

Variable printing technology provides integrated solution for direct mail/website strategy

I.C. System has never given up on direct mail to inform thousands of potential customers about its services as a collection agency. The company has always had good results with this marketing tactic, backed by a strong sales team and customer service staff. The 70-year old St. Paul-based agency is one of the top 20 nationally, and is endorsed by more than 500 professional associations and societies.

"We market our brand through those partnerships," said Chad Lindsay, Creative Marketing Manager. "If an association endorses our services to its members, for many of them that word is gold on our direct mail piece."

The company mainly serves healthcare and dental facilities, financial services companies, communications and retail businesses, from its offices in Minnesota, Fargo, ND, Mason City, IA, La Crosse, WI and Tampa, FL. It sends hundreds of thousands of mail pieces annually and for years has used a simple black and white sales letter with a response sheet for faxing or mailing via a return envelope. When the company decided to incorporate E-commerce applications on its website and set up industry and audience-specific web pages, its direct marketing strategy suddenly needed to be more direct.

With this new online direction, Lindsay said they wanted to drive customers to the website where they could read more about its services, read hundreds of testimonials, and easily sign up online. The immediacy of the online tools gave customers a much more efficient way to deal with an issue they really didn't have time to deal with—

THE PROBLEM

I.C. SYSTEM utilized direct mail to market successfully to members of associations and societies that endorse its services. Its traditional black and white sales letter with a response sheet had run its course. The company was moving in a new direction, developing E-commerce and industry-specific strategies on its website to sign up new customers. Its direct mail campaign needed a more professional look, the ability to target customers individually, and drive them to industry-specific web pages designed to capture their response.

THE SOLUTION

DAILY PRINTING consulted with I.C. System and demonstrated the advantages of new digital printing technologies, which allowed variable data to be printed on individual pieces of mail. With this flexibility and the impressive quality of four-color digital output, I.C. System is able to create professional, colorful mailers, highly targeted to the healthcare, financial services, retail and other industries, and successfully integrate its direct mail and web strategies.

collecting payments.

"We knew the printing technologies were out there, but didn't think it was something we could easily get up and running," said Susan Ott, I.C. System's Direct Marketing Manager. "Our rep at Daily Printing, Steve MacDonald, mentioned the flexi-

bility of the new technology and based on his knowledge of our audience and the communications, he proposed a solution that has worked out very well."

Tom Moe, vice president of sales and marketing at Daily Printing, said variable data printing technology is a perfect fit for I.C. System because it can incorporate their direct mail print campaign with their new web strategy and reach a targeted audience in one seamless process.

"They've been a long-time client of ours, and we knew the direction they could go with one-to-one marketing, and then pulling that through to an online response," said Moe.

"We're seeing a greater demand for the ability to merge print campaigns with web campaigns and other forms of media, and we're showing companies that this can be done very easily now. The digital printing technology has created a paradigm shift in the scope and scale with which we can communicate and get greater results."

Daily Printing, a 110 employee-owned operation in Plymouth, Minn., uses the Xerox iGen digital press, to meet this demand. With the flexibility it offers, I.C. System is able to distribute a six-panel, full color mailer that communicates directly to a customer. "We can switch out images, headlines, end copy, addresses for web landing pages, and individual words such as patient instead of customer. The key is, we can make an infinite number of changes and speak directly to prospects by mentioning their association's endorsement and by showing testimonials from their local peers," said Lindsay. "It's truly



(left to right) **Steve MacDonald, Susan Ott and Jim Tauer** (I.C. System Direct Marketing Account Representative)

amazing how direct we can get now with direct mail.”

The idea was at first somewhat daunting, he added, but the process to get up and running was very painless. “It was just a matter of meeting with Daily Printing, getting the data ready, adding the variables and sending it off to print. Daily Printing is a one-stop shop.”

Even more beneficial to I.C. System is the ability to drive customers to a web-page designed for their audience. I.C. System just rolled out this campaign last month, but results are already promising, said Lindsay. The pieces are not only generating inbound leads and increasing web traffic, they are turning prospects into clients without any sales rep involvement through an integrated direct mail/web campaign.

“Daily Printing has worked very well with us. They always have the latest technologies and show the advantages and benefits—very consultative,” he said. “We now have an impressive, four-color direct mailer and incredible flexibility. It’s definitely triggering a response from our targeted audiences.”

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— **CHAD LINDSAY**,
Creative Marketing Manager, I.C. System

And, added Ott, there is little doubt that customized communications is the future of our direct marketing.

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