



2015 Winner: New Jersey Society of Certified Public Accountants

Entry Title: NJCPA Pulse

Project Overview/Elevator Pitch:

The New Jersey Society of CPAs (NJCPA), an individual member association with 15,000 members, was sending approximately 1.8 million email messages per year, which averaged 120 messages per member, per year—or one email every other business day. Included in that content were six individual e-newsletters that delivered static content to all recipients. However, the NJCPA has a wealth of demographic criteria about its members that can be used to help determine the content members would want to receive. In May 2014, the organization eliminated three of the newsletters and replaced it with NJCPA Pulse, a fully customized e-newsletter that delivers news, resources and events to NJCPA members and nonmember subscribers. The content is based on the recipient's demographic criteria and self-selected areas of interest.

Project Goals/Objectives:

The goal of this project was two-fold:

- 1) decrease the total number of emails sent to members, and
- 2) provide each member with more relevant content and stop sending them content they are not interested in.

The first goal was accomplished by selecting three existing e-newsletters that could be eliminated and replaced with NJCPA Pulse. Those three e-newsletters were a bi-weekly e-newsletter for all members, a monthly e-newsletter for young professionals and a monthly e-newsletter for college accounting students and recent graduates.

The second goal involved utilizing the vast quantity of data already being tracked about NJCPA members, including member type, industry sector, age, CPA license status and—most importantly—areas of interest. Every member is asked to select from a list of 80-plus topics that are of interest to him/her. Prior to the development of NJCPA Pulse, the association utilized the areas of interest primarily to do target marketing for events, but had not been used for content delivery. In addition, NJCPA needed emails to be developed using responsive code so that they can be easily read on any device.

Strategy:

NJCPA worked with its email service provider, HighRoad Solution, to develop NJCPA Pulse. They started with the design of the publication, building upon a template that had been developed when NJCPA went through a rebranding in 2013. HighRoad converted the design into a responsive template, with placeholders for all of the customized content. Next, NJCPA staff developed a taxonomy to use when tagging content, which would then be compared to member/subscriber data from our AMS, Aptify.

The organization developed a content repository specifically for NJCPA Pulse within their CMS, Sitefinity. All of the news/articles are housed in that repository, while events and job postings are housed in Aptify. Once all of those pieces were in place, NJCPA developed numerous web services so that HighRoad would be able to access the data from Sitefinity and Aptify.

The final result resembles a Word merge: Recipient 1's demographic criteria is pulled from Aptify, and all of the content (from Sitefinity and Aptify) is combed to determine the items applicable to that recipient. The content is merged into the newsletter, and it is sent. The process then moves to recipient 2, and so on. In

total, more than 14,000 individual newsletters are sent every other week. One additional strategy that was factored in was to open the newsletter up to nonmembers. By allowing nonmember subscribers, NJCPA was able to use NJCPA Pulse as a member recruitment tool.

Success Metrics:

NJCPA Pulse launched in May 2014, and is sent to approximately 14,400 people every other Thursday.

- The open rate is 28.23 percent, which is 21 percent higher than the nonprofit association average open rate of 23.32 percent.*
- The click rate is 9.52 percent, as compared to the nonprofit association average of 7.89 percent.

While the group has not conducted a formal survey of recipients to gauge satisfaction, anecdotal response from members is very positive. The publication was selected by the Aptify user community to receive the 2014 Aptify Innovation Award, and it also received a 2014 Innovation Star Award from HighRoad Solution.

By replacing three individual e-newsletters with NJCPA Pulse, the association immediately reduced its annual email send by 60,000 emails. And they are continually identifying content that can be highlighted in Pulse rather than sending a stand-alone email. Lastly, NJCPA is going to build on a backbone that was developed for Pulse and create a sister e-newsletter to market their 600+ continuing professional education offerings.

Learn More:

http://images.njcpa.org/pulse/Sample1_9-25-14.htm

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