Custom objects are a simple yet powerful part of Eloqua that can enhance the ways that you're able to connect with your customers. While they may seem daunting if you have never worked with them, custom objects (often abbreviated as COs) can become your best friend as your marketing automation needs increase.

Why Use COs Instead of Contact or Account Fields?

When getting started with Eloqua, it can be tempting to want to store all customer data on the contact and account records. But this can cause problems as your business needs change over time. As your company grows, you'll need to store more customer data and be able to reference it quickly. Today, we're looking at four advantages that COs offer over contact or account fields.

1. Eloqua Custom Objects Can Hold a LOT of Data

Out of the box, Eloqua provides 62 contact fields and 18 account fields, and you can create up to 250 custom fields each for contact and account. This sounds like a lot, and it is. But you'd be surprised how quickly the custom fields fill up as you begin adding the data points that your company needs.

COs, on the other hand, can have up to 1,024 fields each. There is also no limit on how many COs you can create in your Eloqua instance. The only limitation is on the number of records across all your COs,

which Oracle caps at 25 million.

2. COs Can Accommodate Data That Has a Many-to-One Relationship

You will often need to capture multiple records for a single entity, such as when a single customer purchases multiple products from your company. Using account fields to capture this information could work. However, if each product has a large number of data points associated with it that also need to be referenced in Eloqua, that quickly eats into the 250-field limit.

COs provide an elegant alternative because they can hold multiple custom object records linked to a single account or contact. You can use filter criteria to select the correct CO record for a particular campaign. Custom apps or add-ons, such as our Many-to-One Email app, can also help augment the capabilities of a many-to-one CO relationship.

3. Custom Objects Can Store Historical Data

Contact and account fields are ideal for storing relatively permanent data such as contact or business information. However, they are less well-suited to storing information that changes frequently. For example, when tracking campaign attribution, you can easily set up your system to overwrite the Last SFDC Campaign ID field, but what if you want to be able to see more than just the last touch campaign interaction?

COs enable you to store historical data, which is extremely useful for things like campaign interactions, event information, or form submission data. You can then draw on the historical data for lead scoring, segmentation, and more when you go to build a new campaign.

4. They Can Scale With Your Business Needs

As Eloqua instances grow, they increase in complexity. Having a data architecture plan in place ahead of time can save you numerous headaches down the road. COs are a great tool to keep your data organized. You can even set up a CO structure that mimics the data table structure of your CRM so that integrations are tightly aligned.

The Value of Eloqua Custom Objects

The beauty of COs is in their capacity and their flexibility. While it can be tempting to want to store all data on the contact and account records, especially if you are less familiar with custom objects, COs are often the better option. Incorporating COs into your Eloqua data structure now can save you lots of headaches down the road as your Eloqua instance continues to grow.

But for those less familiar with custom objects and everything they can do, we've got you covered. Our team is ready to provide the training and support you need to get the most out of your Eloqua data. Contact us today to learn more.