



e-Dialog Assists NHL.com to Reconnect with Fans

The National Hockey League (NHL) has over 50 million highly-engaged fans throughout North America. Many hockey fans have an emotional attachment to the game and loyally follow favorite teams, players, and rivalries. The NHL estimates that 60% of these fans are displaced, meaning they live in a different geographic area than the home market of their favorite team — for example, a native Bostonian and Bruins fan who now lives in Philadelphia. To kick off ticket sales for the 2008-2009 season, the NHL decided to reach out to this underserved audience with a highly targeted announcement.

“This personalized e-mail played an important role in the 31% increase we saw in single game ticket sales over last year.”

- Amie Ray
NHL.com
Senior Manager of Direct
Marketing



Personalized e-mails lead to a breakthrough

Traditionally, NHL.com had sent one flat e-mail blast to its entire database to announce ticket sales. That all changed in 2008 as NHL.com became more familiar with e-Dialog’s Relevance Trajectory™ methodology. “Knowing our fans’ level of loyalty and enthusiasm, we realized that a generic, one-size-fits-all announcement would likely leave many fans cold,” explains Amie Ray, NHL.com’s senior manager of direct marketing.

In an effort to increase single-game ticket sales, e-Dialog and NHL.com used fan data to develop a highly-relevant e-mail announcement that would speak to each fan directly. The campaign utilized two key customer data points: favorite team and geographic location. Each message was customized so that a fan would receive information on their favorite team, even if that team was not their “home” team. For example, a Boston Bruins fan living in Boston received an e-mail with Bruins imagery and information on the Bruins first seven home games. A Bruins fan living in Philadelphia still received Bruins imagery, but the game schedule only promoted games in which the Bruins were playing the Flyers in Philadelphia. With 30 markets and 30 teams, there were over 900 potential versions of this e-mail. “This program was far more complex than anything we had done in the past,” Amie explains. “We could not have done it without e-Dialog.”

NHL.com reaches its goal

The customized on-sale announcement for NHL tickets was e-mailed to over 860,000 fans and achieved an open rate of 18.6%. The overall click rate for the program was 4.4%, double that of NHL.com’s traditional campaigns. “We believe that this personalized e-mail played an important role in the 31% increase we saw in single game ticket sales over last year,” Amie reports. As an added bonus, NHLShop.com recognized average revenue per customer of nearly \$140, which they were able to determine through e-Dialog’s conversion tracking capabilities. Not only was the campaign successful in generating revenue, but the NHL also got a lot of great feedback from appreciative fans in e-mails and blogs. One pleased fan blogged, “This is an extremely well-executed example of geotargeting-based messaging done right.” NHL.com is planning to repeat this campaign for the 2009-2010 season, and is exploring ways to incorporate triggered messaging into the program to announce local games throughout the season.



CAMPAIGN SHOWCASE: Personalization Scores Big for NHL.com



Targeted segmentation delivers click rates double those of NHL.com's traditional campaigns



NHL.com's 2008-2009 ticket sale announcements had more than 900 possible variations based on the fan's favorite team and geographic location. The e-mail allowed NHL.com to reconnect with displaced fans who comprise nearly 60% of the database. This passionate segment could then follow their favorite team and purchase tickets for when they are playing in town.

About e-Dialog

With more than 10 years of e-mail marketing experience and many experts on our staff, e-Dialog has been providing software-as-a-service and strategic services to world-class marketers in retail, entertainment, travel, media, business-to-business, and more. We understand what it takes for our clients to be successful, which is why e-Dialog is one of the only e-mail service providers consistently recognized by top analyst firms for both outstanding service and first-class technology. e-Dialog is a wholly owned subsidiary of GSI Commerce, Inc. (Nasdaq: GSIC).

RELEVANCE ENABLING TECHNOLOGIES turn it ON! As experts in Intelligent e-Mail Marketing, e-Dialog provides clients with advanced technology and best practices that deliver the highest degree of relevance in e-mail campaigns and programs.

North America
888-256-7687
maxroi@e-dialog.com

Europe
+44 (0) 20 3219 6200
eurosales@e-dialog.com

