Advantage: A Customer-Centric Approach

Advantage is fundamentally a customer-centric platform. This software approach mirrors business strategies devoted to delivering customer experiences through their product offerings. With the customer at the heart of Advantage, publishers have incredible flexibility to curate customer journeys that build brand loyalty and ultimately increase revenues. And in Advantage, a customer is not just defined as a single individual—rather a customer represents an entity with whom there is some kind of business relationship. Our clients serve customers such as individuals, consortia, businesses, religious institutions, physical and virtual stores, academic institutions, third-party agents, non-profit organizations and more.

Each of those customers is represented in Advantage with their own rich set of activities—transactions, letters, notes, accounts receivable, and more! There are dozens of entities related to a single customer that all serve to enrich the overall picture of a customer, allowing our clients to fully understand their relationship with them, serve and market to them more effectively, and attract additional customers.

A customer-centric platform, when done effectively like Advantage, can benefit both staff and customers. Our client's staff benefit from this approach as all activity about a customer is handled within a single account—no hunting around or switching accounts by product is necessary. Customers also benefit by not having disparate customer accounts for each product, which often leads to frustration due to poor customer service and confusing marketing and messaging.

Advantage was originally designed as a customer-centric system because we knew then what has always been true—customer satisfaction is the lifeblood of organizations.

At its core, Advantage maintains key information about a customer. Everything from their name to the type of customer to their credit status to their shipping preferences is stored about a customer. Additionally, Advantage supports sophisticated address features (e.g., temporary, seasonal, future, etc.), authentication information for access to digital content (e.g., single sign-on tokens), multiple emails, logging of customer service notes and/or documents (e.g., contracts), relationship structures, along with language and currency preferences. This core set of data is independent of any orders as not all customers will have order data (e.g., prospects).

Advantage stores key information about a customer for privacy and messaging preferences. Additionally, staff can extend the data definition of entities to include client-specific fields for capturing market-specific demographics. Those preferences and demographics can then be used in a variety of contexts such as in letters or renewal determination. The customer-centric approach allows marketers to select and segment customers based on a wholistic view of the variety of linked activities with confidence and use the powerful promotion-related features.

CORE DATA

DEMOGRAPHICS & MARKETING

ORDERS & TRANSACTIONS

PRODUCT ACTIVITY

As a fundamental part of Advantage, customers place order transactions. Those transactions may come in through the application, API, or via upload. Customers can be designated as a variety of roles in an order—bill-to, ship-to, ship through, participant in digital access, referring customer, and others. These designations are important for taxation, pricing considerations, fulfillment, messaging, and financial handling. A customer can be represented as different roles on different orders allowing a flexible model according to business requirements.

A single customer may engage with an organization for a variety of products—print subscriptions, digital subscriptions, merchandise, books, conferences, etc. In addition to these products, there are related financial activities that staff need to work with (e.g., credit card transactions). Each activity also indicates the role the customer, which is critical to understanding the activity fully. All these activities surround a single customer and can be centrally accessed for any necessary customer service transactions—retention, cancellations, returns, adjustments, migrations, payments, etc.