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Religious Marketer Tries to Reach Younger Audience

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The Printery House is reworking its direct marketing and search strategy to increase efficiency and appeal to a younger audience.

The Conception, MO-based nonprofit cataloger of religious greeting cards and gifts started the process earlier this year by analyzing the activity of its customer file.

"We realized that we had been mailing to a bunch of older customers who had been on our files and hadn't been productive for several years," says Roy Haas, director sales and marketing for the organization, which is affiliated with Benedictine monasteries.

These customers were primarily women ages 45 to 65.

After offering free shipping on orders of \$75 or more failed to sufficiently raise sales levels in the past year or so, Printery House decided to drop customers who hadn't bought anything for the past 36 months and reallocate those dollars to increased prospecting efforts.

Beginning with its Christmas 2011 catalog, the organization is mailing to rented lists of individuals and mail order buyers ages 35 to 55 who are both Roman Catholic and belong to other Christian denominations.

Printery House mails out spring and summer drops of 165,000 catalogs each. For the Christmas season, a total of 531,000 catalogs are mailed in four separate drops: one in August, one in September and two in October, he says.

Also, Printery House, which had been doing its own creative on its catalogs, hired Hemisphere Marketing to redesign it and give it a bit more "pizzazz," says Haas.

"We wanted to take it to next level," he says. "Our catalog was continuing to look the same."

The redesigned catalog includes larger product shots and colors and other elements designed to appeal to younger audience, says Haas.

Central to Printery House's marketing strategy is its email program which goes out to a database of about 16,000 customers three or four times a month who've volunteered their email addresses.

Haas notes that Printery House does have purchase information on these individuals and is exploring the possibility to targeting them based on purchase history and behavior but as yet has not done so.

The group also began search engine optimization and pay-per-click initiatives in June with assistance from Yellowbook. In terms of SEO, Printery House uses such terms as "Confirmation Cards," "Ordination Cards," Christmas Cards," "Baptism Cards" and others. It currently ranks as first and second in Google rankings for the "Confirmation" term.

Printery House has also begun making special offers and offering online coupons on its Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/PrinteryHouse>.

Will these efforts help the organization? Haas says it's too early to tell, but he thinks the organization is moving in the right direction.

"We need to find new customers," says Haas. "If we continue to throw money down the same hole that's not any good."

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