Avanade | Gold Winner

Capitalizing on Marketing's New Tools and Technologies

Modernizing Martech: How our Improvement Initiative Drives Better Experiences and Increases Effectiveness

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Much of the work we do at Avanade involves modernizing IT for our clients to make them fit for the digital world. We've applied the same approach to our marketing tools and technologies for the same reason.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

Our martech modernization initiative is a holistic effort encompassing technology, analytics and people. The objective is to provide better experiences for our clients and our team, and to improve marketing effectiveness.

PROGRAM EXECUTION

Execution focused on five elements:

1. **Avanade.com:** Our corporate website is a primary channel to reach clients, partners, influencers, recruits and our employees. It's crucial that we offer the best experience possible. As part of the initiative, we addressed personalization, video integration, blog platform migration and translation automation.

2. **Marketing automation platform:** Marketo and Microsoft Dynamics 365 CRM make up our integrated, multichannel execution and lead management platform. Improvements included a focus on integrating our tools to influence lead scoring and progression, and the addition of an all-in-one email template and central webinar integration.

3. **Analytics and Insights for Marketing (AIM) platform:** Our AIM platform enabled us to move away from manual tracking and reporting of data. This one-stop shop provides all our marketing data and analytics needs, including Microsoft Power BI-based dashboards, web analytics and social listening.

4. **Agile marketing methodology and tools:** As part of the initiative, we looked at how we work. That led us to fully adopt agile marketing and related tools such as Microsoft Teams, Azure DevOps (formerly Visual Studio Team Services) and Kanban boards.

5. **People and skills:** New tools and technologies are critical to success, but they don't work without people. And those people need to have the right capabilities for the evolving market. Which is why we made skills development part of the initiative.

BUSINESS RESULTS

Our modernization program has driven positive results, including improved website engagement with our target clients, a stronger and more accurate pipeline of qualified leads, increased blog subscriptions and internal efficiencies.

New web features increase engagement. The new personalization capability on our corporate website provides more relevant user experiences. And it gives us better insight into who our web visitors are and how they're engaging with the site. For example, we've seen a significant improvement in click-throughs for visitors we target with industry-specific content. Content engagement is also strong, with a growing number of visitors actively interacting with pages, downloads, videos and contact forms. This has led to improved overall website conversion rates.

Modernization efforts increase internal efficiencies. For example, shifting to automated translations on our local websites has reduced the manual process of translation management and content loading by more than half. At the same time, marketers can now edit translations in the context of the site.

Agile approach increases speed and flexibility. We trained all our team members in agile marketing, and the majority have begun using it for a variety of activities, including content development, operations, campaigns and client evidence. Teams are seeing increased speed and flexibility as a result.

Three critical success factors

Our martech modernization initiative was a significant undertaking, cutting across external platforms and technologies, as well as internal tools, and involving our entire marketing organization. Three key factors have been critical to the program's success:

Integration is imperative. From the beginning, we took a holistic approach to ensure that we could effectively connect systems to get the full benefit of our marketing tools and technologies.

People and capabilities count. Tools and technologies go hand in hand with people and capabilities. That's why skills development, training and new methodologies were integral to the program.

Collaboration with IT is critical. The modernization program is underpinned by strong collaboration between marketing and our IT organization to make sure we're getting the most out of our technology investment.

"We saw an opportunity to use exciting new tools and technologies to digitally transform our marketing organization. But we knew we couldn't do it alone. To be effective, marketing and IT needed to have shared business goals," says Stella Goulet, Avanade's CMO. "Improving the client and employee experiences is key to supporting Avanade's broader business objectives and is an area where marketing and IT are equally vested. Our martech modernization initiative is a great example of effective collaboration at work."