



Automated Registration Marketing

ACE HARDWARE'S 2014 FALL CONVENTION & EXHIBITS CASE STUDY

The company

Ace Hardware hosts two conventions each year, one in the spring with an emphasis on holiday products, and one in the fall with an emphasis on lawn and garden products. Both events are for retailers and are not open to the public.

The timing of the conventions offers retailers ample time to prepare for the seasonal needs of the upcoming year. Also, year-round products are offered by thousands of exhibitors, and Ace hosts its own booths showcasing dozens of corporate services and programs. The General Session features the chairman of the board, as well as various corporate officers, to provide retailers with key information. Also, training sessions help retailers and employees improve their business skills.

The challenge

Of its 5,000 retail stores, Ace primarily wanted to increase retailer registration/participation during its 2014 fall convention and exhibition.

Ace also wanted to increase the number of retailers and its employees attending, particularly those who had not attended an event during the past two or more years.

Ace needed an approach that would speak directly to retailers who had not attended in two or more years. In trying to encourage those retailers to “come

back,” they also wanted to better understand what reason or reasons were keeping retailers away from such pivotal and educational events.



The campaign worked because the messaging style was out-of-the-box, short, personal, with a single, strong call to action.

- Rhonda Wickham, Vice President, Content



Case study snapshot

Challenges

- Generate additional attendee registrations
- Bring back past attendees
- Break through the email clutter
- Understand why someone doesn't register
- Compliment existing marketing outreaches
- Generate an ROI

Solution

- Segmented audience outreach
- Use "new voice" for messaging
- Personalize outreach
- Survey audience
- Specific call to action

Results

- 4,895% ROI
- Obtained critical marketing intelligence

The solution

To target the serial non-attenders (1,400 stores), Ascend Integrated Media created a unique three-stage email campaign that was deployed during three weeks in which recipients weren't receiving the already scheduled promotional blasts.

The messaging within these blasts was short, single-thought messages designed to be **completely different in appearance** and tone than other messaging they have received from Ace.



Each blast conveyed the personal message, asked the past attendee to reconsider and register to attend. If they registered, they received a thank-you email and were deduped from the master mailing list. If they indicated they were undecided, they were asked to take a brief survey providing feedback about what is important to them at the Ace events.

Two weeks later, those individuals who still had not registered to attend the fall event were sent a second message, "We want you back." That eblast also included the brief survey.

To find out more about Ascend Integrated Media and how we can help you increase attendance for your event or drive more memberships, please contact:

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The campaign's completely different look and tone resonated well with past attendees

- Scott Harold, Vice President, Digital Media

The results

Ascend delivered significant direct and indirect attendee registrations as a result of the eBlast campaign: 139 store (10 percent of the campaign's target audience) registrations resulting in 325 additional attendees for the 2014 fall event. A 4,895 percent return on investment for Ace Hardware. In addition, the campaign provided Ace with critical marketing intelligence to shape future events and marketing.