

Amnesty International Belgium Optimizes Fundraising with Analytics

Non-profit human rights organization automatically analyzes and reports on data with RapidMiner to build long-lasting relationships with donors

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Customer Profile

Global Human Rights

Location

Europe

Industry

Non-Profit

*Ilja De Coster,
In-House Fundraising
Consultant*

Amnesty International Belgium

Amnesty International is a global movement of more than seven million people who campaign for a world where human rights are enjoyed by all. As a non-profit, the organization relies on individual donors, who often become aware of campaigns through petitions, street fundraising, telephone outreach, and mailers. Once donors are engaged, it is key to build long lasting relationships with them. As many non-profits do, [Amnesty International Belgium – Flemish section](#) uses a CRM system to extend the relationship lifecycle. But the organization wanted to improve performance using new data analytics methods.

The Challenge

About four years ago, Ilja De Coster, an in-house fundraising consultant, began looking for analytics software to work next to classical CRM systems. “I’m not a data scientist – I’m a fundraiser using direct marketing techniques and databases. Over the 15 years I’ve worked in fundraising, when I needed data analytics, I’d work with programmers. But this was often frustrating. There were misunderstandings about what I required, and, even when those were resolved, it would take weeks to get what I wanted,” he said.

The Solution

De Coster began researching analytics tools online, and soon found [RapidMiner](#), which requires no programming. “RapidMiner freed us from IT. I can use its drag and drop interface to design the analytics processes I want. As a data-driven marketer, it is my main, day-to-day, tool. And, what used to take weeks of interacting with programmers not understanding my needs as marketer, now takes half a day with RapidMiner,” he said. Once he understood the possibilities of data analytics with RapidMiner in combination with CRM-systems and marketing automation tools, there was no limit for his data-driven fundraising.

At Amnesty International Belgium (AIB) – Flemish section, the open source system [CiviCRM](#) is used as the CRM platform. When De Coster started there in 2013, as an in-house fundraiser and data-analyst, he first integrated RapidMiner with the CiviCRM API, making it easy to use the modern analytics software with this CRM database, while adding more robust reporting features. Of course, as a human rights agency, Amnesty International conducts all data analytics in compliance with privacy regulations and protective ethics.

De Coster also started several tests on how to use RapidMiner and CiviCRM for a variety of marketing activities. These ranged from basic ETL-operations; validation and pre-processing of data sets from recruiters in order to start direct debit donations; over selections, predictive modeling and evaluations for marketing actions; and donor segmentations, to enable basic and advanced reporting. “RapidMiner is fast becoming the driver and engine of our fundraising operation,” he said.

After using RapidMiner Server for about one year, De Coster sees more and more possible applications, and is testing and implementing them, step by step. These include anomaly detection to identify significant changes in donation behavior by individual donors, pattern recognition, and churn prediction. He also hopes to use RapidMiner to crawl the Internet to identify new prospects, or to use association rules to identify the best, tailor-made engagement proposals to donors and activists.

“We still have a long way to go, but this system allows marketing automation. We can now send daily notes to our Call Center, with specific calls to action and questions for each donor being contacted. We also send Call Center notes back to the CRM system, so we can better monitor performance, and promptly start debiting new donors’ accounts, once they have approved contributing that way,” said De Coster. He further explained this timely automation ensures donors are not mistakenly re-solicited once they begin donating, which was a problem with the old system that took several weeks to produce follow-up lists. The timeliness enabled by the new system contributes to higher satisfaction among donors.

RapidMiner is also used to predict donor responses to telemarketing calls or direct mailings, once they have signed a petition or stopped giving, improving the cost effectiveness of fundraising efforts. “Even more so than in commercial marketing, fundraisers have to work hard to be as cost effective as possible,” he noted.

On a larger scale, De Coster applies RapidMiner analytic clustering and scoring over customer relationship lifecycles, or “supporter journeys” as they are named internally. This intelligently segments outreach to maximize donor engagement by tracking how long a donor has participated, and customizes contacts month by month. The data analytics engine analyzes and reports evolution in recurring donor bases, can benchmark between other organizations (willing to share data), and altogether serves as an engine for automating supporter journeys. Going forward, AIB plans to integrate and automate this with CIVICRM, MailChimp and SurveyMonkey.

An example supporter journey business rule set

If this RD (Recurring Donor) Status	Then do this marketing action
RDNC1: first time newcomer	Sent welcome pack per post/mail
RDNR3: newcomer in third month renewal	Sent email with invitation to sign petition
RDAA1: newcomer in seventh month after sign up	Send email overview of what organization achieved in last months since the donor signed up
RDSN1: newcomer, stopping after only one month of contributions	Do phone call check in: why did the donor stop?

“RapidMiner saves me days and days of work time, which is critical, because I don’t have time to wait for developers to write code for the analytics and reporting I need. And, now that we’ve been using RapidMiner at the local level, internationally, several other associated non-profits are looking at using it as well,” De Coster said.

About RapidMiner

RapidMiner is the industry's easiest-to-use Modern Analytics platform that significantly accelerates productivity – from data prep to predictive action – with prebuilt models and one-click deployments. Leveraging its open source heritage, RapidMiner was built by data scientists for data scientists, business analysts and developers. Unlike traditional analytics providers, RapidMiner enables anyone to make the most of all data in all environments, by providing a powerful code-free advantage and the wisdom of over 250,000 users around the world. For more information, visit www.rapidminer.com.