

AUTOMATING SALES AND MARKETING IS TAYLOR MARKET MEDIA GROUP'S NICHE

With marketing, ideas are the easy part. Finding someone on your lean and mean staff with the time and know-how to implement the ideas is often the challenge. Especially when many distributors run without marketing departments, making even routine mailings and events burdensome.

Todd Taylor, an automation engineer and founder of Taylor Market Media Group, saw the chance to



build a company around software that offers the marketing expertise distributors

want, but don't always have the time or personnel to achieve.

"He was calling on distributors and discovered people didn't have the tools to effectively target market their customer base," says Joe Raventos, president of Taylor Market Media Group, based in Newport Beach, Calif.

The fruits of his vision and labors are two products: Content-on-Demand and Sales Management Plus.

Content-on-Demand is a Web-based newsletter system that automates newsletter production and emailing lists. Sales Management Plus is a customer-centric sales and marketing software program that allows a company to slice and dice its historical sales data into meaningful information that will find complementary products and/or up-sell opportunities.

"What we try to do is make it easier for the distributor to manage their business processes and free up their time so they can execute better, faster, and more frequently with less effort," Raventos says. "These are tools that allow a distributor to out-source marketing very effectively and very inexpensively.

"There's a huge opportunity for distributors to do proactive marketing. You don't have to be a multimillion-dollar organization either. There are tools available to help a distributor, from small distributors to large regional distributors. Everybody can use these tools."

Content-on-Demand automates the process of publishing an electronic newsletter. Taylor Market Media Group has created a database with product information from manufacturers and vendors. Using that content, a distributor can pick a different set of products to highlight each month and can even configure it to highlight IMARK vendors to maximize rebates. With a click of the mouse, product content is dropped into a template that has been customized with a distributor's logo, contact info, and website links. Customized messages from the distributor announcing specials, events, or whatever needs to be communicated are easily added. Links to a distributor's website or to a manufacturer's homepage allow the reader to be interactive and obtain more information quickly.

When it's all put together, distributors schedule the day they want the news to break. On the chosen day, Taylor Market Media Group automatically emails the newsletter to the distributor's customer list.

"Someone can create a customized newsletter in less than 30 minutes," Raventos says. "In one day, they can take 20 key vendors that they want to promote for the year. Eight hours later, they've got all of their newsletters done for the whole year."

Content-on-Demand costs \$250 a month, based on a minimum six-month contract, and requires a \$995 setup fee.

Since it's always easier to sell more to existing customers than it is to develop new prospects, reaching them with a tool that can generate more sales is what Content-on-Demand is designed to do. That's why Wabash Electric Supply in Wabash, Ind., decided to start using the newsletter system last summer.

Joe Dyer, a vice president and part owner at Wabash, said his company is still tweaking the newsletter, trying to involve department heads from throughout the company to develop the right messages for Wabash's diverse customers.

The newsletter system appealed to Dyer because it was something his staff didn't have to spend time developing on its own. It's a turnkey operation. "As for a mass mailing, this is the first thing we've really gotten



involved in,” says Dyer, whose company has six locations and an email list of about 300 customers.

Dyer says that while it may take time to see results, sending email to customers on a regular basis keeps the Wabash name in front of the right people—and that’s smart business. It’s also more thorough and quicker than the current method of distributing marketing information through sales calls.

“Some customers might not even have a salesman that calls on them,” Dyer says. “But when we develop the right message with the right product, customers are going to say, ‘Geez, I didn’t know you carried that.’ And when the right product is sent to 300 people, maybe that one item interests 20 people that we wouldn’t have sold it to otherwise.”

Power of suggestion is a powerful sales tool—once a company figures out what to suggest. And that, Taylor Market Media Group says, is what Sales Management Plus provides: the power to suggest the right products.

SMP mines data to produce leads. The software package, which Taylor Market Media Group says works with any legacy computer system, allows distributors to analyze a customer’s

buying patterns. Then, using targeted marketing pieces, a distributor can capitalize on sales opportunities with existing customers, which are uncovered by the software.

“Enterprise resource planning software is what runs a distributor’s accounting and inventory,” says Raventos. “It doesn’t do a good job of providing sales and marketing tools.”



By using SMP, Raventos says

that a distributor can quickly and significantly increase sales penetration to its customer base.

“Distributors think they have 60 to 70 percent of a customer’s business, but when you do the analysis you often find they have less than 20 percent, and it’s being split between five distributors,” he says.

Neil Gillespie, a partner with the marketing and consulting Channel Marketing Group, says SMP is an effective way for a distributor to understand what they’re selling and to whom they’re selling it.

“It’s an excellent sales and marketing automation engine,” says Gillespie, who works out of Pittsburgh, Pa.

The software allows distributors to look at complementary products—items that are used in concert with other items—and check sales of each item to specific customers.

“If you were looking to identify customers that bought \$1,000 of enclosures in the last six months, but less than \$100 in fuses, the system would bring up those customers,” says Gillespie, who has recommended SMP to clients.

Then, the distributor could send target-marketing materials on fuses to those customers.

The same analysis could be done with lamps and ballast, wire and connectors, and many other products that are used in concert on a job site.

“It’s looking for niche opportunities in areas where you know the customer is probably buying something, but just not from you,” he says.

SMP costs \$500 a month for 10 user licenses and requires setup fees of \$5,995. It also costs \$99 to set up each user.

Some manufacturers, such as Greenlee, now allow distributors to use co-op marketing dollars to offset their initial investments and continuing costs of using both Content-on-Demand and Sales Management Plus. That’s a big boost for Taylor Market Media Group, but is also a big boost to distributors that can’t find the time and people to market themselves.

“Good market planning is a critical and essential part of running a distributorship. It doesn’t matter what size company you are,” Raventos says.

“If you don’t start now you’re going to lose ground because the market is not growing. If you’re not taking market away from somebody else, they’re taking it away from you. You’re either growing or going. There is no standing still.”

You can learn more about Content-on-Demand and Sales Management Plus at www.taylormmg.com.

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