

Direct Mail Case Study

Virgin Holidays: Burlesque Sale



Sector & Brand: Tourism and Travelling

Country: United Kingdom

Campaign Date: April 2011

Background:

Who is the advertiser?

Virgin Holidays is part of Richard Branson's Virgin brand. It has been arranging holidays since 1985 and claims to be the largest, most successful transatlantic tour operator, and the market leader for UK tourist travel to the USA and the Caribbean.

As well as the USA and Caribbean, the company offers holidays to Canada, the Far East, South-Africa, the Middle East, the Indian Ocean, Mauritius, New Zealand and Australia, plus a well-established ski programme.

Virgin Holidays' DM programme consists of 16 campaigns a year with major promotions in December, May and September. In addition, the company runs segmented monthly campaigns, with variable volume.

What was the challenge?

Virgin Holidays wanted to drive New Year Sales.

What were the objectives of the campaign?

- » Increase brand awareness
- » Sales: Increase travel bookings between Christmas and New Year 2010

Who was the target group?

UK holidaymakers divided into three groups: prospects (conversion), members of the Frequent Virgin Club (retention) and those who had previously booked a family holiday or a holiday as a couple within the past four years).

The campaign in detail:

Which media were used?

The campaign was a cross-media campaign including direct mail, e-mail, TV, radio, press, online and point of sale.

What was the mailing approach?

The campaign was launched in December, a time when a lot of holiday companies and other brands promote discounts and sales. With so much market activity going on, it was important to do stand out creatively.

For this campaign Virgin Holidays first sent an e-mail on Boxing Day 2010, followed by direct mail three days later.

Other channels included TV, radio, press, online and point of sale, with the Virgin Holidays website promoting key offers.

What was the creative concept?

For consistency between all the media in this integrated campaign, a burlesque dancer was featured (Kimberley Holladay), covering her modesty with a disc emblazoned with the message “we’ve taken off everything we can”.

This creative approach reflected the cheeky personality of the Virgin Holidays brand in a stylish, sophisticated and charming way, ensuring that the creative was both entertaining and effective.

For the direct mail, Virgin Holidays used a Maltese cross format which on opening slowly revealed offers as the customer opened each panel; reinforcing the campaign message and playing to the “revealing” creative concept.

Virgin Holidays knows that people expect Virgin to be different and fun and this campaign bang delivered on this.

The results

- » Growth in spontaneous brand awareness in the key segments
- » 50% of the respondents, people who received the direct mail said they were “likely to respond” and 50% said that they “liked the creativity / design” of the mailing.
- » An increase in bookings of 25% year-on-year.

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