

CEO Spotlight

Persona Marketing

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eGrabber Inc, headquartered in San Jose, California is a provider of B2B Prospect Researching tools for Targeted Persona marketing. Founded in 1997, the company has over 100 employees across U.S. and India with more than 100,000 customers.

Companies, big and small, need a constant stream of prospects in their target markets. Now, more than ever before, abundant data is freely available on businesses and prospects - in blogs, social networks, business networks, news, business forums, industry newsletters and many other "deep web resources". This has resulted in an explosion of vendors mining the Internet for contact information and selling them as lists to companies. These lists are typically sorted by traditional demographics that include name/ title/ company/ phone/ email/ industry/employee count/ revenues.

Marketers complain that email marketing to these traditional lists is an endless frustration. Response rates are very low and recipients complain about receiving emails that are not relevant to them. The 'spray and pray' approach which a traditional list encourages, but cannot distinguish a target from a non-prospect.

For instance, if the intended audience was CTOs of companies that engaged in gene-splicing technology, the traditional marketer would purchase lists of email IDs of all CTOs in the Biotech industry, since that list was closest in relevance. However, only five percent of these companies may actually engage in gene-splicing technologies, with the remaining 95 percent of CTOs

receiving irrelevant emails that may cause them to blacklist the marketer - not quite the effect the marketer intended to elicit.

Savvy B2B marketers are adopting persona marketing strategies. Persona marketing utilizes not only titles of prospects, but also activities and aspirations of a prospect so that they can send a more customized email that will prompt the recipient to not only read the email but also make them more likely to respond. This of course, requires more research on



each prospect and instead of starting with an industry or title, persona marketers use a networking group or a niche association to seed their lists, and then fill in research details around them.

In the example above, persona marketing would find a way to send emails to only relevant five percent of biotech companies. They will target not only CTOs but other more relevant people in these



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organizations that deal with genesplicing directly. Companies that are using this methodology find that their response rates are three times higher than in the past. This strategy also allows marketers to now have a more personalized and richer follow on conversation with the recipient.

Other than marketing and sales, recruiters can use this strategy and our tools. In the future, companies will look to build relationships with prospects knowing what they will need three years from now, based on data analysis today. Researchers and tools that can help with this type of marketing will be winners. Entrepreneurs must plan to make money in the long term even without an exit event like an acquisition, funding or IPO. Deep expertise in their domain and patentable intellectual property in their products to gain strategic market advantage are essential ingredients for success.

(Chandra is a serial entrepreneur. His first startup in 1992 introduced the first business card reader solution. Another startup in 2001 was ranked #201 in INC500 fastest growing private companies). 