Online marketing produces results for AA

The Automobile Association of South Africa (AA) recently upgraded its online marketing initiatives to use its website and email communications more effectively as sales channels. Its existing site was not social media friendly - dialogue with members and content publishing was cumbersome and time-consuming. It was also unable to 'catch' potential customers who abandoned the registration form.

It commissioned its agency partner, Ogilvy Interactive, and Ensight, which provided a sophisticated electronic customer relationship management (eCRM) software suite.

Upgrade process

Improving the online membership registration process was the priority. A reworked sign-up process now enhances the user experience and lost leads can be captured. These conversion opportunities are fed through to the organisation's call centre for telephonic follow-up.

A wider range of membership payment options and upgrades was also introduced. Streamlining the payment process and increasing choice removed barriers for customers and made purchasing easier and automating this entire process has reduced the administration.

Social media integration, analytics and easy publishing

Initial integration with social media has been very straightforward and effective, again using the Ensight eCRM Suite. Its FaceBook page has numerous links to its website and even a dedicated "Join" tab that links to the sign-up form with a predefined discount. The company can now segment users who come from its Facebook page and offer them relevant "social media friendly" benefits and offers on its website.

The suite provides powerful and insightful data and analytics about customer behaviour and which areas of the site are most popular. It also lets the marketing team update and manage their e-marketing content themselves, without having to call on their IT department. The marketing team can now respond and act quickly to capitalise on tactical marketing

opportunities.

"With the system, the marketing team has more autonomy and control over our website and electronic communications. We can now do things like test concepts and run our own campaigns - fast and efficiently," says the AA's divisional manager: strategic marketing and product, Evan Lockhart-Barker.

Results

New online sales have increased by 525% and renewals are up by 2,500%. Web visits, visit durations and page views have tripled - all in less than two months. The organisation has improved the content and services it offers - and has increased its returns on its e-marketing investment at the same time. The web is now the AA's most profitable and efficient medium - surpassing traditional marketing channels.

"We're expecting the online renewals to rise further once our new renewal system is in place. Once this is done, we will roll out a renewal reminder email campaign, replacing our current snail mail membership reminders," adds Lockhart-Barker. This will alert AA members that their membership is up for renewal and make it quick and easy for them to take action online, rather than having to contact the call centre.

Ensight's chief marketing geek, John Ginsberg, says, "We are pleased that the solution and its delivery have achieved the AA's goals. This is, however, only part of a larger project to get its online presence to where it should be." The two companies are continuing to work together to integrate the eCRM Suite with more of the core systems. They are looking at how to give customers the information and tools they need, based on sophisticated customer profiling for an even better user experience.