

## information on demand

### Marketers find dynamic support with Web-based programs

Accessing, analyzing and interpreting marketing data used to require the help of IT and analytics people. No more. Marketers can now use Web-based interfaces (WBI) to tap into sophisticated analyses.

The most sophisticated WBIs offer a complex secure link to corporate computers and databases. Marketing professionals are using WBIs to gather detailed information essential to tailor campaigns and fine-tune strategy.

Marketers who use these tools can get real-time portrayals of information on sales orders, Web site hits, marketing-campaign return on investment and more. WBIs deliver the data conveniently from a user's desktop — and quickly, resulting in faster decision making.

Cliff Perona is using WBIs to help avoid costs of unproductive marketing initiatives for his company, which provides on-demand telephony solutions to small businesses. However, Perona, co-founder and director of Hosted Business Services Inc. (HBSI) of San Ramon, Calif., still needs to know whether he is hitting his market and if sales models are matching marketing objectives.

Perona uses NetSuite's Web-based software to manage and track marketing campaigns, as well as run his business. This comprehensive business management application offers graphic-rich interpretations of data personalized for each employee's needs and job functions, including Perona's own.

Perona especially appreciates NetSuite's Real Time Dashboard colorized bar graphs, visuals of a company's key performance indicators, and line graphs of performance and trends. "It's very visual," says Perona. "I can take a quick look at it and see where I am." If an indicator begins moving out of the green zone into the red zone, Perona knows it's time to take action. At a glance, he can check his cash financial position, as well as track and compare today's sales figures with those of yesterday and last week, and preview what's in the pipeline for future sales. The HBSI staff uses individually customized versions of the software according to each employee's role and function.

For one direct mail campaign, he used the application to print addresses on postcards, scan returns back into the system to measure campaign effectiveness and manage follow-ups. Perona also uses the software to assess his company's vital signs in real time. Thrilled at the minute level of detail now available, Perona says: "We used to have to hire a lot of people to do that stuff. Now I have a machine, and it's cheap. I can get 200 people on the system for what it'd cost me to hire one IT engineer for a year."

Laura Smith, vice president and director of list management for RMI Direct Marketing in Danbury, Conn., depends on her system for speedy database analysis so she can better serve her clients with direct marketing information. She uses ListDaxcess® by Direct Access, a marketing database and list management program, on behalf of her mailing list management clients. Smith can customize the program to each client's specific needs so she can manage multiple functions.

"In the past, this has been done, and there was no way for us to get exact counts on anything outside the report parameters," she says. "There are many sources that companies can use to generate new customers — direct mail, television, radio, the Internet. Direct mail, with the help of a good analytical tool, gives companies clear advantages over other sources: We know who we're talking to, what motivates consumers to buy and how to turn those people into long-term repeat customers.

"When we get an order for specific database selections, this program allows us to do what-ifs, and we go in and find additional segments relevant to them. It allows us to upsell." Smith estimates that business has increased by about 5 percent as a result. ☒

