

Web Site Integration Pays Huge Dividends

BY BOB GANTZ AND MATTHEW BOYLE

MFA—MOODY, Famiglietti and Andronico is an accounting firm in Andover Massachusetts with a unique situation for many professional service firms—their marketing and IT directors get along.

So, when the marketing director, Matthew Boyle, formulated a plan to better serve their clients, he and Bob Gantz from IT sat down and figured out how to use technology to accomplish it. The idea was to increase both the quality and scope of the information on clients, prospects, referral sources, and friends of the firm by getting that information directly from the source and then make it available firm-wide. Like any good accounting firm, they figured out how to save money doing so, creating immediate ROI to justify the project financially.

Called the Contact Profile Initiative, once a year MFA sends their contacts a well-designed and personalized e-mail with a link to the MFA web site. There, the contacts can enter or update their own data online. All the contact's information on the web site form is pre-populated, and different forms are used for different types of clients. For example, individual clients are asked for family information to aid in estate planning, while only corporate clients may be asked for their web site or current number of employees.

Once the contact submits the data, it is reviewed internally for reasonableness, consistency and accuracy, and then brought into their CRM system (ContactEase from Cole Valley Software). It is then available throughout the firm, and used by MFA professionals in supporting their clients and predicting what additional services they may need.

"Professionals at the firm spend the majority of their time in ContactEase, since it now contains all the relevant information about the clients, including responsible parties, due dates, and other data," says Gantz.

The results have been significant, with now over a 75% rate of response. "Many e-mail recipients sent us response e-mails stating that they loved the technology. Many asked or inquired if we can show them how we accomplished it and how they could do so themselves. Others just responded

with '...cool,'" says Boyle.

Savings have been significant as well, because the database administrator, who was formerly working 50% full-time on the database, is now spending less than 10% of his time in this area, an annual savings of over \$20,000. This created positive return on the project in under two years.

The initiative is called We Care and continues to serve as a touch point to the client, regularly communicating with them and asking them to verify that their contact information is complete and accurate.

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The results have also been significant in the marketplace: "MFA's Contact Profile Initiative has positively impacted the caring image of our firm, in addition to the image of being technology savvy," says Boyle.

In individual sales coaching sessions, Boyle and the partners have analyzed results to look for potential "messages" in the response rate statistics and develop solutions. For example, if one partner got a lower rate of response than the others they look for an underlying service issue. The specific results are then used to give the partner a warning to better focus on certain relationships.

This accomplishment has also had an impact on morale at the firm. "Internally at MFA, this example of excellent teamwork between two distinct departments promotes unity in the firm. It demonstrates that together we will grow," says Boyle. "When people see data that is detailed and accurate concerning their clients, they feel more confident and positive about their ability to support the client relationship, and, of course, the client does too."

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