

Software Provider PeopleHR Goes from Lead Overload to Record-breaking Revenue

PeopleHR, a UK-based software company, provide lightning-fast cloud-based software systems for human resources (HR) professionals. The solution delivers cutting-edge tools for tackling HR performance management, recruitment, benefits, document management, time tracking, training, scheduling, and many other administrative tasks. With over 1,000 customers ranging from small companies to large blue-chip organizations, PeopleHR have been experiencing phenomenal growth. But rapid expansion brings its own significant challenges.



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SAT SINDHAR
Managing Director
PeopleHR

Too Many Leads, Not Enough Time

The marketing team at PeopleHR have rarely had a problem with inbound lead generation; they use channels such as PPC, Google AdWords, and other SEM and content syndication activities to attract new prospects. Each campaign is designed to provide an educational or promotional asset through lead capture forms on their web site. The system has worked well, delivering a high volume of early-stage leads.

However, that volume created a serious problem. Every lead generated through these channels went straight to sales. Each sales representative was charged with setting up meetings with these potential customers. Sales tended to concentrate on the most recent leads, and when they were unable to get to all the leads in a week, they would move on to the next week's leads, leaving the remainder from the prior week untouched.

Sat Sindhar, managing director at PeopleHR, recognized the problem. 'If we generated 50 leads in a week, the sales team would cherry-pick the prospects that were most likely to close within that quarter or within that month', he said. PeopleHR's cost per lead (CPL) was averaging around \$60. When they looked at the number of untouched leads, they realized that they had approximately 1,500 leads, which had cost about \$90,000 to generate. The team had done nothing with these leads, nor were they likely to.

With this Act-On/Salesforce integration, the sales team are able to see from Salesforce the lead score and customer activity that Act-On captures and displays, allowing them to focus on closing deals with those leads who are more engaged.

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Fast Forward Implementation

Realizing that marketing automation could help them solve this challenge (and a few others), Sat began the process of evaluating vendors. After reaching out to several, he found only one that was ready to talk, in person, right away – Act-On. ‘It was actually really late here in the UK, and I reached out to the sales consultant through online chat, and the only company that didn’t try to make me schedule an appointment through email was Act-On’. Things moved quickly from there. ‘I took the trial and literally a week later we had the basic Act-On program up and running’, he said.

Once Act-On was in place, the PeopleHR team quickly realized that they needed to change their processes. By reaching out to the leads first, scoring them based on their engagement levels, and implementing nurturing campaigns, the conversion ratio on the leads they sent to sales increased dramatically. ‘We took that \$90,000 worth of leads we’d generated and we started marketing to them. They started waking up, they started coming back to us and saying, “Our project was on hold, but no longer. I’m really glad you emailed me and made contact with me”’, said Sat.

Naturally, some of the leads didn’t do that straight away, so the team began sending a series of nurturing communications. These reignited genuine interest. The result? PeopleHR’s sales teams could quickly reengage and close those deals that would have been forgotten and lost without the nurturing campaign.

‘This is where our payback came very, very quickly. Just by working that bulk of leads that we had generated that we hadn’t done anything with, we realized an immediate ROI’, said Sat. In fact, they started to see impressive results right away. ‘By the fourth week, we actually made back what we were going to spend with Act-On in the whole year because we’d opened up so many of the closed, lost leads’, he said.

Integrating with CRM and Gaining a Complete Picture

PeopleHR use Salesforce opportunities and leads and market to them based on their stage in their sales cycle, effectively matching their digital body language and engaging in the right way to accelerate leads to the next stage. With this Act-On/Salesforce integration, the sales team are able to see from Salesforce the lead score and customer activity that Act-On captures and displays, allowing them to focus on closing deals with those leads who are more engaged.


PeopleHR mapped the profiles and activities of the key players and built a matrix. With this tool, it was very easy for them to generate content which would be most relevant for the prospect at each stage. PeopleHR saw this as prime, and realized the importance of matching the buyer’s digital body language to content through a marketing automation system, all in order to accelerate and move them through the buying cycle.

‘Now we have relevant content, and we can send it to the right persona in the right segment, at the right time’, said Sat. This had an immediate impact on PeopleHR’s bottom line, and they have experienced consistently higher revenues. In fact, since implementing Act-On, PeopleHR have had three months of their highest revenue yet. ‘With the combination of Act-On and our CRM, we smashed our sales targets’, Sat said.

Understanding Digital Body Language

As an example of how observing a prospect's digital behaviour made it possible to deliver relevant content, the sales team were able to see if a prospect visited several pages, and then spent time on a pricing page – an indication that they were trying to put together a business case.

'We can now track what our prospects are reading and we know whether they visited the product and pricing page. If we saw that, a few hours later we would send them an article that said, "Here are some good tips on putting a business case together", or "Here's all the key things that our product actually has included in with the price"', said Sat.



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Lead Conversion Benefits from Scoring

One of the biggest benefits PeopleHR have realized has come through lead scoring. By scoring leads, and nurturing lower-scoring leads with content served through marketing automation, the sales teams can now identify and concentrate on the highest scored leads – those that are the most sales-ready.

'We no longer think that all leads are equal, and that every lead is sales-ready', said Sat. 'We realized some leads want information more relevant for earlier stages in the sales cycle, which is very different from what a sales person provides them with'.

PeopleHR's team have realized that they can capture a lot more leads – and that the lead doesn't have to go straight to a sales person. Additionally, they have more conversion points on their website now. Those conversion points enable lead scoring, so the team can nurture leads at different thresholds.

The team found that once they had a lead management system in place, they could handle even more leads and keep up with them. 'We have a lot more leads ... we've doubled the number of leads in three months. And now that we are nurturing them through drip campaigns, we are finding that when the sales person is engaging with the prospect who has been nurtured, they are well educated, they understand what our offering and solution is, and they are much further along in the buying process', said Sat.

Go Big, Right From the Beginning

Sat's advice to other companies looking for a marketing automation solution is twofold. First, he recommends finding a vendor with a strong support system. 'We had a huge amount of interaction with the Act-On support team', said Sat. 'It's a very, very valuable aspect of the service. Our interaction with the Act-On team has pushed us up to another level'.

Sat's other recommendation is to go big with your implementation, because he wished he had done so. 'I would say, buy the biggest package you can to work all of your old leads, because within the first few weeks you are going to get payback. If you just take the average cost per lead and multiply it by the number that you are sitting on you'll soon realize you've got a very expensive asset sitting there – that you are doing nothing with'.

Getting sales to buy in to the solution was also key. 'What's interesting for me is that the sales team has gone from seeing Act-On as something that's just some marketing stuff to it being an invaluable tool that they can use', Sat said. 'They understand that Act-On is going to generate sales-ready leads for them. That's a real success story for us'.

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About Act-On Software

Act-On Software is a marketing automation company delivering innovation that empowers marketers to do the best work of their careers. Act-On is the only integrated workspace to address the needs of the customer experience, from brand awareness and demand generation, to retention and loyalty. With Act-On, marketers can drive better business outcomes and see higher customer lifetime value. The Act-On platform provides marketers with power they can actually use, without the need for a dedicated IT resource.

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