



Content Management: The Secret Weapon in Your Marketing Arsenal

| Making the Most of Your Online Marketing Activities |

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Content Management: The Secret Weapon in Your Marketing Arsenal

The term 'Web 2.0' has perhaps received an undue amount of attention, but it is a reality that every organization with an online presence must work within. Web marketers must face up to highly choosy consumers demanding up-to-the-minute, accurate, conveniently packaged, dynamic and interactive content. With increasing amounts of marketing spend being diverted online (U.S. Internet advertising spending reached close to \$20 billion in 2007 according to one survey) companies are beginning to feel the pressure to make the most of their online marketing activities.

When you consider that online marketing revolves around the Web and the Web revolves around content, at the very core of any effort towards optimizing online marketing is quality content. But good content is not enough unless you can deliver this content quickly, easily and in the right amounts at the right time. Enter the Web Content Management System (CMS); online marketing's most potent but most underplayed weapon. Any organization serious about getting the most out of its Web site will value a Web CMS solution because:

- ▶ Creating and managing online content is a marketing-related function, not an IT-related one. The focus is therefore on an easy-to-use interface that allows marketing professionals with only a rudimentary knowledge of the system to manage Web content.
- ▶ Every Web site needs constant monitoring and updating of content to attract consumers and have them return. A manual process is clearly not the best way to do this.
- ▶ The increased ease and speed of publishing content through a CMS allows for companies to be properly tuned to new challenges and expectations for their site, and respond in a timely manner.
- ▶ Standardized processes that can easily be tracked give companies greater control over the content generated, with quality checks at all appropriate points.



Web CMS: Advantage

- ▶ Centralization of content production for content consistency
- ▶ Performance management to ensure a better usability experience
- ▶ Search engine optimization for greater visibility
- ▶ Analytics capabilities for accurate measurement and analysis of marketing effectiveness

A Web CMS system thus offers several opportunities for maximizing a company's return on marketing investment. The good news is that leading CMS solutions providers have realized the shift in focus from mere administration to marketing potential: they now prime their solutions to directly impact revenue generation. With the right Web CMS, companies can now create accurately coordinated, multi-pronged marketing campaigns that can easily be tracked, modified, and quantified for analysis.

Let's look at some of the advantages of a Web CMS in detail:

CONTENT CONSISTENCY

For potential customers to be attracted to a Web site, navigate their way through it and finally commit to a transaction – whether that be filling out a form, visiting a certain page, or actually purchasing a product – a key requirement is that they consistently receive information that appeals to them without difficulty. It is therefore important for any organization to coordinate content production at every level: the primary site, marketing emails, newsletters, landing pages and microsites. Single-sourcing is a critical enabler of marketing efforts, as the resultant content consistency ensures good brand management and greater user relevancy.

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO)

Central to any e-marketing effort, search engine optimization (SEO) involves techniques and innovations to ensure that a company's Web site is consistently top-ranked. In considering SEO, one must look at two different kinds of advertising that take place:

- Organic or natural search - Although most companies tend to focus on paid search because it's a quick lead fix and much more measurable, the benefits of organic search should not be neglected. It is here that a strong marketing-centric CMS can help; not only by providing consistent, updated content with efficient metadata but also by facilitating keyword analysis and development.
- Paid search - With paid search too, a CMS can help reduce pay-per-click rates by optimizing the Web site's quality score. The quality score is factored on many aspects such as click-through-rate and content relevancy, all of which decide how much an organization pays for search services. It is also infinitely valuable in quickly and easily creating landing pages for all your keywords, campaigns or adgroups.

USABILITY EXPERIENCE

Web 2.0 consumers are not merely looking for information; they seek a user experience. Integral to this experience is accessibility. Consumers must be able to access content in dynamic ways, without being restricted by weak taxonomy support or hierarchical information organizations. Social bookmarking now allows consumers to classify, organize and share content based on hierarchies that best appeal to them. Then there is the question of community-generated content, both primary (articles or blog posts) and metadata (comments, voting, ratings, and more).

A good CMS infinitely simplifies this process by allowing public participation in the publishing workflow. It provides the necessary tools to monitor, acknowledge, verify and incorporate feedback into the system, thus promoting greater interactivity. Web publishers should also remember that users can now access content from various Web-enabled devices: the CMS must therefore maintain a level of separation between content and presentation systems.

WEB ANALYTICS

Responding to dynamic online marketing challenges is nearly impossible without timely and easy access to tools that track, measure, analyze and report user behavior and campaign effectiveness. While analytics has traditionally remained a separate domain from content management, companies are increasingly realizing advantages in leveraging relationships between the two. When fully integrated with a Web CMS, analytics solutions offer the advantages of consistent KPIs (key performance indicators), higher level traffic data analysis, scenario analyses and campaign tracking; all within the interface of the CMS itself. Thus, an integrated analytics and CMS solution offers non-technical, subject matter experts easily understandable, comprehensive tracking tools that can then be leveraged for better marketing returns.

The Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) Advantage

Many factors have prevented small and mid-size organizations from benefiting from either installed software or open source CMS; primary issues being cost and implementation effort. With Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) or hosted solutions, companies now receive all the advantages of enterprise-class CMS solutions without any of the hassles of installed or open source solutions.

The primary advantage is that SaaS removes the need for purchasing expensive software. SaaS also spares resource-starved companies the need for more hardware or personnel investments required for implementation, maintenance and upgrade of the CMS. And finally, SaaS models ensure constant vendor support, as the responsibility for maintaining the solution remains with the service provider.

The Bottom Line

The old days of top-down information delivery are gone. The mantra of the Web 2.0 world is fluidity and responsiveness. Treating content management as just regular delivery of static pages of information is a sure way to get left behind. Content management must be an ongoing process vital to organizational functioning, and the best way to streamline it, is through a good CMS.

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