



The changing face of recruitment marketing: From push to empower

Rewards for success

When you consider that more than half (52%) of UK talent acquisition leaders agree that “recruiting and sourcing highly-skilled talent is the most important area of interest of their organisation” (LinkedIn UK Recruiting Trends 2015), and that 64% of organisations say that the biggest obstacles to attracting top talent is “finding candidates in high demand talent pools” (LinkedIn UK Recruiting Trends 2016), it should come as no surprise that the recruitment space is becoming an increasingly competitive arena.

What this means is, of course, the reward for success in this arena is huge.

And, agencies are on the rise. Recruitment software company Sonnovate reported that during 2014 the number of new recruitment agencies being launched in the UK was at its highest level since 1990. Since then it has shown little evidence of fading away, and the UK’s recruitment industry recorded total revenue of £28.7 billion at the end of the financial year 2013/14.

In terms of marketing and getting key messages through to the market place, it’s become a tough environment. So, as the going gets tough, the marketing should become smarter. Yet, the evidence would suggest that much of the agency marketing has remained fairly static.

The volume of calls is increasing, but the content remains the same. The volume of email is increasing, but the content remains the same. And, finally, the volume of direct mail is increasing but, of course, the content in the main has stayed the same.

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Push

It's all 'push' marketing. Hitting target market with a sales message in the hope that the timing is right and that the particular candidate placed under the recipient's nose on that day, at that time, is precisely what's needed.

In fact, what it does is, mailer by mailer and call by call, erode trust in recruiters.

About five years ago we saw the same trend in the automotive industry. It was knee-jerk reaction marketing that saw an entire database of customers and prospects emailed in a desperate attempt to sell a car. The majority of the database had no desire to buy a car, but they were emailed all the same, because, what's the harm?

Well, the harm as we have proved plays out over a period of months and years. The persistent battering of its database of 'opportunities' triggered a loss in faith and an erosion of trust. Engagement levels dropped and sales, as a result, dropped too.

Empowered

Our solution was to help businesses go back to talking to customers again, work more on the message and the route to market than the offer. What this looked like, in practice, was a process of empowerment. We empowered our clients to become digital publishers, which they absolutely loved.

So, instead of devising offers to send to everyone, think really hard about the type of content that will excite and engage customers.

Think less about the sale and more about creating content that people will read and share – the sales messages will come as an organic by-product of the trust built from the valuable content.

In even more practical terms, we set our automotive clients up to be publishers who produced quarterly digital magazines. These magazines covered all kinds of topics, some automotive-related, some not, and we moved customer feedback from 'don't send me any more emails' to, 'I usually receive my BMW magazine on the first Monday of the month, but mine hasn't arrived yet'.

Recruitment has hit the same wall. Love your database, treat it with respect and the trust that comes out of this relationship will help you to forge the strategic partnerships that help recruitment firms find the levels of success that is drawing more and more to the ever-lucrative marketplace.

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