



Telecom Marketing Best Practices: Rapid Response Intelligence

What do Telecommunications marketing and politics have in common?

Lessons from winning political campaign strategies and beyond

Telecommunications marketers face real challenges in today's world. Brand-name competitors are promising customers a 'better deal' on services that traditional providers have historically dominated. As bundled voice, internet and video offers gain converts, getting the right message to your customers and prospects at the right time has never been more important.

In many ways, today's telecommunications marketing environment looks like the latest political campaign season. To win customers (voters) and elections, successful political campaign managers have built flexible strategies based on:

- Customer insight from voter databases to identify segments and needs
- Targeted attack ads with tailored messaging 'offers' to sway voters
- A 'rapid response' philosophy to counter competitor offers and secure the base
- Use of feedback (polls) to deploy resources efficiently and convert undecided voters
- Multichannel messaging capabilities including mass media, direct mail, telemarketing and emarketing

While political campaigns and telecom marketing organizations have different goals, the requirements for success are similar. To win a customer's 'vote' for your companies' services bundle in today's competitive environment means that you must:

- Understand customer needs and wants at an individual level
- React quickly to competitor campaigns with compelling offers
- Use an analytically driven 'test and learn' approach to strengthen your customer relationships and ROI
- Identify and execute message and offer packages that put you ahead of your competitors

Sound easy? Maybe not. Matching up the best message, package and offer for each customer requires coordinating many moving pieces. Even in single channel campaigns, telecom marketers face complex challenges like 1) product launch teams championing competing product/service bundles, 2) multiple incentive offers, and 3) competitor actions that cloud the picture. Without a current read on what is working, where and why, you lack the insight needed to resolve internal debate and choose the best message and offer for each customer. Timely, accurate information on campaign performance and execution status directly impacts your ability to be a smart marketer.

Our perspective: "Rapid Customer Response Intelligence" is critical to winning in the telecom marketplace.

In Allant's experience, the key to outflanking the competition and ending internal debate on tactics is to leverage your customer contacts via interactive rapid response channels. In particular, inbound and outbound telemarketing are critical tools for understanding the programs and offers that are winning in a constantly shifting marketplace. And telemarketing depends on a continuous supply of timely, current lead disposition data from your campaigns.

Customer lead disposition information is often locked in limbo due to missing data from slow moving or incomplete reporting systems. Leads which are 'assigned but undispositioned' create barriers to smart decisions. Without a timely understanding of the true level of response -- and visibility into where all campaign leads stand in the sales process -- a significant level of marketing flexibility is lost. Like a political campaign strategist without current polling data, key resources may be wasted delivering messages to the wrong audience. This leads to inefficiency and hampers marketing's ability to adopt new tactics that would drive better results.

Allant has tackled this problem on behalf a number of telecom clients. Specifically, we've developed a solution aimed specifically at closing the 'customer response intelligence gap'. Our clients use this solution to connect the dots, for faster more informed campaign execution. They gain advantage from:

- Unified and objective lead management and disposition processing across multiple telemarketing vendors (and/or direct mail, email and D2D vendors)
- Daily, 100% dispositioning of outbound and inbound telemarketing campaigns
- Shorter lead recycle 'hold times' linked to better availability information
- Lead management tools for fine-tuning contact management and assigning next campaign/best offer
- Dynamic lead reallocation across vendors and call centers to adapt to changing conditions
- Integration with existing campaign management tools

Allant clients have seen significant savings and customer revenue gains from implementing this vendor management solution, with a payback of two to four dollars for every dollar invested, and increased flexibility to beat the competition in the marketplace.

Final thoughts on creating a winning telecom marketing strategy

In political campaigns, a voter chooses one candidate from a field of competitors based on the 'complete package' of attributes. The old adage that 'all politics is local' is another way of saying that people vote based on the relevance of the message to the issues that are important to them at the time when they are ready to act. And after the election, the losing campaign manager knows it will likely be a long wait for the next opportunity to win that voter back.

Marketing bundled telecom service packages faces similar challenges. In our experience, getting the results you seek depends heavily on having the right marketing tools to out-maneuver your competition, deliver relevant offers and lock in customer relationships. Channel optimization and vendor management solutions have shown themselves to be a valuable part of the marketing toolbox, with demonstrated value in the form of faster response time and greater efficiency.