But these aspects of your job are by no means new, nor are they mutually exclusive from your traditional marketing plans, they are simply basics that more and more people overlook as technology automates much of their jobs.

So while customer identification and lead generation are critical components of the job function, increasingly so is customer retention. Often, your most profitable and therefore most valuable customers are the ones you already have, and it is vital in the search for new customers that you do not alienate your existing customer base.

The quickest way is naturally to know your customer, but in a world where personal or direct touch can sometimes just be impossible, knowing your customers means being disciplined enough to collect data on them and to put this into a system that will help you understand who your best customers are, and then proactively work towards understanding what you can do to retain them. A potentially daunting task, especially when your customer base runs to hundreds of thousands across the globe. The most intelligent way to go about achieving this is to ascribe a process, or invest in a solution that will give you the ability to make sense out of the mountains of disconnected customer data you collect on a daily basis.

Connecting with your customers
The truth is that many companies have difficulty understanding and connecting with their customers, and according to marketing guru Scott Bedbury, who recently presented a workshop in Johannesburg, creating a connection with your customers is one of the three steps to creating a great brand.

A consistent view of each customer’s past, present and future behaviour is central to identifying and connecting with your customers, yet it can be the most challenging aspect of the process. It is impossible to get a holistic, single view of customers when information collected on your customers is done in a disjointed or haphazard way and data is scattered across different departments throughout the organisation, something which is compounded by modern multi-channel customer interactions.

Another issue is that organisations often lack the analytical capabilities necessary to be able to make sense of, and really use the data thrown up by traditional customer relationship management (CRM) systems. This can make it difficult, if not impossible,
parameter-driven reports. The platform also provides standard reports, ad hoc reports, OLAP drill-down analysis and The SAS Enterprise Intelligence Platform includes enterprise-level existing technology investments and decreases the total cost of can be used within the marketing department and across the Intelligence Platform, which provides foundational components that SAS Customer Intelligence is built on the SAS Enterprise • SAS Real-Time Decision Management • SAS Interaction Management • SAS Marketing Optimisation • SAS for Marketing Performance Management campaigns: data on them and to put this into a system means being disciplined enough to collect customer, but in a world where personal or The quickest way is naturally to know your job function, increasingly so is customer generation are critical components of the Do you understand your customer? your customers? The tools of the trade Johannesburg, creating a connection with The truth is that many companies have of disconnected customer data you collect ability to make sense out of the mountains lack the analytical capabilities necessary to Another issue is that organisations often towards understanding what you can that will help you understand who your are simply basics that more and more work towards understanding what you can best customers are, and then proactively that can be used to understand and anticipate customer behaviour, meeting customer needs, building more profitable customer relationships and turning brand loyalty into personal relationships with its 10 million customers.

Sports The Advanced Media segment of one of America’s largest sports organisations has harnessed the power of SAS Marketing Automation by extending customer intelligence capabilities to give individual teams in its stable a holistic view of their fans. The organisation is a thriving young business that brings fans and their favourite teams closer together through the Internet via cell phone products, fantasy leagues, Web subscriptions, e-mail, e-commerce and other points of contact, and the SAS solution enables it to better educate its customers so that they will develop an emotional bond with sports team and therefore the various merchandise associated with the teams.

Banking One of South Africa’s largest financial services organisations deployed SAS Marketing Automation to give it a 360 degree view of its customers. The solution gathers and cleanses data from product and customer silos and then places it in a campaign management data mart. The data is then exploited for analytical cross-selling and to support automation of various communication channels, including telemarketing, direct mail and e-marketing. The benefits of the solution are twofold: firstly it increases existing revenue streams by cross-selling and up-selling, and secondly, it creates new revenue streams through the introduction of new products tailored more specifically to customer needs.

The thread that ties all of these stories together is the need for intelligent and complete information on your customers. This enables you to market effectively, tailor campaigns, measure their effectiveness and create emotional connections with your customers. This in turn means you can ensure you keep your best customers, maximise profitability, and are able to then seek out new customers who will prove to be loyal and profitable ones.

Time to intelligence Customer Intelligence can ensure that your efforts to reach customers and improve customer profitability do not fall flat, providing you with a complete, single view of your customers, smarter customer segmentation and in turn improved return on your marketing investment.

Customer Intelligence can help you implement campaigns and programmes across channels effectively, consistently and in a timely fashion, and ensure that you target the right customers with the right offers. Incorporating the power of predictive analytics on top of this allows you to predict the result of campaigns before you conduct them, and then afterwards analyse the effectiveness of any given campaign, affording you the ability to learn and grow from previous mistakes.

Customer Intelligence has several distinct business benefits: it can help to enhance the customer experience by gaining customer knowledge and insight and maintaining a continuous customer dialogue; it can assist with achieving profitable revenue growth through customer value management; it can improve marketing performance and accountability by linking marketing activities and assigning them with overall company goals; and it can help optimise marketing expenditures.

This, when combined with analytical capabilities, leads to deeper understanding and insight into customers’ behaviour, yielding strong increases in customer retention and therefore happier, more valuable, more profitable customers.

Some success stories All around the world, organisations from fields as diverse as online retailers, sports organisations and banks have reaped the benefits of deploying a SAS Customer Intelligence solution.

Online Using SAS Customer Relationship Management tools, an online flower retailer in the United States transformed its business, shifting the focus from convenience, which has become something of a commodity, to obtaining a vast knowledge of customers in order to provide a more intimate and customised service. The company collects and analyses customer data, turning it into knowledge that can be used to understand and anticipate customer behaviour, meeting customer needs, building more profitable customer relationships and turning brand loyalty into personal relationships with its 10 million customers.

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