Business challenge

To drive growth in a competitive domestic retail banking market, RAKBANK aimed to increase share of wallet. How could it inspire customers to convert using tailored marketing messages?

Transformation

RAKBANK created an analytics-driven digital marketing process supported by IBM solutions—more than doubling unique-open rates, lifting click-through rates by a factor of four and boosting wallet share.

Praveen Pinto
Manager – Online Marketing
RAKBANK

Business benefits:

x2
increase in unique-open rates for promotional email campaigns

x4
boost in click-through rates thanks to relevant messages

Lifts
share of wallet and drives competitiveness

RAKBANK
Doubling unique-open rates and driving share of wallet with highly tailored marketing messages

Founded in 1976, RAKBANK, the trading name of National Bank of Ras Al-Khaimah, is one of the oldest and most dynamic banks in the UAE. Headquartered in the emirate of Ras al-Khaimah, the bank operates 35 branches and generated an operating profit equivalent to approximately USD382.4 million in 2015.

"IBM is helping us to keep the customer experience at the heart of our customer communications strategy."

Praveen Pinto
Manager – Online Marketing
RAKBANK

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Relevant communications make happy customers

Promotional emails are a valuable way to win incremental sales from existing customers and inspire prospects to buy for the first time. However, if these messages are not relevant, there is a real risk of alienating the audience and damaging the brand image.

RAKBANK, one of the UAE's leading retail banks, aimed to tackle this challenge head-on. Operating in a highly competitive domestic market, the company realized that personalized digital marketing would provide the edge it needed to incentivize conversion and boost its share of wallet—but only if it could gain deeper insight into individual customer preferences.

Praveen Pinto, Manager – Online Marketing, RAKBANK, explains: "In our market, it is extremely common for retail banking customers to have accounts with multiple banks. For example, one customer may engage with different providers for their personal loans, credit card and mortgage.

"Driving growth in such a saturated market means that increasing share of wallet is essential. To achieve the goal, we wanted to build fine-grained customer segments, and use the insights to design highly tailored marketing campaigns.

"In the past, we relied on a third-party email service provider to send out weekly emails to more than 60,000 customers.

"One of the main challenges with this approach was that a single batch of emails took as long as four days to send out to our customers, which meant we were only able to launch one campaign per week. Moreover, customer segmentation was a time-intensive, manual process—limiting our ability to identify individual customer preferences.

"Because we were only able to share a single, generic email each week, it was virtually impossible to ensure that the messaging in the email would appeal to all the recipients—reducing the likelihood of conversion and increasing the risk of customers unsubscribing from our promotional mailing list.

"The digital channel is one of our main methods for reaching customers, and we are keen to keep our unsubscribe rate as low as possible. To solve these challenges, we looked for a fresh approach to digital marketing."

"In addition to being one of the most comprehensive solutions we assessed, we felt that IBM Campaign was by far the most intuitive."

Praveen Pinto, Manager – Online Marketing, RAKBANK

Gaining enterprise-class digital marketing

Following a rigorous evaluation process, RAKBANK decided to design and implement a new end-to-end marketing process based on IBM® Campaign.

"We had a number of operational criteria for our digital marketing platform—and IBM Campaign met practically all of our requirements," recalls Praveen Pinto. "One of the most valuable features of IBM Campaign is the ability to launch multi-wave marketing campaigns, which enables us to share relevant, compelling follow-up messages based on the items that a customer interacted with in a previous promotional email.

"In addition to being one of the most comprehensive solutions we assessed, we felt that IBM Campaign was by far the most intuitive. After demonstrating the platform to our marketing team, we realized that our people would be able to start using the solution with minimal training—enabling us to start reaping the benefit of our new digital marketing platform rapidly."

He adds: "Like all leading retail banks, we utilize a wide range of best-of-breed back-end systems—and it was essential to have a marketing platform that was easy to integrate with our existing systems for core banking, loans and credit cards. We had confidence that IBM Campaign could support the integrations we needed, and meet our stringent requirements around information security."

"Our click-through rates have now shot to 16 percent—an impressive 13 percentage points higher than the industry average."

Praveen Pinto, Manager – Online Marketing, RAKBANK

Strong partnership

Working together with an expert team from IBM, RAKBANK deployed its new solution in just five months. Combined with IBM Marketing Operations, the bank can seamlessly integrate its marketing campaign workflows—substantially boosting the number of campaigns it can roll out each week.

"We had worked together with IBM on a previous 'click-and-collect' project, which enables our customers to sign up for new accounts online, and instantly activate the service after validating their identity in-branch," comments Praveen Pinto. "We knew from experience that IBM offers an exceptional level of customer service and technical support, and we were certain that IBM was the right choice to guide us through the deployment process."

Building fine-grained segments

Today, RAKBANK uses IBM® Campaign to finely segment its customer data and create personalized messages that appeal directly to real-world customer preferences. After building a new multi-wave campaign, the bank's marketing team can test the messages on multiple different applications, platforms and devices—ensuring a consistent experience for every customer.

Because each stage of the digital marketing workflow is integrated with IBM Marketing Operations, the bank can quickly submit its campaigns to the appropriate reviewers in the information security, contact center and management teams—enabling short cycle times for campaign development.

"Working with IBM continues to be a very positive experience," says Praveen Pinto. "We attribute our rapid go-live to the quality of our support—and post-sales support has been extremely responsive. We can see that IBM is a world leader in digital marketing for a reason."

Delighting customers, boosting share

With IBM solutions driving its digital marketing processes, RAKBANK is achieving its goal of reaching out to customers with tailored messages—inspiring higher conversation, reducing unsubscribe rates and driving up share of wallet.

"In the past, it took us four days to launch a single email campaign—now we can launch four new campaigns every single day," says Praveen Pinto. "Crucially, our campaigns are now targeted at specific customer segments. Thanks to our relevant messaging, we are now measuring unique-open rates of up to 50 percent, 29 percentage points higher than the industry average."

He continues: "More importantly, our click-through rates have now shot to 16 percent—an impressive 13 percentage points higher than the industry average. By reaching out to customers with information on products, services and offers that are relevant to them, we are inspiring large numbers of our customers to make incremental purchases, helping us to boost our share of a competitive market."

Shaping behavior-driven campaigns

Based on the initial success of its digital marketing transformation, RAKBANK is now refining its campaigns even further.

"We have already increased the number of campaigns we can launch per year by more than a factor of three, and we are confident that our number of campaigns per year will continue to rise," explains Praveen Pinto. "One area that we are extremely interested in is context- and behavior-driven campaigns. For example, we aim to delight each of our customers by sending a personalized offer on their birthday—something that would have been impossible using our previous approach.

"Similarly, if we see that one of our customers has recently purchased an airline ticket using one of our credit cards, we plan to reach out to them with a tailored offer on travel insurance. The goal is to ensure that all of our customer communications are relevant and compelling—and our IBM solutions are definitely helping us to nurture our customers' loyalty."

Looking to the future, RAKBANK intends to migrate its SMS marketing process to the IBM Campaign platform, and use IBM Interact software to determine the optimal contact method for each of its customers.

Praveen Pinto concludes: "RAKBANK is one of the first retail banks in the UAE to adopt tailored marketing messaging, and we see that our IBM solutions are a valuable source of competitive advantage. Our work with IBM is helping us to keep the customer experience at the heart of our customer communications strategy—helping us to drive our growth."

Solution components
- IBM® Campaign
- IBM Marketing Operations

Take the next step

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