"We’ve seen the future, and we’re ready to take our friends there," is how we reacted when salesforce.com unveiled Marketing Cloud, the first full-service, fully integrated social marketing suite, at Dreamforce 2012. In a blast of business brilliance, Marketing Cloud bundles together the best social marketing tools – mostly from recently acquired Buddy Media, and from last year’s acquisition of Radian6 – into one unified platform that lets marketers do everything in one integrated suite:

- Publish social content
- Engage with social audiences to create two-way conversations
- Listen to social conversations on both a small or massive scale
- Advertise with social ads and social ad retargeting
- Measure and optimize every interaction

When combined with Salesforce CRM, the Marketing Cloud is a true game changer. Marketing Cloud creates unprecedented opportunities to build and engage audiences, turn insights into actions, and deliver more targeted messages than ever before.

**SO MUCH INFORMATION**

The explosion of social networks has been a mixed blessing for many businesses. There’s much more information available on customers and audiences than ever before, but until now, harnessing it has been a daunting challenge.

Since conversations are scattered across multiple networks – with separate tools for social listening, advertising, campaign management, and analytics – measurement and responses are often fragmented in different systems. Without creating a customized system to tie them all together (like Marketing Cloud now provides), businesses are often left with more data stuck in more silos. This separation creates an inability to truly capitalize on the full potential of social. No wonder so many businesses still struggle to find an ROI for deep investments into social media.

**UNIFIED SOLUTION**

Now, with Marketing Cloud, one platform integrates all social programs and data. It sounds so simple, but the implications are powerful. Businesses that bring all their data together can create a seamless stream of communication with clients and prospects. This allows for engagement on multiple channels, capturing and coordinating information about clients and prospects, and continuing the conversation with better targeted messages. All of these steps drive deeper connections with an audience.

In a world where CMOs often talk about closing the loop on marketing campaigns, this is the breakthrough that can actually tighten that loop. Suddenly marketers can track all results in one dashboard, adapt campaigns in real time, and use the audience data to create new campaigns that more closely match customers’ desires and expectations. After all, there’s no better source of customer truth than the customers themselves.

**POWERFUL TOOLS**

Marketing Cloud is born from salesforce.com’s acquisition of Radian6 and Buddy Media. Radian6 was the leading platform for social analytics and listening at scale, while Buddy Media was the leading platform for campaign management and engagement, with more than 50 social applets. Now, with all of their applications unified and their information intertwined, the social marketing toolbox is full and the opportunities are impressive.

Imagine finding new leads and prospects from social channels, and then being able to:

1. Engage with leads and prospects on the social networks they favor.
2. Learn enough specific information about them to develop a deeper relationship.
KEY TAKEAWYS

1. Marketers don’t need to create yet another silo of customer data with social. They can now integrate this important channel of engagement and data acquisition with their CRM.

2. Businesses that adopt a unified social platform like Marketing Cloud will be able to engage with their most important prospects and customers much more effectively than those that do not.

3. This is an opportunity to gain competitive advantage, because successful early adopters will out-compete laggards or those that are ineffective in their adoption.

IT REALLY WORKS

We realize it all sounds wonderful in theory, but you probably want proof.

At Magnet 360, we’ve customized systems for this kind of data driven engagement for years – using “Engagement for Outcomes” as our mantra – so we’ve had our share of “put up or shut up” moments. Most recently, the CMO of a financial services giant challenged us to show something tangible that they could act on to improve business outcomes with prospects.

We took their list of 500 top prospects and customers and were able to match nearly 40 percent of those email addresses to social identities on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and the rest of the social web. They saw how social content gave them access to public proclamations about stage of life events: new jobs, promotions, starting families, and planning retirement. They were floored. Their agents would have the relevant information to discuss 401ks, IRA transfers, and saving for college: with the right people at the right time. It was efficient, it was impressive, and it would give their agents a competitive advantage.

The use cases are different for every business, but the ability to combine traditional customer data with social data, apply the insights to all marketing channels, and then use measurement to improve and adapt messages in real time will revolutionize marketing on all levels. The businesses that adopt these tools early will have a dramatic advantage, not just now, but well into the future.

START OF SOMETHING BIGGER

Clearly, these latest salesforce.com offerings address a big need and opportunity, but we see a future that includes even more marketing/technology integration, which will ultimately lead to a level of engagement that Magnet 360 can only begin to envision.

Integrating social marketing tools and insights with customer data from CRM will allow businesses to build social customer profiles, route social insights across the company, listen at social scale and in real time, and turn insights into actions.

Businesses that adopt and embrace these tools will get a lasting competitive advantage, doing things that will shift market share for years to come. Think of the first bank that created a stronger customer connection by using ATMs, or the first airline to adopt e-tickets and smartphone check-ins. Those businesses earned a 6-24 month lead on the competition, because when audiences change behavior, they stay there. With over 20 years of marketing technology expertise, we’ve seen that when there is a shift in audience behavior because of a new service level, a new feature, or a new capability, those changes are permanent.

Technology-integrated marketing is a real game changer, and we’re excited to be in the game.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS:

SCOTT LITMAN is an entrepreneur and visionary leader who has spent nearly 20 years growing marketing services and technology businesses into industry powerhouses. Common themes have included innovation, entrepreneurship and an ability to recognize emerging marketing technology and on how to bring to market—whether in his own ventures or those of his clients.

As the Managing Partner of Magnet 360, Scott enjoys the opportunity to advise clients on the best uses of integrated marketing technology and services.

Scott has twice been recognized as a finalist for the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year, he has been a finalist for the MHTA Tekne award and he has been recognized by the Business Journal as one of 40 Under 40. Most recently, Scott was named Twin Cities Business as one of 200 Minnesotans You Should Know.

BILL GALFANO is a 17-year veteran with exceptional expertise in Digital Marketing, Strategy and User Experience. Bill joined Magnet 360 at the time of its founding and played a key role in the launch of the business. Bill has also worked to establish Magnet 360’s current UX practice and introduced agile practices to the UX process. As Group Account Director, Bill is responsible for building account management teams and providing engagement strategy to many of our clients.

Bill began his career at Internet Five and in ’98 moved to Imaginet where he was a key leader within the business and to its customers managing large-scale online business initiatives for numerous Fortune 500 organizations. Later, Bill was the Director of User Experience for Room & Board Home Furnishings. Bill has had the opportunity to lead notable engagements with customers including 3M, Ford and General Mills.

LET’S CONNECT.
phone: 612.230.2500
web: magnet360.com
twitter: @magnet360