

Reseller Drives Traffic to Car Dealerships with Email Append



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Marcus Davis, President, HotIdeas.com



The Company: HotIdeas.com

Illinois-based HotIdeas.com provides highly customized and targeted marketing services to the auto, entertainment, and hotel industries. Its unique suite of software applications, Variable Data Casting™, allows it to segment a company's existing customer base into specific groups and categories and deliver highly customized email messages. HotIdeas.com's system received the direct marketing award at the 2004 PODI Applications Forum.

The Situation

HotIdeas.com's clients are sold on the benefits of email marketing, but their customer databases usually possess more postal addresses than email addresses. If they had email addresses for more of their customers, they could take greater advantage of email marketing's benefits and all of HotIdeas.com's services.

The Challenges

To help its clients get those email addresses, HotIdeas.com needed an email append service it could resell that was cost-effective and would reliably match email addresses to postal records.

HotIdeas.com looked for a:

- Permission-based email appending service.
- Company that worked behind the scenes, fitting seamlessly into its own service offering.
- Flexible and creative company willing to work with relatively small car dealership lists.
- Efficient provider that could quickly pass a customer postal address file through multiple email append databases.
- Company that consistently delivered high quality results.

The Solution

TowerData's Email Append Reseller Program

The Results

TowerData appended lists delivered:

- Match rates of 15 percent.
- Average opt-out rates of one percent.
- Bounce rates as low as 0.2 percent.
- Open rates of 39 percent and click through rates of 30 percent.
- Strong profits for HotIdeas.com and its customers

HotIdeas.com

The Story

Illinois-based HotIdeas.com provides highly customized and targeted email & print marketing services to the auto, entertainment, and hotel industries. The number of possible variables it customizes for clients in their messages, over 150, is extraordinary, but in order to provide a cost effective alternative to postal marketing programs that achieves extraordinary results, HotIdeas.com needs clients to have sufficient numbers of responsive email addresses.

“There’s no comparison in price between sending an email and spending two dollars a piece for a direct mailer,” says Marcus Davis, President, HotIdeas.com. “If I have a quality email list, I can pass that marketing savings along to my clients.”

Because many car dealerships that use HotIdeas.com’s services generally don’t collect email addresses—or the email addresses they do have are incorrect because of improper inputting or infrequent updates—HotIdeas.com needed an email append provider that not only delivered strong results but was also experienced in working with companies that wanted to resell email append in conjunction with the other services they delivered to clients.

“Our number one job to our resellers is to respect their client relationships and make them look good to their clients,” says Tom Burke, President, TowerData. “We do that by listening closely to the way our agencies want to work with us, meeting those needs, and delivering superior email append results.”

HotIdeas.com’s clients might have customer lists of 10,000 postal addresses or less. For the append to be cost effective, it needed to combine many dealership lists and run them together in one batch. And like all email marketers, it wanted high match rates and open rates coupled with low bounce and opt-out rates.

Because it was selling its own Variable Data Casting™ service, HotIdeas.com had to be the only company that interacted with the dealerships, and it needed a vendor that recognized and respected the relationship between HotIdeas.com and its clients. “I needed a company I could trust that would work seamlessly in the background,” Davis says. “I pride myself on my customer service. On making my customer’s happy. The company I picked had to have that same drive to make my customers happy—without ever knowing them.”

TowerData stood out for its excellent track record of working with agents and brokers. The company’s solutions have been used by Email Service Providers, advertising and direct marketing agencies, list brokers, postal services providers, and database marketers, to name just a few.

HotIdeas.com evaluated a number of email append providers, and selected two of them, TowerData and Equifax, as best meeting its criteria. HotIdeas.com tested the two companies against each other to see which delivered the best results.

Here’s what HotIdeas.com found:

- The match rates between the two companies were comparable at approximately 15 percent.
- TowerData’s bounce rates, two percent, were consistently lower than Equifax’s at six percent. On one list, TowerData hit an all time low bounce rate for HotIdeas.com—just 0.2 percent.
- Spam complaints were higher with Equifax.
- TowerData’s open rates averaged 39 percent, significantly higher than Equifax’s open rate of 15 percent.
- Compared with other email append providers, TowerData had exceptional customer service and a better understanding of the needs of resellers and agencies.

HotIdeas.com

About TowerData

TowerData is a leading provider of email and data solutions. Covering the entire lifecycle of customer information, TowerData services help businesses acquire and retain customers, validate and enhance data, and deploy and analyze marketing campaigns. Since 2001, TowerData has improved customer communication for companies such as Reader's Digest, Brookstone, DIRECTV, Citrix Systems, Wine.com, and Cathay Pacific Airlines.

"TowerData delivered better results than Equifax," Davis says. "And the profitability of our service and the value received by our clients depends on these superior results. TowerData proved their quality by consistently delivering emails with much higher open rates and exceptionally low bounce rates."

When you're paying for each email address appended, you want to know that those emails will perform. "Other companies may deliver similar match rates, but TowerData's are actually delivered and seen. An email address isn't any good if it bounces or the recipient never checks their email. TowerData ensures that messages delivered to their addresses will be seen by delivering high quality email addresses."

TowerData is now HotIdeas.com's exclusive email append provider. "I have complete trust in handing my client lists over to TowerData," says Davis. "They passed the test."

Even better for HotIdeas.com, TowerData is able to manage a multi-vendor append process on their behalf and match their client files against multiple email append databases to maximize the number of email addresses obtained.

HotIdeas initially used several append services; however, managing the delivery and receipt of files from multiple companies was too time-consuming and distracted HotIdeas.com from its primary business. Davis remarked, "We used to send our files to multiple append vendors, but now we let TowerData do it all for us. We get better results in less time and with less effort on our part."

Plus, TowerData's five-step append service was easy to use:

1. HotIdeas.com sends its clients' in-house postal lists to TowerData's secure system environment for processing.
2. TowerData matches the customer names and addresses against its database of 90 million people who have opted in for third party mailings and retrieves the corresponding email addresses.
3. To ensure that the email addresses HotIdeas.com receives are permission-based and deliverable, TowerData sends an email customized for a dealership to each matching email address.
4. The message invites the dealership's customers to receive online communications. The customers are directed to an opt-in landing page customized with the client's logo by TowerData.
5. TowerData appends the email addresses of the approving customers to HotIdeas.com's client file and returns it.

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