

SaaS Email Marketing Automation and Analysis Suite for Retailers



Dean Abbott
Chief Data Scientist

About Smarter Remarketer

Smarter Remarketer provides a Software as a Service (SaaS) Email Marketing automation and analysis suite that allows multi-channel retailers to bolster customer lifetime value by creating relevant and effective customer experiences.

Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOCFO Magazine

CEOCFO: *Mr. Abbott, what is the concept behind Smarter Remarketer?*

Mr. Abbott: The company started when co-founder Angel Morales and I met at a web analytics conference. Angel has deep experience as a consultant in email marketing, remarketing and digital analytics. We met at this conference, and when we started to talk about the state of analytics, the more we resonated. The things we were saying to each other really jazzed up the other person, and Angel saw the future of retail and marketing in the retail space, which was automation, predictive analytics and machine learning applied to the data that is collected so that better decisions can be made and customers can be engaged in a way that makes more sense for how they behave. The cause of the company is to marry big data that is collected either digitally or in store, keep expertise with how the marketer views the data, and machine learning to help interpret complex patterns in a way that the marketers can use as they segment customers and make decisions on how to interact with their customers in a way that makes the most sense for those customers. It is these three pieces, the data, analytics and deep expertise in retail that all come together under one hood that is really the core of what we have wanted to do from the beginning.

CEOCFO: *How does a client engagement work?*

Mr. Abbott: We are a software as a service platform, so usually customers come to us because they have often heard of us through the grapevine and through the awards we have won in the space. They come to us because they have a problem: their segmentation takes too long, is too difficult to do, and does not achieve the ROI that they think they should be able to achieve through remarketing and contacting their customers, whether it is through email, display or even on site on their own website. They think there is money being left on the table, and there usually is. They come to us, and as we explain to them the data that we can collect to enhance the data they already have and the approach we have to help their retailers create targeted segments and custom segments of their customer base in a way that is easy for them. They do not have to learn to code anything, and they do not have to be data scientists or programmers. They can be the retailers they already are, leveraging the experience and the expertise they have, but now with enhanced information from the data we collect and an interface that allows them to interact with that data so they can create targeted segments that seamlessly integrate into their existing processes. However they are contacting customers now, they can continue to do it that same way.

CEOCFO: *What are you collecting in the data that perhaps others do not realize is important?*

Mr. Abbott: One example is when a user or a visitor interacts with a website. Some of the questions that are interesting about that is what about their behavior, path and journey within the website is and how engaged they are with the brand in that channel. As they click through the different product pages and get to the shopping cart, I think the easiest place to start with the shopping cart is abandonment. They place things in the shopping cart, they look at the shipping and they decide if shipping is too expensive, so they leave. From the data we collect, we know and understand what stage they were in, not just that they carted some items, but they abandoned after shipping, or maybe they abandoned after interacting with promotion codes three or four times. That is a different story. With a different reason for the abandonment, there is a different message that visitors should be given to try to reengage. If they have interacted with promotion codes three or four times, maybe they have a promo code that has expired or does not work. The company might want to help them either find a different promo code or contact them with customer service to help them complete the sale. Maybe they have interacted with credit card field four times. The last thing you want to do is throw them back in the funnel with an email so they are having that same experience and failing once again. They will never come back. It is understanding why the abandon and understanding their journey, such as what kinds of products they interact with, the category of products

they interact with and if they are interacting with hot products or sale items. All those different characteristics of their journey are important in messaging them properly.

CEOCFO: *Would you then make recommendations to your client as to changing their processes and the site or are they interpreting what they should do next once they see the data?*

Mr. Abbott: It is “both” “and”. Some organizations see the first time where the highly engaged customers are going, and they see what kinds of products they are interacting with. Maybe they are interacting with a graphic on their website, and they are able to identify those micro segments of similar behavior where the message should be similar. They may change the way they lay out web pages, or they may change the hero shots that they place on the page. They may change the sequencing and the time for it between campaigns to maximize the net results they are interested in, which is the ROI, completion of the sales and reengaging customers that seem to be engaged but are not actually purchasing. Understanding their behavior and why they do things the way they do it is really at the core of what we are trying to achieve with these retailers.

“Clients want to serve their customers in the best way possible, and to do that-- understanding their behavior, whether it is in-store, on-site or on the mobile app, whatever channel that customer is desiring to interact with a client--then they need data and insights to describe those customers and know the best way to interact with that customers. That is what we do; we hear the voices of our customers at a scale that allows us to respond in a way that feels truly personal. We help the retailer find the best message in the best channel so that they can build the relationship they desire with those customers.” - Dean Abbott

CEOCFO: *Are you often surprised at how unaware retailers are of some of the simple things that are not going right?*

Mr. Abbott: I would say that most retailers have had successes doing what they are doing to one degree or another, and they have deep experience. The people who are making the decisions have seen the space for years, and they have had their successes. The difference really is that sometimes they do not know what they do not know. Once we expose the data that we can collect to the retailers, they start seeing things that make perfect sense to them but they had never thought of before. They start seeing a highly engaged customer or visitor who is highly engaged for months, and then all of a sudden they are not engaging anymore. We can identify customer segments so that retailer can customize the treatment of those segments. In the past, it has taken so much time and effort to build campaigns to identify those segments. It could take days or even weeks to generate an email campaign that has specific characteristics they are interested in. Because we are able to help them do that in a matter of hours rather than weeks, it frees them up to think more strategically about how they can get this list together quickly and respond to the behavior they are observing. Now we can look and see how many people we are hitting with particular segment, and we can do that in a matter of hours, decide whether to act on it, and move on to think about other issues as well.

CEOCFO: *Are there particular types of retailers that are more likely to use your services or might benefit more?*

Mr. Abbott: It is amazingly broad what kinds of retailers we have engaged with, and they range from clothing to shoes to apparel or accessories. The retailers that have a very strong association with their brand tend to be engaged with us more. I think it is because those are the retailers that are especially interested in maintaining strong brand loyalty and understanding how to best serve them and develop a deeper relationship with their customers.

CEOCFO: *Would you tell us about your recent financing?*

Mr. Abbott: We just received the \$7 million round from Battery Ventures, which was very exciting for us because Battery is well known in the space, especially in the digital space. For them to attract us for as long as they did and to make the investment that they did was a real validation that we thought we were on the right track. Part of that whole process was trying to communicate clearly with Battery what we do. One of the difficulties that they had and that some have with us is that we are very broad in what we help provide for our clients. When I was describing the three legs of the store as data, expertise and the machine learning and analytics, those go across multiple verticals and they spill across multiple areas that marketers interact with our customers. That money is being used to help us ramp up sales, ramp up support and ramp up our development cycles so we can do it more quickly. Prior to that, we were Angel funded and we were more of the typical startup company from that standpoint, but this is bringing us up to take care of the things we know we need to do to get to the next level in the next year.

CEOCFO: *There are many companies that seem to be in your space. How do you distinguish when you are talking with a prospective client? Is there an aha moment when they understand all the levels you are able to deal with?*

Mr. Abbott: It is rare that a client we are speaking with connects with all the different areas that we can engage with them on. What is more typical is there is one aspect of what we do that they really have a need for and they resonate with, and

we start there. As they become more familiar with the software, interface and how they can use it, they expand and grow the number and complexity of the campaigns. I think the differentiator for us has been and continues to be the depth of expertise. Angel is a rock star in the email remarketing consulting space and digital marketing consulting. He has been known in that space for a long time, and for people in the email remarketing space, they know who he is. For me, I am well known in the predictive analytics space, and I have been building predictive models for 25 years. The enjoyable part for me is the more Angel and I talk, and we think differently about these problems, the better the solutions become. That is the real value added. A lot of the competitors I see out there may have a deep expertise in one part of the space, but because Angel and I are so complementary, we ask each other the hard questions and we push each other; we design the analytics for to the problem in a way that marketers do not have to understand how it is done, but they can understand how it can be used. It is all applied. Everything we do is focused on providing more value to the retailer.

CEOCFO: *What surprised you as the business has grown and developed?*

Mr. Abbott: There are a couple things that surprised me. One is how difficult it is to make what we think is obvious understandable for a retailer. The first version of the platform addressed some of the issues, and the second version of the platform made it simpler and provided more support and help for the retailers to help them so they could use the tool more effectively from the beginning. The third version of the platform that is coming out soon is going to take that to a new level as we collect more data across more channels. In some ways it seems obvious how the analytics we provide and the segmentation engine we provide is easy and how it can be used, but it is not always as obvious as we thought it would be. That is why we brought in some experts and user interface talent to help us make these connecting points even more transparent and easier for the end user. We do a lot of work with our customers for them to help us understand what they would like to see, and that has really helped improve the product.

CEOCFO: *Put it all together. Why choose Smarter Remarketer?*

Mr. Abbott: I am a data scientist and a technology guy, but I am not a sales guy. My whole career has been built on delivering solutions that under promise and over deliver, and make people happy with me and want me to come back. Crystallizing things into a sales pitch is not my strength, but I would say is the reason why Smarter Remarketer is at the top of the list for SaaS marketing intelligence and automation platforms is because of the data we collect, big data, omnichannel data, and it is more comprehensive than anyone else in the industry. It is because of the data we create from the raw data. We build analytics to help retailers interpret that data and provide insights into customer behavior, and we provide the software interface so that retailers can build these segments seamlessly in their existing environments with their existing relationships without having to write code. It makes it easy to them to provide enrichment and adapt the insight into their data that they could not achieve otherwise.

CEOCFO: *Final thoughts?*

Mr. Abbott: People should take away that clients want to serve their customers in the best way possible, and to do that--understanding their behavior, whether it is in-store, on-site or on the mobile app, whatever channel that customer is desiring to interact with a client--then they need data and insights to describe those customers and know the best way to interact with that customers. That is what we do; we hear the voices of our customers at a scale that allows us to respond in a way that feels truly personal. We help the retailer find the best message in the best channel so that they can build the relationship they desire with those customers.

BIO: Dean Abbott is an internationally recognized data mining and predictive analytics expert with more than two decades of experience applying advanced analytics solutions for public and private sector customers. He is the author of “Applied Predictive Analytics” (Wiley, 2014), co-author of the “IBM SPSS Modeler Cookbook” (Packt Publishing, 2013) and contributed a biographical chapter to “Journeys to Data Mining: Experiences from 15 Renowned Researchers” (Springer, 2012). He is a regular keynote and session speaker at conferences such as Predictive Analytics World, INFORMS, Gateways Analytic Network, IE Group and TDWI conferences. His insights and case studies have been presented in analytics books, including “Predictive Analytics” by Eric Siegel, “The Power of Habit” by Charles Duhigg, and “Investigative Data Mining for Security and Criminal Detection” by Jesus Mena. Dean has also been recognized as a top ten data scientist worldwide and one of the top ten most influential people in data analytics.

He is on the advisory board for the University of California Irvine Certificate Program in Predictive Analytics and the University of California San Diego Certificate Program in data mining, and is a regular instructor for courses on predictive modeling algorithms, model deployment and text mining. He has also served several times on the Industrial Track program committee for KDD Conferences.

Dean earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Computational Mathematics from the University of Virginia, as well as a Master of Applied Mathematics from the University of Virginia.



Smarter Remarketer

**9102 N. Meridian St.
Suite 415
Indianapolis, IN 46260
800.913.9559
www.SmarterRemarketer.com**