TECHLINK

TECHNOLOGY FOR BUSINESS PEOPLE

New Web system can build client prospects

By Laura Otto

Knowledge can become power in building a customer base, says a Geneva marketing communications expert.

For example, when a person interested in your business calls or visits your Web site, you only have eight seconds to covert him into a customer, says Dan Elliott, owner of InteloQuence.

As a result, it's imperative to find out as much information about the potential customer as quickly as possible, so that he may be directed down the appropriate path.

Dissatisfied with any customer tracking programs already on the market, Elliott and his team of developers created InteloSoft, a Web-based, customer management software system.

"For the last three years, we had been trying to find a software program that was easy to use and integrate, but couldn't," said Elliot. "We decided that the easiest way to get that would be to do it ourselves. So we created a piece of software that quite literally turns suspects into prospects and prospects into customers in a very easy two or three click fashion."

Basically, InteloSoft tracks people who visits a business's Web site, recording information such as what the person was interested in and whether he downloaded a brochure, joined a mailing list, will be attending a trade show, needed technical assistance or would like to have a salesperson call.

"Any individual that visits a W_b site and becomes a user is an interesting person," said

Dan Elliott, owner of InteloQuence in Geneva, says his new Web customer management tool can be helpful in securing sales leads. (Photo by Dietrich Wolfframm)

Elliott. "That person should not be ignored, but truly engaged in the customer acquisition process."

When a customer initiates a telephone call, he is identified from a database of potential customers. The representative from the business is then prompted with a series of questions that are

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formulated to determine who that individual is and the size of his marketplace, in industry-specific terms.

The program then determines the appropriate distributor for that person, tracks the customer data in a calendar and forwards the information to the distributor.

"With just a few clicks in the Web software, we can not only track the activity on the Web but also the activity on the phone," Elliott said. "InteloSoft is just a Web-based call center that integrates Web sites with telephone switches."

The product is available for Web sites that InteloQuence designed as well as third-party sites.

Since using the InteloSoft software package in conjunction with a Web outreach program, Bison Gear and Engineering in St. Charles experienced a nearly 900 percent increase in traffic on its Web site in a 48-hour span after launching a new product, according to Elliott.

Auth-Florence Manufacturing in Glendale Heights increased its Web traffic from 7,000 visitors to almost 23,000 visitors in a two-week period since using InteloSoft, said Elliott.

"Visitors to the Auth-Florence Web site downloaded 5,500 28-page catalogs and in doing so, it saved the company $11,000 in printing costs," said Elliott.

The InteloSoft software is installed on the client's server, and because it is Web-based, is available 24 hours per day, seven days a week. In addition, InteloQuence provides maintenance service and 24-hour support.

Because it operates in a UNIX environment, InteloSoft has a higher degree of stability and security than programs operated in a Windows environment, according to Elliott.

"We're pleased to be Microsoft free," said Elliott. "The system is not prone to the kinds of bugs or spamming or spoofing that Microsoft products have."

In addition, UNIX has an open architecture that enables the program to be easily modified, said Elliott.

Every software package has a base set of tool kits that are customized to the client's particular needs.

"The folks at Frain Group in Addison are supplementing the InteloSoft package with an instant messaging live chat tool, and so their system will have telephone Web-based quotations as well as live instant messaging," said Elliott. "We're constantly upgrading it."

Although it varies from client to client, installation typically costs between $2,500 and $7,500. InteloQuence spent more than $100,000 in development.

"It really pays off when you look at the numbers," said Elliott. "It's so easy to use that you can't believe that you're doing anything. Best of all, it's always on, it doesn't say something wrong to the customer and it never fudges on the expense report. It is undoubtedly the most Joe Friday, just-the-facts team member that any company could have."

In August, InteloQuence was awarded the AXIEM award for Design Excellence.