



How Marketing Can Drive the Right Messages with a CMS

| Marketing with a CMS |

Table of Contents

How Marketing Can Drive the Right Messages with a CMS.....	3
How Can a CMS Help?.....	3
More Power to Marketing.....	4

How Marketing Can Drive the Right Messages with a CMS

Joseph DaCunha, Chief Marketing Officer of Excellent Information Systems, an IT services firm, was close to desperation. His smooth-talking abilities had convinced a prospective client to grant him an audience; but now he had to walk the talk. As usual, the client had asked Joseph to send him the URL of his company's Web site – especially the section about the firm's capabilities in providing services around Sarbanes-Oxley compliance – just as Joseph had described them.

As soon as Joseph got off the phone, he ordered his Web staff to reuse the scattered content across the Web site that concerned Sarbanes-Oxley, and put together a small consolidated Web page that he could send to the client post haste.

However, with no search facility on the Web site, the task of finding content was challenging. Further, as is the experience of many companies, there were too many duplicate files on the same subject. For example, a white paper on 'Ten Best Practices for SOX Compliance' had five different versions – and no one had a clue which version was the correct one. To compound problems, the HTML programmer responsible for creating the Web page was unavailable. There seemed to be no way to put up the content on the Web site in such a short time...

Joseph's case is not an isolated one, and one can find countless examples where timely action of updating or repurposing content is just not possible – simply because marketing people don't possess technical knowledge. The result? A lost opportunity. When technical expertise is unavailable, content suffers and so does business. Should a Web site, the single and most important market-facing touch point for any organization, be dependent on a few technical people who may or may not fully understand the strategic intent of the content?

How Can a CMS Help?

In an article on www.marketingprofs.com, David Aponovich states: "Marketing professionals are responsible for the overall communication of products, services and brands. Your Web site is an integral part of your marketing strategy; doesn't it make sense to put more content control in the hands of marketing experts?"

A content management system (CMS) can help organizations give non-technical personnel control of the Web site; which means that even marketing staff can actively participate in managing and updating content on their own. Repurposing or reusing content is easy, as every piece of content is centrally managed. Marketing staff can use the same information and deliver it using multiple mediums such as campaigns, direct email newsletters, pod casts or advertisements.

Driven by templates, the CMS empowers the marketing function to focus on the content and its strategic value, without worry about design or formatting. Subject matter experts across the organization can contribute to maintaining different sections of the Web site, even if they are based at different locations. This is made possible by Web-based CMS that is accessible anywhere.

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Further, quality of content is assured as most CMS's support intelligent workflow automation, which ensures that content passes through several approval mechanisms before it gets published. You can even set alerts if a particular section on the Web site is not updated for a specific time period.

A centralized control system also means that the organization can effectively measure the success of different online initiatives. Campaigns can be created using a CMS, launched using email marketing software, and measured using a Web analytics tool. Campaign enquiries, registrations and feedback can be automatically captured, and trends analyzed using the analytics tool.

For example, information entered by subscribers while mentioning their preferences, can be used by the CRM system to deliver customized newsletters or offers to prospects. While the intelligence is provided by the Web analytics tool, the ability to repurpose content, and launch it in a medium that is well suited to the subscriber is executed using a CMS. This is the basis for a closed loop system, allowing continuous improvement and refining of marketing campaigns on-the-go.

If you opt for a CMS delivered using a SaaS model, the benefits are amplified. There are no hassles of managing hardware or purchasing software – all you do is rent the software from a service provider. As a customer, you pay a fixed subscription fee on a monthly or quarterly basis and leave the task of managing, maintaining and upgrading the software to the vendor.

Integration of the CMS with your proprietary tools or third party software is also the responsibility of the vendor. The SaaS model allows organizations to rapidly deploy the CMS, which in turn means that their Web sites can be quickly aligned to business objectives.

More Power to Marketing

As custodians of the brand, marketing professionals spend significant amounts of time trying to get advertising messages – and even the locations of billboards and such - right. Why should the Web site be any different? As with other mediums, it is important for the marketing function to own the Web site, and make it fast and easy for the function to update the content as the business requires.

The other important aspect is speed in responding to a particular business opportunity. For example, using a CMS, Joseph, our distressed marketing professional, would have been easily able to create a microsite with content that shows the organization's Sarbanes-Oxley compliance expertise. Without relying on a programmer, he could have been able to repurpose content across the Web site by drawing content from different sections.

By giving marketing folks the power and control to easily update and own sections of a particular Web site, an organization can quickly move with the times, and align the Web site more closely with the brand and competitive needs of the market. For instance, the detailed knowledge of a customer can help marketing members easily create and alter forms or campaigns without involving the IT department.

The Web site is an integral and strategic weapon in the armory of marketers, and a CMS can help sharpen this weapon to deliver more value in an intensely competitive world.

CrownPeak
5880 W Jefferson Blvd
Unit G
Los Angeles, CA 90016

sales@crowpeak.com
www.crowpeak.com
Toll Free: 800-887-1944
Tel: 310-841-5920

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