

Nissan Motor Company

SalesLogix-based CRM System Improves Sales and Customer Experience



Renowned for its innovative response to challenges, Nissan Motor Company (Australia) recruited Australian marketing group The Fuel Agency to help it manage its pipeline and boost sales. Fuel, in turn, responded with an automated, integrated web and call centre solution powered by the SalesLogix CRM system from Sage.

While considered among the car industry's best sales forces, Nissan's Australian dealer network still faced some challenges in effectively tracking, funnelling and managing leads.

'A key problem is that the average dealer outlet is best set up to handle short sales cycles,' explained Tim Kidman, CEO at The Fuel Agency. 'Dealers are under pressure to close sales on the spot, and on the whole they do this effectively. But cars are a high value purchase, and, with intensifying competition in the new car market, customers are less and less likely to make quick in-store decisions.'

The trouble is that sales can easily be lost if dealers have no system for gently nurturing potential customers over a longer period of time.'

Nissan turned to its inbound and outbound marketing supplier, The Fuel Agency, for help in improving pipeline management.

In particular, it was keen to free dealers up to concentrate on their core business of shop-floor selling rather than being distracted by long-term customer management and marketing efforts.

After a strategic review of the purchasing process of Nissan customers, The Fuel Agency recommended initially focusing on developing an automated system for managing test drive enquiries.

At the time, test drives were handled on a walk-in basis by individual Nissan dealers. With no centralised management of test

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drive requests, Nissan and its dealers found it difficult to identify and effectively manage a relationship with interested customers over any period of time. This potentially represented a significant loss of sales, and a lost opportunity to gather valuable market intelligence.

'Interest in a test drive is an important indicator of a serious prospective customer,' said Mr Kidman. 'The key is to nurture the customer from this point of interest through to a completed sale, or, failing that, to at least understand why you might have lost them along the way.'

In determining how to manage the test drive process, Fuel recommended an integrated approach that incorporated website and call centre customer contact.

Just one in 120 leads were coming to Nissan online, but Fuel felt that Nissan's website could be harnessed to deliver greater value cost-effectively by capturing valuable lead information through the test drive request process. However, Fuel also recognised that some customers prefer liaison with a human, so it was crucial to also integrate the test drive process into the call centre activities that Fuel already handled for Nissan.

'We need to give customers every opportunity to engage with Nissan,' said Mr Kidman.

Essential to the success of this integrated concept was a robust and flexible customer relationship management (CRM) system. It was also critical that the system was easy to use and interface in order to minimise the effort required in the process by both the customer and the dealer.

Fuel recruited systems integrator, Customer Systems International, to help find and customise the right software for the job.

Mr Kidman said, 'We wanted to keep this system simple and low cost to test our initial idea. But in the longer term we also wanted any information we collected through the test drive process to be a consistent, collatable measurement of client values that could be easily transferred as strategic market intelligence to Nissan and its dealers. It was essential that we had a system that would consistently but simply capture the most important information for Nissan, regardless of the point of customer contact.'

Customer Systems International recommended SalesLogix from Sage,

integrated with Customer System's Computer Telephony Integration (CTI) application, EzDial.

'SalesLogix is a robust and easy-to-use CRM system, but also offers a deep granularity that gives it scope for more sophisticated and strategic projects in the future. It offers enormous bang for the buck,' said Michael Hopwood, Partner, Customer Systems International.

'In addition, the extensive customisability of the application coupled with Customer System's superior design skills, had enabled us to provide a truly unique system that has gained Nissan a competitive edge,' said Mr Kidman.

'We also liked the fact that the Sage system is well proven and supported throughout Australia,' Mr Kidman added. 'Uptime of this system is important not only to the success of this project, but to the reputation of Nissan because it will become such an important point of customer interaction with the Nissan brand.'

It took less than two months for Customer Systems International to develop the SalesLogix-based CRM system for Fuel. Now, Nissan's test drive management system can be accessed either via the general Nissan website by prospective customers or by call centre operators receiving dedicated 1300 calls.

In both cases, the system captures core contact information in just a few data boxes, then immediately recommends the nearest Nissan dealership to the customer's home, and offers them the opportunity to take a test drive at that dealership or another of their choice.

As soon as this information is submitted, the SalesLogix system automatically sends an SMS to the relevant dealer advising that the new lead information has been sent to them by email.

As most sales people will be on the shopfloor, this is also backed up by a call centre phone call to the dealer within a few minutes, to confirm which of the two optional test drive times would suit the dealer. As soon as this is ascertained, Fuel

sends the customer an email via SalesLogix to confirm their test drive time. The whole process typically takes a few minutes. The day prior to the drive, the SalesLogix system automatically sends the customer an SMS reminder. Each day, the system also emails each dealer a list of test drives due that day.

Adding further strategic value to Nissan, the SalesLogix system also emails each dealer weekly a form with all leads relevant to them. The dealer can then quickly via 'hot buttons' advise the status of each lead, and provide a range of useful competitive information relating to that status. This not only increases dealer accountability for closing the loop on leads, but helps Nissan make strategic assessments of its sales and marketing activities.

Customers who have taken a test drive are automatically followed up with a questionnaire designed to find out whether a sale is likely, and whether the customer felt well serviced. If any low rating of either product or salesperson is received, this is automatically directed to Nissan's customer service team for immediate follow up.

If a dealer indicates that a prospect is a lost sale, an email is sent to the prospect to ascertain if the person is still in purchasing mode, and what kind of follow up care they might require. If that person has purchased a competitive product, questions are asked and logged that collect valuable competitive information for Nissan.

Because all phone calls are received via EzDial, Nissan's call centre - manned by Fuel - knows who is calling them and can quickly view which car they are test driving along with the dealer they are visiting or if they have requested any brochures, which helps to enhance the customer experience with Nissan.

This same application enables the call centre agent to click on phone numbers embedded in contact files within SalesLogix to automatically call the client without the need to manually dial the number. Call details for both inbound and outbound calls are automatically logged by SalesLogix, which further reduces the administrative effort for agents and ensures that all customer contact

is registered consistently.

Fuel is delighted with the results delivered by its SalesLogix system. Mr Kidman said, 'Its customer-friendliness is proven by its uptake: despite not being overtly promoted, one in 20 to 25 leads are now coming in via the website thanks to the draw card of the SalesLogix-based test drive management system. This is helping to cut the cost per sale while driving growth.'

According to Nissan, this SalesLogix-based solution from Fuel has delivered it with automotive best practice. Lynn Blake Marketing Manager at Nissan, said, 'From creative through to execution, measurement and fulfilment, Fuel has closed the loop and provided a robust solution for Nissan and our dealer network that is delivering integrated and measurable marketing results. We couldn't be more impressed.'

The initiative also saw Fuel recognised as a finalist in the 2006 ADMA Mobile Marketing Awards.

About Sage Group

The Sage Group plc, an established FTSE 100 company, is a leading supplier of accounting and business management software solutions and services to 5.2 million small and medium sized clients worldwide. With over 13 000 employees, the Sage Group comprises market-leading businesses throughout Europe, United Kingdom, North America, South Africa and Australia.

About Customer Systems International

Customer Systems International is a CRM and business consultancy group that enables companies to run more efficiently and achieve superior results. Their solutions maximise productivity and increase profitability by focusing on the one thing that matters most in business - the customer. With more than 25 years of combined experience inside leading CRM companies and, a multitude of local and international projects, their people are skilled in recommending, implementing and supporting the best solutions to meet your needs. Their consultants work with clients as partners to understand and meet

