

INTHEMAIL

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Campaign helps printer franchises build business in niche markets

Personalized and relevant components resonate with prospects, attract them to "Lunch and Learn" events and prove the sales approach works.

F BY PAT ATKINSON

On May 12, Print Three Franchising Corporation (PTFC)

received the 2008 Gold Frankie Award from the Canadian Franchise Association (CFA) in the Direct Marketing category. PTFC's campaign, "Real Estate 1 to 1," was deemed the winner, based on clarity of message, originality of concept, effective use of medium, quality of execution and overall presentation.

Finalists were selected out of a record-breaking 237 entries from franchisors, ad agencies and support service companies. Eden Advertising and Interactive Inc. developed the creative concept, copy and design.

So, what can be learned from this award-winning direct response application? Plenty!

PTFC is a 35 year-old Canadian franchise organization with 60 owner-operated locations across the country. Although its core business focus is Canadian Fortune 500 companies in a broad array of growing vertical markets, some of PTFC's individual franchise locations were still more knowledgeable about conventional printing services than the digital print and procurement technology needed for today's requirements.

This meant that prospects and clients often weren't aware of their local Print Three store's ability to produce the kind of sophisticated printed pieces they required. That is, until Andrew Hrywnak began to mastermind the company's marketing. As president for the past five years, one of his roles has been to run marketing campaigns from head office aimed at benefiting the company's franchisee network including, helping owner-operators work through their own

results by using direct mail pieces to promote our events."

Research

Along with Eden Advertising & Interactive, an agency that specializes in designing and developing lead-generating marketing across all media, PTFC set out to identify its best prospects and clients, with an eye to building on its strengths in digital print and procurement technology and expanding its business base in niche markets. InfoTrends/CAP Ventures, a worldwide market research and strategic consulting firm for the digital imaging and document production industry, provided advice and information about the specific printing needs inherent in each of the vertical sectors that PTFC's franchisees identified as their key markets: real estate, healthcare, pharmaceuticals, legal, insurance, financial, and associations.

Eden then used this intelligence to develop messaging, photography and direct marketing pieces that were intended to resonate strongly with prospects within each respective market.

"We believe that if a client is going to spend any money on a print campaign, particularly in direct marketing, the pieces must be unique, noticeable, relevant and as personal as possible to the target in order to be effective," explains Esther Willinger, agency president, who acted as account director on this campaign. "For Print Three, we created a series of four mailers for each vertical, with customized headlines that clients would find appealing."

The target audience for the real estate 1-to-1 campaign was directors of sales



Mail components include four highly personalized 8.5 x 5.5 inch postcards with relevant messaging and photos. Three of the cards familiarize the prospect or customer with Print Three's services that are relevant to their needs and build name recognition for the local PTFC store. The fourth is a call to action asking prospects to reserve their seat at a "Lunch and Learn" event. All four cards rely heavily on variable data printing.

and suggests services that Print Three could provide to address them.

Although the first three cards indicate the time and date of the upcoming "Lunch and Learn" session, their key purpose is to familiarize prospects or clients with PTFC's services and build an understanding of what they could be used for in their business. These cards also build name recognition for the local PTFC store.

The fourth and final post card culminates in a call to action. Prospects are urged to reserve a seat at one of the upcoming live "Lunch and Learn" events

recipient's name and mailing address, and the matching relevant images and messages.

"This vertical marketing piece was the first step in getting our customers used to one of the simplest forms of printing we can do for them," Hrywnak underscores. "As soon as we started doing this, I was leading eight to 10 'Lunch and Learn' events on a weekly basis. The key was to be able to say, 'I sent you a printed card to get you into this room and you're sitting here right now. You could be doing the same thing with your customers.'"

He adds that because the target audience of marketing and sales directors are sophisticated customers who quickly understand the concept and want to determine what they have to do to use similar techniques within their organizations, it is a fairly straightforward exercise to convert them to customers once they have attended an event.

Results

Hrywnak says that the average response rate from this campaign was three to six percent. What is even more impressive is that the close rate after each of the lunchtime sessions was 70-80 percent. Overall, real estate 1 to 1 (and identical campaigns in each of the company's target markets) enabled PTFC to build a better reputation and a stronger network.

This simple strategy translated into new business and solidified for Hrywnak something that he would go on to teach

ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN

Client: Print Three Franchising Corporation (PTFC)
Campaign: Real Estate 1 to 1
Agency: Eden Advertising & Interactive Inc.
Creative Director: Jane Bongers (Eden)
Art Director: Rachel Yu (Eden)
Copywriter: Jane Bongers (Eden)
Project Manager: Olga Mete (Eden)
Production Manager: Nancy Morencie (PTFC)
Account Director: Esther Willinger (Eden)

"The pieces must be unique, noticeable, relevant and as personal as possible to the target in order to be effective," – Willinger

marketing plans and close sales.

It was Andrew's idea to implement "Lunch and Learn" events to help franchisees demonstrate how PTFC could help its clients become more effective at their business. Although at the time, it was a great concept, convincing prospects and customers to attend a seminar about printing was no easy feat, even with a free lunch provided.

"When we first started doing these seminars, I might have had one to two on a monthly basis and I was disappointed with that," Hrywnak explains. "I wanted to take it to the next step to see if I got better

and marketing of major commercial and residential real estate firms. In some parts of Canada, top-performing agents were also included. Four postcards were sent out to each recipient over a one month period.

Components

On one side of each of the four 8.5 x 5.5 inch postcards, the prospect's name is featured prominently in a relevant headline, along with an image of a real estate executive or agent. The reverse side includes messaging that is so relevant that it "proves" the sender understands the printing needs of a real estate company

in the area, or if time is an issue, to arrange with the printing franchise to have their lunch delivered to their office and attend a seminar online.

Personalized and relevant

Needless to say, PTFC did its own printing for this one to one campaign. (PTFC's Smart Document Centres are equipped with some of the most up-to-date print and procurement technology.) It employed variable printing techniques on the sender's store location, the particulars of the specific lunch and learn seminar, the recipient's name for the headline, the

franchisees and clients to their own benefit-- that well executed one-to-one marketing works effectively and "the sky is the limit."

Building on the success of this award-winning campaign, PTFC and Eden subsequently designed and launched 22 seminars in 2008, entitled, "The Extreme Digital Event," across Canada—supplementing the direct marketing components with email, purls, surveys and residual data from them. The names of prospects who attended events were entered into a contest for one of three significant prizes. This augmented process resulted in even greater returns with 10-12 percent response rates.

"At every one of these events, franchisees gained new accounts and new business and some of these franchisees hadn't seen a new client account in a long time," Hrywnak stresses. "Our goal is to bring our customers results: tangible results that you can show them. That's unique."

Pat Atkinson is a freelance journalist who will become editor of Direct Marketing starting with the July issue.