

One step ahead: How CFE Media drives ad revenue and 1:1 personalization with Omeda

Patrick Lynch, Chief Executive Officer
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Faced with a challenge, we have two choices: Find problems or find opportunities.

Patrick Lynch faced that choice in early 2010 as an editor at B2B publisher Reed Business Information, a subsidiary of Reed Elsevier.

Reeling from the global financial crisis, RBI was getting out of US-based B2B publishing — and layoffs were imminent.

That year, Jim Langhenry and Steve Rourke, two of Reed's senior leaders, bought three of Reed's publications and formed a new company — CFE Media and Technology. Lynch joined to help with product management and sales soon after, sensing an opportunity to grow in his career with two guys he already trusted and knew.

Built by publishers, CFE was uniquely positioned to navigate the challenges of the post-2008 media landscape.

So they experimented, innovated, and the evolution began quickly. In 2012, CFE used their unique advantage of having thousands of technical articles for engineers within their digital archives to build a patented content marketing platform called ContentStream®. This was the industry's first content marketing platform designed to help industrial marketers fill their content marketing funnel with third-party, technical content that was already proven effective with engineers.

CFE Media and Technology

Business Overview

CFE Media and Technology is a B2B media company that delivers content for engineers — including publications, webcasts, and marketing services — covering the manufacturing, commercial and industrial buildings, and manufacturing control systems industries for a global audience of 1.3 million subscribers.

Strategy and Solution

CFE Media used data from Omeda's CDP to implement Own-the-Topic, a contextual advertising campaign that gave its advertisers 100 percent ownership of key industry topics across all four CFE website domains. They also harnessed audience data and dynamic content to create a more successful welcome email series for new subscribers.

Outcomes

- Drove \$3.1 million in revenue from its Own-the-Topic (OTT) campaign since the product's launch in 2021
- Achieved a 20% YOY increase in engagement for its welcome email series (as measured by click-through rate)
- Serve an average of 22 customers per year with an average subscription length of 4.5 months



Print was declining, but we weren't sure how much it would decline and how fast. Jim and Steve were confident that print could stay strong and help fund our evolution on the SaaS and digital side of business. The mindset was, 'We can't just rely on a print ad in the print magazine forever. Let's diversify.'

In so doing, they became one of the first B2B media companies to adopt and monetize content marketing — a discipline that's now ubiquitous.

Since then, CFE has grown into a 35-person company that produces 23 magazine editions, 100 webinars, 132 eBooks, and deploys more than 45 million emails to its engineering subscribers on behalf of its four brands and hundreds of advertising customers.



Patrick Lynch

CEO and Partner, CFE Media and Technology

- Partner and Managing Director (2020-2023)
- Vice President (2017-2020)
- Director of ContentStream and Contact Stream (2013-2017)
- Project Manager and Sales Executive (2010-2013)

Getting more from their audience data: leveraging the Omeda advantage

That's a whole lot of content. But all that content produces an exponential amount of audience data, all of which the CFE team could use to deliver more relevant, personalized resources and help their advertising clients convert.

But as a small team, CFE didn't have enough time to take advantage of that data.

They could have bought a collection of single-point solutions — a standalone CRM, email service provider, etc. But they knew this would complicate their workflows and make it harder to achieve the results they expected.

Instead, they chose to unify their data with a single audience marketing tool.

So in 2019, CFE turned to Omeda — an audience marketing solution with a native customer data platform, marketing automation and subscription management — to streamline their work and increase performance.

This gave everyone at CFE a single place to manage, activate and monetize their audience.

With Omeda, CFE could take in audience data from every touchpoint — from email and print to website, webcasts and advertising — and consolidate it in one database. Now every time someone opens an email or clicks a link, the interaction is automatically added to the person's audience profile — and the audience member is added to marketing segments once they meet the underlying criteria.

That gives the CFE team a complete view of everyone in their audience. With this intelligence, they can quickly create segments and deliver one personalized, consistent message across multiple channels — email, display advertising and their website.

Best of all: they can do it with less time and stress than ever. The Omeda platform's unique view of the audience saves the CFE team an estimated 75% in operational costs to fulfill these processes.

CFE's "Own-the-Topic": Turning audience data into ad revenue

After joining Omeda, CFE's biggest priority was optimizing its audience and content monetization strategy.

CFE leaders challenged their teams with some important questions:

- How could they give their advertisers more visibility across CFE's various brands and position them as authorities in the space — without spamming their audiences?
- How could they deliver a consistent message across every channel without creating separate campaigns?
- Once the ads were launched, how could they help advertisers better engage individual CFE audience members?
- And most importantly, how could they automate this process to scale their offering?

The new product: **Own-the-Topic**, a highly contextual advertising package that, as implied, gives advertisers a 100 percent share of a topic across CFE's digital properties.

For three months, one customer "owns" all the advertising space for a specific topic on a CFE brand site. That allows their engineering audience to engage with ads triggered by specific keywords related to that topic.

Then, using data from Omeda's CDP, CFE develops a segmented audience list and targets them via email with relevant content from their database.

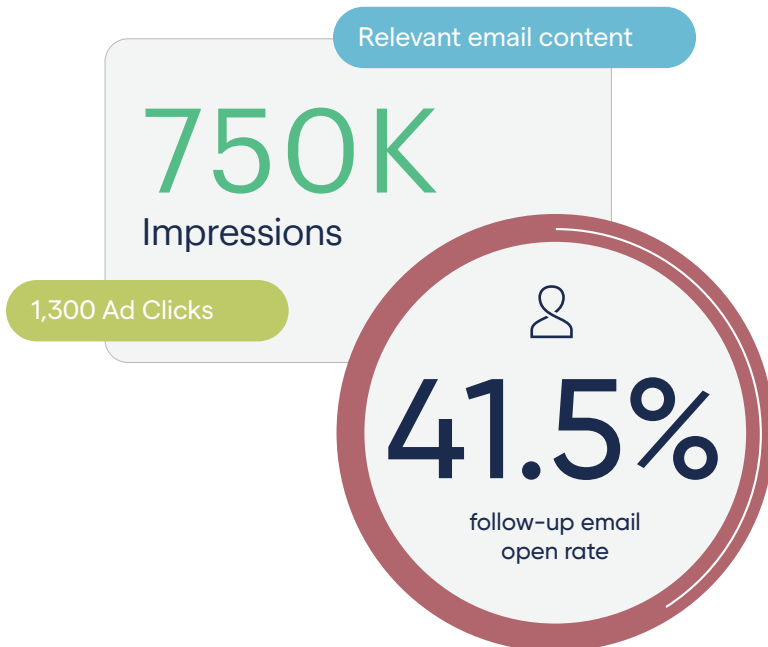
This precision solution was an instant success:

One client's ads received 1,300 clicks and 750,000 impressions, with follow-up emails receiving a 41.5% open rate.

"This offering took off," he adds, "because it was not only a subscription product for our clients, but a way for our advertisers to stick it to their competitors that they owned a high-profile horizontal topic."

More importantly, Own-the-Topic reflects CFE's value-centric approach to content marketing.

"We don't want to just talk about how great a vendor is. We want to tell a good story, educate or engage people with quality content."



CFE's new welcome series: Driving 1:1 personalization with dynamic content

Own-the-Topic reflects CFE's value-centric approach to content marketing. "We don't want to just talk about how great a vendor is. We want to tell a good story, educate or engage people with quality content," Lynch says.

The CFE team soon realized they could provide the same value for new subscribers as well.

From their subscription forms to their website and email analytics, CFE now had the information they needed to give every individual in their audience the right content at the right time.

The question was how to deliver 1:1 personalization on a massive scale.

The solution: Create interest-based segments and assign each new subscriber to the segment that best matched their interests based on their engagement history.

From there, they created a single welcome series for their entire audience, using dynamic content within emails to personalize content to each individual based on their assigned topic, and other data generated from their integrated Omeda database.

Here's how it works:

- **Identify core topics.** The CFE team identified 31 "core" topics that were most important to their audience and customers and added a "Topic" question to their subscription forms. Since Omeda's Form Builder integrates with the rest of the Omeda database, each person's responses automatically flow to their pre-existing profile, and the CFE team can pull them up in subsequent queries.
- **Find an audience for each topic.** The CFE team then built audience queries in their Omeda database to identify subscribers who were interested in those topics.

Because they were using Omeda's integrated database, those queries could account for someone's engagement across every touchpoint, including subscription form responses, CDP data associated with eBook downloads and webcast registrations, and website browsing data captured in their Omeda system. This ability to automatically capture the complete data set ensured their targeting would be as accurate and comprehensive as possible.

- **Assign topics across their entire database.** Once the 31 queries were built, the CFE team used Omeda's Data Loader tool to assign topic flags to their complete database.
- **Automate topical assignments.** Then, with Omeda's help, they built a nightly Lead Generation workflow that selected anyone who qualified for the queries in the last 24 hours and assigned them to the appropriate topics. Now, new subscribers are assigned to new topics every night based on what they've read or downloaded that day — and it's all automated.
- **Create a welcome series for new subscribers with targeted content based on each individual's topic affinity.** Using Omeda's marketing automation solution, CFE built a welcome series for new subscribers.

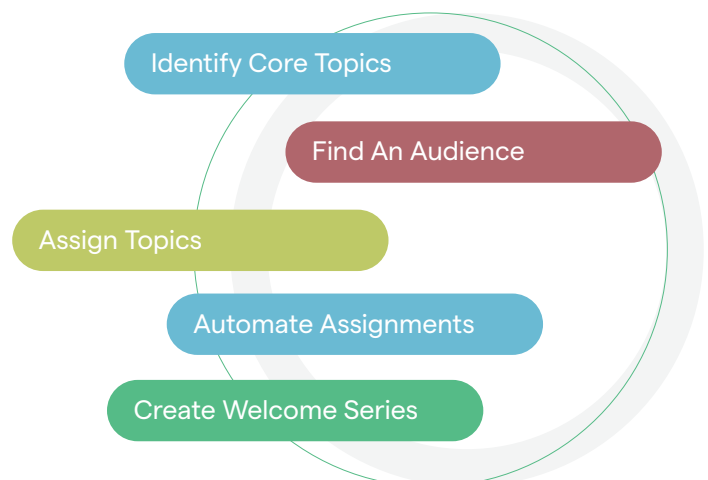
They could have simply segmented their audience by topical affinity — but they'd need to create and monitor 30 campaigns simultaneously.

Not only that, but that broad targeting wouldn't account for the individual differences between people in the same groups. Sure, the campaigns would be highly relevant for most of their audience. But they'd still be missing opportunities to reach people with multiple interests.

To drive 1:1 personalization, they created one campaign with dynamic content in each email. This serves each subscriber a different message based on their topical affinity and other behaviors recorded in Omeda.

For example, if CFE sent an email promoting their upcoming webcast and the subscriber was interested in Artificial Intelligence, that person would see webcasts on that topic in the email. In contrast, someone interested in Motors & Drives would see different webcasts in their message.

Audience engagement is a 24/7 job. This automated nightly workflow helps the CFE team optimize how they best reach their audience, no matter where or when they engage.



Lessons learned from the front line

From pioneering content marketing to launching integrated advertising products, CFE has always stayed ahead of the media business curve.

How do they do it? Here are Lynch's takeaways from a decade-plus at CFE:

Prioritizing efficiency and execution. Lynch and his team don't just dream up big ideas. They back them up with an uncompromising commitment to execution.

"In B2B media, it's all about execution," Lynch says. "If I know how to execute, that's more valuable than just having a good idea."

"Two years ago, we did 50 webinars a year, and it was a seven-figure line of business for us. And I said to our excellent product team, 'How do we grow revenue? Could we do more webcasts in quantity but maintain the quality content for the audience?'... We have to improve the process. We've got to tighten up the efficiency."

From there, the CFE team has been able to double their webcast production — and tap into a growing source of revenue.

The end-result: the webcast business has grown by more than 50% in 2 years.

Simplicity borne of self-awareness: Despite the company's growing reach, Lynch remains self-aware about CFE and its unique value proposition for advertisers.

In an oversaturated media market, companies like CFE can add demonstrable value by helping their partners prioritize the right metrics and the right channels to achieve their desired outcomes.

"As an industry, I hope we simplify the number of products media companies try to bring to market for our advertisers. There's a fundamental problem with too many products out there right now that we all try to sell. And if we go to the core, which is, 'Let's help our advertisers connect with targeted buyers,' that's what media companies do best."

Omeda's audience marketing platform helps them provide that simplicity. "The services business model that we have built into our business does not exist without the Omeda platform serving as the backbone."

What's next for CFE?

Like he was in 2010, when CFE started, Lynch is optimistic about B2B media.

Where others see uncertainty, Lynch sees opportunity.

"I'm bullish on B2B media," he says. "The audiences that most B2B media companies represent have a massive purchasing power in the United States. As media companies, we need to be proud of that and we need to leverage that purchasing power as our stabilizing force in an uncertain advertising future."

"For example, the manufacturing and commercial construction industries represent nearly 30% of the US Gross Domestic Product, and we at CFE reach nearly 500,000 decision makers in those industries daily. That is an immense amount of buying power from an audience of engineers who regularly purchase or specify billions of dollars of manufactured products each year."

"If we take strength in the power of the audience, we should be able to convey that confidence to our advertisers that nobody knows our audience better than us, and then it just becomes a game of campaign execution for a client."





About Omeda

Omeda is a SaaS provider delivering the platform and expertise required to maximize the value of media and publishing businesses' most critical asset - their audience. The platform of choice for B2B and B2C professionals, Omeda's integrated solution, which includes a customer data platform, workflow automation, email automation, and subscription management, provides the professional tools and controls required to maximize a media business' diverse revenue streams, power 24/7 audience development, and orchestrate precise targeting for measurable results. Our platform is built by passionate audience pros, workflow masters, and data nerds who partner with our customers to grow and thrive in a disruptive media world.

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