



How Intrigue and Personalization Helped a Marketing Firm Connect with Handpicked Leads

By Kimberly Smith – from the library of www.MarketingsProfs.com

Company: Babcock & Jenkins

Contact: Lisa Blank, Marketing Manager at Babcock & Jenkins

Location: Portland, OR

Industry: Marketing, B2B

Annual revenue: \$12,400,000

Number of employees: 50

Quick Read

Relationship-marketing firm Babcock & Jenkins didn't just tell prospective clients what its integrated strategy could do; it gave them a true taste.

In a multi-layer campaign that kicked off with a package of brownies and a custom URL from a mysterious source, the company illustrated how it incorporates intrigue, personalization, humor, and a low-pressure approach to establish and advance client relationships.

The campaign achieved a greater than 50% response rate, strengthening the company's pitch in addition to building out its list of leads.

Challenge

Babcock & Jenkins specializes in customer-relationship marketing for its clients. These services tend to be fairly comprehensive and often fall into the "high ticket item" category. Consequently, the company's sales cycle trends between three and six months, mirroring that of many of its clients.

So when the company recently decided to produce its own campaign to generate broader awareness and expand its funnel of leads, it knew to take a page out of its own playbook and devise a campaign similar to those that performed well for clients—a campaign that would cleverly engage, build relationships with, and convert targets over time.

Campaign

Babcock & Jenkins chose to take a targeted approach, defining the business segments in which it already had exemplary success stories and contacting 641 top executives from companies within those segments with the message "We are into you."

The first touch, sent out at the end of July 2008, included a mailed package of brownies accompanied by an unbranded note inscribed with a customized URL for each recipient. There was no mention of Babcock & Jenkins until the recipient visited the URL—a personalized page that greeted each recipient by name and congratulated him/her on a recent noteworthy success. For example, the messaging might have read "Congratulations on [recipient's company]'s second-quarter revenue growth!"

"Our marketing department found facts relevant to that specific individual or that individual's organization as a way to show what our integrated approach could do," said Lisa Blank, marketing manager at Babcock & Jenkins. "Having a one-on-one dialog with that person—with the personal URL, the fact about them, and addressing them by name—was the best way to showcase that."

Dr. Nussbaum, a fictional relationship therapist and the spokesperson for the campaign, also visually and verbally greeted visitors before introducing them to the Babcock & Jenkins agency, its Marketing Lab (a marketing information resource), and his equally fictional book *Your Agency's Just Not That Into You* (conveniently sold out). He went on to point out links where visitors could access more information, as well as a large red "Please contact me" button, which prompted the entry of contact information to be sent to the company's sales team.

The second touch was again a direct mail package mailed approximately two weeks after the first. This time the box included a personalized Dr. Nussbaum coffee cup and one of two branded letters, based on whether the recipient responded to the first touch. Recipients were asked to return to the custom URL to verify contact information and receive a \$10 Starbucks gift card. They were also invited to download the company's limited-edition "Survey of Marketing" wall chart.

Those who responded to the first two touches next received a follow-up email aimed at continuing the conversation, followed by a call from one of the company's sales representatives. Those who did not respond received a separate email about a week after the coffee cups went out; that messaging intended to get that conversation started.

Results

More than four in ten targeted executives (44.5% of the 641) responded to the first touch and visited the customized URL: 10.2% of those requested immediate contact, and 22.8% revisited the site with the second touch. Another 5.4% of recipients responded to the second touch.

After all four touches, more than 50% of Babcock & Jenkins's target audience have responded since July 30, when the campaign launched.

Already, the company's pipeline is growing, with 20 to 25 companies reportedly engaged and showing strong potential for future business opportunities.

Lessons Learned

- **Start with a rock-solid list:** The effort and resources that Babcock & Jenkins put into personalizing this campaign could have been in vain had the company not also diligently assured that it had the most current information on target companies and executives.
- **Break through the clutter:** A spoonful of sugar and a healthy measure of intrigue turned out to be a choice recipe for capturing attention and spurring recipients to take action. (By the way, Babcock & Jenkins tested the first touch, and response was the same regardless of the number of brownies enclosed.) The level of personalization used was also attention-grabbing and helped drive in the overall message of "We are into you." And Dr. Nussbaum's entertaining presence, combined with the value-added marketing content made available once recipients ventured online, helped the company retain its targets' attention after its brand was revealed and the mystery solved.
- **Don't stop there:** Especially in relationship marketing, it's important to invest in the long term and find ways to continue the dialogue with potential clients. Babcock & Jenkins's four-touch approach didn't just target non-responders of its first touch; it also rewarded those prospects who already showed interest, further nurturing those connections. And when the company's sales team reached out directly on the fourth touch, it wasn't with a sales pitch. Instead, representatives solicited feedback about the campaign with the intent of initiating an ongoing conversation with those executives. In the name of relationship-building, the company plans to continue reaching out to these prospects, including those already in the pipeline.

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