3 Ways Automation Can Help Companies Work Smarter, Not Harder

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Although efficiency has always been a central goal for businesses, I have seen companies under increased pressure during this economic crisis to deliver results while navigating significant challenges. Staffing resources are tight and budgets are being cut, but companies need to keep growing to prevent the need to tighten their belts even further.

My colleagues in the marketing industry have seen this play out firsthand. In fact, a recent SurveyMonkey study on how the health crisis has impacted marketing budgets showed respondents believe their budgets are more than twice as likely to decrease (42 percent) as they are to increase (19 percent).

For companies struggling to market effectively, automation can help them work smarter and be more effective. Automation tools save valuable time and help streamline workloads when staff bandwidth is low but can be implemented around the clock to help engage customers and grow business.

The need for automation was already clear before the modern climate hit, but the global health crisis sharply exacerbated it. Gartner predicts that by 2024, organizations could lower operational costs by 30 percent by combining hyper-automation

technologies with redesigned operational processes.

The need to decrease or optimize company costs while maintaining growth is critical, and automation is a company's most useful tool in this climate. Here are three ways you can tap automation to work smarter, not harder and keep growing your business.

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Leave the tedious tasks to tech so you can focus on strategy

Effective marketing can take a lot of legwork. The more you can delegate laborious, time-intensive tasks to an automation platform, the more time you free up for creative, strategic tasks. This is crucial because it lets you focus more time and effort on your solutions, your customers and your overall business strategy.

Let's face it: A lot of tasks, like data management, audience segmentation, scheduling prospect emails and more take up valuable time, but they can all be automated effectively by a powerful enough tool. Sophisticated modern platforms track and leverage data insights to automatically optimize performance with minimal input from employees. And, automated tools work 24/7 so your employees don't confront a backlog of tedious tasks throughout the day.

Now more than ever, you need to invest your manpower where it counts and maximize the time employees can spend on high-value tasks that can't be automated. For your organization, this might include hosting webinars, organizing customer roundtables or planning out a new launch strategy.

The more you can help employees create efficiencies when bandwidth is extra tight, the more they'll thank you for it.

Streamline the way you track customer behavior

Building customer profiles based on behavior is essential to successfully engage customers. The way prospects behave on LinkedIn indicates which of your ebooks could address their pain points, and the pages they visit on your site can point towards webinars or packages they're most curious about. But tracking and analyzing behavioral data across numerous channels is exhausting.

Luckily, integrating your platforms is easy and will provide you with greater visibility to engage customers more efficiently. If you don't view prospects and customers with the full picture of their multichannel behaviors, you're leaving opportunities to deliver value on the table.

Save yourself from tracking behavior on individual channels by tapping automation to create comprehensive audience segments. Your customers are spending more time online than ever before, and they are in too many places at once for you to track behavior channel-by-channel. Manually exporting all that data to a centralized source, where it becomes actionable, takes even more time that you just don't have.

Automation platforms streamline data from key channels to make it clear what's resonating and where you should spend resources. Moving quickly to cut through a cluttered digital landscape will save you time and add more value to your customer life cycle without overhauling your strategy.

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Align your marketing strategy with

your CRM

Marketers and sales teams are responsible for working in tandem to bring in revenue. If your marketers and sales teams are not both benefiting from automation and your customer relationship management (CRM) system, it’s time to figure out how to create a synergistic relationship.

Marketers and sales teams are both under significant pressure right now, but they can both benefit from each other’s technology when leveraged properly. The most effective sales and marketing teams don’t operate in silos. Marketers are working to develop messaging, content, social media and email campaigns that are necessary to engage customers, while sales teams are working to close leads, sell more to existing customers and convert prospects into buyers.

Connecting automation to a CRM system provides actionable intelligence for both marketers and sales. For salespeople, customer intelligence gleaned from automation lends a better sense of what prospects are hot and what interests and needs customers have demonstrated. This helps close sales and contributes to business growth.

When marketers can integrate automation with CRMs, it helps them execute lead nurturing campaigns and convert prospects to customers – it’s the time-tested “right person, right message, right time” strategy. Combining automation with a CRM also helps manage, recycle and reassign sales leads based on specific behaviors, resulting in time savings for you and your teams.

This is especially important if you know you have a long sales cycle. In short – the faster you connect with prospects, the more likely they are to trust and commit to your solutions.

I know this isn’t an easy time to grow a business, and automation can seem intimidating for companies that aren’t

used to it. But having seen the tried-and-true results that automation can deliver, I know it belongs in all of our arsenals as an accessible tool we can rely on no matter what the future brings.

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