

Research by Alterian reveals achieving effective communication with individuals rather than mass marketing is the key issue for marketers today

Submitted by: Ruder Finn UK

Wednesday, 27 May 2009

Survey reveals businesses understand the need for Customer Engagement but are yet to achieve it

LONDON, UK – 27 May 2009 – Almost half of marketing agencies see achieving effective communication with individuals as the key issue facing marketers over the next 36 months with 45% viewing it as a must-have for any campaign. The survey carried out by Alterian amongst almost 100 senior executives from 45 leading UK marketing agencies during its annual partner summit in May 2009, also showed that many expect their roadmaps for fully embracing integrated marketing – key to delivering the right message through the right channel in a timely fashion – to play out over the next 12-24 months.

David Eldridge, CEO, Alterian commented, “Traditional marketing campaigns took market research or group data and built programmes around many generalised traits and assumptions, but didn’t treat customers as individuals. Companies can spend huge amounts of money driving people to their website through search and Google Ads but, if the website does not then engage those people, the efforts and money spent are wasted. Today’s marketing relies on a two way conversation and our business partners – consisting of the worlds leading providers of services to marketers – are geared up to supporting their clients with engaging data-led campaigns both on and offline.”

Engaging conversations

The main theme of the survey was to discuss the industry’s move towards Customer Engagement. Almost three quarters (74%) of respondents claimed that their customers were beginning to understand the value of engagement, although opinion was divided as to how this was expected to happen.

“The need to engage better with customers is driving all types of marketing campaigns today” said Iain Lovatt, executive chairman of Blue Sheep and Alterian partner. “In order to do this, marketing campaigns need to be integrated across online and offline channels and must speak to customers as individuals and not demographics. Integrated marketing is clearly going to be a focus for many businesses over the coming 12 months.”

Antisocial marketing?

Despite the increasing dominance of social media, this was ranked second in the list of key drivers by clients to change their marketing activity, with a quarter (28%) of the audience voting for this. Around two thirds (65%) of respondents ranked the increasing use of the web to research, engage and transact with their customers as the most important driver for change.

“Customer engagement is the new marketing. Smart marketing service providers and agencies realize that and are using their close relationship with their client’s data to drive a move towards individualization of communication and through this are much closer to achieving customer engagement.” said David Eldridge, CEO of Alterian.

He continued, "The research amongst our event's audience backs up this strategy and that of David Frankland at Forrester in his recent report into the MSP market*, underlining the need for technology that can support integrated campaigns and move beyond targeted marketing to addressing and engaging with customers as individuals. It is an exciting time for Alterian as we work with our partners and end user marketers to implement our range of new technology that underpins customer engagement."

Notes to Editors:

Alterian polled a total of 45 marketing agencies such as Acxiom, RAPP and Targetbase Claydon Heeley during its annual partner event on May 21st 2009 and discussed the future of the industry, trends around integrated marketing, social media and customer engagement.

Below are the responses:

My customers understand the value of "Engagement" (allowing companies to have one-on-one conversations with their customers and prospects)?

Responses - 69

1. Strongly Agree - 24.64%
2. Somewhat Agree - 49.28%
3. Somewhat Disagree - 26.09%
4. Strongly Disagree - 0.00%

Which of these do you hear most often from clients as being the key driver of change in their activity today :

Responses - 68

1. Increasing use of the web to research, engage and transact by their customers and needing to respond to this - 64.71%
2. Marketing becoming a two way conversation – needing to embrace social media - 27.94%
3. Consumers being increasingly sensitive to invasive marketing - 4.41%
4. The need to reduce waste and respond to the green agenda - 2.94%

Forrester has identified a clear trend towards the agency of the future.

How similar is this to your own company vision?

Responses - 60

1. Very similar - 45.00%
2. Quite similar - 38.33%
3. Somewhat different - 16.67%
4. Completely different - 0.00%

How relevant do you think website individualisation will be for marketers over the next 1-3 years?

Responses - 66

1. A critical "must have" for online marketing - 45.45%
2. Relevant to many of my clients - 43.94%
3. Only relevant to a small number of the largest organisations - 9.09%
4. Never relevant - 1.52%

How receptive do you think your clients are to embracing Alterian's integrated approach to marketing?

Responses - 65

1. Ready now - 9.23%
2. Ready in the medium term (6-12 months) - 13.85%
3. Ready in the longer term (1-2 years) - 70.77%
4. Ready in 3 years+ - 6.15%

How often do your clients consider digital in their marketing campaigns?

Responses - 62

1. Always - 53.23%
2. Quite often - 37.10%
3. Occasionally - 4.84%
4. Never - 4.84%

How has this changed since this time a year ago?

Responses - 58

1. Increased significantly - 41.38%
2. Increased a little - 46.55%
3. Not increased at all - 12.07%

My customers understand the value of intelligent, analytically led email?

Responses - 59

1. Strongly Agree - 10.17%
2. Somewhat Agree - 52.54%
3. Somewhat Disagree - 25.42%
4. Strongly Disagree - 11.86%

*2009 Forrester Wave of UK Database Marketing Service Providers

About Alterian

Alterian (LSE: ALN) empowers marketers with an integrated marketing software platform combining database, online and operational marketing applications on a shared data infrastructure. The Alterian Integrated Marketing Platform makes it practical and cost effective for marketers to use actionable insight to execute an integrated marketing strategy across online and offline channels.

It is the unique integration of analytics, content and execution through our industry leading tools, such as the Alterian Messenger email platform, and the award winning Content Management solutions, which enables marketers to drive a seamless, multi-channel customer experience.

Alterian's analytically-led software is delivered to approximately 1,000 marketing departments, across 26 countries, and an international network of more than 100 business partners, including marketing services providers, agencies and systems integrators. Its partners, such as Accenture, Acxiom, Allant Group, Cap Gemini, Carlson Marketing, Experian, Epsilon, InfoUSA, LogicaCMG, Merkle, Ogilvy One and Euro RSCG Worldwide, deliver Alterian software alongside their own domain and services expertise to help market leaders such as Princess Cruises, General Motors, Zurich, Astra Zeneca, HSBC, Limited Too, AEGON, Avis, Worldwide Wrestling Entertainment, Dell, Amnesty International and Vodafone integrate marketing processes and drive competitive advantage. For more information about Alterian, products within the Alterian Integrated Marketing Platform or our Partner Network, please visit www.alterian.com.

#

For more information, contact:

Annabel Kerr
Ruder Finn
+44 (0)20 7462 8900
akerr@ruderfinn.co.uk

Karen Gibbons
Alterian
+44 (0)117 970 3200
karen.gibbons@alterian.com