How Naviga Helped Bayard Drive Subscription Customer Growth

The Challenge

Bayard is a 140-year-old international publisher of periodicals, books, and worship and devotional materials. Their mission is to create material that informs and inspires, spreads the gospels, and explores the beauty of the Catholic faith while continuing the church’s tradition of dialog. It is a global mission that reaches 36 million readers around the world every year.

With such an illustrious history and strong customer base, you might think Bayard was in a great position to face the challenges of 21st Century publishing. However, they had outsourced many aspects of subscription and publication management and found themselves cut off from their own subscribers. They lacked visibility into who their customers were and how best to engage with them moving forward into a more digital and more customer-centric future.

“Like many other publishers, we had outsourced management of our periodical publications,” said Benjamin Thomas, Director of Quality and Process Improvement - North America at Bayard. “Time proved that we did this at the cost of visibility into the 360-degree buying pattern and sales potential of our customers.”
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This kept Bayard from being able to draw actionable customer insights from its subscriber lists. It also kept them from being able to upsell and cross-sell to subscriber customers and was an obstacle to growing bulk digital subscriptions. They needed a better system to enable bulk digital sales that was both customer-friendly and easy for Bayard to manage.

COVID 19 highlighted the difficulty of driving bulk digital sales as customers stayed away from the schools and gatherings where Bayard publications were often used, which cut into bulk subscription sales. They had a hard time converting those missing hard-copy sales into bulk digital sales throughout 2020 and needed a better system to facilitate this growing market.

What Bayard hoped to achieve

Bayard needed to take back control of its subscription database, develop the ability to draw insights from that data and use them to lift sales, and improve its ability to drive bulk digital subscriptions.

To achieve that, Bayard launched three initiatives for 2021:

- **Insourcing:** Migrate subscription publication lists to an in-house Naviga Book and Subscription system
- **Digital Fulfillment:** Adopt the Naviga Fulfillment Portal to provide real-time delivery of bulk digital subscriptions — with the ability for subscription owners to grant entitlements underneath that subscription to other individuals, such as students in a class
- **Innovation:** Partner with Naviga to develop a Zinio solution to help accelerate bulk digital sales

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Benjamin Thomas
Director of Quality and Process Improvement – North America, Bayard
Why they chose Naviga

Bayard needed a 360-degree view of their subscribers. For years it had used a home-grown subscription system that Thomas says they had “solidly outgrown,” and Naviga’s Fulfillment Portal was a very good fit for their needs. According to him, “This is a functionality that is well-known in the advertising community, but it is a well-kept secret for the book and subscription community.”

For Bayard, several features set the Naviga Fulfillment Portal apart from both the internal solution it was using and other publishing-focused subscription systems on the market.

First, the fulfillment portal allows Bayard to provide real-time delivery of bulk digital subscriptions, with the ability for subscription owners to grant entitlements underneath that subscription to other individuals. This offers a solution for remote learning, where classrooms needed a secondary option for delivering bulk materials to students after COVID-19 changed the learning landscape. While teachers can still manage subscriptions for traditional print fulfillment, they also now have the ability to manage and grant entitlements to their students who need access to digital learning materials outside the traditional classroom setting.

The Portal also offers publishers and e-commerce businesses a flexible fulfillment solution for bulk digital subscriptions with real-time digital access to products, new monetization opportunities, and the ability to extend the lifespan of content with archived issues. It is completely brandable and customizable to the customer.

The Naviga Fulfillment Portal is currently the only group subscription management offering on the market that has real-time delivery of digital products to customers.

“...

I can say comfortably, the Naviga Book and Subscription system does 99% of everything our homegrown system did and then in addition to that it brings so many new enhancements and features that we didn’t have access to.

Benjamin Thomas
Director of Quality and Process Improvement – North America, Bayard
"It really is a very nice system that meets the expectations of a modern subscription system," says Thomas. "You can look at subscribers to one periodical who do not get another periodical. You can look at subscribers to a periodical who have not purchased a product that our reports indicate is a natural tie-in to that subscription. We can also identify customers who purchased a seasonal product last year but who have not yet purchased this year's version."

By mid-July 2021, Bayard committed to migrating three publishing groups, roughly 10 periodical titles, to the Naviga system. With additional access to the Naviga Book and Subscription system, Thomas says, “this will allow for making better marketing and editorial insights, better leveraging the existing investment in our ERP solution. ... It is also a welcome opportunity to revisit our business practices. Things like the number of renewals and invoices, the structure of our label runs, etc. And it will enable our CSRs to better upsell and cross-sell our materials.”

In addition, the Naviga Fulfillment Portal integrates with the Zinio reader to deliver the content that consumers need to access and provide an easy reading experience.

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Bayard has achieved all three of its initiatives so far. It has migrated three families of publications that represent 10 titles to Naviga. On those titles, Thomas says they are already seeing benefits:

- The Naviga Subscription system allows for better marketing and editorial insights
- Bayard is able to better leverage its existing ERP solution thanks to the 360-degree customer view Naviga provides
- It’s given them the opportunity to revisit and optimize business practices to cut waste and improve sales opportunities
- Finally, Naviga empowers Bayard’s CSRs to cross-sell and upsell based on specific customer insights.

“We can quickly, within minutes, develop meaningful customer insights,” says Thomas. “We can begin probing: Customers that subscribe to a specific publication, what types of products do they buy? Customers that buy specific products, what subscription products do they buy? Then we can cross-sell and upsell to those customers.”

These insights are passed directly to the CSRs and sales teams along with alerts of things they should think about cross-selling or upselling based on what a customer has bought. In other words, when a customer makes a purchase, the CSR is automatically alerted to other items they are likely to be interested in buying that Naviga has surfaced based on common products of interest.

“That’s really very powerful for us to be able to market to customers and create promotions that register [those relationships],” said Thomas. “It’s very, very key for CSRs to be able to say, ‘For this product line, of my customers who bought last year, who has not bought yet this year?’ That’s huge for us.”

These AI-based behavioral recommendations are a powerful tool in driving subscription customer growth and revenue.

6 Features That Set the Naviga Fulfillment Portal Apart for Bayard

1. It supports budgets, goals, and pipelines in an intuitive fashion
2. Outside lists can easily be added with simple import and export functionality
3. The Portal lets them leverage the value of the Naviga Book and Subscription system
4. Bayard can pull meaningful marketing lists from the Subscription system in minutes with A/B and comparison/knockout functions between lists
5. The subscription system develops meaningful customer insights within minutes
6. It allows lists to easily be assigned to telemarketing and sales teams
In addition, Bayard didn’t see any significant functionality gaps from its home-grown system when switching to Naviga. On the contrary, according to Thomas, “I can say comfortably, the Naviga Book and Subscription system does 98% to 99% of everything our homegrown system did, and then, in addition to that, it brings so many new enhancements and features that we didn’t have access to.”

Within six months, Bayard has worked with Naviga to achieve its goals for the first half of 2021 by insourcing its subscriber database, gaining 360-visibility into its subscription customers, and innovating a bulk digital subscription solution.

Imagine what we can do together over the coming years, as Naviga’s solutions continue to grow and improve to meet the needs of Bayard and all of our customers in this swiftly changing world.

About Bayard
Bayard is a media company of international scope with a unique history that goes back nearly 140 years. Its sole owners are the Augustinians of the Assumption, which guarantees the group’s stability, gives witness to its corporate mission, and offers editorial independence to each of its 190 publications. Bayard’s products include Catholic Digest, Living Faith, Living with Christ, Pflaum Gospel Weeklies, and Catechist, as well as books, booklets, digital products, and one of France’s leading daily newspapers, La Croix.

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