

More than just a Web store

Using e-commerce tools to drive sales and marketing results

Many organizations today are recognizing the need to be more flexible and productive with less. E-commerce tools are fast becoming a preferred way to drive sales and marketing initiatives. E-commerce technology solutions allow companies to easily personalize marketing efforts, streamline branding and empower employees to drive sales within a controlled, professional framework.

An integrated marketing solution that couples creative support with the latest in e-commerce tools allows businesses to maximize efficiency, responsiveness and ROI.

Constant challenges

A multifaceted marketing approach could entail direct mail pieces, brochures, e-mail, client proposals, follow-up letters, or any combination of printed and electronic materials. For some companies, every time a new promotion is introduced, new materials are written, designed, approved and printed. For small businesses or large corporations with many small affiliates, taking a new marketing concept from initiation to implementation requires a great investment in time, cost and human resources. E-commerce solutions that offer online access to marketing materials and promotional campaigns are an excellent, cost-effective method to provide sales and marketing support to internal as well as external user groups.

A customized e-commerce site allows brand and marketing message control while offering 24-7 access to material. In a traditional scenario, a retail branch needing to distribute new flyers at its location for a product promotion would have limited options: The manager could either use whatever software is at his disposal to write and design a piece that may be riddled with compliance and accuracy issues or wait for the parent company to go through the design, printing and delivery process of a piece that may not even be specific to the store's location or market. A personalized e-commerce site can offer an efficient, cost-effective solution for simply ordering appropriate marketing materials or designing and executing a program or campaign online.

New solutions

E-commerce solutions allow managers, sales reps — or anyone designated as a user — to act as their own production department. The company's unique creative materials and guidelines are developed by the marketing firm and made available on a site that can only be accessed by authorized members of the company or a designated user community. In a retail environment, this technology supports grassroots efforts at the local store level by giving users ac-

cess to an Internet site with a variety of graphic, image and text choices, all brand compliant and updated for the business's latest promotions. Users create and order professional-looking marketing materials or even print them on-site to bring campaign materials to market much more quickly and cost effectively.

The degree of customization available through e-commerce tools varies widely to meet the busi-

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ness requirements of individual companies and needs of the user groups. With content and user access completely controlled by the company, an e-commerce site can be developed to offer exactly what is needed now with the capacity to expand to meet future needs. E-commerce systems can be designed to offer incredible functionality:

- Real-time stock, order status and reporting information
- Ability to order printed marketing materials, promotional products, packaging, fulfillment services and POP
- Ability to customize and print materials on demand
- Ability to track and manage orders, inventory and ROI

If a sales rep knows that a prospect is only interested in five pages out of the company's multi-page brochure, those pages can not only be printed separately but can be redesigned with images and graphics specific to the prospect. With an e-commerce solution, even materials like business cards can be edited and reprinted if there's a change to the company or employee, eliminating the need to order large amounts of collateral that may quickly become obsolete.

With the ability to improve communication with customers, provide exceptional sales support, and control brand and content in marketing materials, it's clear that an e-commerce solution is more than just a Web store.



With more than 25 years of experience, The Shamrock Companies specializes in building brands with integrated marketing solutions.

Case study:

When a large national wireless service provider was looking to implement an easy-to-use online marketing tool to streamline its prospect nurturing process, it turned to the Shamrock Companies' e-commerce solutions.

The client's goal was to empower its sales team to nurture and manage business prospects with maximum efficiency while allowing the team to spend more time on sales initiatives. Management needed to have access to a centralized prospect database and reports to assess each sales representative's productivity and the status of his or her prospects.

Shamrock's solution was a highly personalized tool that allows each sales rep to see the real-time status of his or her business contacts upon login to the system. The application includes built-in marketing communication tactics like direct mail, e-mail, sales presentations, letters and mail merge. The tool allows the sales rep to select branded, templated tactics that are appropriate for specific campaigns or functions and reach out to contacts on a personal level. The system also includes productivity and prospect status reports for management.

Since implementation of the Prospect Nurturing System, the customer has experienced significant efficiency and productivity gains along with cost and time savings.



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