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**MYTH 4: "We can't spare a dime to invest in research."**

Our bias for action can lead us to believe that research is a waste of time. We convince ourselves that things are moving so fast that any data we collect will have a short shelf-life anyway. Or if we realize we don't have a plan

Santayana reminds us that "Those who don't learn from history are doomed to repeat it." Marketing teams need to take the time to collectively review the effectiveness of their marketing strategies and how well (or poorly) they worked together to realize (or fail to realize) them. Successful execution of marketing strategy is rein-

They might even create a few. Superstars are hard to locate, hard to recruit, hard to afford and hard to keep. A superstar in one company could easily be a goat in another. A superstar strategy is neither scalable nor sustainable, and a truly great marketing organization gets great results not just from the

on the shoulders of our people. Expecting more out of your people when you're giving them less support, fewer resources, etc., just isn't reasonable. Yet we do it with regularity. And we convince ourselves that it works. And maybe it does, for a short period of time. But if you expect your people to show up to a work environment

Expecting more of your people when you're giving them less support and fewer resources **JUST ISN'T REASONABLE.** A work environment resembling a battlefield leads to casualties.

to convert data to actionable insight, we justify away the need for research. Or the research we do is conducted by people who don't have the training (or time) to do the job right. So instead, we shoot from the hip. We keep marching out the same marketing programs that we believe have always worked for us (long after they stopped being effective). Our marketing plans are grounded in assumptions and beliefs that would likely not survive serious scrutiny. Our entire marketing effort sits atop a very shaky foundation.

**MYTH 5: "We don't have time to examine our own navels."**

Whoever came up with this comment must have had an issue with process and the value of learning from experience. George

forced by a healthy system. When is the last time your organization underwent a system health check? Did you bring aboard an objective professional to assist in the diagnostic process, or did you do a self-examination? How did that work out? Did you make substantive change? Or did you file the learning away to be acted upon some day?

**MYTH 6: "I'll just hire me one of them superstars."**

Though often forgotten or at the very least minimized, people are at the core of any holistic effort to improve marketing performance and accountability. It would stand to reason that the better the people, the better the marketing organization. But let's get real: Superstars are not going to solve all of your problems.

sheriff, but from all of the townsfolk—even the day laborers.

**MYTH 7: "If everyone just picks themselves up by the bootstraps and tries harder (or works smarter)..."**

Marketing organizations have a bad habit of throwing bodies at problems, often creating huge inefficiencies because they fail to address the real issue—poor capacity management—at the source. Most of us have witnessed, or been in the middle of, people-intensive efforts that could have been easily streamlined with some foresight and a commitment to increasing the capacity of the function. Yet instead of investing in the necessary enabling infrastructure (process, technology, tools, etc.), we put unnecessary burdens

every day that resembles the fight-or-flight stress of a battlefield, you are going to experience a lot of casualties.

So stop shooting yourself (and everyone around you) in the foot! You've got an unprecedented opportunity to do things differently. We're in the 21st century now, so let's leave the Old West behind and step into the new world of Web 2.0, Marketing 2.0 and Marketing Operations 2.0. You may not get to flash your shotgun as often, but you'll sure play a bigger role in building a flourishing town (your company) into something of which you can be truly proud. ■

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**SPIN CYCLE**

Zimbra shortens the lead to sale time with increased automation Web tracking

—By Beth Negus Viveiros

**Automating communications about new leads** to sales reps and integrated tracking of visitors' Web site activity have helped Zimbra increase the converted lead to closed sale ratio by 50%.

Zimbra, a division of Yahoo, offers a suite of collaboration tools for small to large businesses that integrates e-mail, contacts, shared calendars and documents into a rich browser-based and mobile device experience. The company has over 41 million paid mailboxes across 60,000 organizations including H&R Block, Stanford University and Digg.com.

The company has around 25 reps who close the sales, says Greg Armanini, director of marketing. But aside from trade show presence, all lead generation begins online. "Our company is rooted in the Web, so we don't really do traditional media."

Sunnyvale, CA-based Zimbra worked with Eloqua's lead generation product for three years. However, the product was difficult for many of the reps to use. It required Internet Explorer, and since close to 90% of the reps were on Macs using Safari and Firefox, there definitely wasn't anywhere near 100% adoption.

Last summer, Zimbra began working with LoopFuse OneView's system to track Web visits and customer activity. The system integrates with Salesforce.com.

The lead process for Zimbra typically begins after a prospect downloads a trial version of the software. The average sales cycle is 60 days for small to medium businesses, although it can be

much longer for enterprises and service providers—Zimbra's largest deployment is Comcast and that deal took two years to finalize.

Today, Zimbra has been able to shorten the sales cycle by being able to track site visitors' activity and then contacting the prospects in real time, while the product is fresh in their minds.

"As Web site activity grows, it's common for sales organizations to be overwhelmed with new leads that are not qualified," says Armanini. "It's really hard to scale your business on the Web without sales and marketing automation."

**TRAFFIC PATTERNS**

Has the use of increased track-

ing capabilities led Zimbra to make changes to its company's Web site? "There have been some 'ah-ha!' moments when we noticed pages we expected to generate high traffic not doing so," says Armanini, noting that user questions also led them to notice where content needed to be expanded or added. ■

**QUICK TAKE: Ops Challenges and Trends**



"Every marketing organization needs to embrace marketing operations, but many have yet to start this journey. It's both a function and a process. And as the expectation for marketing to be a business driver increases, so will the need for marketing operations. The processes associated with marketing ops enable marketing to operate like a business with the necessary transparency and accountability."

"You need to get corporate buy-in. It is essential to have C-suite sponsorship. Without it, it is hard to secure the necessary investments, both in terms of dollars and talent. There are also some internal cultural challenges because the talent associated with marketing ops is more about process, systems, data and analytics—skills not typically associated with marketing."

"These challenges actually hint at trends, like the need for more analytical skills, more data, better access to data, and data analytics to make fact-based decisions. There's also a trend toward more performance management and measurement, which requires those analytical skills, systems, tools and processes. We hope this leads to other important trends, like [increases in the use of] marketing metrics, performance target setting and marketing dashboards."

—LAURA PATTERSON, PRESIDENT, VISIONEDGE MARKETING