



# Digital dynamo

Sydney digital marketer, Elastic Digital, has attracted major clients through its digital tracking technology and commitment to delivering real sales leads for its customers as **Nicola Card** reports

**SOME COMPANIES** win lots of awards and appear on the fast 100 or rich list. Others are equally successful, but somehow slip under the radar because they are too busy progressing business to even think about entering awards. Elastic Digital and its hard-driving CEO, Cameron Avery, definitely slides into the latter category.

Formed in 2000, the company specialises in the creation of interactive digital marketing programs that generate sales leads for clients. Such is the value of the service that major corporations including global software giant Symantec have used them to design their digital marketing campaigns and build sales of their massive product range.

That's no mean feat, given Symantec's enormous resources and access to expertise in every quarter of the globe. Elastic Digital's lean team of seven full-time and two part-time staff, plus representatives in Hong Kong, Singapore and San Francisco, has created more than 270 digital marketing campaigns in 15 countries and in four languages over the past four years. Nearly 200 micro sites are powered by their proprietary Profile2Lead technology. ▶

*Cameron Avery's innovative digital tracking technology is winning major international clients*

Symantec Corporation (global) is the largest of clients but among others are Colliers International, Music Matters Asia.com (incorporating Warner Music, EMI, Sony BMG, Universal), Greens Food, Cisco Systems, Citrix, RSA Security as well as Oriel Corporation with campaigns for EMC, HP and VMWare.

Digital marketing, says Elastic Digital founder and CEO, Cameron Avery, is what happens beyond the click. "Digital marketing is not just banner placements, URLs in direct mailers, corporate websites, search engine optimisation, etc. Digital marketing is about what happens beyond the click."

Each of their digital marketing strategy campaigns centres on email and integrated direct mail, with their proprietary Profile2Lead technology at the core. Creating interactive websites for clients' products or services, Elastic Digital loads it onto one of their secure Profile2Lead servers.

They then implement the marketing strategy created at the beginning of the process across multiple touchpoints – email, direct mail, blogs, RSS or banners – that funnel prospects/customers into the client's micro site generating real time leads.

When existing customers/prospects visit a client's interactive micro site, Elastic Digital records their interactions such as which pages they focus on and for what duration, whether they started and finished a video, were interested in certain products, what information they downloaded or forwarded to someone else. New website visitors remain anonymous until they provide their details from which point any contact becomes permission based marketing. Cookies are not used.

The contact's interaction profile is emailed to the client almost immediately, enabling sales staff to strike while the iron is hot, thus shortening the sales cycle. Hence its popularity.

Elastic Digital developed the right product at the right time, but not by chance.

Several years ago Avery recognised that online marketing was the fastest growing sector of the advertising industry, yet technology was incapable of tracking website customers. What turned them on and turned them off? Knowledge was mostly limited to how many actually visited the site.

"I realised most marketing went untracked and there never was any real connection between spend and actual return on investment, yet many corporations were outlaying millions on advertising," Avery said. "It made little sense that so much was being spent without knowing or measuring the consequences. There was a massive niche in the market, and there had to be a better way."

Backing his judgment in March 2000, the Bondi resident quit his well-paid IT job to set up an office in the spare bedroom to develop tracking technology. "You could say I went with my gut instinct starting my own business. At the time I was very confident I was doing the right thing but also very scared."

Avery was self-taught in Macromedia Flash 2 that gave him the heads-up in technology. "I realised I could be a director and create great marketing messages. And fortunately by then I'd gained a broad understanding of IT."

Early in 2001 Avery ran his first digital marketing campaign and later the following year moved to full-time operations using key sub-contractors, before moving to offices in Paddington in July 2004. "My hunch was right, today, having developed Profile2Lead, we have the technology to track everything, so we know what works; we have good insight. And we can create campaigns without recourse to any third party vendors.

"We're not into CRM, we're just front-end, creative, profiling to lead – hence the name. Staff follow tight processes and there's a checklist for milestones. We don't talk; we build. We've been told by

some big players that they choose us because we deliver what we say we will. Others talk, but don't necessarily deliver."

Mastering such effective software has positioned Elastic Digital on a rapid global ascent. The company has been cash flow positive since day one, with growth being organic and self funded. It is recording 100 per cent year-on-year growth.

Avery is one of the few to have been in the interactive market since its inception, and is excited by the prospects. "Today everything is online," he said, "everything is digital or digitally oriented. YouTube is testament to that. Just look at PlayStation and Xbox. Interactive TV is next. Wireless TV linked with PCs featuring LCD screens will become standard."

Elastic Digital is poised for the next phase. "Interactive marketing is our industry, and it's fast growing," Avery said. "I will always be very excited about the future of digital marketing."

Having made the jump from construction graduate to Planet Hollywood restaurant's global trailblazer to the set of Mission Impossible 2, before landing an IT role in 1999 with Express Data, Avery's career was fast tracked into executive sales ("if I enjoy what I'm doing, I give it 110 per cent effort") and before long he was promoted to Cisco marketing manager.

Despite the 'not made here' syndrome – a reluctance by US firms to acknowledge or embrace overseas expertise – Avery believes, within five years, Elastic Digital will have a greater presence in Silicon Valley and the North American market in general. Just recently another major global communications services group expressed interest in Elastic Digital's rare brand of expertise. It's all a long, long way from that bedroom in Bondi. ●

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