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Religence CEO Linda Sharp's CRI Patent No. US 7,526,434

Network-Based System and Method of Marketing Management

The business process patent is for a method to manage marketing by measuring and managing the development of a relationship between a business and a contact.

Abstract: A marketing management method and a system to manage interactions, develop base line for the current performance, analyzing various marketing strategies and selecting a desirable marketing strategy for implementation are disclosed. In one embodiment of the invention, the method helps clients prepare product and service brands to mitigate risks and maximize profits. The method utilizes a web-based system including a server system coupled to a centralized interactive database and at least one client system. The method further includes the steps documenting benefits and leading indicator metrics to evaluate an impact of the new marketing strategy and then making iterative improvements after strategy implementation to the new marketing strategy to refine the marketing strategy further to reduce risks and increase profits.

Claims:

Claim 1. A method for managing marketing using a network-based marketing business system including a server coupled to a centralized interactive database and at least one client system in order to measure and manage a development of a relationship between a business and a contact, said method comprising:

creating, using the server, a unifying framework to manage contact Acquisition, Closing, and Retention as a continuum;

creating, using the server, consistent contact relationship metrics across the unifying framework to measure progress in relationship development;

establishing, using the server, a deliberate, systematic process using the unifying framework and metrics to develop relationships and execute strategy, wherein the framework, metrics and process are stored in the database on the server; creating and storing, using the server, a plurality of contact relationship levels representative of a customer lifecycle for the framework within the database, wherein each contact relationship level is assigned to at least one of a plurality of marketing phases including Acquisition, Closing and Retention:

anticipating in advance and populating, using the server, the database with a plurality of potential interactions between the business and the contact necessary within each contact relationship level to execute a predetermined strategy to develop the relationship between the business and the contact;

predefining, using the server, and storing in the database at least one trigger interaction within the plurality of potential interactions that enables movement of the contact from a first contact relationship level of the plurality of contact relationship levels to a second relationship level of the plurality of relationship levels and from a first marketing phase to a second marketing phase;

assigning, using the server, and storing in the database a predetermined relative interaction value based on an anticipated relative impact and relationship enhancement capabilities of each of the plurality of potential interactions between the business and the contact, the relative interaction value serving as a basis of measuring interaction effectiveness and progress in developing the relationship between the business and the contact;

assigning, using the server, and storing in the database a predetermined variable cost to each of the plurality of potential interactions between the business and the contact;

measuring , using the server, progress in relationship development for the contact within each contact relationship level by receiving over a network and recording the consistent contact relationship metrics of interactions, relative interaction value, and

interaction variable cost associated with each actual interaction between the business and the contact in an ongoing interaction record stored in the database on the server, wherein each actual interaction has an associated relative interaction value and variable cost;

continually assigning, using the server, the contact to a contact relationship level of the plurality of contact relationship levels as each actual interaction is recorded in the database on the server such that the assigned contact relationship level remains the same until the predefined definition of the at least one trigger interaction required for movement of the contact between contact relationship levels occurs;

continually updating in the database on the server a cumulative relative interaction value and cumulative variable interaction cost for the contact as each actual interaction occurs within the assigned contact relationship level based on the relative interaction value and variable cost associated with each actual interaction;

developing, using the server, an operational data stream in the database on the server for the contact, wherein the data stream tracks a cause and effect relationship between the recorded actual interactions and the corresponding relative interaction value of each recorded actual interaction and tracks the variable cost of each recorded actual interaction;

running, using the server, a computer-generated summary report for the contact, the summary report based on the data stream for the contact and transmitted by the server for display on a said at least one client system, wherein the report includes operational interaction flow summaries and patterns;

based on the report, making real-time day-to-day decisions and process improvements regarding the profitability and effectiveness of the chosen strategy and analyzing and producing long-term planning of the profitability and effectiveness of alternative marketing strategies by aggregating and correlating the operational interaction flow summaries and patterns with data acquired from other decision support systems and transaction processing systems.

Claim 2. A method in accordance with claim 1 further comprising modeling alternative strategies in advance of investment, wherein modeling alternative strategies comprises:

anticipating, using the server, potential interactions, fixed costs associated with each potential interaction, and variable costs associated with each potential interaction, the potential interactions being necessary to carry out the alternative strategies through each of the plurality of marketing phases;

running reports, using the server, for each alternative strategy based on status quo, best case scenario, and worst case scenario;

selecting, using the server, a best new planned strategy;

configuring, using the server, an operational relationship tracking system by populating the database with the anticipated potential interactions necessary to carry out an implementation of the selected best new planned strategy as a continuum through the plurality of marketing phases and through the plurality of contact relationship levels within each marketing phase such that all potential interactions and the associated relative interaction values and variable costs of each interaction are available to be selected by the operator of the system for the interaction record when the system is operational;

linking planning to operational execution, using the server, by systematically tracking actual results in executing the selected best new planned strategy by receiving over the network and recording in the database on the server consistent contact relationship metrics within the framework in an ongoing interaction record, wherein each actual interaction has an associated relative interaction value and variable cost and wherein the interactions, the relative interaction values, and the variable costs each constitute a data stream of contact relationship metrics; and

updating strategy decision models, using the server, with actual operational variable cost data from a computer-generated summary report to replace estimates.

Claim 3. A method in accordance with claim 1 further comprising cross-referencing, using the server, the received contact profile information against a unique identifier for easy retrieval and update in the database on the server, wherein the contact information includes the ongoing interaction record.

Claim 4. A method in accordance with claim 1 further comprising running computer-generated reports, using the server, and displaying the reports on the at least one client system that help management improve upon a marketing strategy to reduce risk and maximize profits by linking planning to operational execution by systematically tracking actual results in executing best new planned strategy.

Claim 5. A method in accordance with claim 1 further comprising running, using the server, a computer-generated detailed history of past interactions, current interactions, and planned interactions.

Claim 6. A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein recording each actual interaction between the business and the contact comprises receiving over the network and automatically recording each actual interaction in the ongoing interaction record in real time in the database on the server, wherein each actual interaction is initiated by at least one of the business, a contact of the plurality of contacts, and an automatic computer-generated trigger based on one of a previous actual interaction and an integrated market action plan.

Claim 7. A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein assigning the contact to a contact relationship level of the plurality of contact relationship levels as each actual interaction is received over the network and recorded comprises assigning the contact to a contact relationship level based on which potential interactions of the plurality of potential interactions keep the contact assigned to the same contact relationship level and which of at least one trigger interaction are predetermined to be necessary to move the contact from the first contact relationship level of the plurality of contact relationship levels to the second relationship level of the plurality of contact relationship levels and from a first marketing phase to a second marketing phase.

Claim 8. A method in accordance with claim 1 further comprising aggregating in the database on the server, as part of a data stream for a particular contact, each actual interaction between the business and the particular contact to determine an interaction

flow between the business and the particular contact within each contact relationship level of the plurality of contact relationship levels and within the at least one marketing phase, wherein the data stream for the particular contact includes a relative interaction value of each actual interaction between the business and the particular contact and a variable cost of each actual interaction between the business and the particular contact.

Claim 9. A method in accordance with claim 8 further comprising aggregating the data stream in the database on the server associated with the contact into the data stream of all contacts of a plurality of contacts to determine an interaction flow between the business and the plurality of contacts within each contact relationship level of the plurality of contact relationship levels and within the at least one marketing phase.

Claim 10. A method in accordance with claim 9 further comprising running a computer-generated summary report for the plurality of contacts, the summary report based on the aggregate data stream of the plurality of contacts, and displaying the summary report on the at least one client system.

Claim 11. A method in accordance with claim 10 further comprising comparing the data stream for each contact of the plurality of contacts and the computer-generated summary report generated for each contact to the aggregate data stream of the plurality of contacts and the computer-generated summary report generated for the plurality of contacts to facilitate guiding decisions and process improvements relating to relationship development between the business and each contact of the plurality of contacts in real time.

Claim 12. A method in accordance with claim 9 further comprising:

determining a computer-generated aggregate relative interaction value for the plurality of contacts; and

correlating the aggregate relative interaction value with at least one of business profits, customer satisfaction, and other key performance indicators of the business,

wherein the aggregate relative interaction value is a leading indicator of business profits, customer satisfaction and other key performance indicators of the business.

Claim 13. A method in accordance with claim 9 further comprising:

using a computer-generated aggregated data stream to facilitate iterative improvement of business performance; and

adjusting predetermined relative interaction values to reflect new values suggested from results obtained from a relationship tracking system.