

LoopFuse OneView™ Helps Zimbra Raise Sales & Marketing Efficiency by 50%

Key Benefits

- » 50% increase in sales and marketing efficiency
- » Ease of use for both marketing and sales departments
- » Complete sales and marketing automation platform
- » Tight integration with CRM, pushing key activity information where sales reps can act on it

Popular E-mail and Collaboration Company Replaces Eloqua with LoopFuse OneView

Over the past four years, collaboration software provider Zimbra, now a division of Yahoo!, has been redefining the email and collaboration software space. The Zimbra Collaboration Suite (ZCS) gives a sleek facelift to email standards and not only embraces new mobile computing options, but also openly integrates information from the web to make digital communication easy and efficient. Famous in technical circles for its use of AJAX, a web development technique that allows web applications to function like desktop applications, Zimbra pioneered the next generation collaboration client that integrates email, contacts, shared calendar, instant message, documents with sharing capabilities, advanced search and VoIP into a browser-based interface.

Zimbra's sophisticated technology has enjoyed substantial business success. Recognized as a bright spot of innovation in a large market, the company was acquired by Yahoo! in late 2007. The combined forces of Zimbra's ease-of-use and technology appeal, and Yahoo!'s market reach has helped the company continue on a meteoric rise in email collaboration marketshare, accumulating over 41 million paid mailboxes world-wide.

Capitalizing on a Volume Web-based Market

Zimbra's business model relies exclusively on driving large volumes of visitors to its website and provides various offers to expand adoption. Zimbra, an open source software company, offers both free and commercial versions. By encouraging users to try the software for free, Zimbra is relying on the product's performance to sell itself. Zimbra's success in creating a large on-line community of advocates helps keep the company's name visible in web-based conversations about email collaboration software.

By leveraging open source distribution and viral word-of-mouth media strategies, the Zimbra marketing team drives over 200,000 unique web visits a week to the company's main site <http://www.zimbra.com>. Furthermore, it is important for Zimbra to be cost effective and narrow their focus to only interested buyers to capitalize on the high volume market. Offering free and paid-for trials naturally helps segregate leads; however, the company still receives thousands of leads a week. The Zimbra sales representatives each typically manage hundreds of open leads weekly with a 60-day trial window to close business. If sales pursued each lead equally, they would have only eight minutes per lead each week.

"Businesses know that not all leads are equal. As you scale lead flow, you can quickly overwhelm your sales team with a ton of unqualified leads," explains Greg Armanini, director of marketing at Zimbra. "To be successful, you need to use sales and marketing automation to establish a customer relationship and focus sales reps only on the leads that are interested in buying today."

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Focusing the Pipeline

To minimize the cost of sales and help increase the close rate, Zimbra's business strategy depends on an inbound focused sales team. Marketing's responsibility is to deliver highly qualified leads for sales executives to engage. To help facilitate communication and reduce the sales team's workload, Armanini's marketing team drafts a series of automated emails that are sent to registered prospects throughout the course of their trial.

"It is critical to establish a very well-timed email relationship with the prospect to raise the likelihood of the trial to convert to a sale," said Armanini. "We need to have a personalized email, addressed to the registered prospect introducing their specific sales contact at Zimbra. In the course of a 60-day trial, it is important to balance this communication. It can't come across as spam, and it must ensure the prospect knows who to contact and make them aware of when their trial is about to expire. The last email when the free service is about to be turned off is usually when we have the most engaged dialogue with prospects."

While the sales team personally calls qualified prospects, narrowing the field of prospects to call and when to call them is another challenge. Zimbra uses its website to track visitor activity and tie it to the sales lead information in the company's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. By tracking prospects that visited the site frequently, and alerting the specific salesperson when the prospect was on the site, the sales team can better select which prospects to call and when to call them.

Choosing the Right Marketing Automation Software

In building the marketing department, the Zimbra team initially turned to two technologies in the hopes of streamlining sales and marketing and selected Salesforce.com for their CRM software and Eloqua for marketing automation. However, as the volume and pace of business exploded, the marketing team faced problems with delivering marketing automation programs as flexibly and quickly as the market demanded. While Salesforce.com worked for their CRM needs, Zimbra faced user adoption issues that rendered Eloqua's marketing automation solution ineffective.

"Eloqua had a lot of features, but tended to be hard to use for both marketing and sales. For instance, editing marketing programs took days of tweaks and debugging, and we missed sales opportunities. It also only worked with Internet Explorer browsers while two thirds of our sales department uses Firefox. Consequently, we had very low adoption rates and overall value for our money," cited Armanini. "We needed to speed up our efficiency in deploying programs and increase adoption with sales to optimize our pipeline."

In 2008, Zimbra realized that they needed a new marketing automation solution to be successful and Armanini and team searched for alternatives. "There are several marketing automation vendors, but most of them don't get it though," explained Armanini. These options all required several well-trained administrators. We couldn't afford to put even one person on this full-time, and needed even more automation and usability for sales. LoopFuse was the stand-out winner as they built their software to work for internet driven businesses just like ours."

LoopFuse Delivers Big for Volume Web-based Business

Zimbra redeployed its marketing automation processes on LoopFuse's OneView™ on-demand offering. Armanini and team deploy several lead nurturing campaigns based on specific web-form registrations and user activity. Registrations are now sent to Salesforce.com immediately and updated with an assigned sales representative. LoopFuse then emails the prospect with a personalized email addressed specifically to the contact, and addressed from the assigned salesperson. This correspondence is also recorded in Salesforce.com as are any email opens and subsequent website visits and registrations. When a sales rep receives a reply directly into their email inbox, they can see the complete contact history and instantly know how long the prospect has been evaluating the software, and gauge their interest.

Additionally, LoopFuse offers email alerts that sales can easily tailor down to the contact level. By reviewing pipeline activity reports in LoopFuse, sales executives can identify organizations that are actively evaluating software, pricing and support information on the Zimbra website. Notifications can then be used to hone in on key accounts and alerts can be set so sales executives know when top prospects are on the website. By quickly responding to these alerts with a follow up phone call, a sales rep greatly increases the likelihood of getting the prospect on the phone at a time when they are thinking about their possible purchase.

"Our sales and marketing efficiency has gone up 50% for reaching out to customers and closing business," said Armanini. "If you don't have sales and marketing automation that is as easy to use and as powerful as Loopfuse, it's really hard to scale your business on the web. As a business that is growing aggressively year over year, our sales team must be focused on the most likely prospects in order to function efficiently and profitably."

The Road Forward

For Zimbra, deploying LoopFuse was the key ingredient to creating a highly leveraged and efficient sales and marketing process. As Zimbra continues to drive huge volumes of visitors through its website and build its large community of online advocates, LoopFuse allows marketing to optimize the activities of the sales organization. LoopFuse's marketing automation and sales intelligence enable Zimbra to successfully narrow the field of qualified prospects and maximize closed business.

"Zimbra now has a platform that serves all aspects of the organization. We are able to automate demand generation, email marketing and lead scoring to provide the sales team with a healthy pipeline," cited Armanini. "I can't stress enough how important Loopfuse is to a business like ours. It's really something that once you have it, its hard to fathom how you ever operated without it."

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