



## HUNTER DOUGLAS LAUNCHES TURNKEY PROGRAM

Make it easy for marketing partners to test email

**Hunter Douglas recently launched a new turnkey email program to help resellers promote the manufacturer's window treatments to consumers.**

High-income homeowners in the 34-to-54 age range are the target audience for Hunter Douglas' products, which are sold primarily through locally owned independent retailers, says Joyce Kaneta, Internet training specialist for Hunter Douglas North America.

"There's a lot of training we do with retailers, so they know the right applications for products," she notes. "Some are more energy efficient, while others offer more privacy or light control."

While the division of the company that manages HunterDouglas.com does send out newsletters to consumers who sign up on the manufacturer's website, the majority of the company's emails steer people to their local retailer.

Hunter Douglas has had an ongoing partnership with Constant Contact, where dealers can log in and build their own customized communications using a template. Five issues are created per year for dealers to use to reach their local customer bases, and they are prepopulated with information, such as articles on design tips. Dealers have the option of adding their own content or offers, including promotions for other types of products they may sell, such as floor coverings.

"While this is very easy, it can be hard

for smaller mom-and-pop shops to find time because they are wearing multiple hats," notes Kaneta.

This led Hunter Douglas to create a second email option for dealers, one closely tied into its CRM system. Dealers can upload their own customer databases into Hunter Douglas' system. The "auto emails" sent from the CRM system are customized to look like they come from the dealer.

"We're kind of like the ghost writer," says Kaneta of the new monthly design newsletter, launched late last year. "We do all the work, and prepopulate it with design articles and all the reseller's information—like their contact data and logo."

Some dealers opt to do the Constant Contact newsletter, which they have more control over, and some do both. About 450 resellers have opted in to use the CRM system, which is integrated with FreshAddress' REACT product to clean dealers' databases as soon as they are uploaded. "The majority are opting in for the ones we do, because there's no effort on their part," she says. "The only part they have to do is input their email addresses."

The content in the monthly newsletters isn't heavily branded with Hunter Douglas, and covers design knowledge beyond windows, as many of its dealers also sell other items like flooring, paint or bedding. —**BETH NEGUS VIVEIROS**

## Keep Your Content Relevant

**It's a basic idea, but one many emailers frequently forget:** How frequently you contact your subscriber base should be based on how much relevant content you have to share with them.

"There's no magic number to work towards," says Heather Blank, vice president of strategic services at Responsys. "What matters is what the content is and who you are sending it to."

Email marketers need to consider how much content they have to share when planning their calendar. "How many great content stories do you have to share and talk about?" she says. "And who would be responsive to these stories?"

It's also important to take your cue from subscribers, and how they express their desires for more or less contact.

For example, if someone signs up for daily deals, then by all means increase the frequency of contact with them. But, if they haven't engaged with you for a year, pull back.

Many marketers may be inclined to increase their email frequency if they see their campaigns becoming less effective. "Often, when overall responsiveness is down and emailers aren't targeting or segmenting their files, the only lever they're pulling is frequency," says Blank. "And that's when fatigue starts to step in." —**BNV**

### CLEVER COPY

## Hail to the Chief

**One of the best emails we received this President's Day was, appropriately, from the President himself (or at least his reelection campaign).**

Skipping ahead a holiday to St. Patrick's Day, the campaign offered "O'Bama" t-shirts, celebrating both Barack Obama's Irish ancestry:

"You might recall that back in 2007, as he was on the campaign trail, the President found out about his Irish ancestry. Last year, he traveled with the First Lady to pay a visit to Moneygall, the town of 300 people where his great-great-great-grandfather was born, and jokingly told a crowd there: "My name is Barack Obama, of the Moneygall Obamas, and I've come home to find the apostrophe we lost somewhere along the way."

We found that apostrophe—and put it on this shirt." —**BNV**



## THE SOCIAL/EMAIL CONNECTION

### 3 Tips for Turning Email Into a Social Network

#### 1. Create a clear content strategy.

Your content strategy needs to be a mix of short messages leading to relevant information. Include engaging questions and fun facts. For example, Adobe did a great campaign with pictures asking if they were real or fake. This generated a great deal of engagement. So focus on campaigns that will drive engagement and sales.

#### 2. Use email to drive social traffic.

Once a week, send out an email digest with your last 10 posts, or even email out your Facebook page including comments and likes. Links in this email can lead

users right back into the conversations on the social networks. This is not new. LinkedIn has been doing this with their groups for a while now and it works.

#### 3. Make your social/email promotions a regular thing.

Remember that social media marketing requires time and patience. Content that sustains loyalty and regular promotions can be combined with email and social marketing tools to produce sales growth. The answer is to use standard marketing tactics and then leverage the marketing platforms that can create the best results. Our recommendation is that email remains the number one medium for initiating a social program, and social programs are the best way to insure that campaign is shared to the largest audience.—Jeffrey Mesnik, managing partner, Socialize Your Stuff

## Social Synergy 101

Social is an ideal tool for informal, organic “conversations,” lead generation, branding, and content sharing. Email, on the other hand, is well-suited for one-to-one business communications and targeted marketing messaging. Social’s value lies in opening the door to new relationships, while email’s value lies in nurturing relationships and closing the deal.

There’s a difference, however, between adding Share with Your Network (SWYN) links to your email and realizing real improvements in your marketing ROI. Whether you can realize the promise of these synergies depends on the nature of your business, your customers, and your marketing organization.

#### Consider the following questions:

- How do you envision your customers engaging with your brand through social media?
- Have you established a presence on social media platforms to facilitate and inspire those interactions?
- Does your marketing/e-media group have the resources to create relevant content for your social accounts?
- What social media channels (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) resonate with your customers? With your brand?

For example, is your main goal lead generation? Customer feedback? Customer engagement? Opt-in email collection? The answer, coupled with the nature of your content, will drive your approach. For example, if customer engagement (rather than acquisition) is your goal and your content is targeted and transaction-focused, SWYN links might not be a good fit. You might consider community links (e.g. follow us, like us) instead. If broadening the reach of your brand is at the top of your agenda, encourage social sharing. This requires compelling, attention-grabbing content and strategic use of social sharing tool bars or buttons.

**Do your homework.** Social media is a game changer in many ways, but the “old” rules of mar-

keting still apply. Targeted communications with compelling value propositions communicated to the right customers through the appropriate channels will win the day.

#### Ideas You Can Steal

- **Leverage social media to grow your list.** Social sites can be a valuable tool for cultivating your email opt-in list. Company profile pages on Facebook can include email sign-up forms, and Twitter feeds can send followers to your email sign-up form via a web link. Blogs and social media pages are ideal real estate for a newsletter sign-up form.
- **Use social as a learning tool.** Social append services can provide snapshots of your opt-in customers’ social media presence—and offer a more complete understanding of where and how they might want to relate to your brand.
- **Listen to your customers.** There are numerous tools at your disposal when it comes to social media monitoring, from simple Google alerts to more advanced solutions that track social and web activity to provide an in-depth view of your customers’ interactions with social media generally and your brand in particular.
- **Gather those testimonials.** Getting positive feedback via social sites? Testimonials and reviews from actual customers on social sites are the gold standard for email content. Marketers should mine social sites for testimonials and feedback and incorporate them into marketing messaging across email, online, etc. As Amazon’s customer reviews have demonstrated, there’s nothing more powerful than an endorsement from a real customer to influence buying decisions.
- **Utilize social sharing and community links.** Extending your campaign through “share this” buttons requires sharable content, whereas gathering “Likes” and “Followers” requires strong brand affinity.—Eve Bould, marketing/communications manager, FreshAddress; Jeremy Laverdiere, account executive, FreshAddress

