



## Website Management Strategy

### **CrownPeak Technology's VP of sales and marketing lists five ways to better reach your audience.**

One of my favorite moments from the television series "Seinfeld" is when Kramer decides to become the movie phone guy. Of course, when he says, "Press 1 to select this movie, or press 2 to select this movie," he's confused as to what number has been pressed. He's not a computer. So, after a priceless moment of Krameresque incredulity he simply says, "Why don't you just tell me the name of the movie you'd like to see?" Classic.

And so it occurs to me that sometimes, as digital marketers, we have so much technology monitoring our Website that we sometimes fall into the trap of always designing better ways to say something, rather than figuring out how to simply listen more effectively.

It's certainly no secret that social networking is a hot topic. MySpace.com alone is generating enough buzz to sound like a chainsaw. But we know as digital marketers, this social networking trend is part of a larger movement to develop relationships with our customers. In today's over-saturated market, it's about listening to what our customers are saying, and developing relationships with them *before* they've purchased from us.

Take a simple example: sales leads coming from the Website. Now, normally, every good marketer has a system to enable leads from the Website— to automatically update their CRM system (like Salesforce.com) and apply the campaign from which they came. And, if we're really tricky, we even have the ability to create new campaigns from our content management system before we publish the landing page. Then, we A/B test it, determine which version gets the highest CTR, and we clap our hands together in a swinging motion as if wiping them dry and say "Aren't we fabulous."

But we're missing the larger opportunity. The metrics measured from the landing page are content. The different offers are content. The data that we're not collecting from our Website is — you guessed it — content. And, it can be qualitative. Our customers can, in the immortal words of Kramer, simply tell us the movie they'd like to see.

### **Leads aren't numbers. They are our new friends.**

Consider a new lead coming from your Website. It may surprise you to know that if this lead updates your CRM system automatically, and provides for some added value to your sales team before they contact that lead, you're already a step ahead of the game. Yes, it's true, most companies haven't even gone this far. If you're one that hasn't, it's an important next step.

But what if it could do more. What if you provided for some fields (or even one) on your lead generation form that allowed for leads to add additional, open-ended content. For example, "How did you hear about us?" or "What can we do for you?" can be much more effective than a drop-down menu or a checkbox. Now, you won't be able to assign numerical values to this content because by its very nature it's open-ended. But you can get some extraordinarily interesting and valuable results from your customers.

Or, take this a step further. What if the content coming in from the Website (the leads), could be combined with the content that generated that lead (the offer on the landing page), and also combined with the click-path the lead took to get to that offer and the SEM ad creative that the lead clicked on to get to landing page. What if you could manage that within your content

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management system and publish a centralized report that listed this information by product, by campaign etc. What if all that information was available from the content management system and the CMS also published it to your CRM system as well? And then imagine that if you changed any one element, that it would change in all the various media as well.

Now, I realize that I'm suggesting a fairly granular set of capabilities here— this content may or may not have use for your particular marketing initiatives. I'm using leads here to keep the example simple. Let your imagination run wild here. For example, this could be customers extolling their own uses for a particular product, or FAQ's being answered and re-published to a specific customer help-site, or customer-oriented blog.

The key here is getting beyond the numbers, and into the quality (and quantity, quite frankly) of content that can be generated by your customers, and actually allowing them to tell you what they think— and managing this content like you would any other content. Then, using your content management system as an aggregation tool to bring in analytics data, and campaign content all in one centralized place.

## How to open up your ears...

So, how does this get put into place? Consider these Website management strategies:

- Consider adding the ability to accept open-ended content from your Website users. Ask questions that allow them to communicate with you. I'm not suggesting a psychological examination— and this is something you can (dare I say) A/B test to determine the right quantity.
- Consider content management solutions that allow this content to be migrated seamlessly into the CMS. In this way, the content can either be edited and republished (in the case of a customer suggested FAQ knowledgebase), or parsed and reported (for a lead generation form).
- Consider adding the ability for customers to rate content and add comments to content— in order to let the users determine the value (or lack thereof) of the content.
- Consider content management solutions that allow for these ratings, or analytics data to effect the workflow and placement of content. For example, you should have the ability to automatically raise the visibility (feature it on the home page) of a valuable piece of content.
- Consider content management solutions that allow for seamless integration with other applications, as well as publishing of content out to multiple destinations— so that content pulled into the CMS can be aggregated, moved through workflow and then approved to update salesForce.com or similar.

Using technology to simply monitor a customer relationship is like trying to determine your customer's intent by watching a security camera in your store. Why not use technology to not only talk to your customers, but also listen, collaborate and ultimately communicate?