



PURLs for Profit

Your everything-you-need-to-know guide to personalized URLs, including: **Best Practices** on why they work, campaign strategy, multichannel creative, analytics, and **10 Case Studies**

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Table of Contents

III INTRODUCTION: The “PURL”

BEST PRACTICES

6 CHAPTER 1

Why PURLs Work — and How a Marketer Sells the Client on Them

15 CHAPTER 2

The Overall PURL Media Strategy, Including the Offer and the List

20 CHAPTER 3

PURL Creative Best Practices — for Direct Mail/Email and the Landing Page(s)

26 CHAPTER 4

Meaningful Measurement of the PURL — ROI, Testing and Tracking

PERSONALIZED URL CASE STUDIES

31 CASE STUDY #1 — Natural Products Expo East

35 CASE STUDY #2 — Dallas Morning News

39 CASE STUDY #3 — Roman Catholic Diocese of Erie

42 CASE STUDY #4 — JDA Software Group

45 CASE STUDY #5 — Stein Mart

48 CASE STUDY #6 — Zions Bank

52 CASE STUDY #7 — Salem College

56 CASE STUDY #8 — Resource One Credit Union

59 CASE STUDY #9 — KCSM-FM

62 CASE STUDY #10 — Chick-fil-A



Introduction: The “PURL”

Direct mail and the internet. Not that long ago, it wasn't the closest of relationships. Maybe a general URL next to a little computer icon? Maybe a similar campaign that emerged from an email silo?

But now it's different. They're integrated because direct marketers know that an integrated campaign, using multiple channels, is a more effective campaign. Also, simply put, in a stressed economic age that's full of prospects less willing to spend, to donate, to sign up, they need each other.

And while the closely coordinated direct mail and email campaigns are both popular and successful today, perhaps the most effective demonstration of the offline-online marriage are personalized URL (PURL) campaigns.

Why? First, because direct mail remains very visible, and it's a part of the daily life of most Americans. Unlike other marketing avenues, such as billboards, TV commercials, radio spots and emails — which are all competing for prospects' attention and loyalty — direct mail is the only channel that physically gets into people's hands in their homes.

Second, a personalized URL placed on a direct mail piece maximizes the power of the internet for that medium. Sure, the old (the general URL) and the new (QR Codes and social media tags like Twitter and Facebook) internet representatives on that envelope or self-mailer have value, sometimes quite a bit, but the personalized URL gives the marketer the best opportunity for response and overall ROI.

A personalized URL is a unique and personalized Web address created especially for each recipient of your direct mail or email marketing campaign. This PURL literally contains all of a recipient's name in the Web address, which makes for a personal and engaging tactic that many prospects will respond to by visiting “their PURL.”

These URLs take prospects to corresponding pre-generated internet

For the companies and industry sectors that have traditionally relied on direct mail to get out their marketing messages, their workhorse just got a welcome upgrade with PURLs.

landing page(s) that can be personalized, including using prospects' names, demographic information or anything else in the marketing database. These mini-sites often have a four-page structure, including a landing page, a survey page, an information page (which may or may not be personalized based on information gathered on the survey page) and a thank-you page.

Some marketers like to term the PURL a “concierge service for your prospects,” as it works to both respond to or interact with your marketing communications.

Usually, you'll see a PURL in one of these two ways:

ethanboldt.companyname.com

www.companyname.com/ethanboldt

But because the PURL is only a response mechanism, a campaign only succeeds when people are able to log into the PURL in the first place. In other words, you must have your marketing ducks in a row: the right list, skillful creative, the right offer/incentive and terrific messaging. Otherwise, you can have the greatest landing page in the world, but the prospect won't even acknowledge its existence.

So, what about the forecast of direct mail being doomed because of dwindling response rates, higher postal costs and smaller marketing budgets? It's sheer nonsense. In fact, as a recent Winterberry Group report indicated, it's not even true. Direct mail spending actually went up by 3.1 percent, to \$45.2 billion, in 2010 and is predicted to go up again, by nearly 6 percent, in 2011 to \$47.8 billion.

Personalized URLs not only give a shot in the arm to struggling campaigns, they can further position direct mail for a comeback. “I think the channel's forever altered, but not forever gone,” says Nancy Harhut, chief creative officer at The Wilde Agency in Boston. “People still trust the mail, like to touch their mail, and sometime prefer the privacy, security and record of mail.”

Therefore, for the companies and industry sectors — merchandisers/retailers, fundraisers, financial services, insurance, travel services, magazine publishers, telecommunications — that have traditionally relied on direct mail to get their marketing messages out, their workhorse just got a welcome upgrade.

“The concept of PURLs is easy to get, and easy to sell to a client,” states Neil Feinstein, director of brand and creative strategy at True

North, a marketing agency in New York City. “For validation, you can simply Google ‘PURL response rates’ to learn that PURLs typically increase response rates by 50 to 100 percent.”

And then there’s the fact that you can do a lot with these responses. Using PURLs, mailers can avoid the unknown and measure every response. “I think PURLs are innovative and a new method of interacting and engaging at a deeper level with a customer or prospect, but really it’s simply an evolution of the direct marketing strategy. Many of the things we do as direct marketers can be improved by using this strategy,” says Jeff Haggin, vice chairman at Solution Set, a marketing company based in San Francisco.

Most important of all? PURLs can be very profitable.



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Why PURLs Work — and How a Marketer Sells the Client on Them

While social media and mobile marketing are becoming more popular, they both remain small potatoes compared to what direct marketer Nancy Harhut calls the “Holy Trinity in Direct Marketing”: direct mail, email and PURLs. “Direct will still lead acquisition efforts and then be used to punctuate customer deepening campaigns. There’s been some evidence that all the email we’re sending is hurting its efficacy, while at the same time, direct mail has been ‘rested’ long enough so that now it’s working even better than before — what’s old appears new again,” she describes.

“Smarter targeting, more data-driven communications and increased personalization [all hallmarks of the PURL] will become necessities,” says Harhut, who mentions that the historic problem has always been data quality, but today most companies have access to clean, robust data.

PURLs Represent the Future ... and the Now

Most companies have siloed their marketing efforts, but Harhut thinks that self-interest will begin to trump the channel. Creative



mail that skillfully employs the usage of PURLs will only enhance the chance a prospect will respond. Because PURLs are so easily trackable, then the credit of a conversion will be given to both the direct mail piece as well as the landing page.

“Consumers are most likely to pay attention to messages that speak to them personally. Personalized URLs deliver just that,” says Jason Hornik, senior director of product marketing at Loyalty Lab, which specializes in CRM for clients. He claims that adopting PURLs as a marketing tool can make every message more relevant to each recipient. Used optimally, they help sellers approach behavioral targeting both online and in the mailstream.

Customers and prospects who log onto their own PURLs see content served specifically to them based on prior behavior, life stages, segmentation, demographics and any other data a company may have. “As consumers view products, read, play videos, browse, click and purchase online, their activities are fed back into the marketer’s data pool,” continues Hornik, who adds that this new intelligence can be used to make subsequent communication even more pertinent.

Though data is still preliminary in this field, response rates for direct mail with PURLs are reportedly up to 5 percent, versus typical industry averages of 2 percent to 3 percent. Additionally, site visitors who use a PURL tend to stay engaged longer and have higher conversion rates. The more marketers know about customers, the more they can deliver messaging that causes them to act. Therefore, PURLs create a feedback loop that benefits marketers and customers alike.

In fact, many marketers believe that PURLs represent the best way to use direct mail today, with so many prospects preferring to respond online. “Direct Mail is a very responsive market, especially when using PURLs, because the life of a direct mail campaign is longer than the life of an email campaign,” explains Shawn Burst, founder of Dukky, a custom landing page and analytics software platform based in New Orleans. “PURLs are the best way to ensure you draw in the greatest group of initial responses from your targeted audience in a direct mail audience.”

If PURLs sound enticing to you, take these steps to discover their value:

1. Focus on analytics

Many services are springing up that offer marketers the ability to customize URLs for prospects and customers, but be sure the back-end analytics

The days of prospects being freaked out by prepopulating forms on a website are gone. “One day everyone will be doing PURLs,” says Mike Robinson.

are also state of the art. For PURLs to work, there must be a feedback loop between driving transactions and improving data, and they must be leveraged intelligently with your goals and metrics in mind.

In other words, tracking is a big deal. “It’s one of the main reasons you’d use a PURL,” says Crystal Uppercue, marketing manager at Rockville, Md.-based direct marketing services provider EU Services. “It allows you to collect data in real time and respond with additional messages or push the data out to others in your company for follow-up.”

“The ability to track is far greater than just identifying a level of response, but allows you to break down customer behavior and trends,” says Burst. “You can see and monitor who responds, shares, carries influence, redeems, etc.”

This gives companies the ability to tier their customers based on their activity and interaction with the campaign and brand and market to those consumers based on their level of interaction. “This takes the expected end results of a campaign to a completely new level by being able to understand customers and use the interaction with them to market to the individual, group and masses appropriately,” continues Burst.

Burst says the main obstacle they see is when clients express a fear because of the viral nature of campaigns. “There is sometimes a hesitation because of the unknown element of the quantity of response/sharing activity/redemption. Although these concerns are valid, we always remind our clients the goal of marketing in any campaign is to engage with consumers.”

2. Put this project on the front burner

The way technology moves, we can assume that PURLs will become commonplace at some point. The benefit of initiating PURLs now is that when everybody else is doing it, you’ll be doing it better, having already established a feedback loop between yourself and your customers. They’ll already understand your business meets them with the best offers, personalized to their needs. That’s the beauty of PURLs.

Indeed, many marketers believe that you can’t wait too long. “One day everyone will be doing PURLs,” asserts Mike Robinson, vice president of Performance Direct Marketing in Fort Worth. The days of prospects being freaked out by prepopulating forms on a website are gone. For a big PURL campaign for a major newspaper, for example, he encountered very few complaints.

He mentions the recent Direct Marketing Association statistic: 42 percent of people who respond to a direct mail offer would rather respond online. “That’s just online. Add a PURL, and you’re talking even higher,” he predicts.

Robinson then gives an illustration that could seal the deal with many wary clients. You send out 200 mail pieces with just a general URL. Fifty prospects go there and 10 complete something. So now you know them. But you don’t know the other 40. They’re gone and may never be “seen” again. “With a PURL, you have 10 sales and know exactly where the other 40 dropped off. So now you can go after those people.”

For direct mail providers and printers, PURLs also represent a huge opportunity, believes Robinson. “We’re a large print direct mailer. We have continuous form, etc. We can do two million pieces a day. So how are we different from all the others that do print and mail? One, I’m high-volume. Two, I’ve got PURLs.”

3. Explain That PURLs Are a Tactic, Not a Strategy

“We view PURLs as a tactic, not a strategy,” states Feinstein.

“PURLs allow marketers to get hyperpersonal, thus generating higher response rates. So for us, the typical strategy around PURLs is hyperpersonalization.”

In his New York University (where Feinstein is an adjunct professor in their Masters in Integrated Marketing program) campaign planning class, he teaches the difference between an objective, a strategy and a tactic this way:

An OBJECTIVE is what you want to accomplish.

A STRATEGY is the approach you’re going to take.

A TACTIC is what you do to implement your strategy.

So, if the objective, for example, is to increase sales from existing customers, the strategy would be to use the information in the database to hyperpersonalize communications so the message is more meaningful to the recipient, describes Feinstein. And, as we all know, relevance increases response. In this case, the tactic could be to use PURLs to create that hyperpersonalized experience on a landing page.

Based on this logic, the challenge with PURLs is having a robust database underlying the program. Just using a name in a PURL in a direct mailer so that a user types in her name and then sees it on the

“PURLs are as good for direct mail as the iPad has been for the publishing industry. Strategically, PURLs have re-awoken the creativity associated with direct mail,” says Neil Feinstein.

top of the landing page is merely a gimmick. “But if you can infuse personal information about that customer onto that landing page, her online experience will be more meaningful,” claims Feinstein.

Say this customer bought a red sofa at Crate and Barrell, and the landing page has a picture of that sofa with matching pillows, chairs, tables and rugs. She can see the accessories that match the sofa she just bought and can easily envision her in her new living room.

“Therefore, the biggest obstacle facing a client is the depth and taxonomy of the database,” explains Feinstein.

Also challenging to clients are the technical issues related to the database. To implement PURLs, clients often have to reach out to other departments — mostly the IT department, which has a habit of dealing with the squeakiest wheel first. For these famously harried co-workers, PURLs are the kind of project that’s often low on the priority list. Also, using PURLs may add to the timeline of program. And with the pressure for marketers on the line to deliver results as quickly as possible, they often do not have time to implement a PURL-based program.

“PURLs are as good for direct mail as the iPad has been for the publishing industry. Strategically, PURLs have re-awoken the creativity associated with direct mail. Tactically, they have made direct mail into a more vibrant response-generating tool that connects offline and online,” says Feinstein. And crucially, PURLs make measurement easy, so a marketer can determine the ROI with a high level of certainty.

“We have spoken with just about every one of our clients about using PURLs. They are all interested in the concept but often need expertise in the implementation. That’s where we come in,” notes Feinstein.

What a PURL Campaign Looks Like

Besides the case studies that you can delve into later in this report (page 32), here are three contrasting examples of PURL campaigns:

1. Increase membership

A museum sought to increase its membership base, so it created a member profile and bought an appropriate mailing list. Then it send a PURL mail piece to each of these prospective members, asking each respondent to log into their PURLs to give information on their favorite kinds of art in exchange for a sweepstakes entry to win a free museum membership for the year. By the end of the campaign, the museum has

an top-notch pre-qualified list of prospects for future direct mailings, plus email addresses to lower the cost of future contacts.

2. Pre-qualifying prospect list

A marketer hoped to pre-qualify its in-house prospect list so its sales presentations would be more effective. A PURL campaign was created that offered prospects a free gift, but in order to get that gift, prospects had to log into their PURLs and complete a survey that asked them to name the most challenging aspects of their businesses. Armed with this information, the marketer's follow-up team of sales professionals were able to deliver much stronger presentations and increase conversion rate.

3. Cross-sell relevant products

A bank had been successful in getting many new customers, but most of them were unaware of their full product offerings. To bolster the cross-sell opportunities, the bank formed a PURL program that targeted existing customers and urged a dialogue on their PURLs about relevant products, including a survey that would trigger cross-sell product opportunities.

4. Acquire/renew subscribers and generate leads for advertisers

In working with a magazine publisher, copywriter Ruth Sheldon describes a direct mail letter that contains a PURL. "Most prospects find it hard to resist," she admits. "Imagine ignoring an address like <http://FirstNameLastName.freemagazine.com> no matter how jaded your prospect is."

This particular PURL site can collect real-time information, including an email address so that further valuable communication can take place online with potential subscribers. The data from these PURLs is useful beyond acquiring and renewing subscribers, as Sheldon says it can help generate more ad revenue for publishers by offering advertisers the names of opt-in subscribers.

"It can be a win/win for the advertiser (with names of prospects who want to hear from them), publishers (who can now offer advertisers added value) and for subscribers (who want more personalized offerings and free merchandise)," she describes.

So, what kinds of clients are PURLs best suited for?

"Any client looking to engage with their customers uniquely or those who have access to a database for a marketing campaign,"

Marketers can ease their customers' [privacy] concerns by taking precautions, especially surrounding their online marketing efforts.

says Burst. "Any type of organization who has a membership, higher education, service providers, any organization with a sales force," answers Uppercue.

Addressing Privacy Concerns

As technology has evolved, so have consumers' concerns surrounding the use of their personal data. Not only are they leery of providing information, consumers also are leery of who uses their personalized data and for what purposes. Marketers can ease their customers' concerns by taking precautions, especially surrounding their online marketing efforts. Here are a few tips that Uppercue urges you to think about when creating a PURL campaign:

1. Define and assess security risks of the website

In the planning stages you should define and assess the potential security issues with your marketing campaign to minimize their impact. If the website includes sensitive data, consider creating a threat model to identify the risks and possible vulnerabilities. The analysis assists the development team in its website set-up.

2. Take complete stock of the website

Information security is not just about preventing theft or damage. It also includes ensuring your website is available, fast enough, complies with legal and regulatory requirements, provides accurate information, prevents release of confidential information to unauthorized users and inappropriate use, protects your users, and provides the ability to analyze and learn from incidents.

3. Password protection

Consider using a unique four-digit number when creating the PURL string. This keeps recipients from accidentally or purposely viewing another individual's site. For example, you may have several individuals in your mail file with the same first initial and last name, so in this case you'd have to use a number to identify each (JSmith1, JSmith2, JSmith3 ...). If JSmith2 was inclined, he could access JSmith1's PURL. It's better to assign a random multiple-digit number to each PURL so your recipients can't crack your code. Some marketers use separate passwords included in the marketing offers with the PURLs so recipients can securely access their sites.

4. Test before and after rollout

All projects must include structured testing. Security testing involves checking what is not allowed on the site as well as the intended functionality. This requires thinking outside of the box to foresee any

potential obstacles. You should proof PURL sites before a marketing campaign deploys as well as after.

5. Monitor your reports

Review your data collection reports often to identify abnormal behavior and how these problems occurred. Problems with capturing information can skew your results and possibly prevent a future marketing campaign. It's also a good idea to protect the reports from alteration. In some instances, Uppercue has seen recipients of PURLs pass their personalized landing page information to friends, who then access and use the recipients' identities to fill out the pages. This wreaks havoc on your reports. You may want to consider locking each PURL so the recipient cannot change her name, and instead provide her with the option to refer the friend so he gets his own PURL.

Above all, use caution in handling sensitive information. For most marketers, customer data is their livelihood, and possible security issues can wreak havoc on their reputations. The Direct Marketing Association encourages marketers to establish their own security policies and procedures for secure information systems. This includes staff training and routine assessments, as well as agreements between all business partners and service providers that handle personally identifiable information.

Dealing With the Price Question

Personalizing website content and extracting visitor information through data-acquisition forms from generic landing pages is something that all marketers are interested in. But how best to drive those visitors to the site? Isn't it cheaper to use standard direct mail, banner ads or newspaper ads? Or should you spend the extra change on the per-click charge for PURLs?

"At first, I couldn't believe the price," admits Ryan Cote, director of marketing at The Ballantine Corporation, a full-service direct marketing company based in Wayne, N.J. "Now the prices are more affordable, and we believe it's a great response vehicle for a direct mail campaign." He says PURLs add around \$40 to \$50 per 1,000 names, like adding a nice brochure to your mail piece.

"Lots of marketers send responders to a generic website or even a micro-site specific for the direct mail campaign. PURLs can get you very specific response data unlike other response devices," remarks Uppercue.

PURLs are not a broadcast medium. Rather, they are designed to cre-

ate a dialogue with a targeted audience that resembles the existing or desired customer/donor profile. The goal of the PURL campaign is often not to sell something immediately, but to get valuable information to be used in more targeted communications in the future.

“We’ve found that a PURL does better for lead generation than trying to sell something,” relates Cote, whose company has engineered over a dozen PURL campaigns. For example, the magazine publishing market can be tough because subscriptions themselves are so low-price. But while a PURL campaign didn’t work for a consumer magazine, it did for a niche magazine that wanted to generate leads for a new VIP website.

“If it cost 5 percent to 10 percent more to double your response, why wouldn’t you equip your campaigns with this kind of technology?” asks Burst. “As response increases in a campaign, so do sales and ROI.”

“Why PURLS Work” Takeaways

- ✓ **More Personal, More Relevant:** Prospects are most likely to pay attention to messages that speak to them personally and are relevant, which is exactly how personalized URLs are received.
- ✓ **Makes Future Communication More Effective:** Customers and prospects who log onto their own PURLs see content served specifically to them based on prior behavior, life stages, segmentation, demographics and any other data a company may have — this new intelligence can be used to make subsequent communication even more pertinent.
- ✓ **Higher Response Rates:** Response rates for direct mail with PURLs are reportedly up to 5 percent, versus typical industry averages of 2 percent to 3 percent.
- ✓ **Better Engagement, More Conversions:** Site visitors who use a PURL tend to stay engaged longer and have higher conversion rates.
- ✓ **Revitalizes Direct Mail, and Connects to Web:** Strategically, PURLs have re-awoken the creativity associated with direct mail. Tactically, they have made direct mail into a more vibrant response-generating tool that connects offline and online.
- ✓ **Simple Steps to Maintain Customer Privacy:** Marketers can ease their customers’ concerns about privacy with PURLs by taking several sound steps.
- ✓ **Easy to Measure for ROI:** PURLs make measurement easy, so a marketer can determine the ROI with a high level of certainty.

The Overall PURL Media Strategy, Including the Offer and the List

It's clear that each personalized URL campaign has a different purpose. But it's surprising to find out exactly how many types exist, successfully. "Clients that use PURLs have done so to build databases, create referral programs, spread a message to a current database, build loyalty programs, increase sales and redemption," lists Burst.

The only requirement? As long as you know the end user prior to the marketing outreach, then he recommends the use of the PURL. "If drawing in a greater initial response results in doubling your campaign response, why not?" he asks.

Indeed, there are many programs that can benefit significantly from a PURL. Uppercue lists the following:

1. Lead Nurturing

You can collect additional information using a PURL form, push responses to sales reps in real time and plan follow-up messages to



responders and non-responders that are automated for streamlined campaign management.

2. Enrollment (for a Trade Show, Class, Membership, etc.)

PURLs could be used to fill out a form for sign up.

3. Renewals (Membership, Service)

PURLs could be used to easily renew a membership, a contract, a subscription, and so on.

4. Direct Sales

PURLs could be used to suggest a product or upsell or cross-sell.

5. Contests

Again, filling in a form, selecting a gift, etc., can work here.

Create, or Continue, the Conversation

Of course, each PURL campaign must also have an overall media strategy, one that's not built on just one PURL mailing and a simple landing page.

Most users only think of the cost investments, but there are also time investments. "If you're going to use a PURL to its full advantage, then you have to think long term," urges Uppercue. "I would not recommend using PURLs for a singular event. PURLs are an investment and best utilized to trigger future communications based on the data they can collect."

The main purpose of the PURL is to take the information and run with it — deepen your relationship with the prospect. If you intend to only use it as a one-off, then you're squandering the potential of the PURL.

One part of the PURL potential that you should exploit? The ability to survey your prospects. As long as you have a well-defined purpose and use the landing page real estate properly, you should be able to compile the information of most value to your company.

Your principal questions about the customer or donor can be answered: the customer pain point, the timetable for when the prospect is ready for a capital investment, what other relevant products the customer may be interested in, the other campaigns the donor may want to support, and so on. And remember: If you don't know exactly what the survey is for, it won't help you very much beyond capturing elementary data.

The PURL is the beginning of the conversation with the prospect, and that conversation can be most efficient and successful when multiple channels are involved.

The PURL is the beginning (or a more expert continuation) of the conversation with the prospect, and that conversation can be most efficient and successful when multiple channels are involved. Today that may be the PURL, two weeks from now it's an email, then it's a text message. Some prospects, especially those over the age of 30, may prefer (even if they don't admit it) to talk to someone on the phone, especially if they initiate the call.

At the very least, a PURL campaign integrates direct mail and the Web. Uppercue agrees, "More sophisticated PURL campaigns will tie direct mail, email and the Web together."

The Ducky platform, for example, relies on social media to promote viral sharing. "It pulls the maximum amount of data in a non-invasive approach and capitalizes on word-of-mouth marketing to extend the reach of campaigns," describes Burst.

Don't Forget About the Offer ... and Make It a Good One

There's no substitute for a good offer. Sylva Wilson, marketing analyst with St. Louis-based machine tool distributor Hartwig Inc., says it's best for the offer to be a bit of a tease. One piece that Wilson mailed employed a theme based on the NBC game show "Deal or No Deal."

"On the piece, it's got a picture of a case, and it says, 'Go to visit your personalized URL ... and enter for a chance to win the contents of case No. 13,'" Wilson says. "Well, that's not enough. So what we do is, right underneath that, we [say], 'When you get to your site, you'll be able to see what's inside of case No. 13.' That alone will entice people to go to the site, because they want to know, 'Well, what's in 13?'"

Marketers can continue making incremental progress via the personalized URL, Wilson says. The way she encouraged progress was to make the "Deal or No Deal" offer good enough on the Hartwig PURLs for campaign prospects to go ahead and register for the campaign's associated event and receive their giveaway. To make the giveaway relevant, she pays attention to audience interests and, particularly, to the hobbies prospects have in that "territory." For example, Texas prospects win hunting trips.

Know Your Audience

When it comes to the list, it's pretty darn simple. "Just like any direct mail campaign, if your list is bad (bad addresses), your campaign will be less successful," states Uppercue.

“A great offer, campaign and powerful technology will have no life if it goes to a bad/unresponsive list,” agrees Burst. The power of the PURL campaign does not come alive until someone responds by logging on to his PURL, so having a good list is vital to get the maximum number of initial responders. “The more responders you have, the more potential to increase your campaign response through sharing you’ll have,” he says.

So, how much prospect information do you need for a good list? “The more data you have regarding your prospect doesn’t always mean the better the PURL campaign,” says Uppercue. However, if you have information that will help you to segment your list and create specific landing pages for groups or individuals, you can then create a memorable experience.

PURLs are also great for collecting information on prospects. “Then you can create a personalized response message based on the data you’ve collected,” explains Uppercue.

“Like any other direct response tool, knowing your list and knowing your demographics just allows you to do more,” agrees Karen Riley, president and owner of Mt. Kisco, N.Y.–based direct marketing firm, The MDI Group.

For example, if you are selling an automobile and you know your prospect is looking at a certain price range, you can only have media on the landing page that’s relevant to that range of vehicles. “Once you’ve successfully driven people to the website, you can do a bigger, customized, personalized sale. You can customize the PURLs against the list and have the graphics and the video and the audio change per user,” Riley explains.

Of course, personalizing and positioning the data for each list depends on the type of PURL campaign you’re running. For acquisition lists, you can always resort to gender or geographic location, recommends Uppercue.

Cote says he is always trying to persuade clients to do as much personalization as possible. “It comes down to how much data you have, for PURLs work best for house files because have you so much more than just name and address.” For example, rather than simply using the name a few times along with geographic location, marketers can swap out images, blocks of copy, hyperlinks and calls to action depending on the prospect.

PURL Media Strategy Takeaways

- ✓ **Work for Nearly Any Kind of Campaign:** PURL campaigns can be used for lead nurturing, enrollment, renewals, direct sales, contests, etc.
- ✓ **Think Long Term:** To use PURLs to their full advantage, invest in the long term, as they're best utilized to trigger future communications based on the data they can collect.
- ✓ **Keep the Main Purpose in Front of Mind:** Deepen your relationship with the prospect.
- ✓ **Maximize the PURL Potential:** Use the ability to survey your prospects.
- ✓ **Improve the Conversation:** PURLs can begin the conversation with the prospect, and that conversation can be most efficient and successful when multiple channels are involved.
- ✓ **Don't Neglect the Offer:** A good offer can make a PURL campaign sing.
- ✓ **A Good List Is a Must-Have:** The power of the PURL campaign does not come alive until someone responds by logging on to their PURL.

PURL Creative Best Practices — for Direct Mail/Email and the Landing Page(s)

The key to any successful marketing “conversation” and PURL campaign is its creative, of course. Does the copy and design engage the prospect? Does it grab her attention right away with the right combination of copy and images? Does the PURL stand out? Does the creative behind it prompt the prospect to visit her PURL?

And once the prospect does land on that PURL, does it seem like she is on the same continuum, with similar engaging creative? Is there enough engagement on the landing page to get the prospect to take action?

Yes, those are a lot of questions, but it’s the skillful management of the mail piece/email integration with the PURL landing page that will make or break your PURL campaign.

“You’ll want the mail piece and the landing page (or email and landing page) to look similar so that the recipient knows they’re part of the same campaign,” explains Uppercue.



Also, it's recommended that the copywriter remain involved with both the print/email as well as the landing page. "It would appear that too many marketers have one set of talent charged with online and a different set of talent dedicated to direct mail, and that no one is managing integration," describes Gary Hennerberg, president of The Hennerberg Group, a direct marketing company based in Colleyville, Texas.

Indeed, if not handled properly, "both websites and PURLs can actually be a barrier to sale when they are not prepared to carry out the original intent of the marketing program," claims Keith Goodman, vice president of corporate solutions for Modern Postcard.

Goodman gives an example of a marketer trying to get leads for sales reps: A website allows prospects to get information that will allow them to make a purchase decision without ever speaking with a sales rep. "If you are going to send somebody to a site, it should be with the specific intent of following the line of the campaign — i.e., buy a product, generate a lead, download a whitepaper," he recommends.

And just as testing remains a key to successful direct mail, the same is true with PURL campaigns. Testing here should still apply, yet it's a step that is often ignored, to the detriment of the campaign being run.

For example, a test showing that conversion rates were much lower than anticipated usually points out the landing page wasn't synced properly with the direct mail piece, and that could extend to the data, the personalization, the creative or the offer. "Not syncing the landing page with the direct mail piece that brought the prospect there is the No.1 destroyer of conversion rates," affirms copywriter Bob Bly.

Where to Put that PURL ... and How

Uppercue suggests positioning the PURL in several places on both a direct mail piece and an email — as a header, in the P.S., on any print piece you think the recipient might keep.

"In an email, I'd place the PURL high enough [so] that the recipient could see it in the preview panel of their inbox. I'd also call it out several times in the email," she suggests.

Regarding the mail piece, Uppercue does recommend that PURLs only be printed on the inside of a direct mail piece. "I would never place it on a postcard/self-mailer for security reasons. I would also recommend using a random assigned number along with the person's name," she says. For example, you could have two John Smiths on

“Just slapping a PURL in place of an existing URL will not increase response ... The font needs to be legible, but tie in with your overall brand graphics,” says Carolyn Goodman.

your list. If you used random code numbers such as JSmith14 and JSmith68, you could avoid problems.

For Carolyn Goodman, president and creative director of Goodman Marketing Partners in San Rafael, Calif., she believes that the “magic” of a PURL is the combination of simplification of the message, utilization of a creative format that showcases the PURL and the use of a targeted list. “The font needs to be legible, but tie in with your overall brand graphics and the look and feel of the piece,” she says. “Just slapping a PURL in place of an existing URL will not increase response, per se.

“It’s like when personalization became a hot trend; people went overboard and every other word, ETHAN, was your name, ETHAN. It didn’t kid anyone into believing that the message was more personalized, ETHAN, just because you inserted my name, ETHAN, a few times throughout the package.”

In terms of designing a PURL, Uppercue says to try to make the domain name as easy to remember as possible. “I would also keep the domain name as short as possible. You should also try to avoid using words that are often misspelled. Or, if you want to play it safe, you can also buy the misspelled web address,” she suggests.

For example, Uppercue’s company sent a mailing one year with the PURL sneakpeek.euservices.com. “We didn’t think of recipients who might misspell the word ‘peek’ (peak)!”

Bottom line: Keep your domain names simple. PURLs in emails are different because they’re links, so these rules really don’t apply. “Call attention to the link several times and with a different font or color. And make sure the recipient knows that they should click here,” says Uppercue.

Burst agrees, saying that the user should be clearly instructed on what to do. “Whether in a direct mail piece telling them to log on or in an email where they will be clicking a button and referred to the site. The instructions and incentive should be very clear — and the driving message of the artwork — in order to make the transition from the catalyst piece into the microsite seamless,” he describes.

How Personal Should the PURL Get?

Personalization varies based on the data you have available, of course. But you don’t want to go overboard. “There’s a fine line between seemingly helpful versus seeming like a stalker with using a recipient data for personalization,” says Uppercue.

“If you’re a bank who wants to upsell services to an existing client, I wouldn’t say, ‘Mr. Jones, last year you spent \$3,245 on travel, I would suggest that you take out travel insurance from ABC Bank.’ Instead, just offer the travel insurance. They don’t need to know that you have access to how much they spent last year on travel expenses,” she points out.

And again, here you can personalize by gender using prefixes if you don’t have a lot of data or you could use the state to add images or text that relates to the geographic location of the recipient.

“To really utilize personalization, we’re talking about relevant communication. The more relevant that communication, the better the response rate,” says Mike Walther, president of DME, a personalized relationship marketing agency based in Daytona Beach, Fla.

And make sure you understand the ground rules about relevancy. Before you begin to use that relevant data, Walther recommends you ask a couple of crucial questions: “What information do we know about the potential customer to make sure that the group that we mail to and the conversation we have is as relevant as possible? And are we going to get too relevant, so they think that Big Brother or a breach of trust occurs?”

To Incentivize or Not? That Is the PURL Question

“The incentive to log onto one’s PURL is related to the value of the offer and share incentive at hand,” says Burst. “What the user gets (or could get) from participating should always be a focal point on the mail piece or email that drives them to the landing page.”

However, if you have a good offer (a personalized offer even), you shouldn’t need to incentivize the PURL, claims Uppercue. “But we have used contests to incentivize the recipient to visit their PURL. You could also use it as an easy, convenient way for customers to go update their information online. PURLs are great because you can pre-populate forms so that the recipient doesn’t have to do all the typing.”

Depending on the product or service you’re selling, you may not need to keep the design of the mailer and the landing page identical. “They have two different functions; the function of the mail piece is to catch the prospect’s eye in the mailbox and drive her to the Web. Once you get her to the Web, the function of the site is to make the sale,” instructs Riley.

“You have to find a way to entice and reveal that they’re going to get

How much should you tailor the Web experience for the prospect? It depends on the data you have available.

much more information once they get to the website,” she says. Riley cites a PURL used for a magazine subscription offer, where the mail piece incentivized with cost savings, and the landing page flaunted the editorial content.

Designing the Landing Page

These mini-sites often have a four-page structure: landing page, survey page, information page (which can be personalized based on information gathered on the survey page), and thank-you page. But other PURLs have simply one page.

“If you’re new to using PURLs, I would keep it simple. Just one landing page or maybe two to drive someone to a secondary offer or form,” says Uppercue. “You can track all of the traffic to know what pages they did clickthrough and how long they stayed on each page to judge interest.”

How much should you tailor the Web experience for the prospect? For Uppercue, it depends on the data you have available. If you know previous purchases, you might not want to offer those again (unless, of course, your product has a short shelf life). You’ll prefill the obvious data like address, title, but you might not want to prefill data that is very personal, like income or number of children.

For Burst and his company Ducky, if a user is logging onto his PURL, his First Name, Last Name and email (if provided) will preload into the form. A business can ask additional information (gender, age, mobile and home number) or just have the user come in and validate their information and continue to the next page. Welcome messaging on the site will also greet them and, through variable imaging, a business can communicate a different welcome message for those responding to the PURL rather than entering the site directly or through a social share link.

Beyond the more obvious forms of personalization, you also can enhance the site experience for the prospect. “The job today is to drive people online where there is an opportunity to enhance the experience, so prospects can make more informed purchase decisions faster,” notes Jeff Haggin, vice chairman at Solution Set, a marketing company based in San Francisco.

Using video, audio and other features, marketers can build up the sales experience for the user. “Video, demos and testimonials — stuff you can’t do on a static page — that’s the killer application where offline meets online,” he shares.

Uppercue agrees, “Direct marketing customization is evolving. With PURLs, you can customize any text or image. You can even customize the layout of the page or what additional pages are available. You can also personalized videos with PURLs — images or audio.”

“We offer variable imaging, video integration — through which all the graphics and messaging testimonials can all be displayed,” says Burst, who mentions an automotive campaign that used an IVR module that allowed users to call in to activate their offer and answer the poll questions via the phone activation as well.

PURL Creative Takeaways

- ✓ **Mail Piece/Email and Landing Page Look Similar:** Recipients will want to be reassured that they’re part of the same campaign.
- ✓ **Optimal PURL Placement:** Place the PURL in several places on both a direct mail piece and an email — as a header, in the P.S., on any print piece you think the recipient might keep.
- ✓ **Maintain the Magic:** It’s the combination of simplification of the message, utilization of a creative format that showcases that PURL and the use of a targeted list.
- ✓ **Simplify the PURL Name:** Make the domain name as easy to remember as possible ... and short.
- ✓ **Use “Relevant” Personalization:** Use gender prefixes, geographical locations and relevant images, for example, but don’t go overboard by listing, for example, the exact amount of mortgage debt a prospective customer has.
- ✓ **One Size Does Not Fit All:** Some PURLs incentivize to encourage visits, while many do not. Some mini-sites have a four-page structure, and others have only one page. Both depend on the campaign and the amount of data available.

Meaningful Measurement of the PURL — ROI, Testing and Tracking

So, PURLs allow marketers to improve response by using a higher level of personalization and technology, but what about where the rubber meets the road? What about the ROI?

“Your response is good, but your ROI is even better,” assures Riley.

“There are many more factors to determine success than simply response,” concurs Burst. “The success of a campaign is determined by the objectives and goals, and the data that is collected through the site.”

With PURL campaigns, clients have a different set of goals than with direct mail, says Cote. “How many visit and responses? Sure. But if you get that data, then your sales team can close a lot of those leads and also create follow-up campaigns, such as with people who don’t respond but visited the PURL. There is so much more you can do because of the data. And it makes so much sense for lead generation,” he remarks.

It depends on what you want to achieve from a campaign, but in most cases where sales is intended, yes, ROI is king, agrees Leslie Berry, a project manager for Keiger Direct, a direct marketing and printing company based in Winston-Salem, NC. “ROI is what matters if you want to truly measure the dollars and cents of a campaign — if you want to measure cost per converted lead.”



However, she mentions that measuring response alone is also an important indicator of the success of a campaign. It lets you gauge how well your prospects are interacting with certain media and marketing messages. “It let’s you know if you are on the right track,” Berry explains.

For Most PURL Campaigns, Don’t Skip the Testing Phase!

To account for the PURL’s costs and measure its potential benefit, marketers are also advised to run a classic test. “It’s important in such a campaign to hold out a no-mail control group and a no-PURL control group and measure incremental lifts from such a tactic,” says Haggin.

He says it’s also crucial to amortize the costs of the PURL deployment among the PURL population of recipients and take that higher cost into consideration when measuring ROI on the response. By his account, response rate multiplied by average order size should beget a margin greater than your cost.

“Marketers should undertake a standard cost-benefit analysis to ensure that the potential ROI justifies the use of a PURL in a campaign,” agrees Uppercue, who suggests sending a mailing with a mail reply versus a PURL reply just to see what your audience responds better to. “If you don’t test this, then you should definitely offer both in the package. Keep in mind that you may see a boost to your generic website, too, and you can contribute that to your mailing as well,” she says.

There are some PURL campaigns, however, that don’t necessarily warrant a no-PURL versus no-mail control group. “The size of the data list in this case would dictate,” indicates Berry. “Because many cross-media campaigns have a small universe in the first place and hopefully the data is well parsed, holding out control groups can be statistically questionable.”

If you are dealing with larger numbers, then you should never substitute technology for the sensible application of direct mail basics, continues Berry. “Testing is a good way to find out how your prospects prefer to communicate. In the past, we have given multiple ways to communicate (filling out survey by mail, phone or Web) and gauged the results that way, instead of doing a no-PURL versus no-mail group.”

Getting Your PURL on “Track”

Tracking your prospects and how they’re responding, such as what part of the landing page they’re using, is fundamental to PURL success.

Tracking data is what future iterations of the PURL campaign are based on ... a company can narrow down or identify their active customers and [then] target market.

“Any demographics that are listed in the data when the campaign starts and any information collected throughout the campaign can be tracked — race, age, gender, preferences, etc. We can also track if hits to the PURL are from particular emails or from direct mail,” explains Berry, who mentions that any links listed on the PURL are tracked per click and page hits are counted, too.

Uppercue recommends a similar level of tracking to push the client closer to getting the sale. “We track conversions, such as how many opted in to our program. From there, we’ll offer lead nurturing programs to see if we can get to a sale,” she describes. Her company also tracks links visited for potential upsell opportunities, along with how many times each visitor visited their page and the amount of time they stayed.

“I’d also track hits to PURLs that do not convert ... as these you should send a separate campaign (like a ‘Hurry, offer ends soon!’)” says Uppercue.

Because of sophisticated tracking technology, you have the option of going even further. Berry mentions that they are also able to track the browser, operating system and device (smartphone, PDA, iPod, etc.) of the people that have visited the PURL. She says email data is available as well, such as read versus non-read and unsubscribes.

Meanwhile, Burst goes deep into the social media sharing world with his company’s tracking for clients. “We track those who respond, fill out the form, answer questions, share with friends, activate the offer, redemption (if a bar code is scanned), the social and true influence all users who shared, the time they took on each page, sharing activity on specific sites, demographic information of responders (by state), sharing activity with a map view and graph view, and more,” he lists.

The Future of the PURL

Tracking data is what future iterations of the PURL campaign are based on. Through the user experience and data collected, Burst says a company can narrow down or identify their active customers and target market to those customers based on activity, poll responses, location, age, etc.

“Depending on the campaign, and level of interaction, we can modify not only the offer, but the ‘path’ they travel as well,” states Berry, who explains that there are always multiple paths available during

a campaign, such as non-response versus response, etc. “A simple ‘YES/NO’ answered on a survey question could trigger an extra response mechanism and warrant an extra touch.”

This interaction is very useful for future marketing campaigns and can alter the way the prospect is approached. “If you already know a great deal about a prospect from a previous campaign, those preferences can be used to your advantage when initiating a second/third communication,” underscores Berry.

A PURL campaign run by Carolyn Goodman’s company illustrates this example perfectly. “We mailed targets the first time with a unique domain name and PURL for our first product offering. Forty-five days later, we mailed the second product offer with a different domain name and PURL. So we know that when recipients visited their PURL, we knew to which campaign they were responding. Each campaign had a long response tail ... and we were still counting four months afterwards.”

Indeed, modifying a future campaign based on the prospect’s actions is a PURL at work at its best. “If you want to automate the messages, you can add rules into a PURL campaign to send timed messages, or messages from certain sales reps based on the geographical location of the recipient,” says Uppercue, who adds that, if they didn’t respond, you’ll need a follow-up ready to go. She says you can also hand these leads off to sales reps.

In conclusion, PURL campaigns represent the perfect integration of direct mail, email and the Web — and will soon become a dominant tactic taken by direct marketers, companies and organizations from every vertical. They just make too much sense, and bring in so much return on investment, for PURLs to stay under the radar for much longer.

PURL Measurement Takeaways

- ✓ **Different than Direct Mail:** While visits and responses are important, it’s all about the data so the sales team to close a lot of leads and marketers can create follow-up campaigns.
- ✓ **It’s All About ROI:** ROI is what matters if you want to measure cost per converted lead.
- ✓ **In Most Cases, Test:** To account for the PURLs’ costs and measure its potential benefit, marketers are also advised to run a classic test.
- ✓ **In Some (Smaller) Cases, Do Not Test:** For cross-media campaigns with a small universe and well-parsed data, holding out a

control group can be statistically questionable.

- ✓ **Tracking Is Key:** Tracking your prospects and how they're responding, such as what part of the landing page they're using, is fundamental to PURL success. It's what sets up lead nurturing programs and up-sell opportunities.
- ✓ **Tracking Can Extend to Social Media:** You can also track the social and true influence all users who shared, sharing activity of specific sites, and more.
- ✓ **PURLs Can Have a Long Response Tail:** Prospects may visit/ revisit their PURL months after a direct mail piece landed, so marketers and companies must prepare the landing page for such a "conversation" by updating with new products, for example.

PERSONALIZED URL CASE STUDY #1

Natural Products Expo East

In order to build an audience of qualified buyers for the Expo, the tradeshow launched its first PURL campaign that produced a high response rate — and ultimately, more registrations.

● The Project:

Natural Products Expo East is the largest tradeshow on the East Coast serving the natural, organic and healthy products industries. New Hope Natural Media produces the event and the goal was to bring an audience of qualified buyers to the show floor to place orders and carry the exhibiting companies' products in their stores.

How did the personalized URL fit into the project? “[Because] many registrants from one store share an email address when they register, it was important to reach past and potential future attendees through other methods,” explains Jessica Nicolella, marketing manager for New Hope Natural Media.

New Hope considered a personalized postcard in the mail a great way to catch a person's attention and give them something (a PURL)

expoeast.com

25
Boston

NATURAL
PRODUCTS
EXPO
EAST

Now is the Time to Grow your Business
Boston Convention & Exhibition Center | Boston, MA USA

Hi <firstname>,

Natural Products Expo East has a great year planned for <FieldA> like yourself with **thousands** of exhibits showcasing the best in **natural, organic, and healthy** products. Also enjoy:

- <FieldB>
- <FieldC>
- the Community Celebration
- Breakfast by the Bay and Keynote Speaker Alicia Silverstone

These are all included with your free registration.

Visit your own personalized web page to learn more about how you can grow your business with Natural Products Expo East!

<FieldD>

Sponsored by
earth
balance

that makes them curious enough to actually follow direction from the direct mail piece. It was New Hope's first PURL mailing.

● **Objectives of the PURL:**

The first goal was to encourage past attendees of Expo East to register for the tradeshow.

The second was to give those registrants, and those that had already registered for 2010's event, enough reasons relevant to their business that they feel compelled to attend.

The goal of the personalized postcard and the PURL was to make sure that the benefits of attending for a particular business type were not lost in the overall general benefits shown in any of the marketing from direct mail to email to Web copy.

"In terms of the overall media strategy, the postcard was meant to give recipients a quick glimpse of how the show would benefit their business, drive them to visit their PURL for more detailed information, and then drive them to register for the show and finally attend," says Nicolella.

● **Target Audience:**

The list included anyone who had registered for Natural Products Expo East in 2008, 2009 or 2010 — qualified buyers.

● **Creative for the PURL:**

A campaign called "Now Is the Time to Grow Your Business" was used for all of marketing in support of the 2010 show. It incorporated light blue text with a brightly colored growing tree image following the bright colors in the square, simple logo. An extension of free registration (because the deadline had already passed) was used as an incentive. The postcard was 4¼" x 6".

The copy was varied, but the basic framework consisted of the following:

Hi Bill,

Natural Products Expo East has a great year planned for independent retail buyers like yourself with thousands of exhibits showcasing the best in natural, organic and healthy products. Also enjoy:

** Discounts of 25% or more on show orders*

** The Community Celebration*

* *Breakfast by the Bay*

* *Keynote Speaker Alicia Silverstone*

These are all included with your free registration.

Visit your own personalized web page to learn more about how you can grow your business with Natural Products Expo East!

www.billmiller.expoeastshow.com

The landing page had a similar look and feel to the mail piece, but included more detail than the postcard. There was an image used on the postcard that also was used on the PURL and related to the type of business buyers were from or the type of products they have responsibility for purchasing. The site was a single page with a link to the registration vendor's page.

There was a different image used for different types of buyers and different features and benefits of the show were highlighted depending on the type of business. The image, hyperlink, blocks of copy and call-to-action links were all variable — producing over 5,000 possible combinations (not including the name personalization, of course).

In addition, past registrants were offered an opportunity to register and current registrants were offered reasons to remind them why they should attend and make sure they were aware of specific networking events, education sessions and opportunities on site.

● **Campaign Strategy Deployment:**

The postcard went to 7,000 past registrants and 3,500 current registrants. The PURL mail pieces were sent out September 21, 2010.

Though the PURLs were not specifically used in any marketing efforts other than the personalized postcard project, the marketing plan included a postcard and a brochure sent earlier in the year, emails approximately every two weeks, social media networking, print advertising in industry publications, radio advertising and program sponsorship, and in-person audience development.

● **Final Results:**

Out of the 7,000 past registrants, 292 registered from this campaign (4.2 percent) and 153 attended (2.2 percent). There is not a way to track those current registrants that attended, but overall, 362 people (3.4 percent) responded to the card by visiting their PURLs.

What made it succeed? Expo marketers' considered this PURL campaign one of this year's most successful strategies in terms of overall trackable registrations and cost/registrant. Simply put, the objectives were reached because a large number of buyers registered for the show. "The free registration offer after the deadline coupled with the curiosity of seeing a URL with the person's own name in it made this project successful," asserts Nicolella.

What proved challenging? "In future PURL projects, I would like to use the PURLs for a larger pool of data and invite people to view their PURLs through multiple mediums including direct mail, email and possibly telemarketing to get the largest possible number of visitors to the PURLs and ensure that the investment in the PURL is earning the largest number of registrants for the lowest cost," shares Nicolella, who explains that the limitation is in using data that may not have the same level of detail or the exact same type of data as past registrants because the personalization becomes unnecessary if everyone is defaulting to the more generic personalized option.

Will this kind of PURL mailing be used again? "We will continue using PURLs in the future as they proved to be a great way to increase the relevance of direct mail and reach potential attendees who may not be on our email list," concludes Nicolella.

● **About Marketing Company/Printer**

The Ballantine Corporation is a New Jersey-based company offering turnkey direct marketing creative and production services to companies nationwide.

significantly raise response, even without changing the offer.

● **Objectives of the PURL:**

The main goal was to win back as many lapsed subscribers as possible by getting prospects to either visit their own personalized URLs or mail back filled-out reply forms.

They hoped to capture more data about prospects, including those who visit their personalized URLs but leave before they complete the subscription form.

The marketing company was keen to beat the current control with the same existing offer: a \$30 credit card awarded when signing up for ePay.

The newspaper hoped to convince prospects to take the ePay option for subscription payment, which is the best-case scenario for any subscription publisher.

It was important to try and create a seamless look and feel of the direct mail piece, the newspaper and the landing page in order to properly brand the campaign and reassure prospects that all marketing collateral was related to the *Dallas Morning News*.

● **Target Audience:**

The list consisted of approximately 60,000 people who had let their subscriptions lapse.

● **Creative for the PURL:**

The direct mail piece consisted of a canary yellow envelope — similar to previous efforts the newspaper had sent — with a double window, with the PURL showing through the top one and the prospect's address showing through the bottom one.

Thus, even if a prospect didn't open the mail piece, he could still go to his personalized URL. The only copy on the outer, besides *The Dallas Morning News* name on the back flap, were the words "Personal" and "Confidential" on the front.

Inside, a one-page letter greeted the lapsed subscriber by name and used standard promotional copy about the newspaper, along with the offer.

Then, in the middle of the letter, a PURL was featured.

Perfed to the bottom third of the letter was a reply form with credit card icons and data fields. A reply envelope accompanied the letter inside the mailer.

The landing page was designed to resemble the letter, with the same color schemes and similar copy, and the greeting was personalized as well. Prospects then were given an offer to choose and, after clicking, were taken to the newspaper's site.

In order to increase the chances of response, pre-populated data — with name, street address, city, state and ZIP — were used on the online subscription form. The prospect only had to put in his email address for confirmation, along with credit card information.

● **Campaign Strategy Deployment:**

Beginning in early fall 2009, personalized URL campaigns went out each week (and continue to do so at present). At the time of publication of this report, 28 campaigns have been conducted. Anywhere from 300 to 50,000 mail pieces have gone out at one time.

The marketing company hoped to capture more data about prospects, including those who visit their personalized URLs but leave before they complete the subscription form.

● **Final Results:**

Results exceeded the newspaper's expectations. The personalized URL direct mail piece has had a 43 percent increase in response rate over the control so far, and the cost per sale went down by almost 70 percent.

Depending on which campaign, the response rate to each personalized URL campaign varied from as low as 0.5 percent to as high as 3.5 percent.

What made it succeed? One key to the success of the personalized URL was the pre-populated forms, as the marketing company explained that you're much more likely to get a sale with a pre-populated form rather than if it's completely blank. The prospects have much less "work" to do, and they like that.

Will this kind of PURL mailing be used again? The "win back" campaign will continue. And new efforts also will be generated for those prospects who visited their pURLs but didn't subscribe.

● **About Marketing Company/Printer**

Summit Direct Mail in Dallas, Texas, specializes in the creation and production of response generating direct mail marketing promotions. It relied on MindFire for the PURL technology.

PERSONALIZED URL CASE STUDY #3

Roman Catholic Diocese of Erie

Using a series of three postcards to drive lapsed donors to their personalized URLs, this particular diocese experienced a significant rebirth in gifts.

● **The Project:**

In November of 2009, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Erie, Pa. partnered with a marketing company to develop a relational marketing solution to enhance its acquisition campaign of lapsed donors to their \$6 million annual fund program. A cohort of 5,000 annual fund lapsed donors were targeted for this new re-acquisition program.

These lapsed donors were not just any lapsed donors. They had not made a contribution to the campaign at any time over a 10-year period, even though their support had been solicited on a yearly basis through direct mail programs.

How did the personalized URL fit into the project? Diocesan development and marketing staff developed an innovative campaign communication structure whose content did not focus upon an appeal for campaign participation, but, rather, on questions that would reaffirm

I Am ^{It means} a part of something
bigger than myself.

<http://www.beingcatholicmeans.org/SamSample099>

Diocese of Erie
P.O. Box 10397
Erie, PA 16514-0397

Sam Q Sample
123 Anystreet St
Anyplace, NY 12345-1234

1-1



NON-PROFIT
US POSTAGE
PAID
ROME, NY
PERMIT #63

this group's participation in their faith lives using targeted and personalized messaging.

The Diocese of Erie is the first diocese in the United States to develop, implement and deploy a PURL program for its fundraising efforts. The level of sophistication of the targeted messaging and audience segmentation made this campaign particularly innovative when compared to previous efforts.

● **Objectives of the PURL:**

Reconnect with 5,000 annual fund lapse donors through a pastoral outreach and rekindling their relationship with their church.

The Diocese of Erie wanted its donors to reconsider contributing towards the annual campaign. Following this campaign, lapsed donors were then solicited to support the diocesan annual fund.

● **Target Audience:**

A cohort of 5,000 annual fund lapsed donors were targeted for this new re-acquisition program. These donors had not made a contribution to the campaign in a 10-year period, even though their support was solicited on a yearly basis through direct mail programs.

● **Creative for the PURL:**

Lapsed donors were mailed a series of three oversized postcards featuring a PURL address that contained the lapsed donor's name. The front of each postcard posted the same question: "What does it mean to be Catholic?" Upon accessing their personalized Web page, the recipient was provided with the following answers:

It Means that I Belong

It Means that I am Part of Something Bigger than Myself

It Means that I have a Caring Pastor

Each Web page contained an extended treatment that provided an answer with a high degree of personalization (the name and picture of the lapsed donor's pastor, for example). The landing page was developed to echo the graphic identity of the postcards.

The postcards were full-color as well as the Web page. Each site had one page.

The lapsed donor mailing piece was just one part of the whole coordinated program for the annual campaign. The diocese did have dif-

ferent mailed pieces for different donor segments.

● **Campaign Strategy Deployment:**

The pieces were sent out in December a week apart from each other. Each roll out was 5,000, and the diocese mailed three times.

● **Final Results:**

The results of this campaign were significant and immediate, as 14 percent of the targeted group responded. Over 600 lapsed donors within this cohort made contributions in excess of \$125,000 to the diocesan annual campaign within weeks of deploying the campaign.

This response rate was 100 percent higher than response rates associated with direct mail programs used in the past designed to reacquire lapsed donors. Overall, a 900 percent return on investment was achieved for this program.

Additionally, these reengaged donors have significant historical value to the campaign as they are more likely to continue their annual contributions.

What made it succeed? Rekindling the prospect's connection to the diocese before they ask for a donation was critical.

Will this kind of PURL mailing be used again? For the marketing company responsible for this campaign, it's a definite "yes."

The marketing company president predicted that, in the coming years, most marketing pieces that are going to non-donors, lapsed donors or non-customers will include a PURL or a personalized QR Code so that the company doing the marketing or fundraising can provide more information to the recipient. She said that these PURLS or QR Codes allow the organization to provide a way to get relevant information to those that are interested without the marketing piece being too large or expensive.

● **About Marketing Company/Printer**

Cathedral Corporation, based in Rome, New York, was responsible for the development and design of the campaign, with the direction of the Diocese of Erie and for the print and mail for the direct mail pieces.

PERSONALIZED URL CASE STUDY #4

JDA Software Group

A good question and a great incentive made a personalized URL campaign a huge win for this software architecture company.

● The Project:

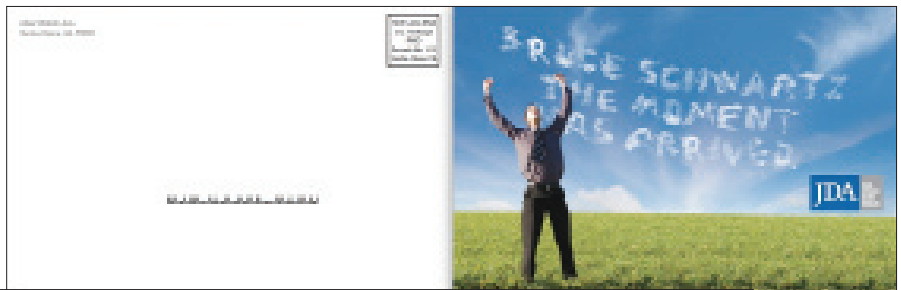
When will a user upgrade? That's the question for software companies. For the JDA Software Group, it was fully aware that users are most likely to change over to a new system during a scheduled upgrade.

JDA also acquired a competing company, Manugistics, and developed a new software architecture based on the strengths of the Manugistics products. Turns out that JDA's new architecture provided a much-needed technology upgrade for the existing Manugistics customer base.

Intel and Hewlett-Packard teamed up to offer hardware optimized to support the new JDA architecture. JDA, Intel and HP wanted to market their products jointly.

Because many users (organizations, companies, individuals) schedule their upgrades in advance, the key was to identify each user's upgrade schedule.

How did the personalized URL fit into the project? PURLs were essential for the conversations that started in fall 2007 with prospects who were considering buying the \$500,000 to \$1.5 million software suites.



John, welcome to the next level of performance and profitability with JDA. Get here by visiting:
www.jda-themoment.com/John.Mahoney

JDA THE MOMENT HAS ARRIVED

Enabling smarter assets and demand chain solutions
JDA Software Group Inc. is a leading provider of demand chain solutions, providing the industry's most comprehensive and integrated suite of supply chain management solutions. We help our clients optimize their supply chain.

Open, Scalable, Flexible, Powerful.
Our solutions are designed to be open, scalable, flexible and powerful. Our solutions are designed to be open, scalable, flexible and powerful. Our solutions are designed to be open, scalable, flexible and powerful.

We're here to support you.
We're here to support you. We're here to support you. We're here to support you. We're here to support you. We're here to support you.

Starbucks. Be Us.
Starbucks. Be Us. Starbucks. Be Us. Starbucks. Be Us. Starbucks. Be Us. Starbucks. Be Us.

Intel **HP**

● Objectives of the PURL:

There were three main goals for the three-headed project:

1. Introduce JDA's new product.
2. Fill its sales pipeline with highly qualified leads.
3. Identify upgrade opportunities.

● Target Audience:

The PURL reached out to 2,200 people from companies who could view case studies, videos and product information relevant to them based on their job functions — manager, director or finance officer. These companies were in the market for purchasing the \$500,000 to \$1.5 million software suites.

● Creative for the PURL:

The technology firms sent out personalized direct mail pieces that featured a man with his arms spread upward, experiencing an epiphany due to these fluffy words forming above his head: “Joe Schmoe, The Moment Has Arrived.”

After determining customers' upgrade schedules, personalized direct mail and email were sent, complete with PURLs that led recipients to personalized landing pages. Those landing pages then showed the prospect how hardware from HP and Intel would support software from JDA.

The moment for a new solution had arrived for users, but was the timing right for making a purchase decision? A survey on the PURL posed the question — “when do you plan to upgrade?” The survey included questions that helped identify growth plans, software needs and hardware preferences.

Prospects received a special incentive for completing the survey: a free Starbucks gift card.

The PURL also featured relevant case studies, videos and product information.

● Campaign Strategy Deployment:

Customers revealed more information about themselves each time they visited their PURLs, which allowed HP, Intel and JDA to reciprocate and nurture them throughout the sales cycle so when customers were ready to buy, they bought the software suite the trio was offering.

Answers to the survey questions provided “inside” information the

JDA sales and consulting team needed to move the client to action, when the time was right. Customized reports delivered to each stakeholder or team provided real-time information showing ROI specific to their job functions.

Also, the software companies were able to track which features each contact viewed, giving further insight into a particular prospect's wants and needs.

● **Final Results:**

For a mere \$50,000 campaign, it yielded a 9.2 percent response rate and \$13 million in sales. It also generated a solid pipeline of confirmed revenue opportunities for both the sales and consulting teams.

Real-time results monitoring allowed the team to adjust and improve the campaign as needed, resulting in an added boost to campaign results. Overall, the campaign took a month to get off the ground, then six to nine months to show results.

What made it succeed? “Being relevant and consistent is what separates this project from the many projects I have done in the past,” says Daniel Johnson, strategic relationship manager for Intel. “Sending specific [information] to specific people does make a huge difference. This type of project takes good program management, and it is a bit more time-intensive to set up, but the results are worth it.”

Results like these are causing many marketers to consider direct mail-to-landing page campaigns, and some to drill down further and provide PURLs. Marketers say the direct mail captures prospects' attention, and the landing page holds it by providing more details. Then the personalization, minimally, provides leads and, optimally, creates relationships.

Will this kind of PURL mailing be used again? Yes, the marketing company explains it has since taken that PURL concept, and instead of just being a campaign landing page, it's creating an ongoing engagement with people, which drives prospects back to the PURL.

● **About Marketing Company/Printer**

The Mahoney Co. is based in Santa Clara, Calif. and offers multi-channel communications and 1:1 direct marketing services.

Stein Mart

Seeking to increase in-store traffic and build out a customer database, the national specialty store chain turned to a PURL campaign to achieve their goals.

● The Project:

Stein Mart is an upscale, off-price specialty store chain with locations nationwide. With both in-store traffic and its customer database stagnating in the Northeast, Stein Mart sought to upgrade its direct marketing efforts, especially its direct mail, to boost the levels of each.

How did the personalized URL fit into the project? The PURL was a fit because it was designed to personalize the mailers, driving customers into the microsite and then, through the share incentive, leverage those customers to drive an even greater response. More importantly, personalizing the outreach separated the direct mail from previous campaigns.

● Objectives of the PURL:

The top goals were to drive in store traffic and build out the customer database. The method would rely on current customers to promote the store — virally — through a share sweepstakes program. If this program succeeded and went “viral,” then the campaign would be considered successful.

The graphic features the Stein Mart logo in green script at the top left. Below it, the word "WIN" is written in large, bold, orange letters, followed by "\$1000" in large, bold, pink letters, and "SHOPPING SPREE!" in large, bold, green letters. A small asterisked note below the text reads: "* See website listed below for full details." To the right of the main text, there is a personalized message: "Jane, You are invited to our exclusive online appreciation event. Go online now to get \$10 OFF \$25 and your chance to WIN!" Below this message, it says: "We're giving away 10 - \$100 Gift Cards and a \$1,000 Shopping Spree when you share online!" A row of social sharing icons follows: a green "share" button, Facebook, Twitter, Email, and SMS. On the right side of the graphic, two women are shown from the waist up, smiling. The Stein Mart logo and tagline "once you go you get it" are positioned at the bottom right. A circular badge in the bottom left corner says "GO ONLINE NOW!". At the bottom center, the URL "www.SteinMartGift.com/janesmith" is displayed.

Stein Mart®

WIN

\$1000

SHOPPING SPREE!

* See website listed below for full details.

Stein Mart
once you go you get it

share › f t e SMS

GO ONLINE NOW!

www.SteinMartGift.com/janesmith

● **Target Audience:**

Stein Mart used a current customer list in its database from a selection of stores in the Northeast.

● **Creative for the PURL:**

The mailer was a 6" x 9" postcard equipped with a PURL on both sides. Both the images and design were consistent with Stein Mart's messaging, branding and look of previous marketing.

The landing pages were designed to make the transition from the direct mail piece to the online experience seamless. The art and messaging on both pieces was the same and remained consistent with the company's branding.

There are four pages in total on the microsite:

1. Welcome Page: The first landing page is where customer data was confirmed and/or gathered. Additionally, Stein Mart asked for the date of birth and gender of all responders. This allowed Stein Mart to pull valuable demographic data related to its responding audience.

2. Survey Page: Stein Mart asked one question related to how often responders shopped in stores.

3. Share Page: Consumers were given the opportunity to share the offer and sweepstakes with friends on over 260 social networks.

4. Thank You/Redemption Page: This page thanked the consumer for participating and was also where customers could print out the dollars-off coupon to bring in stores. The direct mail piece did not have the coupon printed on it, so all users had to go online to their PURL in order to obtain the coupon.

● **Campaign Strategy Deployment:**

The mail piece was sent out the last week of March 2010 and arrived in homes starting March 28, 2010.

By logging onto their PURLs, customers could print out their \$10 off a \$25 purchase coupon to bring in-store for redemption. The share sweepstakes provided an additional incentive to drive consumers to their PURL. If they chose to share with friends via the site they would be entered to win a \$1,000 shopping spree.

The campaign was promoted through the direct mail postcard. Due to consumers sharing the offer with peers through the sharing feature during activation, the campaign was also posted on blogs, Facebook, Twitter and shared through email by responders.

● **Final Results:**

Overall, 20,029 pieces were mailed and a total response of 30,068 was garnered — a 150 percent response.

Responders came from three avenues: mail (1,571 responses, or 8 percent), social sharing (25,464 responses, or 127 percent) and into the site directly (3,597 responses, or 15 percent). “Directly” means a user entered the campaign URL from a social share or a PURL.

What made it succeed? Because Stein Mart has a national presence and coupons were redeemable at any store location, the reach of the campaign was in no way limited demographically. The integrated sharing feature allowed users to do marketing for Stein Mart in this campaign. The company grew its customer database and increased redemption from the expected 2-3 percent to 40 percent redemption in-store.

Will this kind of PURL mailing be used again? Because this was a very successful campaign, that’s an emphatic “yes.” It engaged current customers, the offer worked and paired with the PURL technology, the results were outstanding.

● **About Marketing Company/Printer**

Dukky is a custom landing page and analytics software platform built specifically for direct marketers that’s meant to dramatically increase response, engagement and ROI. The printer was Mele Printing in Covington, La.

PERSONALIZED URL CASE STUDY #6

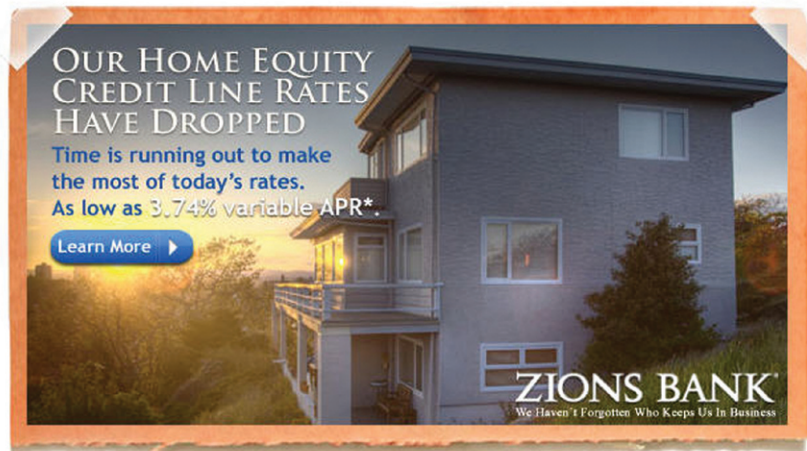
Zions Bank

In an effort to expand the number of banking products per household, Zions Bank embarked on an ambitious personalized URL campaign.

● The Project:

Headquartered in Salt Lake City, Zions Bank had a healthy list of new customers to which it wanted to upgrade. In particular, after a customer would sign up for an account, she would go through a boarding program in which the bank would analyze all the metrics around the customer to determine what her next product most likely would be.

How did the personalized URL fit into the project? Zions Bank sent these customers a personalized URL on a mailing in order to begin the upsell process, not knowing how popular these personalized landing pages would become. And it was first comprehensive personalized product that Zions had done.



Just a reminder that time is running out to take advantage of the Zions Bank Home Equity Credit Line.

Using this affordable credit line may help you to get out of debt sooner, make home improvements, or just have extra money for family needs. So don't miss out on today's low rates. Reply by March 31, 2011. To learn more, call 1-800-789-5626, [visit us online](#), or come visit us at any local branch.



When you make the most of our 3.74% variable APR* rates, you may also be able to:

- ✓ **Consolidate Your Bills** - You may be able to pay off your high rate bills.
- ✓ **No Closing Costs** - Close in 10 days or less, with no closing costs or annual fees.
- ✓ **Make Home Improvements** - Use your Home Equity Line to remodel or redecorate.

● Objectives of the PURL:

The main goal was to try and expand the number of products per household. “With existing clients, that funnel can run dry unless you have some acquisition program and involve them in a multitouch program,” explains Matthew Wilcox, vice president of corporate marketing and communication for Zions Bank.

Also, Zions sought to maintain a relevant and updated personalized landing page for the customers.

Meanwhile, Wilcox had to find a way to make several channels — direct mail, email, paid search and phone — all work together on this PURL project.

Eventually, he also hoped to build a similar program for the bank’s business clients.

● Target Audience:

The audience consists of Zions Bank customers who’ve signed up for an account. If the customer supplied an email address, the bank first sent an email. If there was no email on file, then a direct mail piece was sent. Based on the response to the piece, customers either received a follow-up email or direct mail piece. Overall, the list was split roughly 50/50 between direct mail and email.

● Creative for the PURL:

A standard, white #10 envelope was used, without any teasers. Inside, a relatively tame letter greeted the customer, with engagement services listed on the side. What stood out, however, was the personalized URL, as well as variable images.

The email mirrored the letter creative, but subject lines varied. Often, they’d have the first name of the prospect in the subject line, such as “Joe, special offer on VOLP checking.”

The personalized landing pages then bore a strong resemblance to the direct mail letter and email message. “It featured one new product for the customer alongside a host of engagement services that metrics revealed would be beneficial to the relationship,” says Wilcox. Overall, there were nine core products, and each customer would receive one of the nine.

● Campaign Strategy Deployment:

Direct mail, email, paid search and telesales were all involved

with this personalized URL campaign that was piloted in late 2009 before getting the full roll out in March 2010. “Email was most cost-effective, and we also thought that it would be the engagement our customers would choose because they were part of our active e-newsletter list,” reveals Wilcox.

Roughly half the file was sent an email first before a follow-up postcard; for those customers who hadn’t provided an email address, they were sent a direct mail piece. If neither of those steps worked, then Zions Bank used the internal sales branch for some outbound calling.

Now the PURL changes on a monthly basis. “We’ve seen an increase in traffic to those URLs,” testifies Wilcox. “We knew we’d get people to go to them, but we didn’t envision that people would revisit them after they purchased the product. So people were bookmarking the page rather than the static website URL and engaging with us that way. It forced us to keep a more relevant eye.

“While the response rate wasn’t as high as we had hoped for the first round, in the second round the response went up when we went with similar products.”

The multi-touch campaign now runs on a quarterly basis. “As an example, Q3 of 2010 included 188,405 of our customer base that were modeled, with 61,821 receiving direct mail only, and 126,584 receiving both email and direct mail,” details Wilcox. All customers were broken up into product groups based on their product propensity for one of the nine products.

● **Final Results:**

“Because the campaign was an integrated multi-touch (meaning that everyone received multiple touch points), there is no precise way to provide a break-out that attributes a conversion to any one particular communication,” explains Wilcox.

However, overall the campaign achieved an account response rate of 5 percent, with about 75 percent of new accounts being in the deposit product lines. Statistically, the initial emails had an average open rate of almost 18 percent, with a drop off in the second follow-up emails to 14 percent. Clickthrough rates for the first email averaged around 1.8 percent, with a drop off to 1 percent for the second follow-up emails.

Zions Bank was very happy with the final results, so much so that it’s moving the PURL campaign over to the business front.

What made it succeed? The email followup helped to increase results of direct mail, while direct mail captured more email addresses. “So it was true multichannel success,” says Wilcox.

What proved challenging? “We were surprised by how many customers used their personalized landing page, even after signing up for a new product. We didn’t envision that, so we will be doing that differently going forward,” he indicates.

Will this kind of PURL mailing be used again? “Yes, as we’re building this out for some kind of business component. We had some skeptical executives who are now singing the praises of this PURL strategy,” Wilcox concludes.

● **About Marketing Company/Printer**

Design and copy was done half in-house and the other by Harland Clarke Marketing Services in Salt Lake City. The PURLs were hosted with Zions Bank’s email service provider.

Salem College

Facing a 20 percent marketing budget cut, the personalized URL campaign for this women's college was nonetheless challenged to increase future enrollment.

● The Project:

Salem College is the oldest woman's college in the United States, and it wanted to use a different marketing technique in the admissions department to gain interest in the school. The first year a personalized URL campaign was used was in 2009, but the marketing budget had just been reduced by 20 percent.

Nevertheless, the goal was to increase interest (therefore increasing enrollment) while mailing to 20 percent fewer prospects than in previous years.

How did the personalized URL fit into the project? The initial mailer for the campaign included a PURL, with a hook of watching a short trailer about the college. On the PURL landing page, if the survey was completed, the prospect received a link to the password-protected full-length video, only available, at that time, to PURL respondents (a "be the first to watch" pitch).

Previous to 2009, Salem had never done anything with a PURL. Since then, the women's college have produced another admissions campaign for 2010 and are currently working on the 2011 campaign.



● Objectives of the PURL:

First, get prospective students to learn about Salem College and provide information on their academic goals for future marketing efforts.

Next, get students to take partake in a Spring Visit (one of the survey questions asked if they were interested in Spring Visit, which triggered an invite email and mailer).

Ultimately, increase future enrollment while mailing to 20 percent fewer students — all on a marketing budget restriction of 20 percent from the previous year.

● Target Audience:

The list was made up of sophomore and junior high school girls with high academic scores who were interested in the majors that Salem offers. This data was purchased through the College Board. It was felt that a cross-media campaign would have a better appeal to the i-Gen (the “Internet-Generation”).

● Creative for the PURL:

The campaign used the messages “How will you change tomorrow?” and “Shine.” Images of campus and close-ups of students were dominant throughout the campaign. All print pieces were printed on a digital press, full of color. The PURL was present multiple times on the back of the invite and non-response mailers.

Incentives included watching Salem’s new admissions video and receiving a customized, one-of-a-kind brochure.

The landing page included similar graphics and imagery from the mailers. A trailer of the admissions video was available to watch from the landing page of the PURL. In the 2010 campaign, an audio snippet was added, welcoming viewers to the site, and was played automatically when entering the landing page.

The PURL landing page included two pages. The first page was the survey and profile page, all in one, and the second page was the “Thank you” page.

The 2009 campaign’s “Thank you” email was versioned. The admissions counselors at Salem College are divided up based on geography. Knowing this information, the “Thank You” email came from the prospective student’s future counselor. The email showed a picture of the counselor and contact information so the prospective

student could specifically contact the counselor if she had questions.

The 2010 campaign included the counselor variable, as well as varying the picture on the landing page according to the visitor's ethnicity.

● **Campaign Strategy Deployment:**

The PURL was just the beginning of a larger conversation. Depending on responses from the PURL, a highly customized and personalized eight-panel roll-fold response brochure was sent out immediately. This brochure highlighted the programs and interest indicated from the online survey. After the three-month PURL ended, postcards and mailers were sent out to the respondents throughout the summer up until enrollment.

The landing page included a profile section and a brief three question survey. Salem wanted the visitors to verify their contact information and complete the survey questions. The survey asked about their intended majors and what extracurricular activities they were interested in, and also asked if they were interested in Spring Visit Day.

The PURL began at the very beginning of February 2009 with the initial campaign lasting through April of 2009. A total of 80,000 invite mailers were mailed.

There was a so-called "Non-response" (NR) track: Invite mailer, NR email, NR mailer, NR email No. 2, NR email No. 3. If the prospect visited the site and completed the survey, a thank-you email was sent immediately from her future admissions counselor, and a response brochure personalized from survey questions and a handwritten note from her counselor were sent out.

If prospective students hit the site but didn't complete the survey, a static/default response brochure was sent (a personalized one was sent later if visitors returned to the PURL and completed survey). A Spring Visit Day email and postcard was sent out (a month before the event) if they requested more information on the survey. Static postcards were sent throughout the summer to keep Salem front-of-mind. No text messages or social media was used in the 2009 campaign.

● **Final Results:**

Overall, 4.4 percent of recipients visited the PURL. This represents a 303 percent increase in responses from the previous year when only static mailings and such were used.

Of those who visited the site, 47 percent completed the survey and provided additional information about their interests. 717 prospective students requested additional information about the Spring Visit program, and Spring Visit attendance increased by 46 percent.

This solution saved the admissions staff labor and time — counselors no longer had to frantically input data to send out response pieces.

What made it succeed? There are 170 new traditional-age students enrolled for 2011, the largest number of first-years and transfers since 2004 and an 11 percent increase over 2009. The PURL campaign directly contributed to this increase. From the 2009 data list, approximately 32 percent of the 170 completed applications and approx. 25 percent are attending Salem College next year.

What proved challenging? All of the goals were met, but the most challenging aspect was the quick turnaround. Wanting to be the first college marketing materials seen, 80,000 pieces were expected to be in the mailstream within one to two days of receiving data.

Will this kind of PURL mailing be used again? It was used for the 2010 and 2011 campaigns.

● **About Marketing Company/Printer**

Keiger Direct handled everything from creation and implementation of the PURL to printing the invite, non-response, survey response, etc. Local freelance designer and Salem alumna, Carrie Leigh Dickey, handled all design aspects (print, Web and email).

PERSONALIZED URL CASE STUDY #8

Resource One Credit Union

The credit union saw an opportunity to address the unique needs of young adults with a special product through a multichannel campaign, including a personalized URL.

● The Project:

Resource One Credit Union, headquartered in Dallas, Texas, is already busy. It serves over 270 employer groups and also the communities of Dallas and Northwest Harris County, with over 40,000 members nationwide.

But Resource One saw an opportunity to address the unique needs of young adults — people who are just starting out in life with their first job, first car and first loan needs. The credit union's decision makers determined that the interests of this audience were typically underserved by financial institutions.

Resource One was in the midst of a year-long initiative to market its MyLifeMyMoney (MLMM) product to Gen Y. Part of this year-long focus included a company spokesperson, Jared, who was in his mid-



twenties. Jared promoted MLMM through visits to colleges, night-clubs, high schools and credit union branches.

How did the personalized URL fit into the project? As a part of that comprehensive cross-media strategy, personalized direct mail with a personalized URL for each prospect was also launched.

● **Objectives of the PURL:**

The top two goals were to 1) effectively market Resource One Credit Union's Generation Y product line, MyLifeMyMoney, to its existing member base between the ages of 18-30, and 2) encourage members to upgrade their accounts to the MyLifeMyMoney program — incorporating personalized URLs as a response vehicle.

● **Target Audience:**

Resource One Credit Union members between the ages of 18-30.

● **Creative for the PURL:**

A 8½" x 11" letter was personalized with the recipient's name and PURL. Upon visiting their personalized landing pages, members were asked to complete a short online survey with questions on their financial needs.

To appeal to the target audience, the copy in the letter was written in a very informal tone. The letter also came from the spokesperson Jared to enhance the personalized feel of the letter.

Individuals who visited their PURLs had a chance to win an iPhone. Referral incentives were also offered — \$25 for each person referred and another \$25 if that person opened a loan.

The creative for this piece had a casual look and feel and was intended to appeal to a younger audience. The letter looked as if it was handwritten on a piece of notebook paper, complete with coffee stains and hand sketching.

● **Campaign Strategy Deployment:**

6,788 letters were mailed.

● **Final Results:**

325 individuals visited their PURL for a 4.8 percent response rate, and 85 visitors completed the survey for a 26 percent conversion rate. The number of MyLifeMyMoney account holders increased 273 percent.

Resource One Credit Union was very pleased with the results of this campaign and is continuing to focus on serving the young adult population through its direct marketing efforts.

What made it succeed? Making sure that the copy, tone of voice and creative would appeal to young adults. The PURL grabbed the young demographic's attention and the ease (and trackability) of response was key, as well as offering a highly desired item as an incentive — the opportunity to win an iPhone — to increase responses.

Will this kind of PURL mailing be used again? Yes. PURLs offered an easy and comfortable way for people to respond, especially among tech-savvy audiences. And one of the key benefits of using PURLs was their ability to allow tracking of real-time responses.

KCSM-FM

The public radio jazz station from Long Beach was deep in the red, but personalized direct mail began its remarkable turnaround, including a recent personalized URL mailing.

● The Project:

Home of the third largest jazz collection in the world, the public radio station KCSM-FM was in dire shape a few years ago. It was deep in the red and averaging only a \$40 gift per donor.

By most accounts, the direct mail program was lackluster. So in 2008, the radio station hired a new direct marketing agency to overhaul its direct mail. That year, KCSM-FM launched a new campaign featuring a #10 package with a personalized T-shirt premium to existing or past donors.

The campaign did gangbusters, with an 8 percent response rate.

Then in 2009 the station changed the offer from a T-shirt to a tote bag, which was still personalized with a jazz image like before. So, same campaign idea but a different premium ... and it bombed.

How did the personalized URL fit into the project? In 2010, KCSM-FM returned to a T-shirt premium campaign, but with a twist: A post-



card format with a personalized URL. As the marketing company president said, “Now that personalized URLs have traction and we’ve seen them work for other clients, let’s give a PURL a try.”

● **Objectives of the PURL:**

1. Put the new direct mail campaign back on track, and hopefully return to 2008 donation levels (and put station in the black for first time).
2. Reduce the cost of the package by using a postcard, yet utilize personalization as well as a personalized URL to boost campaign results.
3. Capitalize on audience development efforts (which included a Facebook profile for the station to drive people to KCSFM page).
4. Increase the size of the list by going after cold prospects.
5. Up the donor ask to \$80 in order to receive the premium.

● **Target Audience:**

Overall, 23,500 PURL efforts were mailed. Approximately 8,100 were past donors and the rest (15,400) were cold prospects. Roughly, 80 percent were local (from the greater San Francisco Bay Area).

● **Creative for the PURL:**

Piggybacking on the successful personalization efforts of the 2008 campaign, the marketer again designed a new free jazz T-shirt (with minimum donation), but this time decided to complement the personalized T-shirt with a PURL.

A 6" x 11½" four-color postcard was used, with both sides personalized. The front featured the radio station in the corner card (Jazz 91.1 KCSM-FM) and then a trumpet blowing out famous jazz names like Freddy Hubbard and Miles Davis, music notes and, in larger type, the full name of the donor prospect.

On the back, descriptive copy, the T-shirt premium and the personalized URL (shown in two different places) were used. Copy was headlined by “Commercial-free jazz. It’s got your name written all over it.” This was followed by smaller copy, “Recognize any of the jazz legends on the flip side of this postcard? If so, you’ll love listening ...”

After these two short paragraphs, the offer was made: “Make a donation of \$80 or more by June 30, 2010 and we’ll send you a T-shirt and honors We’ll imprint your name on the back ...” Then it read, “Order your personal KCSM-FM jazz T-shirt now at: [PURL]”

Instead of sending targets to a generic landing page to make their donations and order their T-shirts, the marketer embedded the recipient's name in the URL.

● **Campaign Strategy Deployment:**

KCSM-FM had been trying to get \$40 donations, but had no success. So the marketing company overhauled the outbound package, lowering cost by 12 percent, and then aimed to get higher gifts by asking for them.

With all PURL mailings, a key is not getting bogged down with copy. In all, much less copy was used compared to the #10 package in 2008. "If you love jazz, support this station. Give us \$80 bucks or more and get a T-shirt." It was made that simple.

To generate more audience, a die-cut postcard was sent out announcing that KCSM-FM was streaming (no donation ask). On the social media front, the station set up a Facebook profile to increase audience size.

● **Final Results:**

Among the 23,500 mailed, there 232 unique hits to PURLs, which is almost 1 percent. Among the 232 unique hits, there were 188 click-throughs (which is 81 percent).

Overall, there were 79 donations, and 78 donated \$80 or more. Total revenue raised was \$6,914.

What made it succeed? Prospects seeing their names on a T-shirt as well as in the PURL made them already feel more connected to the radio station, and may have prompted the larger donations.

What proved challenging? Using a list of people who had never before been KCSM-FM members proved to be difficult.

Will this kind of PURL mailing be used again? Despite not connecting with "cold" prospects as much as KCSM-FM wanted, the station just announced that it will be in the black this year for the first time in years. So a PURL will be used again.

About Marketing Company/Printer

Goodman Marketing Partners is a full-service, multichannel, direct response marketing company based in San Rafael, Calif. Catapult Media in San Diego set up the PURL and tracked all the data.

PERSONALIZED URL CASE STUDY #10

Chick-fil-A

Without a fully qualified customer database, the restaurant chain's individual franchises looked to create one with the aid of a personalized URL campaign.

● The Project:

Chick-fil-A's individual franchises had no customer database to speak of, yet hoped to increase in-store traffic and promote the upcoming release of a new product. The popular restaurant chain knew it needed some marketing help, particularly in the area of direct mail. However, they had never run a PURL campaign before.

How did the personalized URL fit into the project? As the campaign goal was to use a purchased list to create a customer database for the individual franchises, Chick-fil-A turned to the attention-getting power of PURLs.

PURLs also allow for a more customized experience for the responders. Because the goal was to convert the third party list into a captured



FREE Chick-fil-A
Chicken Sandwich

Please use by 03/31/10.
Offer valid only at Covington, LA locations. **Please activate your card online before using.** Not valid with any other offer. To enter our Free Chicken for a Year sweepstakes & activate your offer visit:

<www.giftfila.com/johndoe>



FREE Chick-fil-A
Chicken Biscuit

Please use by 03/31/10.
Offer valid only at Covington, LA locations. **Please activate your card online before using.** Not valid with any other offer. To enter our Free Chicken for a Year sweepstakes & activate your offer visit:

<www.giftfila.com/johndoe>



SHARE    

Be a good friend.
Share free food!
You could **Win FREE Chick-fil-A for a year!**

*Go online for complete rules and details

lead, the PURL equipped the campaign with the potential to draw in a higher than normal percentage of responders to the mail piece.

Through the integration of viral peer sharing in their campaign microsite, the PURL helped local business owners put their best foot forward, ensuring the maximum initial response. The greater the initial response, the greater the campaign potential.

● **Objectives of the PURL:**

The goals were very clear-cut:

1. Develop individual store customer databases;
2. Gain customer data for future targeted marketing to promote the upcoming release of the Spicy Chicken sandwich;
3. Increase store sales.

● **Target Audience:**

The list was a purchased list of households within a five-mile radius of store locations, targeting women age 31 to 40 with a household income of \$40,000 and above.

● **Creative for the PURL:**

The direct mail piece was a 4" x 6" plastic postcard with two perforated cards that could be detached and brought into participating locations for redemption. The PURL was placed on both sides of the postcard ensuring customers would know to go to their personalized microsite to activate their offers.

The landing pages were designed to make the transition from the offline mail piece to the online microsite a seamless customer experience. The design on both the mail piece and the microsite was consistent with the messaging, branding and look of all other marketing by Chick-fil-A. The offer message was clear and concise: "EAT FREE CHIKIN."

Upon landing on their PURL, customers were walked through four landing pages:

- 1. Welcome Page:** This is where data was confirmed and/or obtained from new customers.
- 2. Survey Page:** Chick-fil-A owners asked responders a few questions to gain some qualifying information and opinions about future product releases.
- 3. Share Page:** Consumers were given the opportunity to share the offer with their friends on over 260 social networks, taking the campaign viral.
- 4. Thank you/Redemption Page:** This page thanked the consumer

for participating. Any consumer who did not have the direct mail piece could click on the “Print Coupon” button that printed out a coupon with their customer information to bring into stores for redemption.

● **Campaign Strategy Deployment:**

There were two offers promoted to drive prospects to visit Chick-fil-A’s microsite. A free Chick-fil-A chicken biscuit could be redeemed during breakfast hours and a free Chick-fil-A chicken sandwich could be redeemed during lunch or dinner hours.

The offers were activated on the microsite. Redemption was limited to one coupon per person. There was no purchase necessary to receive the free items.

Any user who also shared the offer with friends on their social networks was then entered into the sweepstakes to win free Chick-fil-A for a year.

The campaign was promoted through the direct mail piece and also through some minimal business-to-business marketing. Storeowners passed out postcards to a few local businesses so those employees could also participate, but no subsequent emails or text were sent out.

● **Final Results:**

Overall, 5,048 pieces were sent out (mid-February, 2010) and a total of 14,124 users responded, largely because of social media sharing — which is an astounding 279 percent response rate.

Leads came from mail, social sharing and into the site directly. Specifically, 1,110 came in through mail (22 percent), 3,784 directly to the site (74 percent) and 9,229 through social sharing (183 percent).

“Directly to the site” means a user entered the campaign URL directly without a user code or name already associated with it. This was the result of the B-to-B marketing as well as users posting the URL on blogs/coupon sites without including their share code.

What made it succeed? All objectives were met and storeowners were thrilled with the in-store success. For almost a year storeowners had unsuccessfully tried to build up a customer database and still did not have one that was usable. In its single direct mail campaign, they were able to obtain a full database of customers to re-market to.

Chick-fil-A franchise owners were able to create individual store

databases of customers that included demographic data, opinions and social activity of customers because of information gathered from the campaign microsite.

Will this kind of PURL mailing be used again? Yes, it was a great offer that worked for the audience and, paired with the marketer's technology, the results far exceeded expectations.

● **About Marketing Company/Printer**

Dukky is a custom landing page and analytics software platform built specifically for direct marketers that's meant to dramatically increase response, engagement and ROI. The printer was Tele-Dynamic Solutions in Plantation, Fla.