

# ShipServ Customer Case Study

With the audacious goal of driving business through better marketing, ShipServ, the leading e-marketplace for the maritime shipping industry, needed nothing but the best in B2B marketing. The company found its answer in Marketo, the “easy to use, easy to administer, and easy to learn,” marketing automation software, and in just six months, the company has seen amazing results. Marketo has fueled an 80% reduction in the time and effort required to manage ShipServ’s marketing campaigns, increased contact-to-lead conversion rate from 10% to 25%, raised the lead-to-opportunity conversion rate by 50%, and helped ShipServ build a strong foundation for building its business by growing its pipeline of opportunity around the world.



**SHIPSERV**  
Find. Connect. Trade.

**Market:** Maritime E-marketplace  
**Industry:** Business Services

#### The Challenge:

- Grow business through advanced marketing while reducing administrative tasks
- Nurture and qualify leads automatically to focus and fuel sales efforts
- Manage digital communication to prospects in a fragmented and global industry

#### The Solution: Marketo Lead Management

ShipServ’s VP of Marketing John Watton evaluated a number of marketing automation solutions. John knew he needed more than just a marketing automation tool; he needed an application to drive revenue. Marketo proved just such an application, offering not only comprehensive automation capabilities and seamless integration with Salesforce, but also a business strategy foundation and agile model that would get ShipServ up and running quickly.

#### The Results:

- 150% increase in contact-to-lead conversion rate
- 50% improvement in lead-to-opportunity conversion rate
- 80% reduction in the time and effort required to manage its email marketing campaigns

Founded in 1999, ShipServ is the leading e-marketplace for the maritime shipping industry. The company provides an e-commerce platform (ShipServ TradeNet) that connects suppliers with ship management companies and shipyards around the globe. The ShipServ community includes over 125 corporations who manage more than 4,000 ships worldwide as well as over 8,500 suppliers who help them outfit their vessels. The company is on track to manage more than 3.1 million trading transactions in 2008 with a gross merchandise value of over \$1bn.

#### The Challenge

Not only is ShipServ’s business growing at a rapid rate, but the company also must keep pace with an extremely fragmented and truly global industry that is composed of ship managers, shipyards and suppliers around the world and ships themselves that are constantly in transit. ShipServ already had Vertical Response in place for sending emails to lists, but had no way to follow up with, nurture, or score leads.

“We had great email marketing tools, but they were unintelligent in terms of lead nurturing,” says John Watton, VP of Marketing. “We could see if a prospect opened an email, but we had no way to respond based on their action.” Because of this, John’s team was forced to create lists manually to sort respondents and then set calendar notices to remind themselves to move their marketing campaigns forward. This process was too difficult and cumbersome to support a systematic expansion of the business.

ShipServ also needed its marketing department to be just as much of a revenue engine as its sales organization. “Our business is moving at a certain velocity, and our old process simply was not scalable; we were not going to grow our business through manual intervention,” John continues. “We needed a way to automate our marketing campaigns so that we could focus our time and resources on the best opportunities. That’s the only way to really drive business.”

#### The Solution

John needed not just a marketing solution, but a business solution, and ShipServ carefully considered a number of options. John considered Eloqua, but decided that it wasn’t for ShipServ: “It felt like it had been built for very large enterprises and then scaled down, and needed more up-front consulting and time just to get started. We needed to move quicker than that.” By the end of ShipServ’s selection process, Marketo had proven itself the clear frontrunner for a number of reasons:

- A solution you turn on, not deploy: Out-of-the-box integration with Salesforce to support the fast-moving ShipServ team
- Comprehensive marketing automation capabilities to support segmenting, nurturing, tracking and reporting
- An incredibly intuitive product that is “easy to use, easy to administer, and easy to learn”

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*“Marketo is pivotal to our business.”*

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Once the decision had been made to use Marketo, getting up and running was – in true Marketo fashion – extremely easy. ShipServ was integrated and using Marketo in less than one day. “I’ve been in sales & marketing for 20 years and have used all kinds of software,” says John, “and Marketo was definitely one of the easiest to get started with. We literally just flicked a switch.”

## About Marketo

Marketo makes marketing easier. Our award-winning demand generation solutions provide email marketing, lead nurturing, lead scoring, and closed-loop reporting capabilities to help marketing and sales teams work together to generate and qualify sales leads, shorten sales cycles, and demonstrate marketing accountability. With over 100 enterprise and mid-market customers across B2B industries such as technology, financial services, life science, health care, telecom, insurance, and publishing, Marketo is emerging as the fastest growing lead management vendor in the world. Built for marketers by marketing veterans from Epiphany, Siebel, and Intuit, Marketo is easy to use and boasts an on-demand model that gets customers up and running in just one afternoon, with no charges for set-up, integration or training.



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## The Results

Since “flicking the switch” to turn Marketo on less than six months ago, ShipServ has seen significant and quantifiable business-driving results, including:

- 150% increase in contact-to-lead conversion rate
- 50% improvement in lead-to-opportunity conversion rate
- Linking marketing to business success fosters improved collaboration for better marketing and sales alignment
- 80% reduction in the time and effort required to manage its email marketing campaigns helps ShipServ scale its business through higher-quality and higher-volume marketing

## Marketo Fuels Business Growth

ShipServ needed a way to drive business through the development of a powerful marketing engine, and Marketo has delivered. “Marketo has reduced our campaign management burden by about 80%,” says John, “and this in turn means that we have time for more value-add activities and can do more marketing with more campaigns to generate more business.” While this near-elimination of tedious, manual marketing administration makes life significantly easier for ShipServ’s marketers, the ripple effects have an even greater impact on ShipServ’s business as a whole.

Creating campaigns used to take John’s marketing team days, but now the group can create and launch entire campaigns in less than an hour. Even better, once the campaigns go live, John and his group can “forget” about them, knowing Marketo will automatically follow up at the right time and in the right way depending on each contact’s response. With this peace of mind, ShipServ’s marketing group is free to focus on more strategic and creative initiatives.

Because Marketo makes marketing easier by eliminating manual processes, ShipServ is able to send more campaigns with different messages to targeted and segmented groups of contacts. This, in turn, helps drive the overall business by creating a robust pipeline of quality opportunities and ensuring that none fall through the cracks of a high-risk, manual process. John concludes, “We’re really basing our business on using Marketo to help us grow opportunity.”

## Marketo Fuels Robust Opportunity Pipeline

This opportunity is indeed growing, and at an explosive rate. Even better, opportunities are not simply growing in number, but in quality. In just six months after starting with Marketo, ShipServ’s conversion rate for moving prospects from the initial “contact” stage to real “leads” has jumped from 10% to 25%. Further down the pipeline, the company has increased its lead-to-opportunity rate from 30% to 45%.

With a sales team spread thinly around the globe, ShipServ places a high value on the growth Marketo has created in its pipeline. “We’re nurturing cold contacts and driving them to sales when they’re ready. We’ve increased our hit rate, and we also measure the productivity of our salespeople and that’s on the rise as well,” says John. “Marketo is having a tremendous impact on our business because our salespeople are able to focus their time on the best opportunities.”

More time for strategy, more opportunities, and better opportunities – that’s how you drive business through marketing

## Marketing and Sales Align to Become Co-Drivers of Business Success

With Marketo helping ShipServ’s marketing team fuel the company’s sales pipeline, it’s no surprise that John’s team has enjoyed more “internal kudos” in recent months. “On the softer side, one of the biggest benefits of Marketo is how it helped the relationship between marketing and sales and marketing and the business overall,” explains John.

With Marketo, sales can clearly see the contributions of marketing not only through a more robust pipeline and increases in their own productivity, but also through weekly website traffic reports and insight into the company’s growing prospect base. John comments that this has allowed “much more open and collaborative conversations” between the two departments.

He continues, “Branding is important, but you really need to link marketing to business success because at the end of the day, revenue is king. Marketo helps us make that link deliver measureable results.”