



Customer

CAKE, a Sysco company, provides innovative, cloud-delivered guest management and point-of-sale solutions to restaurant operators throughout North America.

Challenge

Use “cold emailing” approach to do the work of 10 sales development reps in reaching out to 425,000+ Sysco customers.

Conversica Solution

Conversica’s AI Automated Sales Assistant with Unlimited Bandwidth.

Conversica Virtual Persona

Julie Hudson

Conversica Assists

- 20 percent engagement rate, with 30 percent of those positive responses
- Reintroduce Sysco brands and services to former customers
- Pinpointed the most effective hour and day to reach out to prospects

CAKE Discovers the Perfect Recipe for Reaching Out to Restaurants

There’s a lot of name-dropping going on lately at the Redwood City, Calif., offices of CAKE, a Sysco company that provides cloud-delivered technology solutions that make it easier to run a restaurant.

It doesn’t take long to know which name is dropped most often at CAKE, because sales and marketing staffers frequently wear t-shirts announcing, “I KNOW JULIE HUDSON.”

Funny thing is, Julie Hudson doesn’t exist – at least not in the flesh. She’s an automated sales assistant powered by artificial intelligence (AI) technology from Conversica.

Yet Julie’s status as an AI agent doesn’t diminish her popularity with CAKE employees and customers. In a way, it makes her an even bigger sensation. Perhaps that’s because Julie never takes a day off, can work at any hour of the day without a break, and always has a friendly word for customers and colleagues.

Best of all, Julie Hudson gets results: She patiently nurtures leads right down to pinpointing the best time and number for sales agents to reach the prospect.

As Lucy González, CAKE’s sales and marketing operations analyst, observes, “There’s a reason we have those t-shirts.”

For CAKE, a Unique Approach

CAKE’s need to implement Conversica® became clear after the Silicon Valley start-up was acquired by Sysco, the \$48 billion food services leader. CAKE’s guest management and point of sale solutions offered Sysco a new avenue for broadening its footprint in existing accounts. And it gave CAKE, as a newly minted Sysco company, access to a database of more than 425,000 Sysco customers, many of whom would likely be open to hearing about new technology solutions from a brand they already use and trust.

“They do love Julie. We’ll often get calls from customers asking for Julie Hudson. They just want to meet her.”

*Lucy González
Sales and Marketing Operations Analyst
CAKE*

With the acquisition, CAKE had to retool its sales organization to meet the challenge of selling to Sysco's customer base. The company switched from an outside sales approach – with reps hitting the pavement and demonstrating CAKE equipment in person – to a purely inside sales model, where virtual demonstrations take the place of on-site sales calls.

“At the time, the funds weren't there to grow a team as quickly as we wanted,” says González. But when CAKE sales and marketing executives saw a Conversica demonstration, they realized they could deploy it to cost-effectively “cold call” current Sysco customers via email – a departure from the typical use of Conversica to qualify leads before they reach sales personnel.

“Julie is essentially cold emailing,” says González. “Normally, that might not work but because we're a Sysco brand, Julie's emails don't get caught up in spam filters, and prospects are more receptive.”

González says Julie's emails don't sell prospects on CAKE so much as introduce the company's high-tech offerings to restaurant operators, while offering them a chance to schedule a demo or answering questions – all the while emphasizing CAKE's relationship to Sysco. Over a series of friendly, helpful emails, Julie nurtures the relationship and eventually secures the best time and number for a CAKE sales rep to contact the customer.

A 20 Percent Response Rate

Roughly 20 percent of leads engage at some level, reports González, and early estimates show about 30 percent of engagements are positive. In a typical campaign, Julie sends out 1,000 emails a week and from that batch she cultivates an average of 60 leads for CAKE sales reps to further qualify and close.

What's more, informal research suggests that engagement with CAKE often leads to an extended customer relationship with Sysco, which is good news for the parent company.

Meanwhile, CAKE has used Conversica to fine-tune the timing of its outreach. By adjusting when to send emails and measuring the response, González has pinpointed the precise hour of the week that delivers the best response rate. “The response is two-to-one better than any other window,” she says. “So now we know the very best timeframe for launching campaigns.”

CAKE is also working to grow its business by tapping its database of former Sysco customers, which includes hundreds of thousands of additional contacts. “They don't have to be Sysco customers to use CAKE,” says González. “But our hope is that by welcoming a Sysco brand back into their business, they'll be tempted to re-engage with Sysco for all their other services.”

With the cloud-based Conversica platform integrated into CAKE's Salesforce workflow, expanding the use of Julie Hudson should be easy. “She scales beautifully,” says González. “And she sticks with it so you never have to worry that a lead isn't being worked. In fact, it takes an average of seven emails before a prospect responds. It's hard to imagine a human sales development rep being that persistent when they're working hundreds of new leads and following up on hundreds more.”

Yet because Julie's emails are so natural and cordial, says González, her diligence doesn't seem to turn off customers. In fact, it has the opposite effect.

“They do love Julie,” she says. “Even when customers say no, it's still very positive: They'll say, ‘not at this time’ or ‘contact me after the holidays.’ They're convinced Julie is real.”

As a result, all that name-dropping at CAKE headquarters isn't limited to employees. “We'll often get calls from customers asking for Julie Hudson. They just want to meet her.”

For more information

See for yourself how Conversica is revolutionizing sales conversion management. To learn more call +1 (888) 778 1004, email sales@conversica.com or visit www.conversica.com to set up a product demonstration.

About Conversica

Conversica is the only provider of lead management software for marketing, inside sales and sales organizations. Presented as a customized online persona, Conversica engages and nurtures leads through natural email exchanges until the lead converts into an opportunity or opts out. Conversica is used by more than 14,000 sales representatives worldwide and has assisted in the creation of more than US\$8 billion in sales revenue.

Founded in 2007, Conversica is a portfolio company of Kennet Partners and Toba Capital, and is headquartered in Foster City, California. To learn more, visit www.conversica.com and follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Google+](#), [YouTube](#), and [@myconversica](#) on [Twitter](#).