



VerticalResponse

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CASE STUDY

**USED
CARDBOARD
BOXES.COM**

UsedCardboardBoxes.com
Employs Email-Driven 'Flash Sales'
To Move Inventory

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Background: “Big 6” Consultant/MBA Turned Used Box Guy

Marty Metro would’ve never predicted he’d be in the cardboard box industry. The enterprise technology consultant found himself, after the dot-com bust, struggling for consulting work. His “aha” moment initially came after he saw a moving truck loaded with empty boxes heading toward who-knows-where, (the recycling plant? A dark alley?). He wondered how he could streamline the whole process of buying – and getting rid of – packing boxes so that it would be easier, faster, cheaper and most of all, less environmentally wasteful.

“I thought, why don’t we use some of this really cool dot com technology and figure out a way to connect someone who just moved with the person about to move, in a super efficient way?” said Marty.

In 2006, he launched UsedCardboardBoxes.com. The company purchases used shipping boxes in bulk from large corporations and sells them back to other companies (as shipping boxes) and consumers (in the form of pre-packaged kits), primarily through its e-commerce site. Headquartered in Los Angeles, today the company has 15 employees and another 30 contractors at 6-plus regional distribution centers across the country.

The Problem

As the company grew, it attracted many business-to-business (B2B) clients who were looking for very specific types of boxes, in a set quantity, and shipped by a certain time period. Marty, CEO, needed a way to quickly notify these clients the minute he had the inventory that fit their requirements. Getting the message out quickly – and closing the sale – also would reduce the time the inventory sat in his warehouses.

The Discovery Process

Since its early days, UsedCardboardBoxes.com has been sending out regular email marketing newsletters to stay in touch with both its B2B and business-to-consumer (B2C) customers in a non-obtrusive way. Marty chose VerticalResponse in part because, “We wanted to support our small business peers,” he says. As the company searched for a way to send very specific B2B inventory communications to a targeted pool of people, it became clear that the solution was email. The ability to tailor email lists to clients who wanted the available inventory was crucial, and VerticalResponse provided the list segmentation options to achieve that. The reporting and data provided by VerticalResponse also was important to Marty’s team, so they could make sure the messaging was as relevant as possible.





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The Solution: The 'Flash Sale' for Boxes

Using VerticalResponse, UsedCardboardBoxes.com now sends "inventory blasts" to those specific B2B clients that have expressed an interest; think a super-targeted "flash sale" for cardboard boxes. The blasts feature the type of box and quantity available, and are sent to a highly targeted list of customers who have requested those specs, which typically range between 125 and 150 email addresses.

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Results: A Win-Win-Win

The email blasts can achieve an open rate of 30 percent or more and the company often gets a sale the same day. "Of course, we only need one positive response to make that email successful," said David Rodriguez, National Operations Manager.

Recently, an inventory blast not only led to the sale of the highlighted inventory, but also brought in two other orders, resulting in more than \$13,000 in sales from one email. A huge return for a small investment.

The general monthly email newsletter, which contains company updates, sustainability tips, links to press mentions and more, continues to perform well, too. B2B emails often achieve open rates of 15 to 20 percent and B2C emails achieve 8 to 10 percent. A single email newsletter can generate between \$12,000 and \$18,000 in sales.

"The numbers are great, and knowing that we're making money by supporting the environment really gets me going," said Marty. "I'm proud of being able to help our customers help the environment."