

Meet the Editor

David Myron: Evolutionary Road Warrior

by LAUREE PADGETT

It's time to profile another editor whom I have only started to get to know in the past few years.

David Myron, who works on two of Information Today, Inc.'s newer publications (*CRM* and *Speech Technology*), originally worked on *CRM* for 2.5 years beginning in 2001 as a senior editor, focusing on customer service and contact center strategies. After a stint as senior editor of *American Demographics*, in which he covered the buying and behavioral techniques of Gen X-ers, he returned to *CRM* in January 2006 as its editor-in-chief. Eighteen months later, he became the editorial director of *Speech Technology*. At that point, he also took on the same title for *CRM*.



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Historically Speaking

CRM, which stands for customer relationship management, launched in 1997 with the title *Sales and Field Force Automation*, published by Freedom Technology Media Group. Under the editorial helm of Larry Tuck in March 2000, the magazine's name was changed to *CRM*, reflecting its enhanced scope. A year later, the editorial offices moved from Malibu, Calif., to New York, and Elliot Markowitz took over as editor-in-chief. He was followed in 2002 by Ginger Conlon, and 2-plus years later, Myron returned.

"Because *CRM* magazine was born out of *Sales and Field Force Automation* magazine, it naturally had a strong focus on tactical sales strategies (i.e., sales technology deployments)," says Myron. However, during his tenure, Myron broadened *CRM* magazine's scope, blending tactical and strategic advice for sales, marketing, and customer service managers and ex-

ecutives as well as C-level professionals. *CRM* now has more stories about people and business process strategies as well as technology strategies. "All of our stories have one common thread—to help companies improve their customer relationships," he says.

Speech Technology magazine, which was founded in 1995 under the editorial direction of Brian Lewis at CI Publishing, Inc., is also now part of Myron's domain. In 2000, the publication was sold to AmComm Holdings, Inc., spearheaded by John Kelly. Then in June 2006, ITI acquired the publication from AmComm. At the time of the acquisition, most of the magazine's content was written by industry practitioners, including speech technology engineers and developers, VUI (voice user interface) designers, marketing professionals, and vendor executives.

Within a year, *Speech Technology* magazine was redesigned by ITI senior designer Laura Hegyi. The extreme makeover was also carried over into the website and the email newsletter. In fact, the circulation of the newsletter more than doubled to 25,000. Then, three full-time editors were hired, daily news coverage was initiated with original stories loaded on the website, and the C-level and executive-level readership increased from 44% to 60% by May 2007.

Back to the Present

Today's business and technology managers and executives who read both publications look to *CRM* and *Speech Technology* for strategic and tactical advice on improving customer relationships.

"We cover timely and relevant people, process, and technology initiatives that aim to improve business productivity, efficiency, and profit," according to Myron. The articles focus on (but aren't limited to) business and technology strategies for sales, marketing, and customer service departments. Myron believes that the publications' "hardworking editorial teams, our ambitious coverage of the markets that

we follow, [and] our connections to some of the brightest and most influential people in their respective industries" give *CRM* and *Speech Technology* their niches in the ITI realm. He also notes that both magazines have a "relentless commitment to helping companies improve customer relationships and profitability."

Myron says he is interested in "strategic and tactical CRM and speech technology strategies that improve customer relationships and profitability." So far this year,

he cites the special February issue of *CRM*, the "Recession Issue" that was devoted to recession strategies. The feature section in the June issue titled Who Owns the Social Customer? focused on that topic. Likewise, the features in *Speech Technology's* January/February issue concentrated on Implementation Strategies 2009. In the June issue, the magazine also debuted a new column called The Business Case, by Donna Fluss, which focuses on speech solutions for enterprises.

Hot Stuff

Analytics and SaaS (software as a service or hosted CRM) continue to be hot topics for *CRM* magazine.

"Many companies are investing in these technologies today," says Myron. "Software as a service enables more companies to benefit from CRM solutions through a low-cost, monthly subscription model, as opposed to investing large sums of money into the implementation and maintenance of an on-premises CRM system." This means that companies of any size can capture, track, and manage valuable customer data. Once their transactional CRM systems are in place, companies can look into analytics applications, which help organizations make good use of the great customer data their CRM systems are collecting.

"Analytics can be used to determine your most profitable customers, attract more like them, and minimize customer churn," he says, adding that many "companies are experimenting with social media, as many of these tools are already available for free." What's exciting about social media applications is that organizations can use these tools to build their list of followers and grow their customer bases, he says. "It's still a nascent market, but there are already some viable social media solutions available that are specifically designed to help businesses improve their customer engagement strategies," he says.

For *Speech Technology* magazine, analytics, hosted speech solutions, and automated outbound messaging are among the most interesting new topics for Myron, who sees the tremendous potential in enhancing the value and usage of speech technologies.

"Hosted speech solutions—where the systems are built and maintained by a partner offsite—have the same potential as software as a service does for CRM because companies don't have to invest a lot of money into building them on premises," he says. This lower-cost model lowers the barrier to entry for many companies.

He also says that speech analytics is another interesting topic because it helps organizations gain valuable attitudinal information. Companies can record phone conversations, save them as digital files,



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and "search them for indicators of customer frustration or anger, such as an increase in decibel levels, curse words, or competitors' names." For organizations, automated outbound messaging offers the ability to notify large groups of people about sudden changes (i.e., flight delays and cancellations) or regular notifications (i.e., prescription refills).

Show Stoppers

As program director of the CRM Evolution and SpeechTEK conferences, Myron also helps to organize ITI's new Exceptional Customer Experience (ECE) Summit.

CRM Evolution and the ECE Summit are designed to help attendees learn and share strategies that promote innovation, cut costs, increase revenue, and improve customer relationships across sales, marketing, and customer service departments. SpeechTEK is the largest conference in the U.S. dedicated to helping organizations use speech technology for a variety of enterprise goals, such as cutting costs, enhancing productivity, improving customer satisfaction, and increasing security efforts.

Making Change

Myron's dedication to making a difference continues beyond his magazines and his shows. Aside from his professional organizations, he also supports the ASPCA, the Humane Society, Farm Sanctuary, and the National Eagle Scout Association.

The best way to get on his good side, he says, is to make "a donation to one of my favorite charitable causes." This goes hand in hand with his favorite quote from Gandhi: "Be the change you want to see in the world."

Whether keeping readers and showgoers up-to-date on the latest speech technology and CRM products and services or supporting his "pet" causes, no doubt Myron will continue to be the change he wants to see in the world, or at least his part of it.

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