

ASTD Drives Conference Attendance with Cross Media

Digital Digest - April 2008 Volume 4, #1

The traditional “one-size-fits-all” marketing campaign is a dinosaur lumbering towards extinction. Consumer expectations challenge marketers to send targeted, relevant messages, and to send those messages in the format consumers prefer: mail, email, the Internet, instant messages, etc. These customer expectations will only grow. Enter cross-media marketing.

Customizing A Conference Experience

The American Society for Training & Development (ASTD) was after some buzz of their own when they embarked on a cross media campaign to promote attendance at their more than 30 certification programs.

ASTD, which strives to be a world leader in workplace learning and performance, has learned that inefficient to market so many programs individually. “There is a fear that we will overwhelm members with the various catalogs, direct mail, and emails each department sends out,” says Paul Hamel, manager of education and policy marketing. “When does it become too much? How do you stand out and get your message across?” ASTD tackled the challenge with its “Road Map” campaign.

The campaign began with direct mail that drove recipients to their own PURLs. Once there, recipients could easily navigate the site, choose their classes, and build a personalized brochure based on programs of interest to them. They also could confirm their addresses and personal information, instructing the PURL to display available classes based on their geographical location, industry, and previous class participation.

“While ASTD is still measuring the results of the campaign, based on the data so far, we’ve seen a seven percent increase in attendance from quarter to quarter,” says Hamel. “We know it’s the best campaign so far because it is driving better awareness and attendance.”

The positive effect is spreading. Hamel says ASTD’s membership department is now also using cross media. And, for conference planning, PURLs are used to generate instant personal attendance schedules. While the personal schedules are being created, users also are directed to more information about the conference, such as the keynote speaker or featured events.

Why Cross Media Works

People are motivated to attend events for different reasons. By developing segmented groups within your invitation list you can start to see common attributes. These groups can be targeted with offers that will entice them to attend your event based on the attributes you uncover.

While securing registrations, what else would you like to know about your attendees that would help make their experience more memorable? Unique cross media services allow you to capture more information for future targeted messages. Post event mailings to thank attendees can go a long way and, if you can add personalization, you could drive a next action. For example, do you want them to sign up for information about upcoming events? Or you could determine what they like best about their membership and leverage the information for future acquisition campaigns. In any case, while you have someone on a PURL page, the opportunity is ripe to capture more information!

A Few Recommendations

Paul Hamel at ASTD touts cross-media marketing. “We use it all—email, VDP direct mail, and PURLs.” Think across department functions, he says. “For example, cross-media campaigns can be used to help make navigation of conference websites easier for visitors. Pointing people in the right direction helps drive response. We know that ASTD has about a seven percent increase, so we can work the calculations for ROI.” One more thing. “Cross-media campaigns might not produce instant revenue, but they will create long-term awareness for whatever you are promoting.”