

HP Digital Publishing solutions: Driving new customers to BMW



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– Bill Clark
Redi-Mail



What can double consumer response rates to a direct mail campaign for a brand new, ultra high tech luxury sports car? For one of the world's leading automotive manufacturers the answer includes the HP Indigo Press 3000, a high-speed digital offset-quality color press whose output is designed to directly engage future new car owners with relevant images and information.

New focus on one-to-one marketing

Prospective BMW buyers across America recently discovered an eye-catching brochure in their mailboxes featuring the premium BMW Z4 roadster in all its James Bond glory and in their favorite car color. They may have noticed that the people in the photographs looked a little like they did, and even seemed to live in the same kind of neighborhood.

What they received was a piece of sophisticated direct mail from BMW of North America through a campaign implemented by Redi-Mail Direct Marketing, a leading provider of sales and marketing systems that offers advanced database, lettershop, and fulfillment capabilities. Redi-Mail in turn used the expertise of Global Soft Digital Solutions, Inc., a full service digital solution-based firm that relies on HP technology to produce full color documents that can be personalized and printed in quantities as few as one.

Thanks to the variable data capabilities of the HP Indigo Press 3000, BMW's 32-page Z4 brochure was not simply targeted toward specific demographics but also tailored for individual recipients, including their age, sex, and income level. "We had identified potential customers through previous, more traditional marketing campaigns, and now we were looking for a way to not only connect with these prospects but to speak to them on a one-to-one basis. Through our partnership with Redi-Mail, we are able to target each prospect with mailings geared to their particular likes and dislikes," says Dianne Martini, direct marketing manager at BMW of North America.

Measuring ROI

"BMW came to us with a challenge," says James J. Weaver, president of Redi-Mail Direct. "Their marketing objective was to speak to potential customers as individuals. And with our experience in technology enabled marketing, our relationship with Global Soft, and our in-house production capabilities, we were able to provide the tools to meet the challenge."

Redi-Mail senior sales consultant Bill Clark, who has worked with BMW on large mail projects for the past five years, says the new program kicked off with an initial run of 15,000 personalized direct mail pieces, which were generated by a larger mailing to targeted prospects, including current BMW owners. "There was a series of questions for them to answer and, based on the responses, that's where the HP/Redi-Mail/Global Soft solution came in," he says. Incorporating preferences expressed in the original response cards, the text of each brochure focused on the recipient's reason for interest in a new car, while visually reflecting their overall demographics. In addition, each brochure featured a personalized note that invited them to visit their nearest BMW dealership, making it easy for Redi-Mail to track responses and measure results, including return on investment.

Streamlined workflow

"To me, this piece validates the HP Indigo 3000 as the digital press of choice, as well as the shift in the industry," says Chris Petro, president and chief executive officer at Global Soft Digital Solutions. "It uses all the tools that are available, and it's refreshing to see a leading edge automotive manufacturer like BMW use that to their advantage."

Global Soft, which specializes in one-to-one customer relationship marketing, entered the digital printing arena in 1999 and today owns three HP digital presses. "We felt there was an emerging marketplace along with digital technology that could address customer needs with a solutions based offering focused on specific applications. We looked at a lot of different equipment, but it basically

came down to output and personalization, which we felt was a natural progression for our core business competencies.”

BMW’s Z4 brochures were customized and printed on one of Global Soft’s HP Indigo Press 3000s, a high-speed digital color press that can produce printed materials aimed at a single recipient. “On the high end, I can target down to an audience of one and speak directly to that person, positively impacting a client’s revenue stream,” Petro points out. “On the low end, I can run 500 or fewer full color brochures, so the client is never impacted by obsolescence.”

Consistent identity

The ability to produce high quality materials as needed is key to the success of any campaign focused on a particular audience, and allows materials to be resent or adjusted for future mailings. Where the HP Indigo Press 3000 also shines, asserts Bill Clark at Redi-Mail, is in printing quality, which not only rivals that of offset but in some cases surpasses it.

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Global Soft’s Petro admits that BMW was initially concerned about whether the colors on the cars could be matched exactly, as well as how well the variable data would integrate into the final product. “We worked

hand-in-hand with Redi-Mail, and did a lot of color matching, a lot of sampling, and a lot of data manipulation, and the whole piece came together,” Petro says. “Their response was outstandingly positive.”

Enhancing customer loyalty

With a high volume capacity designed for demanding production environments, the HP Indigo Press 3000 delivers high definition images and up to seven-color printing. It also incorporates advanced personalization technology, and features a seamless workflow that allows information to be identified or recaptured as needed.

“In the past, if we had personalization or some kind of variable printing to put on a four color piece, we had to laser in the information unique to that record or batch of records,” says Redi-Mail’s Bill Clark. “With the HP solution, we can do the four-color printing and the variable all in one pass.”

The ability to produce variable documents on demand is one of the benefits of HP solutions and services currently linking business processes to customer relationship management and other database systems. It’s also an integral part of the decisive role played by HP in the successful campaign conducted for BMW by Redi-Mail.

“With HP digital printing, companies can use variable data to increase customer loyalty, while at the same time ensuring that their marketing materials have a consistent brand identity,” says Bill McGlynn, vice president, Digital Publishing Solutions, Hewlett-Packard. “Digital printing is a powerful tool for reaching and retaining customers – and today that’s more important than ever.”

Challenge

- Marketing programs that speak to potential customers as individuals.
- Printing that delivers exact car color matching.

Solution

- High-definition variable data printing, advanced personalization technology, and seamless workflow.
- Direct mail pieces that incorporates customer preferences and lifestyle, personalized message, images, and dealership information.
- Integration of BMW customer database, direct marketing agency, dealer network, and print service provider in a seamless workflow.

Results

- Personalized direct marketing campaign targeted at individuals.
- Print quality consistent with BMW brand image.
- High quality image and color matching.

A digital future

By embracing the HP digital solution for personalized direct mail, both Redi-Mail and Global Soft are helping their enterprise customers retain strong leadership positions in a challenging marketplace. "If you asked me where we'll be in five years, I'd tell you that we will be an exclusive CRM, direct-to-customer organization," asserts Chris Petro. "And that's what we sell our customers. I don't sell them printing. I sell them customer satisfaction, and that's invaluable."

While the full impact of BMW's highly targeted Z4 brochure is still to be measured, there are high expectations for twice the usual response rates.

"Our target would be a 20% or 25% response, which is an increase of almost two and half, or at least double, of a traditional mass mailing," he says and adds: "It's a beautiful car."



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