Stacking Up Demand Creation Technology

✳ Demand creation technologies can be segmented into four key layers of functionality

The foundation of any best-in-class demand creation effort is complete and accurate data

Organizations should identify their requirements and carefully match them to appropriate vendor offerings

When it comes to fast food, it's easier to select from the list of the numbered, pre-grouped meals. Of course, individual items are still available for those that prefer them; it just takes a bit of extra time staring up the menu to choose exactly the right combination.

In similar fashion, a growing number of b-to-b organizations have chosen to purchase marketing automation platforms (MAPs) that offer a wide range of next-generation demand creation functionality in a single package. This hasn't meant the end of point tools, however, as MAPs have proven to be weak in certain areas and non-existent in others. To help sort out how the world of demand creation technology has recently evolved, we have overhauled our Demand Creation Technology Stack (page two); in this brief, we review the stack's four layers, and explain common functionality within each.

LAYER ONE: MARKETING DATABASE
The repository of contacts, prospects and customers, a marketing database is the foundation of all demand creation. Whether data comes from a single database or is housed in multiple internal and external data stores, the core requirement is to be able to access it in an integrated, seamless manner. Key functionality in our first stack layer includes:

- *Data quality*. It's impossible to run effective marketing campaigns without having quality prospect and customer data. Between wrong email addresses, duplicate entries and incorrect information, many organizations run fragmented marketing campaigns that don't reach their intended targets. By the same token, a response can't be qualified or duplicate responses from a Web inquiry identified if the correct demographic information doesn't exist within the database.

- *Data integration*. Although most companies think they have a unified contact database, there are often pockets of independent prospect and customer lists whose data conflicts with the central system. Without the ability to integrate this decentralized data, targeting and segmenting efforts will never encompass the full contact universe. In addition, integrating demographic and firmagraphic data from third-party sources will further enhance contact records.

- *Data analytics*. The ability to query data is the key to making it useful; therefore, it's important to have a wide range of functionality to detect patterns and similarities. From identifying spelling and data-entry mistakes to segmenting and profiling the data based on user-definable rules, a marketing database that automates and refines demand creation efforts is critical.

- *List building*. The end result of well-run quality, integration and analytics is the ability to generate clean, validated lists. Lists should be able to be built based on a number of dimensions, including geography, industry, title and buying responsibility. The best list tools will automatically generate lists based on a range of user-defined dimensions (e.g. vertical industry, company size, title) and dynamically show how the number of targets within a list is reduced or increased as additional parameters are then included or deleted.

LAYER TWO: CAMPAIGN MANAGEMENT
Many organizations currently rely on a myriad of manual and automated processes to develop, execute and manage online and offline campaigns, as well as to support Web marketing and channel marketing requirements. To streamline
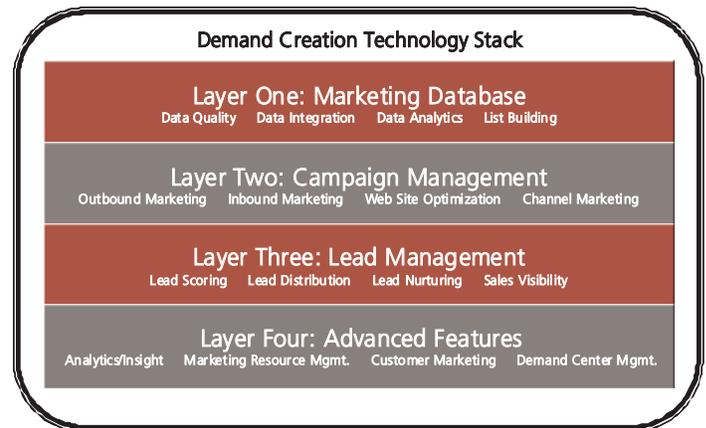
these processes, technology for campaign management should exhibit the following four competencies:

- *Outbound marketing.* A wide range of functionality exists to help organizations directly target prospects and customers through a variety of mechanisms; the key is to automate as many of the processes involved as possible. While standalone email tools are still very popular, they often cannot persist response activity from touch to touch. When it comes to teleprospecting and direct mail, contact information and status data will need to be entered manually into a system to include it from a closed-loop perspective.

- *Inbound marketing.* Inbound marketing is the practice of targeting unknown individuals with value-added content that drives them to self-identify. Successfully enabling inbound marketing relies on functionality that supports paid and organic search efforts through keyword and phrase optimization, along with the ability to syndicate content (e.g. multimedia, white papers) and track its usage. Finally, it is critical to make content available through social media outlets and track it, and to identify individuals that interact with it.

- *Web site optimization.* To optimize a Web site as a demand creation engine, three technological components are required. First, Web content management facilitates the creation, editing, management and delivery of content, including multimedia. Second, integration with other key campaign and lead management functionality will provide the engine to help convert visitors to leads. Finally, Web analytics must extend beyond the collection of activity metrics (e.g. number of visits, page views) to offer insight into visitor behavior and trend analysis over time.

- *Channel marketing.* Supporting the channel means making it easier for partners to assemble marketing campaigns and leverage the supplier's technological infrastructure, which also leads to consistent branding and messaging. On the analytics side, best-in-class b-to-b organizations understand that better alignment and reporting with partners on leads and opportunities results in improved campaign execution, better conversion rates and visibility into partner pipelines and performance.

LAYER THREE: LEAD MANAGEMENT

Generating responses through campaign management-related activities is one thing; delivering a truly qualified lead to sales is another. Thus, our third layer, lead management consists of the following functionality:

- *Lead scoring.* A system must be able to score the explicit attrib-

Demand Creation Technology Stack

Layer One: Marketing Database
Data Quality   Data Integration   Data Analytics   List Building

Layer Two: Campaign Management
Outbound Marketing   Inbound Marketing   Web Site Optimization   Channel Marketing

Layer Three: Lead Management
Lead Scoring   Lead Distribution   Lead Nurturing   Sales Visibility

Layer Four: Advanced Features
Analytics/Insight   Marketing Resource Mgmt.   Customer Marketing   Demand Center Mgmt.

utes that a prospect possesses, including demographics (individual, corporate) and positive responses to propensity to buy questions (also known as BANT, or budget-authority-need-time frame). It will also need to score implicit attributes to automatically make value judgments on activity significance (both the content involved and the difficulty to absorb the offer), and support kickers for the number of activities taken overall or within a certain time frame. Scoring must also be flexible, allowing multiple schematics to be created for different product lines and geographies.

- *Lead distribution.* Once a prospect's lead score meets an agreed-upon threshold, that prospect must be automatically routed to the most appropriate rep (direct or indirect) with an alert that the lead is now in the queue. Lead management tools should allow users to define the rules for routing and link them to the scoring mechanism. Advanced tools enable scored leads to be dropped into a pool, where they can be examined, accepted or rejected, then subsequently followed up on by direct or channel reps. Key also is the ability to track leads and define thresholds that will trigger alerts to managers if a prospect has not been contacted within a definable time period.

- *Lead nurturing.* As leads are worked by either inside, field or channel sales, a significant number will eventually be rejected. Thus, b-to-b organizations must build mechanisms to capture these prospects, and have built business rules to make sure they're either re-routed into another function for additional nurturing, or expunged from the system. When this re-routing occurs, further business rules must be built to re-market and/or re-contact these prospects at specific time intervals, and score further interactions that could result in their being resubmitted to sales for another try when additional buying signals have been given.

- *Sales visibility.* Sales can often benefit from not only having

increased visibility, but also being proactively alerted when key prospects are exhibiting specific actions (e.g. downloading content). Other features to look for include activity reports that can be accessed from a CRM system or emailed to reps, as well as a library of prebuilt email templates with approved messaging and branding that reps can send directly to prospects.

LAYER FOUR: ADVANCED FEATURES

The world of b-to-b demand creation continues to become more complex, be it from a reporting, organizational structure or roles/responsibilities standpoint. Technology must continue to evolve to meet these new challenges; our fourth and final layer is comprised by a series of advanced features that include:

• *Analytics and insight.* Marketing must not only measure its contribution to the business but also be able to identify opportunities and optimize its processes. Such insights can help organizations uncover customer and prospect attributes, behavior and response patterns that lead most often to qualified opportunities, pipeline and revenue; then try to replicate them. Robust analytics functionality also can identify the most popular "arcs of activity" that demonstrate which types of response are indicative of serious prospects, helping to prioritize spending and tactical energy.

• *Marketing resource management.* Marketing resource management products are no longer leveraged by only the largest of enterprises; organizations of all sizes now realize the importance of using workflow tools to support processes that make marketing more efficient. These features can benefit a wide range of marketing functions, including: operations staff (for planning, budgeting and ana-

lytics, as well as overall marketing technology management), field marketing (for scheduling), and corporate or product marketing (for content/asset management).

• *Customer marketing.* This class of tools develops and executes campaigns to existing customers, identifying cross-sell/upsell opportunities based on a customer's previous purchases and interactions with an organization. Significant coordination is required with sales to ensure that they're aware of major customer communication initiatives, and have the opportunity to execute them in one-off fashion if desired.

• *Demand center management.* As marketing organizations decentralize some level of campaign and program execution, they must define a set of processes and guidelines to support global content requirements and branding and messaging consistency, as well as to enforce policy adherence. These tools allow central marketing organizations to have control over the access to and customization of a library of campaigns, tools and collateral by lines of business or regions.

THE SIRIUS DECISION

Evaluating demand creation technology solutions involves a number of key decisions. Remember that technology alone will not solve demand creation woes; understanding and optimizing internal processes is critical, as is building the skills required to maximize technology's benefits. Set strategic requirements and priorities; then find the demand creation technology layers that best match them. Finally, consider a phased approach; it can help avoid the prolonged implementation cycle that results when an organization tries to adopt too much too soon.