

Client



Alterian Partner



Partner:
RAPP UK

Website:
www.uk.rapp.com

Headquarters:
London, England

Size:
420 staff in three offices

Solution:
Engine, DDV, Campaign Manager,
Dynamic Messenger

Results:

1. Improved customer engagement with Best Western's loyalty programme
2. 40% increase in email click-throughs
3. 540% rise in the amount of loyalty points claimed
4. 30% increase in return on investment.

"Dynamic Messenger is a lot more powerful than traditional email tools and the way it's so flexible in deriving rules and assigning content really stood out. Moving to Alterian means we can build quick, flexible campaigns, all with 1000s of different content variants. As the tool integrates seamlessly with the other Alterian software, we also save time as we don't have to move data manually between the marketing database and email tool anymore."

Ryan Davies, Digital Product Consultant
RAPP

Improving Best Western's loyalty scheme with dynamic emails

By developing 1-to-1 loyalty marketing, RAPP increased email click-through rates by 40% and achieved a 30% increase in return on investment for the UK's largest chain of independent hotels.

Experts in data driven marketing

Alterian partner RAPP is a full-service, integrated, data-driven marketing agency and one of the first to recognise the power of using insight to engage with customers as individuals. By successfully blending analytics, creative and technology, RAPP has become a major force in the industry and delivers award-winning campaigns for clients such as Skype, NSPCC and Mercedes-Benz.

One of RAPP's long-standing clients is Best Western, the largest group of independent hotels in the UK with over 270 hotels and 18,500 employees. A highly distinctive travel brand, its hotels range from old coaching inns and former castles to contemporary boutique hotels in major cities.

Sophisticated analysis drives relevance

RAPP had already been using Alterian's database marketing technology with Best Western to achieve a single customer view, perform data analysis and segment customers but executed emails via a standalone email application. But as data volumes grew and the sophistication of segmentation increased, RAPP had soon outgrown its existing email tool. The team also had to move list data and response files between the Alterian campaign manager software and email system manually, which hindered the overall process.

"Using Alterian, our customer intelligence was becoming a lot more precise, generating more usable customer profiles and trigger points for campaigns but the email tool wasn't flexible enough to take advantage of all the insight," explained Ryan Davies, Digital Product Consultant at RAPP. "It was good at handling simple dynamic content but we were becoming restricted by how many campaigns we could run and the number of creative elements it could manage."

RAPP turned to Alterian's Dynamic Messenger email platform to deliver its email campaigns and Best Western was the first client to reap the benefit. Now the agency could apply the growing intelligence at a more granular level and create emails for different customers automatically.

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Placing the customer at the heart of campaigns

One of the latest projects RAPP tackled for the hotel brand was an overhaul of its online loyalty scheme. The Best Western Rewards programme had previously taken a traditional tiered approach with three levels of customer, based on how many nights they stayed a year. But Best Western wanted to increase overall engagement in the programme, reduce churn, grow membership and reduce campaign costs.

RAPP turned to its data and using Alterian found out what really motivated Best Western's customers, to underpin a more strategic and personal approach. "Through segmentation, modelling and analysis of the loyalty data we were able to understand what drove people to behave in a particular way and create triggers for emails at different points along the customer journey," said Davies. "Being able to treat loyalty members as individuals meant relevance went through the roof and for unique users, open rates were between 65 to 85 per cent."

The way Dynamic Messenger is designed has allowed RAPP to unleash its full creative potential. Templates and content blocks are all inter-changeable so recipients never tire of seeing the same design, or different themes can be easily applied but the business rules behind the email remain the same.

The agency now creates a whole range of different loyalty based emails, using various criteria such as purpose of stay, amount of reward points, number and frequency of hotel bookings, plus whether people are on the way up or down as a customer, or in danger of leaving the scheme.

One of the most sophisticated is the pre-stay email which uses the hotel, city, country and date in question, to send a unique email including photos and maps relating to the customer's hotel, a weather forecast, events in the local area plus tailored loyalty offers. "Dynamic Messenger is so flexible we can even reach out to third party content providers to help build emails around an individual," said Davies. "Sourcing data from Google Weather and What's on When mean that we can present people with content directly relevant to their stay which adds a lot of value."

The team at RAPP now uses a lot more information to help drive the creation of loyalty emails. Before the loyalty newsletter email goes out for example,

Alterian Case Study

RAPP and Best Western

in addition to selecting groups of relevant people based on their interests, content is also determined by who has clicked on an email before or has used their loyalty points most recently. With so many different pre-set variables available, including subject lines, introductions, reward bandings and templates, over 4 million different combinations are possible.

“By seeing who is more engaged in the scheme allows us to tailor emails with different ways to redeem points,” explained Davies. “Trigger emails warning people they might lose their points and offering interesting ways to spend them, mean that members pay more attention and become more involved.”

RAPP now creates 8-10 different trigger campaigns automatically every day, which are proving very cost effective for Best Western. “Some emails might only be going to 20-30 customers but this level of targeting achieves incredibly high response rates. The key thing is that content is always changing automatically but the rules driving it are kept the same and that normally takes time to set up. If we had to create each email manually, the volume of campaigns just wouldn’t be feasible,” said Davies. “Using Alterian Campaign Manager we can also run highly targeted campaigns automatically on a daily basis, reaching out to new customers with existing email templates.”

1-to-1 loyalty marketing reaps rewards

RAPP used its data expertise to place Best Western’s customers at the heart of the loyalty scheme and now members are a lot more engaged. By creating new ways of understanding customers and driving personalised emails, content has become a lot more persuasive.

“Alterian helps simplify and automate a high volume of campaigns, freeing us up to focus on strategy and new ideas,” said Davies. “We find we can do an awful lot more than we could with other email tools, which as a rule, are aimed at less skilled marketers. But in terms of putting together entirely personal campaigns they don’t really compare.”

Using all the segmentation data to drive emails, RAPP achieved a 40% increase in click-through rates and a 30% increase on investment for Best Western. Points claimed rose by a massive 540%, as member activity grew and lapsing customers re-engaged with the programme.

“Insight lies at the centre of everything we do and Alterian lets us maximise data’s true potential for Best Western, igniting genuine creativity and talking to customers as individuals, in a very efficient way,” concluded Davies.

In the future, RAPP is also looking to use Alterian Web Journey to examine customer behaviour on the Best Western website, to further refine the targeting of its email campaigns.

Alterian

Alterian (LSE: ALN) enables organizations to create relevant, effective and engaging experiences with their customers and prospects through social, digital, and traditional marketing channels. Alterian’s Customer Engagement solutions are focused in four main areas: Social Media, Web Content Management, Email, and Campaign Management & Analytics.

Alterian technology is utilized either to address a specific marketing challenge or as part of an integrated marketing platform, with analytics and customer engagement with the individual at the heart of everything. Working alongside a rich ecosystem of partners, Alterian delivers its software as a service, or on premise. For more information about Alterian visit www.alterian.com or the Alterian blog at www.engagingtimes.com.

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