



Raising the Response Rates for Better CRM

By Shannon Duffin

Does Customer Relationship Management feel like it's a game of hit and miss? Your company has a motivated need for feedback about how your products and services are being received, after all, so why not mail a survey to every customer? Typical direct mail response rates are often underwhelming*. One RPM® customer asked us to help them find a way out of dismal customer response rates.

The company had been mailing printed surveys to customers who had recently used a service plan, but response rates disappointed them. The cost outweighed the return value of this CRM program. The company turned to email marketing as a cost effective alternative for communicating with their customers.

But what about those response rates? My Database Marketing™ from RPM® offered them the integration of direct mail, direct e-mail, an online survey tool and customer personalization as an easily supported suite of customer relationship management. Starting with a database of recently active customers, the newly organized campaign sought to make the reply process more efficient, intuitive and customer-friendly. The reworked month-long campaign now includes a branded, personalized kick-off email linking to an online survey, a monthly prize incentive, and automatic reminder emails that steadily grow response rates over a month's time. The new objectives were:

1. Contact only customers with recent service activity to improve participation relevancy.
2. Subject line notes recent service activity and prize opportunity to show relationship/benefit.
3. Link email to online entry/survey with simple embedded URL for ease-of-use.
4. Provide incentive prize giveaway to motivate customer interest.
5. Present known customer data variably as a personalization objective.
6. Build response activity with weekly reminders to nonresponders, while being inoffensive.
7. Create venue for customers to provide free-form comments about their service.
8. Collect customer feedback for insight into the performance of third-party service contractors.
9. Offer unsubscribers a chance to opt-out of the list in accordance with CAN-SPAM guidelines.
10. Collect and compile responses and activity into ready-made reports for analysis.

During the second month-long cycle of the My Database Marketing™ campaign, the rate of emails opened of those successfully received averaged over 50% with a particularly successful open rate of 87% for one brand (Email List C). The same brand converted an equally successful 26% into completed survey feedback.

House List	Emails Received	Opened with Reminders	Received/Opened	Clicked through to PURL	Completed Survey	Total Conversion Rate
Email List A	274	153	56%	53	41	14.96%
Email List B	284	142	50%	54	42	14.79%
Email List C	205	178	87%	63	53	25.85%
Email List D	284	188	66%	63	54	19.01%
TOTALS	1047	661	63%	252	208	18.6525%

Clearly pleased with the dramatic increase in response rates, the customer continues to implement their monthly campaigns with My Database Marketing™ and have moved forward with the process in other promotion formats.

***In terms of performance, the (DMA) report found email statistics are stabilizing, with open rates for house lists at 14.92%, click through rates in the high single digits (9.36%) and conversion rates in the mid single digits*

(5.26%), according to the report. Prospect lists performed faintly worse than house lists, with open rates at 8.56%, click through rates at 5.57%, and conversion rates at 3.15%."

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Shannon Duffin has managed creative design and marketing for RPM since 2003. She holds a visual communications degree from the University of Kansas. e-Mail Shannon at sduffin@rpm-go.com for more information about RPM's creative services.

*Want to learn more about My Database Marketing™?
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