Vanguard accelerates its digital maturity with Claravine and Adobe

Consistent campaign data supports agile, customer-centric marketing

claravine   **Vanguard®**

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Kimberly Whitehead, marketing technology manager, Vanguard

SOLUTIONS

Claravine

Adobe Analytics

RESULTS

ENABLED
cross-channel analysis

REDUCED
cumbersome manual processes

DEMOCRATIZED
access to data

The Vanguard Group

- *Established in 1975*
- *Employees: 17,300*
- *Malvern, Pennsylvania*
- https://investor.vanguard.com/corporate-portal/

OBJECTIVES

- Define and enforce a consistent taxonomy for campaign data across all channels, regions, and teams
- Use automation to streamline campaign setup, execution, and reporting processes

USE CASE

Standardize tracking codes for holistic reporting

THE PROBLEM
Uncoordinated teams hindered marketing efforts

The Vanguard Group, the largest provider of mutual funds in the world, understands that an effective digital strategy is essential to strengthen its brand and alert customers to new investing opportunities. With $7.2 trillion in global assets under management, Vanguard offers brokerage services, variable and fixed annuities, educational account services, financial planning, asset management, and trust services. Vanguard's marketing teams promote these services through global campaigns across various business units, countries, and regions.

To succeed in the intensely competitive financial services market—where customers are increasingly price-sensitive—Vanguard needed to deliver content and offers tailored to specific customers. But this approach required reliable customer data in a consistent format that all the marketing teams could activate. And since different marketing channels had their own systems for creating and labeling campaign tracking codes it was difficult to get the cross-channel insights marketers needed to deliver great experiences.

Vanguard's campaign measurement efforts were just as vast and varied as their products and marketing programs. Their marketing teams generated a large volume of tracking codes, with many abbreviation parameters and dates. There were code variations among the different channels, business units, and teams, and team members needed to keep up with the most recent guidelines from the marketing operations group. Since some of the campaign data was incorrectly tagged, the information that flowed into Adobe Analytics didn't provide as many useful insights as it could have.

The manual processes Vanguard used to launch campaigns were also cumbersome. "To download our campaign IDs (CIDs) for display advertising, we had a whole deduping process that we had set up with queries," said Kimberly Whitehead, marketing technology manager at Vanguard. "We'd send it to our ad agency. They would append information, send it back to us, and we'd upload it to Adobe." All this manual work could cause delays of a week or more.

This story is all too common among organizations that rely on manual campaign setup processes. [According to Forrester,](#) 21 cents of every paid media dollar is lost to poor data quality, and marketing teams spend up to a third of their time dealing with data quality challenges.

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Mary Daniel, project administrator, Vanguard

THE SOLUTION

Cross-channel data governance ensures consistency

In 2017, Vanguard adopted Claravine for marketing data governance to standardize their campaign tracking. Their initial goals were to:

• Create and enforce a consistent taxonomy for campaign data across all channels, regions, and teams.

• Use automation to streamline campaign setup, execution, and reporting processes.

Claravine allowed Vanguard to centrally define their taxonomy and put in place governed, automated processes for creating tracking codes and managing campaign data. They moved from divisional, channel-specific data governance to an enterprise, cross-channel model. The result is richer, cleaner, and more accurate data flowing into Adobe Analytics and other downstream systems. The platform ensures compliance with agreed-upon naming conventions and supports collaborative processes across platforms and teams.

Claravine also simplifies the campaign execution process. It automatically validates and monitors campaign, data, and page readiness to make sure customers get a good experience and the right metadata gets captured.

At Vanguard, it only took a couple of weeks to configure the Claravine platform. "We had to come to an agreement on what the taxonomy would be for how we measure campaigns across different channels," said Kimberly. The move to Claravine prompted discussions among teams that didn't normally work together on a regular basis. During the brainstorming stage, the business units shared their different approaches, which enabled the working group to identify best practices and extend them across the whole organization.

Since implementing Claravine, marketing teams at Vanguard have a scalable data governance process in place. That means every time they run a campaign, the central data model ensures the right data is f lowing to Adobe Analytics and other downstream systems ahead of execution. "Before Claravine, people were doing things ten different ways," said Mary Daniel, a project administrator for Vanguard. "Now, people have gotten on the bus and are using one consistent approach."

"Sometimes, if you democratize things, you lose some of the quality. But Claravine also improves the data quality because you have that standard taxonomy."

Kimberly Whitehead, marketing technology manager, Vanguard

THE RESULTS
Claravine enables holistic insights and efficient processes

One of the benefits of Claravine is that it provides the right balance between structure, which is needed to ensure consistent data, and flexibility. "We have the structure, but then each divisional team can customize to what they want," said Kimberly.

Because automated data governance is built into the platform, a centralized marketing operations group doesn't have to create all the tracking codes, and a centralized analytics group doesn't have to build all the reports. That means teams in different regions, functions, and product groups can define a measurement strategy that makes sense for their goals, while still supporting the broader strategy for the whole organization.

Since adopting Claravine, Vanguard has shifted to an "agile pods" approach to marketing. Each pod, consisting of a cross-functional team, can create whatever tracking codes they need across all the channels they're using. "Maybe you're doing display, you're doing search, and you're doing social," said Kimberly. "You might be creating a bunch of marketing landing pages. As you're creating those pages, you can create customized campaign IDs on the fly to support your measurement strategy."

Empowering each pod to create their own campaign tracking codes has made Vanguard's marketing organization more nimble. "Now that you're able to have more people creating codes, you can move a little faster," said Kimberly.

Another key benefit of Claravine is cross-channel reporting and analysis. "Claravine democratizes access to the data, and then it also makes it easier to do cross-channel analysis, because everybody's using the same code structure," Kimberly said. Vanguard marketers are now able to compile data from many different sources to create 360-degree views of campaigns, audience segments, and customer journeys. They can also take a more holistic approach to their A/B testing programs, which helps them make better decisions for the future.

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Shifting from spreadsheets to a tool that provides governance and validation has made the process of creating campaign IDs significantly easier. "I know that the CID is delivered," said Mary. "I don't have to struggle with a very manual Excel spreadsheet. The switch from managing this manually to one true source of truth—where you can actually validate and have governance involved—beats everything hands down. So I really love what the tool does for me."

The system required only 30 minutes of training, and users enthusiastically embraced it because of its ease of use and effectiveness. "In one case, we were kicking off a campaign in a couple of days and I told someone to look at how another person on their team was using the tool," Mary said. "That person actually submitted the code with no training at all. That's how easy it was for us."

The Vanguard marketing team requested some product enhancements—including a comments field and the ability to export historical tagging data from the Claravine platform—and Claravine's willingness to make those changes helped drive product adoption. "Until those features were added, marketing teams that were managing tags in Excel felt like they were duplicating their efforts," Kimberly said.

In the initial use case, Claravine helped Vanguard get more value from Adobe Analytics. Now Vanguard is integrating other systems—including Google Campaign Manager and Amazon S3—into their data governance model, as well as exploring other marketing use cases beyond campaign tracking. "Claravine isn't a one-trick pony," Kimberly said. "We brought it in for one use case, and now we're getting additional value from it."

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