Email Marketing within Marketing Automation Platforms - What the Experts Recommend

What is marketing automation, and how can it be useful? In the early phases of pursuing sales leads, many marketing tasks are repetitive and routine. Unfortunately, most people who express initial interest in your business will never actually make a purchase. Quite frankly, it is a waste of your sales staff's time to respond to every person who visits your website or requests some basic information about your product or service. Marketing automation takes care of some of the "busywork" and lets your sales staff focus on high-quality sales leads that have already expressed interest in your product or service, and are nearing the point of making a decision.

What is the role of email marketing within marketing automation platforms? E-mail is the easiest method of communication to automate. Prerecorded phone messages are often annoying or even offensive, and social media conversations are a bit too dynamic to automate easily. A timely email message that provides some useful information can give the impression of a personal touch without actually requiring a human to be involved. Most people are familiar with email auto responders; these programs are often used when someone is on vacation to reply to email with a generic, "I'm out of the office" message. Marketing automation is similar to this, but much more involved.

Reeling Them In

Marketing automation platforms are designed to track potential sales leads over the Internet. Here are a few characteristics that may be tracked:

- What items have they viewed on your website?
- Which pages have been viewed on your site and for how long?
- Do they follow you on *Facebook* or *Twitter*?
- Which of your social media posts have they viewed or commented on or shared?
- Have they read or responded to previous email communication?
- Are they in a position with purchasing authority?

These and other activities or characteristics are tracked, tabulated and compiled into a "Lead Score"; when the score reaches a predetermined threshold, the person in question will begin receiving marketing messages via email. Individuals receive targeted marketing messages based on their activities, interest or job title. As they become more interested in your company, you communicate more. The messages you send are designed to subtly push the customer towards a sales decision. By providing useful information, you are serving your potential customers even before the sale. This opens the door for subsequent sales contacts. When they are ready to make a purchasing decision, they will think of your company first.

It Starts with Content

Your marketing content is crucial. Most people hate the idea of corresponding with a computer. Your content must be general, but specific enough to generate interest. Be honest with your potential customers; do not ever directly state that the messages are coming from a real person, but do not expressly mention that they are automated messages either. In essence, your content should give the impression of being written specifically for the individual it is being sent to.

Marketing automation platforms can make your marketing efforts more efficient. Email marketing within marketing automation platforms allows you to communicate with your potential customers effectively and efficiently long before the sale as you educate them and move them through the sales cycle.