

Case Study Automotivedigest.com

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Andrew Powell

President, Paisley Software Solutions, Inc.

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Paisley Software Solutions • 225 Lincoln Street, Suite 5• Denver, CO•80203• USA

Introduction

Current Trends

With the number of businesses utilizing the growing World Wide Web, email has become a fundamental form of communication. Email is instantaneous, allowing delivery to occur in seconds, as opposed to postal mail (snail mail), which is, at best, done over night. Email also provides inherent audit trails allowing the sender and recipient to view an e-mail's path, history, and whether it was delivered or bounced. Unlike a phone call, email is an asynchronous form of communication. It allows a message to be delivered by a sender without the sender having to wait until a recipient is ready to read the correspondence. It could be argued that email is the most used and beneficial component of the World Wide Web for businesses.

Paisley Software Solutions took many of the time, cost, and tracking/auditing features of plain email and enhanced them to make a complete correspondence management system. The system is built on a Microsoft platform, utilizing MS SQL 2000, Windows 2000 Server, IIS, and the SMTP server within IIS.

Email has become a cost-effective alternative to print and postal mailing combinations. The costs to print and mail an attractive product flyer or newsletter could cost several thousand dollars. That is to construct and send only a few thousand mailings. This could cost several dollars per piece of mail to send. With a postal mailing there is not a cost effective way to track and/or verify a particular piece of the mailing was received or opened.

With HTML emailings, the cost to send a single piece of email can be less than a penny. There are also other features that Paisley Software Solutions enhanced. Paisley included a rendering report that lets a client know exactly how many emails were received and rendered effectively. This provides a client with a much lower Cost of Communication (COC). Paisley Software Solutions offered time savings benefits with automatic list management features and collaborative CRM functionality.

Read on to see how Paisley Software Solutions helped a Web Publishing company drive online marketing campaigns, effectively disseminate information, and deepen customer relationships.

Case Study

Automotive Digest

<http://www.automotivedigest.com>

Automotive Digest has been collecting and refining information that spans the automotive industry into condensed abstracts. Web site visitors are given the ability to view a list of story, titles, and abstracts and then click on links to related sites for more information. This provides industry executives with a time saving way to stay on top of developments.

Automotive Digest took this synopsis model a step further by sending an HTML-rich weekly mailing of the industry news. Automotive Digest had over 18,000 recipients on the list (recipient numbers from August 2001). Previously Automotive Digest used a 3rd party tool to deliver the mailings. They were able to deliver the mailing to most of their recipients, however, there were a large percentage of customers that had problems rendering the HTML-rich email and had to settle for a text version.

Paisley Software Solutions was brought in to help Automotive Digest better manage their customer information database and web site. Prior to the involvement of Paisley Software Solutions, Automotive Digest had been managing contact information in ACT (<http://www.act.com/>). This solution ran as a desktop application and had a single user interface. That meant that a single resource from Automotive Digest was tasked with the contact database management; which with over 12,000 (recipient numbers from August 2001) contacts was a daunting task for an individual.

Paisley Software Solutions immediately took the single user interfaced ACT database and transformed it into a Microsoft SQL server database. This database was front-ended with a browser based thin-client application. By doing this many users could manage the contact information vs. a single ACT user. This allowed tremendous timesavings in data management. Also by front ending a live DB, the data became more consistent and timely. Paisley Software solutions also created an effective backup and recovery strategy that allows the DB live past a hardware or system failure. This was not possible with the ACT solution.

The second step that Paisley Software Solutions provided was to create a custom HTML mailing solution that would allow for better rendering of the email. Prior to Paisley Software Solutions' involvement, the HTML newsletter could not be received by any AOL recipients (and also a number of other recipients). This was a similar problem to browser compatibility. There are myriad email reading/rendering software applications (Microsoft Outlook, MS Outlook Express, Netscape, Eudora, Yahoo, Hotmail...). All of these reading tools render HTML differently. Which in turn means that for some readers, the HTML is not rendered correctly. By interfacing directly with the SMTP (Simple Mail Transfer Protocol) server, Paisley Software Solutions was able to manipulate the SMTP headers in a much more effective manner. This

effectively rendered email to 1,400++ recipients that had previously been unable to view the HTML rich email.

After creating the custom SMTP mailer and joining it to the CRM system, Paisley constructed several forms so that recipients could manage the format of their mailings. This allows the list to manage it self. Recipients could change the format of the mailings, test the new rendering formats, or request off of the lists. This also helped reduce the time it took to manage 100's of unsubscribe or format change requests.

Another benefit of controlling all of the email management campaign from a SQL compliant database was the inherent audit trail and reporting ability. With the new functionality, Automotive Digest was able to track the delivery of email newsletters, view recipients requesting format changes for a given date range, recipient requesting off of a mailing for a given date range, and CRM record modifications by Automotive Digest employees for a given date range.

In addition to the basic database reporting, Paisley Software Solutions provided site traffic reports that Automotive Digest was able to share with potential advertising customers. Site statistics were affected dramatically on the days of mailings. Traffic would be up almost ten-fold.

Armed with this new information, Automotive Digest approached banner-advertising clients with a new method of advertising within the mailings. This helped Automotive Digest communicate to clients the benefits of advertising within the mailings.

The latest accomplishment Paisley Software Solutions provided was to allow Market Segmentation with in the CRM database. Market Segmentation allows multiple mailing lists to be maintained apart from each other. And also allows recipients to be categorized within each segmentation. Now Automotive Digest has several weekly mailings that allow a greater deal of visibility, segmented content delivery, and target marketing.

Paisley Software Solutions has helped Automotive Digest grow their CRM DB to over 30,000 members and to push multiple weekly mailings out to over 60,000 members (number from August 2002).

For more information or to sign up for a custom newsletter, visit <http://www.automotivedigest.com/emailsignup.asp>.

For More Information

Contact:

Andrew Powell

President, Paisley Software Solutions, Inc.

andrew@pasileysoft.com

610-529-3558