how to transform their insights into cost-effective lead generation. As modern as their technology was, their approach to sales was strictly old school... and very expensive.

Multiple challenges

Cold calls, a newsletter, a webinar now and then and, of course, social media were all they relied on, and it wasn't a reliable way to attract truly qualified leads for the Sales team. They needed ways to

- educate the market about social media monitoring
- categorize leads as sales ready
- provide value to organizations that were researching social media monitoring
- segment their target market based on company size and monitoring needs.

The client's CFO, who had just come onboard, realized that, without a better way to get qualified leads, the company was not going to meet its revenue goals and would be spending far too much for the customers it got. During his time as a senior marketing executive at the world's largest PC software firm, the CFO had worked with one of the founders of AcquireB2B and suggested that the CMO invite them to help.

Listen in, campaign out

The first thing that happened was analysis – listening to what the client said it wanted, translating that into what they needed, and comparing those wants and needs with the marketing assets (and Sales activities) available to accomplish them. The assets were scant.

To inform prospects, providing the right information at the right stage of the buying cycle, the client would need to fill several gaps in its content... and modify everything – the focus had to shift from what the technology does to how customers benefit from using it. To provide the most appropriate content (based on a person's role in the buying cycle), they would also need to clean up their database, determine which industries were the most likely to benefit from social media monitoring, and identify the job functions of the researchers, influencers, evaluators, recommenders, and decision makers involved in the purchase.

AcquireB2B not only had to get inside the head of its client; it had to understand what was going through the minds of prospective customers and, with all those ideas out in the open, develop a strategy to position the client in a way that distinguished them from much larger competitors (with much larger budgets) and create tactics to deliver the message in an affordable way.

Direct approach

The obvious platform was email. It would be able to deliver targeted messages and offers and by utilizing marketing automation, enable faster responses, follow-up communications (based on recipients' actions), and testing – to determine which approach would get the best results. With accompanying landing pages for each mailing, it would be possible to track successes, categorize respondents based on the offers they accepted and actions they took, and determine whether they were ready to be handed off to Sales or put back in the list for further nurturing – with additional offers and information.

Since there was still a role for contact by phone – especially to help with the lead qualification process – AcquireB2B developed a telemarketing guide and called the client's prospects to engage them in conversations, rather than bombard them with a scripted spiel. The outcome of those discussions was combined with the email campaign results in a customized report that the CMO could use to verify that the effort was working... and how well.

By the numbers

Within three months, the number of qualified leads rose to a level that met and, in some areas, exceeded the client's objectives. The Sales pipeline was filling up; activities were shifting from prospecting to demoing, proposing, and closing sales; and revenue targets were being met.

The unsupportable cost-per-sale changed, too. It dropped from well above the industry average to only 26% of the average cost – all by doing for the client what it does for its customers: tapping into the conversation and creating the best response.