

## Online Florist Grew Valentine's Day Net Email Revenue Over 60%

Blooms Today is an industry leader in the online floral network. The company began in 2000, yet their history dates back to the 1950s when they originated as Karin's Florist. Located in Northern Virginia, Blooms Today still remains a family owned business dedicated to serving customers' floral needs across the country. Their name carries a guarantee of exceptional quality, value and extraordinary service. They are proud to offer a 100% money back guarantee and same day delivery on many of their flowers. As part of the Bloom Net Network, they are also a supplier within the 1-800-Flowers network.

Since 2006 Blooms Today has used Bronto Software to communicate with their customers to promote flower buying holidays, special occasion purchases, and lesser-known holidays.

### Challenges:

Blooms Today uses four main marketing tactics: SEO, print media, affiliate networks, and email marketing. However, email marketing created several challenges for Blooms Today including oversending, ability to effectively target, and maintaining list hygiene.

"We've found that in addition to the major flower giving times (Valentine's Day, Mother's Day), there are other lesser known holidays like Friendship Day, Teacher's Day, or Parent's Day, but we have recognized that with these holidays we didn't want to oversend to our list. Consumers don't want their inbox bogged down by irrelevant retail emails," said Maureen Ristau, Marketing Coordinator at Blooms Today.

Targeting became a concern, since flowers are a perishable speciality product Blooms Today can't offer a wide selection of hundreds of products, without exposing themselves to great business risk. In order to truly maximize their email marketing investment they would have to effectively target their customers.

One of their biggest challenges was list hygiene. "When we first came onboard with Bronto one of our first challenges was to ensure that we were CAN SPAM compliant. Upon joining Bronto, we undertook a complete overhaul of our list. Our list size decreased dramatically, but we ended up with an exceptionally clean and much more productive list in the end," recalled Ristau.

### Solution:

With a clean and growing list, Blooms Today focuses on maintaining their list hygiene. With each small upload of email addresses, bad email addresses are weeded out, allowing their major lists to remain clean. Blooms Today maintains pristine practices of growing their list through only website and phone sign ups. When a customer places a phone order, the operator asks if the customer would like to "sign up for savings," by joining the Blooms Today email list. With each new email sign up, an enticing welcome message is sent to lay the groundwork for their email marketing relationship. "With email marketing, customers who sign up to receive our emails become lifelong partners with Blooms Today," said Ristau.

In order to maximize their email marketing relationships with clients, Blooms Today utilizes remarketing through segmentation. "Around Valentine's Day, people are getting bombarded with emails from us and others. We run a segment every time which eliminates those who have converted before I send out a new email. If they've bought roses around Valentine's Day, then we won't send another until after Valentine's Day," said Ristau.

In November 2007, Blooms Today began including a pre-header in all of their emails. "Instead of simply including 'Having trouble viewing our message,' Bronto recommended that we use that valuable email real estate to drive website traffic. We began using 'What are you waiting for? View our collection of fresh flowers!' to truly entice our customers to go directly to our site and start shopping," Ristau commented.

Other marketing techniques used by Blooms Today are used to increase sales during otherwise slow buying seasons, such as January. To promote the sentiment that 'flower buying should not be simply reserved for special holidays,' Blooms Today began sending out "Just Because" emails. These emails encouraged customers to purchase flowers at non-holiday times to demonstrate how much they care.

### Results:

Through the effective use of pre-headers, segmentation, and re-mailing, Blooms Today has found solid and consistent success in email marketing. Blooms Today has seen a resounding increase in orders around Valentine's Day. During Valentine's Day 2008, Blooms Today increased orders generated through email marketing 73% over last year's campaign.

But even more exciting has been the results at non-holiday times. In response to their "Just Because" emails, their orders generated through email marketing increased over 100% in January 2008 from January 2007.

Preheaders proved to be a valuable email marketing resource, as consistently the preheader receives the highest click through percentage. For a recent St. Patrick's Day promotional email, the preheader received over 30% of the total clicks for the email, more than any other link in the entire email.

Through the practice of re-mailing, Blooms Today has been able to consistently increase their conversions per email. Ristau mentions, "For example a recent re-mail of Easter flowers substantially increased revenue for the entire email campaign."

Blooms Today has also seen customer acquisition increase, through compelling sign up processes. In February 2008, email sign-ups increased over 75% from February 2007.

"The results from email marketing are clear and compelling," said Ristau, "Bronto's application is easy to use and their client support is great. With their help we've been able to improve our email marketing program and see great rewards."

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