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Pica9:

SaaS for the Enterprise
Pioneering a New Approach to Local Marketing

By Eileen Singh

The Challenge of Custom Software for the Enterprise

In May at the Henry Stewart DAM conference in New York, marketers from top companies heard Nikki Nielson—Corporate Marketing Specialist at Polaris Industries—recount the story of Polaris' transition to a Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) marketing system.

Most marketers will be familiar with the notion of SaaS—software that can be implemented instantly, is easily configurable, integrates with many other platforms out-of-the-box, and has low or no setup fees. But even though SaaS applications have become the norm for marketing technology, many enterprise companies like Polaris have been hesitant to adopt these standardized marketing applications. Where enterprises have moved to SaaS, as in Polaris' case, it is often driven by three key benefits:

- More efficiency for marketers

- Better integrations to other systems

- More cost-effective overall

These three factors were clearly driving forces when Polaris made its decision to switch to SaaS. Nielson explained to the conference attendees at Henry Stewart how the legacy digital asset management application Polaris had commissioned in the early 2000s lacked the scalability they required for distributed marketing. This customized system,

known as the MediaVault, had been designed to meet all the requirements, the Polaris marketing team could imagine. However, by 2011, the corporate marketers at Polaris found that the MediaVault was no longer delivering the value it had originally promised.

What Polaris needed, Nielson said, was an agile solution that would give marketers a larger impact without all the headaches. In late 2011 they chose CampaignDrive by Pica9: a SaaS local marketing system designed to help large, multi-location brands do distributed marketing more efficiently.

According to Nielson, the decision to "go SaaS" was a case of simple cost-benefit analysis for Polaris. Compared to the custom MediaVault system which required dedicated IT resources for every type of change, a SaaS solution offers Polaris those resources without constant back-and-forth. "Today, we can manage an entire global marketing system with a hyper-lean internal
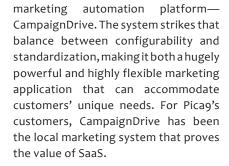
Kevin Groome

team, all thanks to CampaignDrive," Nielson claims. As a result, Polaris has definitely been enjoying the ride on the SaaS bandwagon.

Moving From Custom to Standard Marketing Software

As Polaris demonstrates, SaaS marketing software can be both an attractive and effective solution for enterprise-level organizations. But enterprise SaaS for marketing hasn't just been an overnight

> " *Our goal is to help brand marketers focus less on the technical challenges of their distributed or local marketing and more on creating great brand experiences*

sensation. Instead, it's been a gradual process where a select few vendors have built trust in the SaaS model.

This is mainly because enterprise companies are more reluctant to relinquish control over the design and development of the software they use. For years, large companies have relied upon complex IT procurement and implementation processes to exhaustively define, refine, and address business requirements. Having this level of control is very attractive for these companies, because it seems to mean the resulting software will be more powerful.

But just like Polaris found with the MediaVault, it can often have unintended consequences. This is where SaaS applications step in, offering a solid product and a more efficient approach in exchange for some of that extra control.

Pica9 Founder Kevin Groome knows how much work has been involved in creating the groundwork for this enterprise SaaS revolution. When Groome founded Pica9 in the late 1990s, the company's objective was to help major brands streamline

the local advertising their franchisees and dealers were doing. The company took contracts to create custom local-marketing software for their clients. At the time, this was the natural relationship between a client and a software vendor, especially when working with companies with more than 200 locations, the size of Pica9's average client.

Even at this early stage, the problems with custom software were clear to Groome. As he recalls, "each application we built for a client was made-to-order, with all of the bells and whistles the client needed (and sometimes just the ones they *thought* they needed)." All of those client requirements meant that each project Pica9 took required a full-blown development cycle.

These custom development projects were complex, challenging and slow. Worse, especially for the client, they were also expensive, and frequently went over budget. By the time the dev team would be ready to sign-off on a project and declare it successful, a new business requirement would emerge which would send them immediately back to the drawing board.

Despite these problems, creating a standardized approach to the myriad possible business requirements an enterprise marketing team needed was a challenge that continued to thwart many local marketing automation vendors.

In pursuit of that elusive "Goldilocks" enterprise local marketing solution, the Pica9 team was able to create a single, SaaS local

marketing automation platform—CampaignDrive. The system strikes that balance between configurability and standardization, making it both a hugely powerful and highly flexible marketing application that can accommodate customers' unique needs. For Pica9's customers, CampaignDrive has been the local marketing system that proves the value of SaaS.

The Next Mile in Local Marketing

If SaaS provides one huge advantage over custom software, it's in the area of updates, enhancements, and general improvements which keep the system modern throughout its lifespan.

At Pica9, the focus of feature enhancements is entirely on the customer. "We believe that a laser-like focus on understanding the customer, contributes to better software. This translates into superior long-term relationships with customers who truly unlock the potential value of CampaignDrive," asserts Groome.

One of the major forward-looking initiatives for CampaignDrive is to build out integrations to the upstream content sources and downstream deployment channels that customers use. This gets to yet another advantage that the SaaS platform offers to the enterprise: modularity. Instead of painstaking manual processes of tracking and updating different systems, SaaS platforms like CampaignDrive offer marketers seamlessly integrated data feeds between different applications.

Following these innovative approaches has helped Pica9's enterprise customers understand the value of a SaaS local marketing system, and it's why Groome feels confident asserting that "SaaS applications like CampaignDrive are empowering brand marketers to close the loop between marketing activity and revenue, helping major brands achieve the impact they want from their marketing." **MT**

Marketing Tech Insights

Top 10 Marketing Automation Solution Providers - 2016

With marketers investing a considerable amount of time and efforts in creating and curating online content, automating these entire process can turn to be a game changer for the players in the industry. The role of marketing automation tools cannot be discounted as they helps businesses in generating and nurturing leads and prospects more effectively. It has become crucial for enterprises to implement the right marketing automation systems to stay relevant in a hyper-competitive marketing environment.

Targeting the unprecedented demand for automation solutions in the market, there are a multitude of vendors delivering entry level systems to sophisticated marketing automation software. The aim is to allow enterprises integrate best practices in their marketing strategies in addition to developing programs that enable the clients realize ROI and profitability goals from lead generating campaigns. The solutions also facilitate cross functional alignment between marketing and sales departments for better co-operation and implementation of highly effective marketing programs.

With numerous marketing automation solution vendors delivering a full spectrum of services—from strategic planning to launching, managing, and measuring marketing campaigns, it can be an arduous task for the CIOs to zero in on the right solution for their company. In order to assist CIOs and CMOs in identifying the right marketing automation solutions, a distinguished panel comprising of CEOs, CMOs, CIOs, VCs, and analysts including Marketing Tech Insights editorial board have selected the leading firms that offers best-of-breed technology solutions and services in the marketing automation landscape.

The selection panel looked at the vendor's capability to fulfill the need of buyers with effective solutions that curb challenges and promote business growth. In this edition of Marketing Tech Insights, we bring to you "Top 10 Marketing Automation Solution Providers".

Pica9

recognized by **Marketing** magazine as

TOP 10
**MARKETING
AUTOMATION**
SOLUTION PROVIDERS - 2016

An annual listing of 10 companies that are at the forefront of providing marketing automation solutions and impacting the marketplace

Company:
Pica9

Key Person:
Kevin Groome
Founder & CEO

Description:
SaaS local marketing automation for multi-location brands with CampaignDrive by Pica9

Website:
pica9.com