



Helping Domino Get 5x More Leads and Fortune 500 Customers

Company Domino Data Lab

Based in San Francisco, Domino Data Lab provides a comprehensive data science platform used by more than 100 leading enterprises, such as Allstate, Dell, Tesla and Moody's Analytics. Since its launch in 2013, the company has grown to more than 90 employees and raised \$40.6 million from investors including Sequoia Capital and Coatue Management.

Challenge Marketing to a Technical Audience

In early 2015, Domino was still a young angel-funded startup with a staff of 11 and around 20 customers. The firm was bringing in some 200 leads a month, but many were individuals or small companies whose trial accounts rarely led to purchases. As an early-stage startup, it was critical to increase sales and draw in larger customers, both to improve cash flow and to lure investors.

"We had a product that we knew people wanted, because we'd successfully sold it. But we needed to get more people to know about it in order to drive more leads," said Nick Elprin, Domino's Co-founder and CEO. "We were very early, so that was the key test for us as a company: Can we build a business around this?"

One obstacle was that the fledgling firm lacked the in-house talent to achieve its sales goals. The one marketer on staff focused only on event and social marketing. "We didn't have enough capacity or the right capacity dedicated to market strategically to a technical audience," Elprin said.

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Greg Kogan

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As a result, the CEO lost valuable hours on marketing work, like updating the company website or marketing infrastructure for lead tracking. That took away from time better spent on building products, fundraising and closing deals.

Moreover, Domino was flying blind when it came to its existing marketing efforts. The company was spending money on Google AdWords campaigns, events and third-party email marketing, but lacked analytics to illuminate which initiatives were actually working. There was no CRM in place to track incoming leads and flag quality prospects. And automation of marketing efforts was limited, meaning customers who signed up for a trial weren't seamlessly guided toward a purchase. All this added up to inefficient spending and missed opportunities. The setup that got the company off the ground was no longer sufficient for its ambitions.

Domino wanted to find outside help, but agencies were prohibitively expensive, and building out a marketing team would require a significant financial and time commitment. On top of that, Domino needed to find a marketer that could understand the nuances of its technology—no small feat.

"We have a really technical product, and a lot of marketing people aren't able to understand what we do well enough to communicate with a technical audience," Elprin said. "We couldn't hire just anybody."

Solution

An Analytical, Iterative, and Hands-On Approach

When Elprin was referred to Greg Kogan, the CEO was impressed by his vision and technical aptitude. Kogan started working as a consultant with Domino in May 2015 and stayed on for most of the next three years.

Kogan's first step was to set up analytics to objectively evaluate the return on investment from existing marketing efforts. Within a month, he identified several expenditures that weren't driving results. For example, he discovered the company was wasting money on AdWords campaigns targeting people who searched for "python" (many were looking for the snake, not the programming language). Kogan also concluded that, at the time, there was not enough search volume for data science platforms to justify an SEO campaign. He also set up a test

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Results at a Glance

5x

Monthly Inbound Leads

5x

Customers

Named “Visionary” by Gartner

to compare an internally run email campaign to the third-party service Domino had been using. It turned out Domino’s own campaign led to much higher reply rates and leads.

Next, Kogan tested and built out new channels for acquiring quality leads. For example, he created gated resources, which required target customers to provide contact details to access free content. Kogan also launched email outreach campaigns that directed prospects to useful resource pages on the company’s website, bringing in leads at Fortune 500 companies such as Clorox. Once these initiatives proved effective, Kogan scaled them up, and they remain dominant lead generation sources for Domino today.

“Greg freed up a lot of my time right away,” Elprin said. “He helped us reduce costs by getting rid of services or ad spend that wasn’t valuable. We got a lot more bang for our buck with our marketing spend, in terms of inbound leads.”

Meanwhile, Kogan took over managing the company website and built up Domino’s sales and marketing infrastructure. As the company grew, he implemented Salesforce to organize incoming leads and improve automation. As Domino’s marketing department expanded, Kogan remained an integral part of the team. He filled in where the company needed him most, including content marketing, SEO, email campaigns, demand generation, marketing analytics and automation. For example, one lead generation program he implemented increased sales leads by 64 percent from the previous month.

“Having Greg was like having an ace up my sleeve. He’s the kind of person I could deploy to whatever was the most painful problem at any given time, and count on him solving it,” Elprin said. “Even with the full-time hires we added, he still had something we really needed.”

Even though Kogan was a consultant, he seamlessly became part of the team: taking over marketing efforts, holding himself accountable for results and collaborating with colleagues. “Greg is very autonomous and self-directed—he doesn’t require a lot of overhead,” Elprin said. “He’s thoughtful and demonstrates a high degree of ownership, which isn’t always the case for contractors.”



Greg Kogan

The Results

Market Leader with a Well-Oiled Marketing Machine

Kogan's efforts have paid off as Domino grew to a venture-funded company with a workforce of more than 90, including a marketing team. Thanks to a scalable, effective lead acquisition machine and transparency in marketing results, leads have increased by a factor of five to around 1,000 a month. Domino's customer base has also quintupled, with clients now including numerous Fortune 500 companies such as Allstate, Dell, Tesla and S&P Global. In 2017, Domino was named a "Visionary" by Gartner in the Magic Quadrant for Data Science Platforms. Instead of competing for market share with small startups, it's now a serious contender against massive industry incumbents.

"We have created really strong and broad brand awareness, and the market sees us as the leader in this space," Elprin said. "We would not have been as successful without Greg's help."

Learn more at gkogan.co or email greg@gkogan.co