The Key to Relentless Marketing...

Anticipate, Automate, Syndicate

COREMETRICS®
Power Simplified

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

Online marketing grows more complicated every day. The proliferation of new media outlets, an increasing amount of data to analyze, the convergence of online and offline worlds, and decreasing response times to market changes fuel this complexity and make it hard to prove the viability of integrated marketing plans. Yet that's exactly what marketers are expected to do.

Now more than ever, marketing teams must demonstrate the value of every dollar they spend. Traditional approaches to business optimization provide at best a snapshot, a single-session view of visitor behavior. The real solution is continuous marketing optimization, an approach that tracks visits over time for each user and takes into account both online and offline behavior in order to target each online visitor with offers and information most likely to generate business results.

Central to continuous marketing optimization is the ability to anticipate, automate, and syndicate:

- Anticipate customer preferences and predispositions based on a cross-channel historical view of behavior
- Automate the management of marketing campaigns, enabling an almost immediate response to customer actions
- Syndicate personalized content to the appropriate channel at the right time

This white paper reviews the current business challenges and corresponding trends in online marketing and business, as well as the opportunities for improvement and the criteria for evaluating a marketing optimization solution.

The Business Challenge: Effective Marketing in an Increasingly Complex Environment

Today's marketers have an unprecedented wider range of online options for driving traffic to their site: display ads and banners, keyword advertising, affiliates, RSS feeds, email lists, widgets, videos, and a host of social media tools. With increased choices, however, come increased challenges and responsibilities.

How do you know which efforts will result in the greatest business benefit? How do you rise above the noise and get noticed? How do you ensure a rich site experience that keeps visitors coming back? And how do you manage all this content both on and off your site? Effectively managing this process is challenging even for the most experienced data analysts. For most marketers, most of whom don't have that level of experience, it can be a frustrating black hole.

The complexity isn't limited to just the diverse delivery mechanisms. Extended buying cycles, new social media tools, increased demands on marketing, and diverse needs also make it difficult to continually optimize.

Extended Buying Cycles

The days of same-session conversions are long gone. Consumers are constantly bombarded with information, promotions, and discounts, causing them to tune out much of the "chatter." They're also more selective in how they spend their money online due to the economy and the many options available to them. As a result, consumers spend more time comparison shopping and educating themselves on their choices, forcing companies to engage them in a series of touch points over an extended period of time. The challenge becomes capturing the consumer's attention more frequently and effectively then the competition, while creating a clear and compelling buying opportunity that resonates with each customer.

Companies are also losing control of the buying process, as well as how consumers experience their brand. Visitors no longer always start on the home page or top-tier pages. Often they begin deep in the site, if they go there at all. Many consumers are demanding information be served their way, whether that's a widget, a video, an ad, or Facebook and MySpace. This leaves marketers scrambling to maintain a consistent message through a myriad of touch points, while simultaneously capturing user behavior at each juncture over time.

New and Ever-Increasing Social Media Tools

Social media tools pose both challenges and opportunities for marketers. However, in determining how to best leverage social media, two common problems arise:

- **Social media is a new area,** so no one has a clear perspective on what's going to work and what isn't. What's the best way to leverage the available tools? What are the user profiles? What are your customers' expectations for how you should engage them, and what are your company's expectations for engagement? How do you measure success?
- **New tools are constantly emerging,** increasing the complexity of the marketing process and further compounding the "newness" issues. Marketers have less and less time to study new technologies and determine which ones are fads and which ones will ultimately drive business.

Increased Demands on Marketing Teams

The complex, dynamic, 24/7 nature of online marketing places increased demands on marketers. Companies expect real-time, measurable results on a campaign's effectiveness. No longer is it acceptable to launch a program and wait four, six, or twelve months to assess the outcome. Marketers must analyze large amounts of disparate and complex data to show a definitive ROI on every marketing dollar spent, using tools that are cumbersome at best.

Consumers also expect a faster response, no matter what time it is. Moreover, they want businesses to engage them on their own terms, using highly targeted messages, in channels they prefer to use. If companies fail to do this, consumers tune out and go elsewhere.

Diverse Needs, Disconnected Initiatives

Typically, marketing teams have many divergent needs based on the particular communication channel: email, affiliate, search, banner, social media, mobile, and more. One group targets sales at a certain cost; another targets leads; another drives people to click on an email link; and so forth. It's difficult to determine how all of these components work together, and even more challenging to share data between these groups. And it's almost impossible to evaluate consumer responses to the different initiatives over time.

The Current Landscape: A Push to Align Marketing with Business Goals

Budget dollars are finite; and the current economy is shrinking budgets even further, resulting in more dollars being spent on Web initiatives because they're a provable source. However, Web analytics are no longer enough to justify marketing spend. Companies want to align marketing efforts with business goals, and then constantly refine their programs and initiatives based on a real-time, comprehensive assessment of their efforts.

This business optimization push is driving several key trends in online marketing:

- **Business dashboards:** a complete view of how every marketing program is running. Are they delivering value to your business? Are you reaching consumers and converting them to customers?
- **Benchmarking:** an assessment of how you compare to your competitors. Are you gaining or losing ground? Are they finding new customers in places you've not looked? Are their messages resonating better with visitors?
- **360-degree customer view:** a thorough understanding of customer behaviors online and offline. What activities are customers engaging in online? Are your offline efforts resulting in online interactions? Can you drive customers to take action with you offline?
- **Automation:** automated processes that streamline marketing program management. How do you automate class sales, up-sales, recommendations, keyword selections, and email personalization? How do you utilize technology to streamline manual processes and communications?
- **Brand syndication:** an approach for consistently presenting brand and content across multiple channels. Can you use syndication to influence a consumer's experience of the brand and drive them to your site? How can you leverage syndication to encourage a transaction, whether it's a site visit, a purchase, an information request, or some other interaction?

Existing Technologies: An Assessment

The overall goal of online marketing and business optimization is sound: provide companies with the insight and tools necessary to target consumers with compelling content, optimize marketing spend, and significantly improve the bottom line. Current trends indicate that marketers and their companies embrace this goal. The problem is that most existing technologies fall short on execution because they're either too basic or too complex. They also tend to focus at the session level versus the whole customer over time, making it difficult to attribute consumer actions to specific initiatives, build a comprehensive view of visitor behavior, and share data across programs and channels.

A Tunnel View of Buying Behavior

Traditional Web analytics focus on individual visits or sessions. A user comes to a site, interacts with it over a specific amount of time, and leaves. Everything the user did during that visit is captured and included in reports.

The problem is consumer behavior is infinitely more complex than a single visit. Consumers click on emails and affiliate links, view numerous banners and ads, read content in other venues, and often access your site multiple times. All of these touch points have an impact on a consumer's buying behavior. Thus analytics that focus on individual sessions reveal little and may even be inaccurate.

This tunnel view of buying behavior also makes attribution difficult to impossible. While several Web analytics tools collect visitor information day to day, each visit is examined in isolation. There's no analysis of a user's progression between day one, day two, and other future visits. Nor is there any comparative analysis of a user's exposure to offsite interactions and their impact on a user's behavior. To truly understand what influenced a consumer's purchase, you need to examine their action as a whole over time, not just a single visit.

Effective remarketing is equally challenging when the analytics focus on individual sessions. If you only know your customers by their actions on a single day, it's a crapshoot if your targeted emails, direct mails, and ads are actually on target. You need a rich visitor history over time and across channels to effectively remarket and retain your customers.

Disconnected Technologies

The other big challenge that marketers face with traditional analytics is the various levels of disconnect that exist between the different marketing channels, web site technologies, backend systems, and vendors. Disparate measurement systems and reference scales make it hard to pull all the data together for a complete, accurate view of what's happening with customers. Moreover, many of the marketing optimization solutions are comprised of individual applications that were later merged together, making it difficult for even the individual solution components to talk to each other.

This fragmentation also impacts a marketer's ability to exchange data with other groups, both within and outside the organization. Merchandizing, operations, IT, finance, and external data-driven partners all have data you need and need data you have. But how do you share information when the systems are so disconnected? How do you gain the necessary insight into business performance, customer behavior, and marketing spend without a single view of all the data elements. You don't—and that's the challenge that marketers face when it comes to online business optimization using disparate systems.

A Golden Opportunity: Anticipate, Automate, and Syndicate

If traditional approaches to business optimization fall short of their intended goals, what options are left for maximizing marketing spend and aligning marketing initiatives with business objectives? The answer: Relentless Marketing, an approach that tracks each visitor over time, follows customers on your site and beyond, combines both online and offline behavior for the richest customer profile, is entirely automated and takes action in real-time.

Central to continuous marketing optimization is the ability to anticipate, automate, and syndicate in an ongoing cycle of improvement, where every new piece of information you gather makes the overall data more relevant, allowing you to continually improve your marketing programs:

- **Anticipate customer preferences and predispositions** based on a historical view of browsing behavior across multiple channels.
- **Automate the management of marketing campaigns,** enabling immediate delivery of specifically-tailored content to individuals in response to past and current browsing behavior.
- **Syndicate personalized content** to the right channel at the right time (web sites, emails, ad networks and more).

While this white paper reviews anticipate, automate, and syndicate as separate components, the true benefits of Relentless Marketing come from the combined power of all three working together.
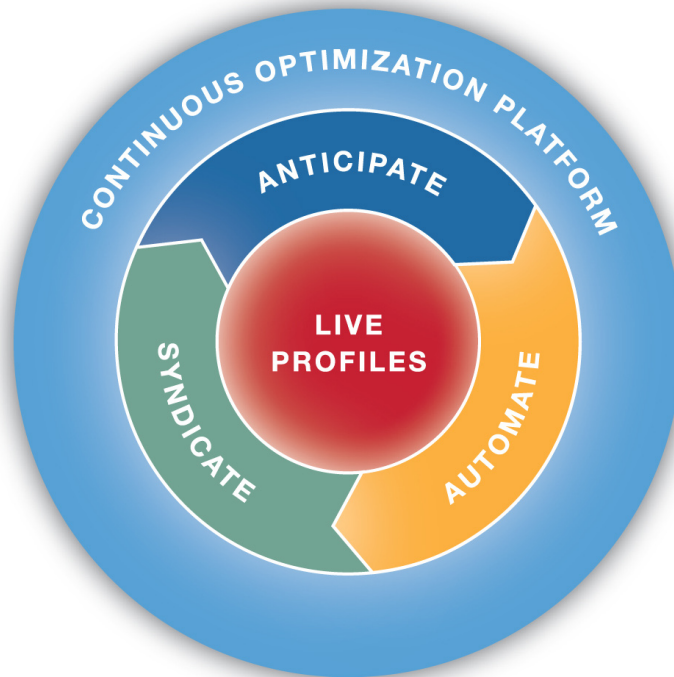
The ability to anticipate consumer behavior, automate marketing processes, and syndicate personalized content through all communication channels allows marketers to continually optimize their programs and align them with their organization's overall business goals.

Anticipate

Unlike traditional Web analytics, Relentless Marketing starts with the most complete data set possible, combining both online and offline data and capturing all brand and marketing impressions, not just clicks. Equally important, it monitors all this activity for prospects and customers over time instead of a single visit. Together this enables you to accurately attribute consumer behavior to the appropriate marketing initiatives—a critical step in optimizing your marketing spend.

This type of customer-focused attribution opens your eyes to which programs are influencing consumers to take action, which ones are acquiring new customers, and which ones are bringing existing customers back. You'll also know which programs don't work, because customer-focused attribution goes beyond counting clicks and page views. It connects clicks and impressions that occur across the Internet over time to web site visitor acquisition, conversion, and retention.

In the end, the ability to understand consumer behavior and anticipate what they'll do next allows you to make better decisions about your marketing initiatives. That's a critical step in maximizing your marketing spend, one that enables you to automate your processes and syndicate personalized content to all your channels.

Automate

If anticipate is the foundation of continuous marketing optimization, than automate is the frame that holds everything together.

The demands placed on marketers are extreme: real-time, measurable results; large amounts of rich data coming in 24/7; and high consumer expectations for fast response times and highly personalized messages. The only way to meet these demands is by automating the management of marketing campaigns.

Automation reduces the need for constant human intervention and allows you to:
- Respond immediately to customer actions
- Increase the speed with which you deliver data inside your organization
- Drive communication and collaboration between previously disparate teams and initiatives
- Streamline and improve the decision-making process
- Easily connect what marketing does with the business objectives
- Quickly deliver the right content to the right place for each customer
- Focus on managing your strategies instead of worrying about tactics

Syndicate

The final component of continuous marketing optimization is syndication, the ability to deliver personalized content to your web site, emails, ad networks, videos, social networks, and any other communication channel that you utilize.

With syndication, it doesn't matter if visitors no longer start on your home page. It doesn't matter if customers control how they experience your site or brand. It doesn't matter if your brand is distributed across multiple channels. Syndication puts you in control, enabling you to:

- Confidently push the best message at the optimum moment through the right media channel every time
- Pass behavioral data and consumer insights to your ad networks, email vendors, onsite search providers, and other partners exactly when they need it
- Decrease bounce, abandonment, and desertion rates
- Increase the efficiency of each visitor's experience on your site
- Identify your target audience, as well as other groups that are a good match for your products or services

Criteria for Evaluating a Relentless Marketing Solution

When evaluating a relentless marketing solution, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Is the solution framework integrated from the ground up, with each component built on a common code?
2. Is the data consistent, and does it provide cross-campaign comparisons?
3. Can the people running your marketing campaigns easily use the various solution components without assistance?
4. Does the solution have a provable ROI?
5. Is there a dashboard that provides a top-level view of how the different applications work together?
6. What is the company's reputation for customer service? Do they partner with you versus support you? Do they understand your business needs and not simply the easiest way to implement the solution?
7. Does the company's vision of the future match yours? Are they focusing on the problems that are central to your business?

Coremetrics: Relentless Made Easy

To be successful at Relentless Marketing, you must continuously follow your customers over time, both online and offline; anticipate future buying decisions based on this visitor history; and then tap the rich historical data to deliver the right message to each customer every time. As the leading provider of online marketing optimization solutions, Coremetrics makes it easy to be relentless.

At the center of Coremetrics's solutions is the Continuous Optimization Platform. The Platform gives you detailed insight into your online visitors and enables you to share this information across your marketing programs and automatically deliver tailored content to your customers. Seamless data sharing is possible because Coremetrics develops all of its products internally, so each Coremetrics application integrates seamlessly with the Platform, as well as every other Coremetrics product.

Equally important is Coremetrics's Lifetime Individual Visitor Experience (LIVE) Profile on which every Coremetrics application is based. LIVE Profile tracks customers and prospects as they interact with your business online, across multiple ad networks or via email, video, social media, affiliate sites, and more. LIVE Profiles combine online and offline data, providing a single, comprehensive view of each visitor's behavior over time and across channels. Moreover, this historical data can be incorporated across the entire Continuous Optimization Platform and into every Coremetrics application.

The final two components of Coremetrics Continuous Optimization Platform are automatic content delivery and personalized messaging. Coremetrics enables you to automate your marketing campaigns and deliver tailored content wherever it's needed, making it easy to be relentless in your pursuit of continuous marketing optimization.
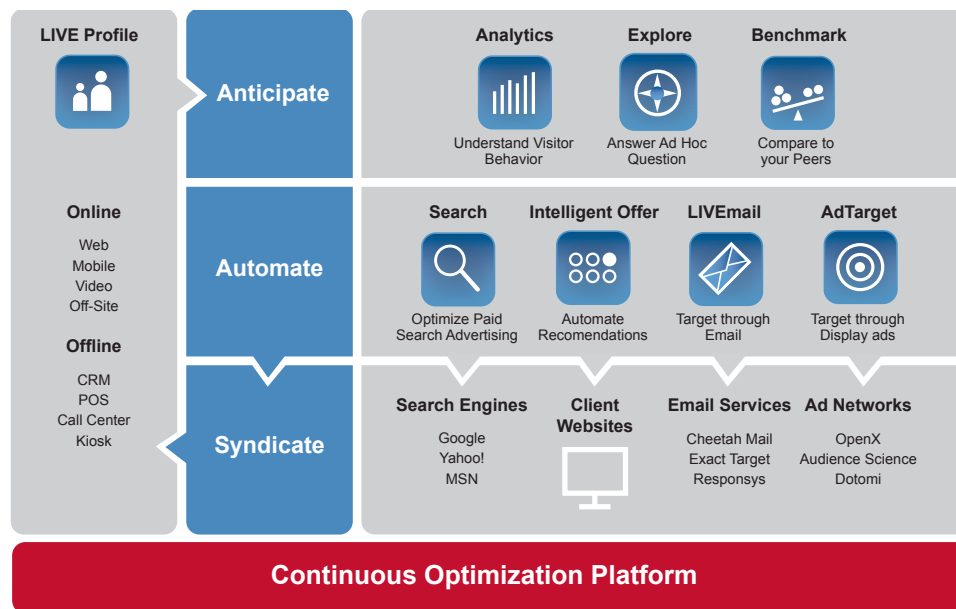
Make your best offer. Anywhere. Anytime. Automatically. The Continuous Optimization Platform from Coremetrics updates visitor's lifetime browsing behavior, optimizes based on many visits over time, incorporates data from online and offline behavior, and improves customer offers on a continuous basis to automatically drive customers through the conversion process.

About Coremetrics

Coremetrics is the leader in marketing optimization. Its products help businesses relentlessly optimize their marketing programs to make the best offer, every time, anywhere, automatically. More than 1,900 online brands globally, transacting more than $20 billion this year, use Coremetrics' Software as a Service (SaaS) to optimize their online marketing. Coremetrics' solutions encompass advanced online analytics and integrated marketing optimization applications, including search engine bid management, email targeting, ad impression attribution and cross sell recommendations to acquire customers more cost effectively, increase conversion rates, and increase lifetime customer value. Coremetrics is consistently recognized by industry analysts and thought leaders, and in 2008 was named to Deloitte's Technology Fast 50 Program for Silicon Valley Internet, Media, Entertainment and Communications companies. The company is privately held with funding from Accel Partners, FTV Capital and Highland Capital Partners, and is headquartered in San Mateo, California.

To learn more about Coremetrics, visit http://www.coremetrics.com or call 866-493-2673.

Coremetrics has strongly supported online privacy since its inception. To learn more, visit http://www.coremetrics.com/privacy.

COREMETRICS®
Power Simplified