CASE STUDY
UNIFYING CUSTOMER DATA: SAMSUNG ELECTRONICS AMERICA
**Situation**

Two years ago, Samsung was known by consumers as a single brand. Internally, however, Samsung was a collection of three business units that had gathered data from various sources over many years. That made relevant, consistent communications with the customer an area for improvement. As if that situation wasn’t challenging enough, “the data wasn’t very clean, nor was it valuable in terms of making marketing decisions,” says Kris Narayanan, Samsung’s director-integrated marketing.

Samsung set about identifying a solution by setting a marketing strategy that focuses on its customers—an example of how leading organizations are bringing the concept of customer centric marketing alive, succeeding where others have stumbled. Many marketers say they support the idea of customer-centric marketing,

but for one reason or another—whether it’s lack of a top-level executive sponsor or communication issues between operating divisions—they can’t make it happen. “Most companies understand the concepts of customer-centric marketing and customer value. But they struggle with the steps needed to take what they view as an academic exercise and transform it into something real,” says John Lee, VP-client group leader at Merkle. “They say, ‘Don’t tell me it’s just about building more infrastructure.’ The good news is, Integrated Customer Marketing is much more than that.”

**Approach**

Samsung worked with Merkle to first take a comprehensive look at the information existing in its business units and to enhance its data management. The second step was using the data to profile Samsung’s best customers. “We gained wonderful insights through that process,” Mr. Narayanan says. “It helped us understand the customer segments within our database that we needed to target more.” The final step was mapping out how to communicate with these consumers with a coordinated Samsung voice.

**Results**

Today, regardless of where consumers encounter the Samsung name, they are directed to the same destination for information. Every time a consumer calls with a product question, sends in a product registration or e-mails for more information, that customer data is collected and stored in a single secure database. After calling the Samsung service center and opting in, for instance, a consumer will receive a follow-up e-mail message. “A couple of years ago, simple things like the tone of the message, the e-mail return address, the subject line—they were all different depending on which product line was involved,” Mr. Narayanan says. “Pulling the data together was easier than pulling the business people together; but we have come a long way in those couple of years.” Samsung is working to further develop its customer relationship program. For instance, if a consumer buys a Samsung television, registers it on the Web site and opts in, the company sends that customer e-mails with tips as well as a place to connect with the community of Samsung TV owners for help and advice. The next goal is to figure out when to suggest the next Samsung purchase.