

COLE & WEBER UNITED

ADVERTISING AGENCY RAISES LEAD VALUE WITH ON-DEMAND LEAD VERIFICATION

Agency Drives Service Value With Lead Quality

Cole & Weber United, a WPP-owned advertising agency, has built innovative online lead generation services based on two different models. Some clients have leads delivered on a cost-per-lead or cost-per-action basis, while others profit from the fuller services provided by an agency-of-record relationship.

To produce leads that meet its standards for both kinds of clients, Cole & Weber United doesn't just act as a publisher that generates its own leads. The agency also purchases some leads from other publishers.

Using automated processes and manual review, Cole & Weber United strives to ensure that its core value proposition is upheld by its leads, whether they are generated internally or externally.

The Problem


Too many leads that were deemed valid still could not be reached

The Solution

TARGUSinfo On-Demand Lead VerificationSM

The Result

The number of unreachable leads that pass review have been cut by 15-20%



'We've seen a decrease in our subjectively rejected lead rates across the board by somewhere between 15-20%.'

– Dave Behn, Cole & Weber United Agency Partner and Director of Performance Marketing

“The philosophy is that the better leads you can provide, the more valuable you are as a partner,” says Dave Behn, an Agency Partner and Director of Performance Marketing for Cole & Weber United. “So you want every opportunity to try to reduce the amount of invalid leads, whether they’re caught upfront or caught subjectively.”

Lead Quality Demands Vigilance

To protect its lead quality, Cole & Weber United has fine-tuned some widely-used methods. The agency uses automated processes to reject obviously faulty leads and test for patterns, words or phrases that suggest fraudulent activity. Manual review provides a backstop.

The agency always keeps an eye out for innovative solutions that help raise lead quality and reduce client returns.

“Our experience has been that you are never going to get a pure bunch of leads,” Behn says, “but it’s our job to try to minimize the number of bad leads that get through.”

Returned Leads Eat Into Profits

Sometimes clients claim that leads that have passed through Cole & Weber United’s processes still can’t be reached. Clients return these leads to the agency and are not charged for them.

The agency refers to these leads as “subjectively rejected” and makes a priority of limiting them.

“To me, the definition of reasonable quality in a lead-generation space is the ability to contact that person,” Behn says. “That’s the lowest common denominator. Obviously, there are other factors of quality, but as the entry point, you absolutely need to be able to provide valid information.”

Subjectively rejected leads create lost sales for the agency, which often doesn’t find out how many leads a client is returning until the end of the

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month. At that point, the agency doesn't have any time to make good on the defective leads for that billing cycle, if at all.

"The problem with subjectively rejected leads isn't so much that clients shouldn't have the right to do that, it's that it eats directly into your margin as a publisher," Behn says.

Agency Adds A Unique Level Of Verification

Cole & Weber United adopted TARGUSinfo On-Demand Lead VerificationSM in 2005 and incorporated it with the agency's previous processes.

The agency first considered TARGUSinfo because it provides greater coverage and accuracy than other solution providers. TARGUSinfo automatically confirms the validity of consumer names, addresses and phone numbers submitted online. But what makes TARGUSinfo's solution more valuable is that it enables the agency to verify that the three pieces of contact information all relate to the same person.


Ultimately, Cole & Weber United picked TARGUSinfo because its solutions help raise lead quality and build client relationships on more than the bare bottom line.

"It's really about a business partnership and a relationship and I think we are looking for ways to provide mutual value," Behn says. "And, above and beyond everything else, I think that will produce great results for both us and TARGUSinfo."

Tailored Solution Increases Effectiveness

The partnership began with TARGUSinfo consulting with Cole & Weber United to customize its solution. The process helped the agency maximize its efficiency.

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By adjusting the business rules used for the solution, TARGUSinfo worked with the agency to minimize good leads that were marked for rejection.

“I think that TARGUSinfo’s ability to look at real data that we’re providing and to try to shift the business rules has been great,” Behn says “TARGUSinfo has been very willing to do that and provide feedback and point of view on what we can change. It allows us to make more educated decisions about our adjustments to the business rules.”

Lead Return Reduced

TARGUSinfo made an immediate difference in Cole & Weber United’s returned-lead rate.

“We’ve seen a decrease in our subjectively rejected lead rates across the board by somewhere between 15-20%,” Behn says.

The lift is also providing a marketable difference for the agency when it talks with prospects and customers.

“I think they like to know that that level of data verification exists because it’s not exactly ubiquitous,” Behn says. “They like knowing that that exists and they like knowing that it’s already built into the system. It’s not something that they have to implement themselves.”

Since Cole & Weber United’s partnership with TARGUSinfo is built on this foundation of value provided to the agency’s customers, the relationship can grow with the agency’s ever-evolving needs for lead quality.

“It sounds like TARGUSinfo is scaling into even more robust data verification services,” Behn says, “and so I have confidence that TARGUSinfo is going to be able to support our needs and keep moving forward.”