



Conversion Rates for Publishers Clearing House Increase 20% with Return Path Certification

Industry: Publishing



Challenge:

Publishers Clearing House (PCH) is one of America's largest direct marketers and its web property, pch.com is now the leader in sweepstakes marketing on the internet. Through value-based magazine and merchandise offers, rich promotions, sweepstakes excitement, and a trusted brand name, PCH is able to attract millions of customers and achieve exponential sales growth year after year.

One of the key ways pch.com drives traffic to its website and maintains a relationship with its users is by sending email invitations. These email invitations encourage new visitors and subscribers to enter sweepstakes and review value based magazine subscriptions and merchandise offers online. While their user base is very engaged, they need to be reminded of pch.com offerings in order to drive revenue for their program. Otherwise, they may forget to return to the website.

As a result, email is an important revenue driver for their business so they are focused on maximizing deliverability for optimum response. While pch.com had near 100% deliverability and regularly achieved 20-30% click through rates, they wondered if there was some way to increase their response levels, particularly at Hotmail. Hotmail makes up a healthy 17% of their list which represents many millions of users. Therefore, even a small bump in response could greatly impact their bottom line.

Solution:

As a Safe sender in the Return Path Certification program, pch.com had already achieved near 100% deliverability across their key domains. But their desire to earn higher response rates at Hotmail prompted them to upgrade their membership and become a Certified sender. As a Certified sender, not only would pch.com receive VIP treatment to 1.8 billion inboxes including Hotmail, they would also receive special privileges at Hotmail that would give them the bump in response that they desired. These privileges include:

- **Links and images automatically enabled.** Since pch.com emails are graphically driven promoting sweepstakes entries and magazine covers, automatic image and link enablement resulted in a pop in their response.
- **No hourly throttling limits.** Since pch.com sends a large volume of emails every day, the ability to send email without volume limitations gave them the added flexibility to send messages that arrive at the right time.

Additionally, they were welcomed past spam, security and content filters that may have otherwise typically blocked their email because of some common terms they used in their email promotions particularly those associated with sweepstakes entries. As a result, pch.com applied for the upgrade. They already had strong reputation metrics so their Return Path account manager knew they would have no trouble meeting the rigorous standards of the program.

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Results:

Pch.com was accepted to the Return Path Certification program in January 2009. As a result of their upgrade to Certified sender, pch.com was not only able to maintain 100% deliverability at their core domains including Hotmail, but they experienced a significant lift to their click-through and conversion rates. Improved rendering coupled with the other program benefits resulted in a 6% lift in click-through rates and 20% lift in conversion rates at Hotmail – a big win for pch.com.

Customer Feedback:

“The impact of becoming members to the Return Path Certification program was like winning our own sweepstakes! We had good deliverability thanks to Return Path’s expert advice, but we wanted to extract more revenue from our key domain, Hotmail. Our Return Path account manager recommended certification as a solution because of the image rendering benefits afforded to program members. Once accepted, not only did we maintain our good delivery at Hotmail, Yahoo! and all of our key domains, but our click-thru rates improved by 6%. That lift resulted in a 20% lift in conversion in just two months! And with Return Path Certification costing just a fraction of a penny per email, Return Path Certification is the best solution on the market for senders who want to extract real revenue from their email program.”

-Sal Tripi

Sr. Director of Operations and Compliance

Would you like help increasing your email response rates? Find out how Return Path can improve your overall email performance. Email rpinfo@returnpath.net or call 1-866-362-4577 for more information.

