



10 Steps to a successful Personalised URL campaign

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9th September 2008

Introduction

Over the last couple of years direct marketers have made increasing use of personalised URLs (pURLs) in their campaigns. A pURL is a web link containing a person's name, such as www.msg360.co.uk/chrislawson. There are a number of benefits to using pURLs, including:

- Increased response rates. Case studies have consistently shown that a larger proportion of people respond to a campaign featuring a pURL than equivalent campaigns without a pURL.
- Response data. You can view and analyse data about who visited their pURL, when, how many times, and which pages they visited. This is all valuable information to generate leads that you can follow up. With a typical campaign, you only get to know about those interested enough to contact you. A significantly larger percentage of people will have been interested enough to visit your web site, but not quite convinced enough to make a purchase. These are very warm leads, and with the tracking software that comes with pURLs you can identify them and follow them up.

However, just adding a pURL somewhere in your campaign is not necessarily going to be the magic ingredient for runaway success. Here a few tips on how to make optimal use of this innovative new response channel.

1. Make it personal

People like the personal touch. Use every piece of data you have about your targets; their name, their job title, the company they represent. Personalisation is simple to achieve and can more than double your response rate. To grab someone's attention, think about using personalised imagery. Not something cheesy like their name written in the clouds, but something a little more subtle, such as a post-it note with "Hey Chris, give us a call on 08700 424 360" in a hand writing style font.

2. Make it relevant

Personalisation is the bare minimum. To really capture the attention of your audience, and to get them to respond, use the information you have about them to deliver relevant, targeted content. For example, someone has just bought an ACME Squash Racket from your sports shop's web site, your CRM system tells you that people who buy that squash racket are 50% more likely to buy JointAid Knee Supports, so send them a message offering a 20% discount on JointAid knee supports

is they buy within 2 weeks. Also, show them a map with their nearest outlet and give them directions for how to get there from their home.

3. Make it prominent

Given that a large percentage of people will never even read a single line of many direct mail campaigns, adding a pURL on page 3 of a 6 page brochure is not going to make a significant impact on your response rate. You need to find a way of making the pURL almost unavoidable. At the very least it should be the first thing they see. Then you'll capture a whole host of people who would normally throw your postcard away, or delete your email without reading beyond the first line.

4. Make it consistent

The creative design and content of all your communications should convey a consistent message and look and feel across all channels. i.e. If you're sending out postcards through the mail, followed up by an email 1 week later to those who didn't respond, both of which link to a pURL, it is important that they all re-enforce the same message. Your target should also be able to recognise the email, and associate it in his/her mind with the original postcard. Don't repeat the message word for word, and don't assume that they've seen or read the first communication. Just find a slightly different angle on getting across the same concept.

5. Keep it short and simple

The pURL landing site should be small and simple. i.e. no more than 3 pages and none of the pages should require scrolling down too far. Many people have seen that abandonment of the pURL landing pages increases the longer the site.

6. Use a domain name that reflects the nature of the campaign

Again, this really helps capture the attention of those potential respondents who don't read past the first line. Try to use a domain name that sticks in the memory and is relevant to the message you're trying to convey. For example, rather than www.jimsGym.com/ChrisLawson try www.JimsFreeTrial.com/ChrisLawson

7. Offer an incentive

However flattered your prospects are that you've created a site 'just for them', you need to give them a strong reason to visit. Some may take a look out of curiosity, others because they have heard of you and like you. However, most people lead busy lives and so need a good reason to devote a slice of their time to looking at your campaign. We're not necessarily talking about a free gift here, although it's an option, just make it clear that if they visit the pURL they will be 'rewarded' in some way, even if it's the promise of some very special offers selected especially for them.

8. Use multiple delivery channels

Different people respond to different channels. You have no way of knowing which channel they prefer when you first make contact, so be prepared to try multiple channels over time. Once they have responded, remember which channel they responded and use that approach first next time.

9. Use multiple response channels

According to the Direct Marketing Association (DMA) 43% of consumers prefer to respond to an advertisement online. If my maths is correct, that means that 57% of consumers have no preference

or prefer not to respond online! OK, so personalised urls will increase the chances of your prospects responding. However, some people will still prefer to respond by email, phone, sms or physical mail. You should continue to offer all of these response channels, but make sure you're capturing data from all of them so you can analyse your results and refine your campaign.

10. Test, analyse, fine tune, and test again

Don't expect to get it right first time. It's notoriously difficult to get people to respond in this competitive marketplace. Deliver your campaign in stages, monitor your response data to see what works and what doesn't, make some changes and deliver a few more.

About msg360

msg360 provide a fully managed and hosted platform to deliver personalised URL campaigns, with online, real time, tracking of respondents. With our skills and experience in the marketplace, together with our tried and tested technology, we can help you to deliver highly successful pURL campaigns. The msg360 Reseller solution allows organisations to present pURLs as an integrated part of your overall proposition, without the need to invest in software licensing, hardware infrastructure or in-house technical skills.

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Acknowledgements

Many thanks to those who contributed to the creation of this paper, including:

- **Targhee Child**, Marketing Manager at Destination Homes - www.destinationhomes.com
- **Fred Hernandez**, Marketing Manager at Modern Postcard - www.modernpostcard.com
- **Jennifer Kelly**, V.P. of Marketing at Ritter's Printing - www.rittersprinting.com
- **Tim Murphy**, Senior Account Executive at eDOC Communications - www.edoccommunications.com
- **Ian Piddock**, Marketing Manager EMEA at LANSA - www.lansa.com