How a Belgian Retailer disrupted its Client Communication

Leading retailers all over the world are upgrading their customer experience through data– and AI–driven marketing. How does a Belgian retailer compete with these online, heavily personalized retail giants? Find out which challenges this retailer had and how we helped them to implement the best solution.

About the client

Our client is one of the largest fashion retailers in Belgium. They have both an off–line presence with 20 brick–and–mortar stores and a web–shop which has been gaining momentum in recent years. Like many other mid–sized retailing company they are highly aware that now is the time to be investing in new technologies if they want to continue growing in the years and decades to come.

The challenge

One of the key areas where retailers can make the difference is in getting the right messaging to the right segments of their clientele. A method of doing this is using a customer relationship management system (CRM) that stores information on clients and their historic behaviour. However, many of the systems on the market find their origin in a B2B context, which is typically an environment where the number of salespeople / marketeers are vastly greater in number than on the B2C retail market. Hence, the challenge was to find a system that was in fact well suited to the specific needs of our client as a player in the retail market.

Solution

Knowing they wanted to find a way to interact with their customers in a better way, our client contacted Crunch Analytics to help them solve this challenge. This encompassed three key steps: finding the right solution, implementing the solution and providing support after the platform had been implemented.

1. Finding the right solution

In the first phase of this project Crunch Analytics scoured the market to find the platform that was best suited for the needs of a mid-sized retailer with both on-line and off-line contact points with clients.

An important difference between B2B and B2C CRM systems is that the latter offers the possibility to interact with larger batches of customers simultaneously using email, SMS, web push, mobile apps or social media integrations. This is a major improvement upon more basic tools that offer things like simple mailing lists, or even the basic tools from Google or Facebook that offer a lot of variables but little to no integration with detailed customer behaviour.

The clear winner of this competition was the Zaius platform, a relative newcomer to the CRM market, but one with a clear focus on B2C companies. The reason why Crunch and the management team of our client selected Zaius can be summarized in the "killer features of this platform".
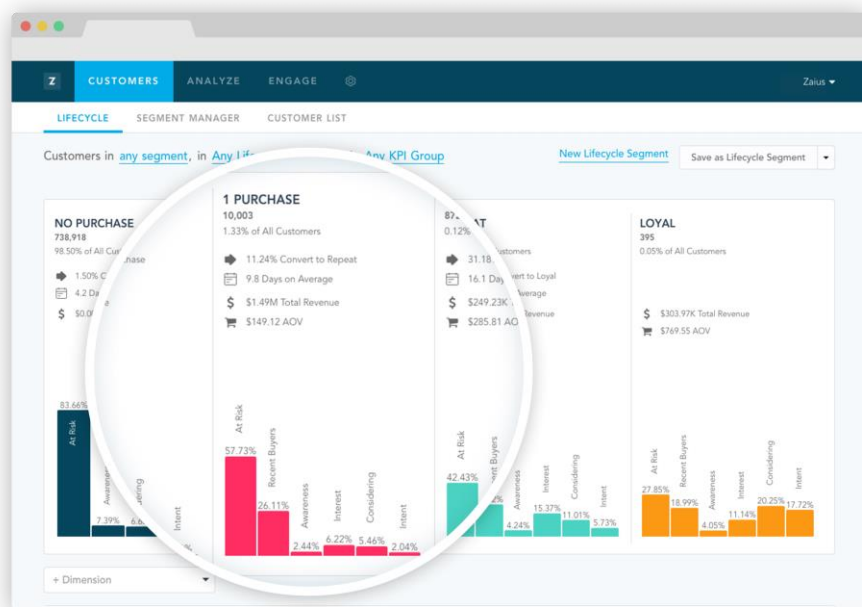

Killer feature 1: Segmentation

Your customers aren't an uniform mass

First and foremost, Zaius makes it ridiculously easy to create segments based any information you might have on your clients. Want to reach the segment of customers that have recently bought high heels in stores in East-Flanders, who also happen to be women aged between 35 and 40, and who also have bought shoes on the webshop in the past? This will take you approximately one minute and five or six clicks.

Want to reach out to these clients with a specific mailing? Get ready to do another handful of clicks *et voila* – you're done!
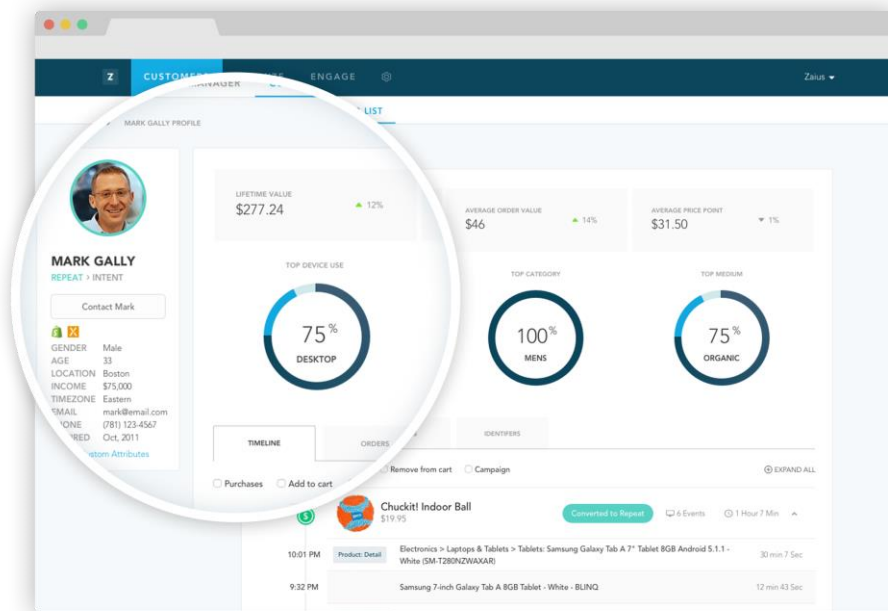

Killer feature 2: Personalization

Regular newsletters are boring

You don't want to send people information on products they are not interested in. If I'm only buying men's shoes I have no message getting the latest news on women's sneakers. Sending me these mails will only make me more likely to hit the unsubscribe button.

Zaius makes it possible to mail to a veritable plethora of different segments, if you can dream it you can make it. Moreover, it is also possible to hide or show specific blocks of text or images in your emails, or show customers products that they have recently watched.

The use of segments in mailings is actually the most straightforward way to make your messaging more personal. Simply define your major audiences and then create specific messaging to target these audiences.

Finally, personalization of emails is only the beginning. By synchronizing specific segments to Facebook or Google these customers can be re–targeted on different channels. Moreover, this also makes it possible to acquire new high–value customers by specifically targeting customers that resemble your top segments.
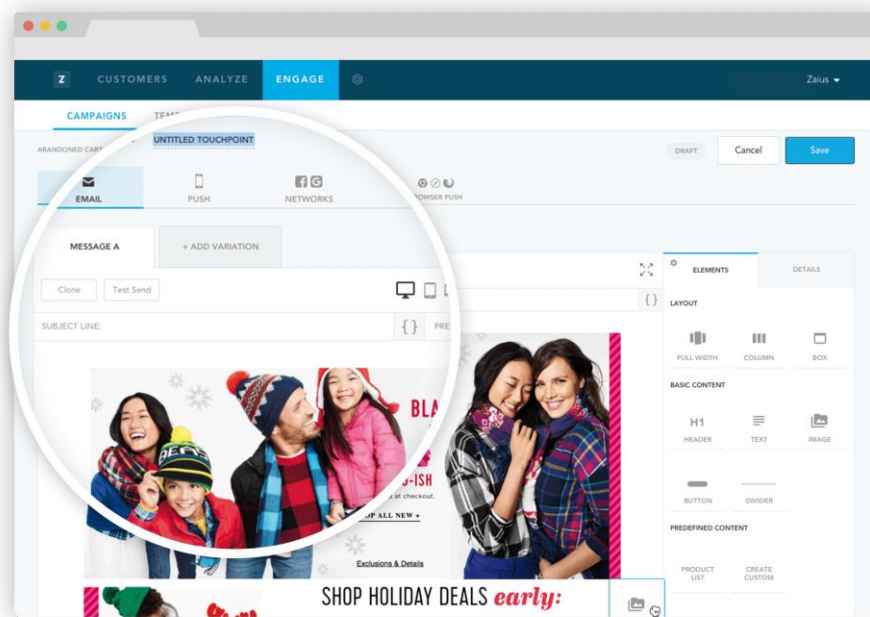
Killer feature 3: Marketing automation

Thinking up creative campaigns is hard work

Make sure that your hard work results in the maximal possible payoff by using your time to create automated campaigns rather than only one–off campaigns. Creating specific customer interaction work–flows can be as simple as creating an abandoned basket campaign or as complex as a segment–specific re–activation campaign that includes incremental incentives to entice customers to make their next best purchase.

All this fits within the idea that your best customers are not the people who just purchase your product once, but your best customers are the people that keep returning to your store. These are the true groupies of your products, who will keep the spirit alive for years to come. Hence, your campaigning should be geared towards getting as much customers as possible into this segment.
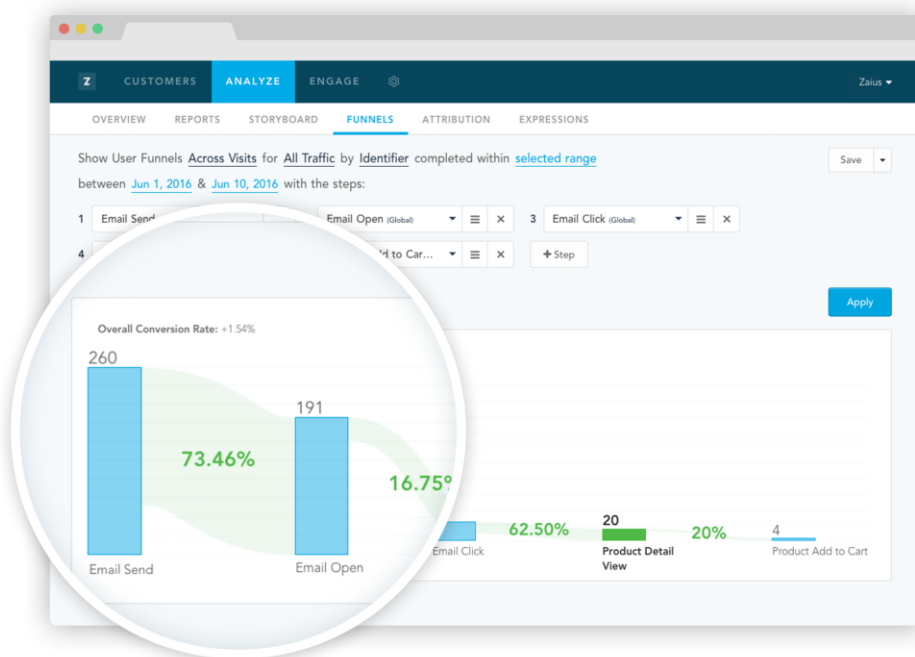
Killer feature 4: Attribution and analytics

Learn from your successes (and mistakes)

It's impossible to improve without trying new things. Hence, it is also essential to be able to compare how different ideas stack up against each other. The Zaius platform makes it very easy to gain insights into these metrics. Everything starts with very basic questions such as:

- How many people are opening my emails?
- How many people are clicking on my emails?
- How many people who interacted with my emails have purchased a product?
- Where are my customers clicking in my emails?

But this can move into much more interesting territory, using automated or manual A/B testing you can experiment with different subject headers, different content or even set up completely custom marketing campaigns to see what works and what doesn't.

The main issue for many retailers is that they are working based on their intuition, rather than basing their decisions on measurements. A solid CRM solutions offers an excellent opportunity to change this.

2. Implementing the right solution

Faithful to the business objectives of Crunch Analytics to go beyond pure data strategy, our team made sure that the deployment of this system became a reality. For our client specifically this was a daunting task since this was combined with the adoption of a new ERP system, as well as a new website – enough to give IT departments nightmares for weeks on end.

Crunch was happy to become a trusted partner during this integration, helping to make sure that all systems were set up in the way that would be most beneficial for our client.

Another important facet of the actual deployment of such a system is making sure that the system is sufficiently adopted to the specifics of the client. Our client – like any other company – has its own lingo and its own specific way of doing things and looking at their customers. It is of paramount importance that these things are reflected in the system they use to communicate to their customers.

An example of customization for our client being that their customers receive coupons valued at 10% of their purchase every time they buy something. Naturally, the way in which customers interact with these coupons has to be reflected in their CRM system, enabling them to single out people who are heavy users of this discounting system, and isolating which customers apparently don't buy into this type of loyalty program.

3. Providing training and support

Enabling a company to become more data driven does not end when the programs are deployed and functional. Having functional software and accessible data is merely an enabling factor for a company. The main challenge comes afterwards in making sure that the possibilities are leveraged and the technology is used correctly and to its fullest extent.

In order to make sure that these new investments also drive an impact in the organization Crunch Analytics provided support in three key ways.

First and foremost, this was done by means of **in-house and hands-on training.** When it comes to technology nothing compares to learning by doing, and having someone by your side who knows the platform can be invaluable. No software platform can has every conceivable feature by default, and small changes to an idea can sometimes drastically decrease the time required to get something up and running. Having someone by your side to guide you into the right direction is a great way of getting the hang of a platform quickly.

Secondly, we also make sure that there is **written documentation** available. This documentation mainly focuses on the custom parts of any installation, as well as the meaning of specific variables. This often makes it easier to perform tasks that may not have to be performed with high frequency. Which is something that can occur when a lot of things become automated (yay!).

Finally, **Crunch Analytics remains on call** for any issue that may arise. Sometimes a five minute phone call is all you need to avoid hours of frustration in getting things to work.

Result

Adopting a new CRM strategy has not merely given this Belgian retailer new ways to communicate to its clients. Already it is becoming clear that these new possibilities are fostering more innovation and creative ideas among the teams of our client.

These new ideas and creativity will be of paramount importance of companies who want to be successful in the retail industry of the future. It is no secret that this industry is under serious pressure from the giants like Amazon, but with the right tooling, the right ideas and the right people it is still possible to carve out a meaningful place in the retail of tomorrow, and going beyond merely surviving as a relic of what retailers used to be.