Brafton adopts Marketo Engage to increase email deliverability, identify more sales-ready leads, and expand into new markets

Building a successful brand in today's digital world requires engaging potential customers with fresh, useful content and thought leadership that piques their interest. To gather qualified leads and increase market share, many companies turn to Brafton, a top content marketing agency that develops and manages targeted content strategies from blogs, graphics, and video to search-engine optimization and social media.

With offices in Boston, Chicago, and San Francisco, Brafton has grown quickly since its founding just over 10 years ago. As the company prepared to expand beyond the US and pursue growth opportunities in the UK and with its Australia-based sister company Castleford, it wanted to improve and modernize its marketing automation capabilities. Several years ago, Brafton had used Marketo, but switched to Pardot in an attempt to reduce costs. Unfortunately, the Pardot tool quickly showed its limitations, impacting email deliverability and making it difficult to identify sales-ready leads. As a result, the switch actually ended up costing Brafton more money than it saved.

"We saw our deliverability rate for marketing emails decreasing, and some of our core email metrics were trending downward from campaigns sent through Pardot," says Ryan Collier, Assistant Vice President, Sales Operations at Brafton. "We had to use a spreadsheet workaround to do lead scoring, which was complicated and tedious. When we switched to Pardot from Marketo, we also saw an 18 percent dip in sales-ready leads. It didn't bode well, and we realized we needed to go back to Marketo."

Objectives

- Move from Pardot to improve deliverability rates for marketing emails
- Identify high-converting sales opportunities with better lead scoring
- Expand marketing automation to more domains and brands as business grows

Email deliverability compared to Pardot

⬆ **15**%

or greater

Growth in sales-ready leads

⬆

Unlimited branding domains for new businesses

⬆

> "Since moving our marketing campaigns from Pardot, we've seen email deliverability increase by more than 15% and open rates jump because we're reaching people with better, more relevant information."

Ryan Collier
AVP, Sales Operations

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Smarter marketing automation

Brafton decided to gradually shift its campaigns back to Marketo Engage to improve email deliverability, follow up with more marketable leads, and add new branding domains as it acquires and grows new businesses. With high-performance servers optimized for deliverability and reputation management, Marketo immediately increased Brafton's email deliverability rates and made it easier for the company to scale and manage marketing automation.

"Marketo Engage makes it simple and cost effective to add multiple branding domains, which will be key as we expand in Australia and the UK," says Collier. "It's also very straightforward in Marketo to read a smart list and look at anyone who clicked a specific link in an email or was on a webpage during a certain time period. We could get that information in Pardot, but it was challenging and required several steps. Marketo greatly streamlines identifying and following up with strong leads thanks to a solid combination of tools for campaign analytics and execution."

Better synchronization with CRM

Marketo Engage offers built-in, bidirectional synchronization with Salesforce, helping Brafton keep its sales and marketing data in sync and provide sales teams with the most up-to-date lead information. After the first initial sync, each sync typically takes seconds or minutes and only syncs data that has changed.

"Marketo is much more sophisticated compared to other tools out there, and synchronization with Salesforce is a good example," says Collier. "Marketo syncing with Salesforce is seamless, much better than Pardot. With Marketo, the syncing is quick and accurate—and it's all built in and happens behind the scenes. That's a big help for our teams needing access to the most current data."

Converting more leads into sales

As Brafton continues to grow its business by offering customers click-worthy content, it's reaching more people with its email campaigns and bringing in more top-line revenue. The company is currently moving all of its 600,000 leads to Marketo and plans to take advantage of Marketo Engage for email, web, and mobile ad campaigns, with other channels to follow.

"We're having more success with campaigns enabled through Marketo Engage in terms of people responding and engaging directly with us," says Collier. "Compared with Pardot, Marketo gives us more high-converting opportunities for our sales team so that more leads end up turning into revenue. That's what we call a win."