

Client



Partner



Company:

Boardroom Inc.

Website:

www.boardroom.com

Headquarters:

Stamford, Connecticut, USA

Industry:

Publishing

Solution:

Data Discovery and Visualization and Selection Planner, part of the Alterian Integrated Marketing Platform

Results:

1. Boardroom reduced monthly campaign management costs by 20.3% during the first year and 26% for each successive year based on a multi-year contract.
2. Campaign execution time averaged 16 hours prior to this initiative and was reduced by approximately 75% to 4 hours per campaign.
3. Boardroom no longer needs to pay for a programmer's time to execute campaigns, as all the work is done by the database and analytical teams.
4. The Solution launched in four months from inception, one day after the best case go-live date of 4/30/06 and two months prior to the must go-live date of 6/30/06.

"The Alterian tools have not only given us more visibility into our data, but they have also given us more confidence in our campaigns. Additionally, the flexibility of our list selects is greater, while our costs are lower – it's a definite win-win"

Bruce Reznik
Director of Database Marketing,
Boardroom Inc.

Boardroom Inc. Surpasses Marketing Goals with Superior Database, Operational, and Campaign Execution Tools

What began on Marty Edelston's kitchen table over thirty-five years ago with \$20,000 and a dream has now evolved into Boardroom Inc., one of the largest publishers of direct-mail newsletters and books. Known for providing useful information in quick and easy-to-read formats, Boardroom currently publishes five publications and numerous books. The publications are available via an annual subscription. Books are available as one-time purchases or as part of a continuity program, in which books are sent on a regular basis, as updated.

In recent years, Boardroom's flagship publication, Bottom Line Personal, has grown its subscriber base to one million and its readership to two million. With the success of Bottom Line Personal also came the challenge of effectively maintaining, from a cost and marketing perspective, the subscriber database as well as the databases of Boardroom's other publications and books.

The Challenge

Boardroom wanted a database marketing solution with the flexibility to continually adjust and improve its campaign selection strategy through rigorous testing and analysis. Additionally, Boardroom was looking to create efficiencies in cost and campaign execution.

To achieve these goals, Boardroom made a decision to switch database providers. At the time, Boardroom's database consisted of a mainframe and server environment and was managed by an outside provider that applied transactions monthly. Using this approach, selection and model scoring could take one to two weeks – which prevented Boardroom from executing marketing programs as quickly and efficiently as it desired.

After reviewing nearly a dozen database marketing service providers, Boardroom decided to move its database needs to Merkle, one of the nation's largest data-driven marketing agencies.

Boardroom's next step was to find the list selection tool that would meet its specific requirements. Overall the company sought to do the following:

1. Reduce campaign management costs by 20%
2. Run campaigns using the new tool within a four- to six-month timeframe
3. Reduce campaign execution time by at least 50%

"Several significant barriers existed during the initial stages of this project. Boardroom lacked an existing in-house infrastructure and faced an aggressive timeline," said Scott Sutton, Associate Director, Merkle.

"Boardroom decided that they wanted a new campaign solution implemented by Q2 2006. For a solution of this size and scope, the normal time between decision and implementation can range from nine months to more than one year."

Boardroom worked with Merkle to evaluate both SQL and software tools during an aggressive one-month trial period. Boardroom concluded that while the processes used to run SQL queries and reports would be more familiar, it was not efficient. A software tool was the better option.

The Solution

Boardroom selected the following applications from the Alterian Integrated Marketing Platform: Data Discovery & Visualization, Campaign Management, and Reporting. Key Alterian applications added to the solution included Selection Planner and Analytical Reporting.

All three companies – Merkle, Boardroom, and Alterian – agreed that developing a three-way partnership would enable Boardroom to have more control of its campaigns – resulting in deeper insight into the data, analysis and selection process.

"We liked the Alterian solution because of the quick counts feature, the 'Drag and Drop' convenience; the ability to create fields and tables on the fly; the quick loading of model scores and its speed. It runs five million rows per second!" said Bruce Reznik, Director of Database Marketing, Boardroom. "That kind of speed enables more "what-if" analysis, which increases productivity and reduces costs, which inevitably leads to campaign improvements and increased profits."

Results

Boardroom's brand mantra is to "provide answers to tough questions from the insider's perspective using dozens of experts who are top in their field." Boardroom applied that thinking to their internal marketing efforts and pulled together a dream-team of experts to achieve a high level of results.

The combination of Alterian Selection Planner and Merkle's database solutions gave Boardroom the results they were seeking. Transferring from the previous SQL-based solution to Alterian Selection Planner also accomplished operational goals – specifically shorter campaign cycles, more internal control, reduced campaign selection time, and reduced monthly maintenance costs.

After evaluating the results of the new solution, Boardroom found that it achieved – and even surpassed – its initial goals. The solution was implemented just one

Alterian Case Study

Boardroom Inc.

day after its aggressive “best case” go-live date. And more importantly, Boardroom’s campaign execution time – which averaged 16 hours prior to the initiative -- was reduced by approximately 75% to four hours per campaign. Updates can now be performed in eight hours – a 20% improvement from Boardroom’s target.

“The Merkle/Alterian combination has created tremendous efficiencies for us. Now our transactions are applied bi-weekly vs. monthly, and we can score files in hours vs. days. More importantly, it allows Merkle to focus on database maintenance and improvements while Boardroom focuses on its campaign selects,” added Reznik. “I finally feel like our database and marketing teams are in harmony.”

As a result of the success with the Boardroom initiative, the company became a “referenceable” client for Merkle. Referenceability is a metric – supported by a detailed evaluation and review process -- used by Merkle to indicate client satisfaction by measuring whether a client would provide a positive reference for Merkle in the marketplace. Boardroom also became a “Raving Fan,” which is the highest benchmark of client satisfaction that can be achieved.

“The collective efforts between Merkle and its partners create tremendous value and return on investment for our customers,” said Don Patrick, Chief Operating Officer, Merkle. “Like many of our clients, Boardroom had some aggressive campaign goals. By leveraging technology, people and processes, we were able to deliver unmatched operational efficiencies for their circulation intensive campaign needs.”

Benchmark*	Goal	Achievement
Campaign Management Cost	Reduce by 20%	First Year: Boardroom reduced monthly campaign management costs by 20.3% Each successive year: 26%
Client Referenceability	Boardroom Referenceability by: 9/30/06	Boardroom became referenceable: 6/15/06 - over 3 months ahead of target date
Solution Go-Live Date	Must go-live date: 6/30/06 Best case: 4/30/06	Solution Go-Live Date: 5/1/06
Average Campaign Execution Time	Reduce by 50%	Previous Average Campaign Execution: 16 hours New Average Campaign Execution: 4 hours per campaign reduced by approximately 75%
Update Time	Run a complete update (on a bi-weekly basis) in 10 hours maximum	Update Time: 8 hours , a 20% improvement vs. the target This also allows Boardroom to run ad-hoc extracts outside the normal update timeframe in order to implement critical change requests

* Benchmark definitions

Campaign Management Cost: The fee Boardroom pays Merkle to develop, maintain, manage and support its campaign systems. A key metric for Boardroom when measuring ROI.

Client Referencability (Merkle benchmark): The referenceability metric is supported by a detailed evaluation and review process in which clients are asked to complete surveys regarding Merkle’s performance. One of two key client management metrics used by Merkle to evaluate the success of client relationships and tracked closely by senior management.

Solution Go-Live Date: The launch date of the new solution. The date is critical to achieving other key project metrics and is used during post-mortem evaluation of project management.

Average Campaign Execution Time: A critical productivity measure for Boardroom and enabler of a rigorous campaign selection process. This enables both Boardroom and Merkle to spend incremental time saved during execution on “what-if” analysis and testing.

Update Time: Time required to update the Alterian data mart. Since Merkle did not have experience with Alterian prior to this project, the benchmark of 10 hours was derived from calculating an average of internal and external clients within the industry. This is a key metric in evaluating the freshness of customer data; therefore, leading to increased response rates.

Alterian

Alterian (LSE: ALN) empowers marketers with an integrated marketing software platform combining database, online and operational marketing applications on a shared data infrastructure. The Alterian Integrated Marketing Platform makes it practical and cost effective for marketers to use actionable insight to execute an integrated marketing strategy across online and offline channels.

It is the unique integration of analytics, content and execution through Alterian’s industry leading tools, such as the Alterian Messenger email platform, and the award winning Alterian Content Management solutions, which enables marketers to drive a seamless, multi-channel customer experience.

Alterian’s analytically-led software is delivered to approximately 1,000 marketing departments, across 26 countries, and an international network of more than 100 business partners, including marketing services providers, agencies and systems integrators. Its partners, such as Accenture, Acxiom, Allant Group, Cap Gemini, Carlson Marketing, Experian, Epsilon, InfoUSA, LogicaCMG, Merkle, Ogilvy One and Euro RSCG Worldwide, deliver Alterian software alongside their own domain and services expertise to help market leaders such as Princess Cruises, General Motors, Zurich, Astra Zeneca, HSBC, Limited Too, AEGON, Avis, Worldwide Wrestling Entertainment, Dell, Amnesty International and Vodafone integrate marketing processes and drive competitive advantage.

For more information about Alterian, products within the Alterian Integrated Marketing Platform or our Partner Network, please visit www.alterian.com

UK & European Headquarters

Alterian
The Spectrum Building
Bond Street
Bristol
BS1 3LG
UK
T +44 (0) 117 970 3200
F +44 (0) 117 970 3301

North American Headquarters

Alterian Inc.
35 East Wacker Drive
Suite 200
Chicago, IL 60601
USA
T +1 312 704 1700
F +1 312 704 1701

