

eCRM: Converting new prospects

Using the best scenario that
triggers the best return





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The reality for most businesses is that getting steady web traffic to your site is really only the start. Capturing emails and building your database? Sorry, but that's only the first hurdle. If your prospects are not converting – using their hard earned money to become a client – then your business is headed for trouble. A steady conversion of prospects to customers is the lifeblood of any business.

So how do you do it?

Most marketers will tell you it isn't any one event which converts a prospect. Rather it's usually a series of steps which guide the prospect along the sales funnel until they make their first purchase. The potential customer needs to understand who you are, like you and trust you before they make their first purchase. Your job as the marketing campaign manager is to guide them along this path.

Six Steps to Prospect Conversion

1) Start with a Database

At the expense of stating the obvious, you need email addresses of warm prospects before you can start any conversion process. The more, the merrier. While you are looking to guide your prospects along the journey to becoming customers, the reality is that many of them will get lost along the way, so the more targeted prospects you can feed into the funnel, the better your results will be. Where your prospects are coming from is beyond the scope of this article, but your planning should include an active email capturing programme.

2) Preference Centre & Progressive Profiling

Once you have captured an email address, you need to establish with the prospect what their preferences are – do they wish to receive messages by email, by SMS/text, by post? What messages do they wish to receive and with what frequency? You can also establish if they wish to receive third-party marketing offers. The advantage to doing this is that the prospect is less likely to unsubscribe from your email marketing campaign if they have had some say in what they receive and how often they receive it. For you, this is the beginning of your segmentation process. Some prospects may want to receive your newsletter; others may only want to be notified when you are having a sale. This allows the messages you send to be relevant and allows you to begin to develop a profile of the prospective customer.

Progressive profiling means teasing information out of the prospect over time. Rather than bombarding them with a long online form to fill out, progressive profiling asks further questions based on previous information shared by the prospect. This wins trust over time and increases the amount of prospect data you can amass.

3) Welcome Programme

A well-crafted welcome programme not only makes your prospect feel all warm and fuzzy inside about your brand, but it also presents a key opportunity to capture more data to allow for further segmentation.

A welcome programme may include automated email messages, customised landing pages and data capture forms. The welcome programme should launch as soon as the prospect first provides their email address. It provides you with a wonderful window to shine a positive light on your brand and capture your prospects' interest. It should also present opportunities to collect visitor data which allows you to provide targeted content and relevant calls to action. These relevant messages are more likely to connect with your prospect and initiate

action.

4) Newsletter Programme

The essence of a newsletter programme is that consistent contact establishes trust. It may take six or more touch points with your prospect before they have reached the sufficient level of trust for them to purchase from you. Regular newsletters, with tailored content appropriate to their interests, drives this trust-building process. A newsletter can become something your prospect anticipates receiving in their inbox and that's a pretty powerful feeling to have attached to your brand.

While your newsletter content is building trust, your tracking of the prospect's behaviour and response to your email newsletter is revealing more about him or her. Have they stopped opening your email? When was the last time they clicked through on a link and what was it that triggered their response? These kinds of questions provide you with valuable data which allow you to further drive the conversion process. Open and click-through rates will provide you with a goldmine of information if you pay attention to what they are telling you.

If you've managed to capture postal information, you can offer them geo marketing offers specific to their region. Along similar lines, if you've captured their date of birth you can send them a 'Happy Birthday' greeting. It all works towards winning over the prospect.

5) Behavioural Marketing

Through all of the steps outlined above you will be tracking the prospects' behaviour through a series of interactions:

- Web-browsing activity – provided they have logged in with their email, you can track what they view and how long they view it for
- Response to emails and tracking click-through rates will give you further behavioural clues about the prospect. Also by tracking how they opened the email gives further prospect data – did they open the email on their mobile? This suggests certain attributes of the prospect such as a preference for mobile communications, a desire for interactive communications and possibly point towards a younger prospect.
- Origin of email – where did the prospect come from? Did they come from Facebook? Then they may have a preference for Social Media and can be scored appropriately. Was the email source from a survey or from an exhibition/trade show? These again will help to score the prospect. Did they participate in an online game? Then their score might reflect that they are a 'player.'
- What does this data tell you?

Let's look at how one of Cabestan's clients uses prospect behavioural marketing to drive their new client acquisition strategy.

Case Study

One of Cabestan's clients is a large French retailer who rely on Cabestan's integrated marketing solutions as the engine of their online retailing activities. One aspect of their multi channel marketing approach is to use behavioural marketing to track their prospects' behaviour as they interact with both the website and emails. This analysis allows them to identify prospects who are most likely to make a purchase and become a new retail



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client.

How?

They use scoring to create a map of their prospects. By tracking and analysing the prospects' behaviour as they browse the website they are able to map out what items they view. They use this information to customise the emails which are sent to the prospect and then track the click-through rates from the various links in the email. This builds up a behavioural picture of the prospects' interests.

If a prospect spends most of their time browsing womens' clothing and childrens' clothing on the website, then the next email message they receive will be tailored with an offer on childrens' clothing and link to a new womens' clothing product. If they prospect clicks through on the email offers to learn more, then this behaviour is tracked.

This information is then compared against existing clients and how they have behaved during the same period. Comparisons can be drawn between existing clients and prospective clients and marketing messages can be targeted to their specific needs.

They then take this process a step further and use prediction analysis (predicting the prospects' future behaviour based on similar responses from your existing client pool) to refine the process.

By matching a number of different data sets, such as origin of their email collection (instore, on the website, coregistration, search, etc), their age, seniority, number of newsletters and types of newsletters sent, number of website clicks, and click-through rates on emails enables them to develop a comprehensive picture of the prospect. By comparing it to an existing client and identifying what the 'trigger event' was which made them purchase, they can then anticipate which unique marketing action will convert the new prospect into a client.

This brings targeted communications to a whole new level and allows the retailer to enjoy the best ROI on their client acquisition programme.

6) Basket Abandonment

In tracking your conversion scenario there are instances where your prospect may select items to purchase and then abandon their basket before finalising the transaction. This can and should be monitored. Often you can determine what the obstacle to purchase was and offer an alternative.

- Postage – was the postage too expensive – offer free shipping
- Confidentiality – was the prospect unsure about providing their confidential banking details? Then offer them an alternate payment option such as a call centre
- Cumbersome – is the check-out process too long? Find a way to simplify it.

By monitoring your checkout responses you can streamline the process and remove barriers to prospect conversion.

Up Next

Look out for next month's white paper where we'll be looking at Loyalty programmes.

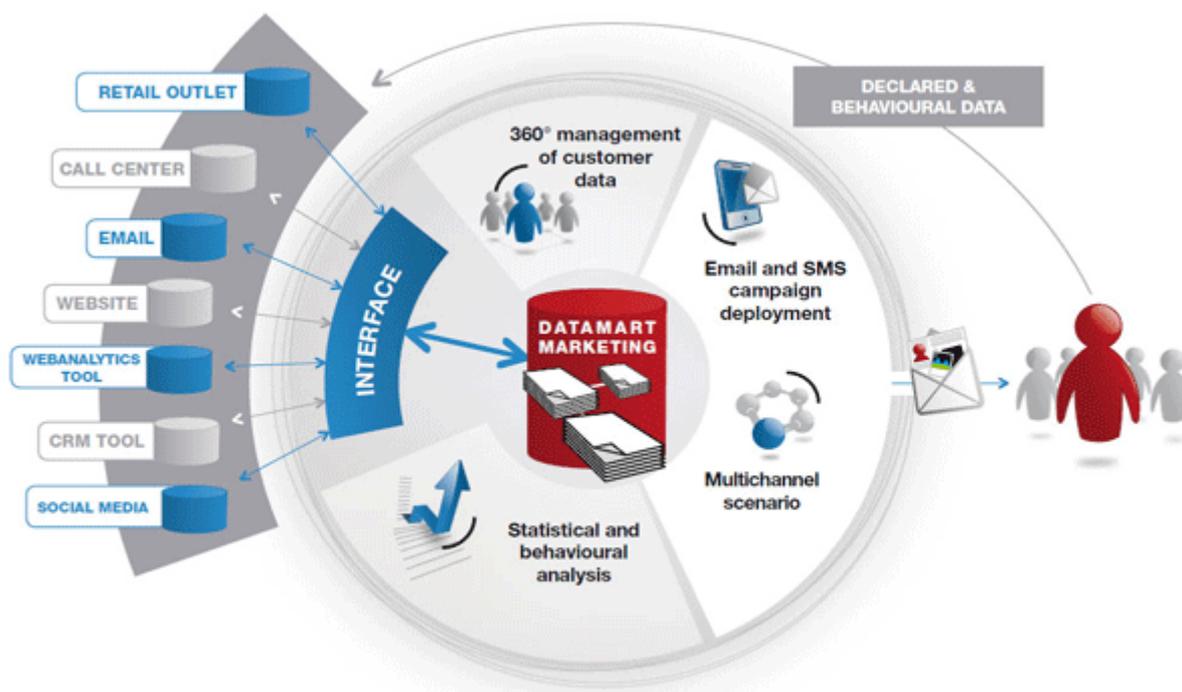
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About Cabestan

Cabestan are specialists in consumer engagement by Email and SMS.

As industry leaders for over 12 years, Cabestan develops the only SaaS platform to coordinate and orchestrate your marketing campaigns. The **Cabestan** platform provides a flexible way to manage your relationships across the entire customer lifecycle.

Our solutions give you a 360° view of customer data allowing you to plan and deliver personalised and real time marketing communications resulting in greater marketing effectiveness.



Cabestan's platform delivers the following powerful tools:

- 360° management of customer data
- Email and SMS campaign deployment
- Multi-channel campaign management
- Statistical and behavioural analysis with real time data

Companies using **Cabestan's** campaign management platform include: **Axcion, General Electric, Toys "R" Us, Estee Lauder, Symantec, Yves Rocher, GDS Suez and Renault.**

Cabestan is a global company with offices in London, Paris, Madrid, New York and Montréal.

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