

Data-driven pioneer blueSummit: There is no alternative to data-driven marketing

Melania van Hümmel, Kathrin Buschmann / Februar 2019

In our second edition of “Data-driven Pioneers,” we are focusing on the performance marketing agency blueSummit. The Agency recognized at an early stage that data-driven marketing was imperative to survive in online marketing. In its work, it sees itself as a consultant and decision maker, a visionary and trendsetter. Sebastian Sommerer founded blueSummit with the mission of developing modern solutions for the digital challenges of the future. And he has been successful: For the past ten years, the independent agency has been supporting renowned companies like Lufthansa, MediaMarkt, OTTO, and Ernsting’s Family in the fields of SEA/Shopping, SEO, Affiliate Marketing, Paid Social, and Performance Display.

The customer experience is paramount

For blueSummit, data-driven marketing is the approach that allows it to meet the needs of today’s customers. As a result of increasing opportunities for communication and interaction, a rise in the number of end devices and the increased use of mobile devices, customers have become more demanding and more impatient. The customer approach must be targeted and relevant. Björn Haese, Leader of Product Development at blueSummit Media: “There is no alternative to data-driven marketing. At least not if we want to meet the demands that customers place on advertisers. In the course of our daily activities, we have to identify and target a wide variety of user groups and approach them with the messages that are right for them. This is a time-consuming process and to achieve it we need data-driven marketing—there is no other way.” Michael Schönherr,

Operations Manager at blueSummit Media, points out that advertisers who do not incorporate data-driven marketing into their processes and workflows will face a significant competitive disadvantage. He argues that it is necessary to keep pace with the times and to firmly incorporate the technology of artificial intelligence and machine learning into the agency's day-to-day business.

The organic growth in the market is largely exhausted, so it is all the more important to process data traffic in a targeted way. Thanks to data-driven marketing and automation, the agency has more time to focus on the essentials: the target audience and the content that is tailored to their needs. "As a result, we can, for example, push seasonal campaigns more strongly, achieve better conversion rates, and thus generate further growth for our customers," Schönherr continues.

“Customers come to us increasingly frequently with basic questions: ‘We want to grow by 20 percent over the next year, what should we do, where should we start?’”

Michael Schönherr
Operations Manager at blueSummit Media



From service to holistic consultancy

Working with data and automation means the agency service that blueSummit offers is shifting focus: It is becoming more and more important to provide agency customers with comprehensive advice in view of the increasing opportunities for communication and interaction and as a result of the growing volume of data. "We are dealing with a range

of advertising platforms and a variety of devices that consumers use to access information—and data is accumulating everywhere. This is what our customers are confronted with—they need someone to give them direction,” explains Schönherr. blueSummit’s customers seldom merely ask for a campaign to be run—instead, they want to achieve specific campaign goals and expect support in making strategic decisions. Analyzing and interpreting data correctly in order to then derive recommendations for action for individual channels is more relevant than ever in the agency’s service portfolio. “Whereas, a few years ago, it was a case of optimizing growth and visibility in online marketing. Nowadays, the focus is on a better user experience with the help of personalized content,” explains Alexander Horn, Head of Marketing Automation.

“The winner will be the player who offers the best customer experience at all levels. Advertisers who do not integrate a data-driven approach into their marketing mix now or in the future will face a significant competitive disadvantage due to increasing complexity.”

Alexander Horn
Head of Marketing Automation at blueSummit Media



One challenge remains: changing the way people think

Not all customers are open to blueSummit’s progressive approach. Above all, traditional customers who cling to working methods that have been established over many years need to be won over to the benefits of automation. In the case of automated processes such as creating reports and campaigns, it is not immediately evident from the outside what the agency’s work processes and the technology used will look like in detail, which

is why misgivings about automation and data-driven marketing may arise. Despite the concerns that still remain, the benefits far outweigh the drawbacks. This is the only means of streamlining processes in many areas and of achieving a tailor-made customer approach. “Data provides an insight into user needs and helps us to obtain the geographic, demographic, device, and behavior-specific information which is crucial to campaign management nowadays. Since the amount of data can no longer be mapped manually, data-driven marketing always goes hand in hand with automated work processes,” explains Schönherr. Furthermore, providing transparency to the customer is more important than ever in the case of such complex developments: Close communication such as regular discussion of the measures introduced and the results is necessary to ensure that the customer is involved in their own further development.

Within the company, the more than 200 employees of blueSummit had to adjust to the new processes and undergo training to prepare them for changes in the workflow.

“In the wake of automation, we need an organization that is constantly flexible enough to reinvent itself and adapt,” Schönherr explains. “The work of the agency is becoming increasingly complex. The trend towards the reallocation of tasks will not end in the near future.” Customer trust will continue to be important—it is the only way that we can venture to undertake pioneering work together and broach new topics, which will lead to impressive results and provide a competitive edge.

According to blueSummit, three key factors come together in data-driven marketing:

1. As a result of increased opportunities for interaction and communication, the agency has more data than ever at its disposal. Proper analysis of this data makes it possible to significantly improve the performance of marketing activities.
2. The new technology and different advertising platforms also access the data collected. Overall, the agency can set up very simple campaign structures and tailor these efficiently to the specific needs of the customers.
3. The consultancy service of blueSummit is shifting—towards analysis and strategy.

Innovative “fullistic approach” as an example of pioneering work

blueSummit is the first agency in Germany to test Google’s “fullistic approach.” With this new concept, campaigns can be almost completely automated using machine learning. It was developed by Google in collaboration with advertisers to allow campaigns to be created and managed in a holistic way. Overall, the creation, implementation, and optimization of the advertising campaign is simplified, while the administrative workload is significantly reduced. At the same time, strategically important topics such as target audience and content can be given more emphasis. For example, blueSummit used precisely this innovative approach for its customer Blume2000.de and was able to achieve significant results: A clear increase in visibility was accompanied by a strong uplift in conversion volume while maintaining the desired efficiency. In addition, time savings of more than 20 percent were achieved in the areas of campaign maintenance and calibration. blueSummit used the time saved to focus more on the topics of audience and content strategy. While continual improvements in performance were identifiable within the test phase, the new structures and processes meant that performance could also be sustainably improved even after the end of the test.

“The success is visible: blueSummit is seeing an average increase in performance of 25 percent across all its customers.”

Michael Schönherr
Operations Manager at blueSummit Media



For blueSummit, data-driven marketing is a key factor that enables it to survive in the face of increasing competition from other agencies. The approach has proved successful: Since blueSummit was founded ten years ago, the agency has achieved sustained

growth—in terms of the number of customers, the media spending invested, the agency turnover, and also in terms of the development of new innovative products.

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