

Legendary Whitetails Combines New Email Strategies with Dynamic Web Content to Achieve Overall Revenue Lift of 22%

Testing different formats and incentives enables a specialized eTailer to find hidden opportunities for growth and take its web and email marketing to the next level... with impressive results



DeerGear.com

→ Niche eTailer targeting white-tailed deer hunters

Location

Mequon, WI, USA



Key challenges:

- Slipping email delivery rates and poor conversion
- Stagnant web marketing program
- Limited in-house IT and marketing resources

Solution:

- Sitebrand Web Personalization solution, Email Marketing Module, and Professional Services
- Ability to easily mount, track, and test different email campaigns and dynamic web content

Results:

- Overall revenue lift of 22% for all website marketing campaigns
- Measurable increases in detected unique opens, click through rates, purchases, and revenue from email optimized campaigns

For millions of passionate white-tailed deer hunters across the United States and Canada, Legendary Whitetails is the outfitting solution of choice. For roughly ten years this niche eTailer has been equipping white-tailed deer hunters and their families with a broad assortment of casual outdoor wear, hunting accessories, and gifts. The vast majority of this merchandise is designed and manufactured exclusively for Legendary Whitetails. All products are available 24/7 from a simple uncluttered, easy to navigate website at www.deergear.com.

“Expect to be impressed”

The company competes with a variety of well known retailers that provide the rugged outdoor customer with casual wear. Few, however, offer the level of specialization that enables white-tailed deer hunters to wear their sporting passion as visibly and proudly to the same degree as Legendary Whitetails.

Straightforward, no nonsense website copy, such as “expect to be impressed,” reinforces a quality theme while setting the tone for the entire website experience.

Mining the web opportunity

Initially the deergear.com website started out as a fulfillment strategy. In the earliest days, a small 30,000 piece direct mail brochure would promote merchandise and encourage customers to fulfill their orders online. Until recently, the focus continued to be on fulfillment albeit on a different scale: today a 3 million piece catalog mailing drives white-tailed deer hunters from across North America to the website. Mark Kaiser, Marketing Manager for Legendary Whitetails, recognized there were huge, untapped marketing opportunities to take advantage of on their website. “We were getting rave reviews from customers for the ease of use and simplicity of our site,” says Kaiser. “It was a nice, clean, and fast site but we weren’t doing much in the way of web marketing. To really grow the business and take it to the next level, we realized we had to put some resources into our online marketing,” he adds.

“The first-time visitor campaign alone pays for our monthly Sitebrand investment 10-fold.”

**Mark Kaiser, Marketing Manager,
Legendary Whitetails**



“ We had a 17% lift when we activated the first-time visitor campaign promoting a 10% discount...But our average dollar size skyrocketed up 37% on orders that were triggered by that campaign. That more than paid for the discount! ”

Mark Kaiser, Marketing Manager,
Legendary Whitetails

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Specific requirements for a web marketing solution

Kaiser identified three key requirements for a new solution to power-up his website marketing strategy:

- The ability to customize the content in real-time for different visitors – based on triggering rules, referring domain, location, keyword searches, whether they were a new or returning customer, etc.
- A tool for managing email campaigns and better integrating these with new website marketing programs
- An analytics tool for easily capturing key website metrics related to visitor traffic and the ability to measure the ROI from A/B split tests and any campaigns run

Hi-tech implementation without hi-tech skills

After an extensive review of potential solutions, Kaiser and his small marketing team quickly settled on Sitebrand. For Kaiser, seeing how easily the tool worked was a critical factor in choosing Sitebrand. "They [Sitebrand] walked us through this a couple of different times. I remember thinking, 'I'm not a high tech web analyst, but I understand this.' I immediately saw how we could use Sitebrand to implement sophisticated, technology driven marketing programs without having hi-tech web personnel in-house," he says.

User friendly interface – and comprehensive professional services

One reason Sitebrand is easy to use is that it has an extremely intuitive user interface. This enables marketers to create, implement, and evaluate a variety of marketing campaigns with point and click ease.

In addition, the Sitebrand solution comes standard with *Blueprint for Success* services. This is a comprehensive, 90-day program that includes an initial assessment to determine areas of the site where visitors are abandoning their search, recommendations on how to introduce *Sitebrand*, immediate best campaign practices to run for quick time to ROI, and ongoing training from customer services representatives with in-depth analytics knowledge.

From an implementation standpoint, Kaiser notes that Sitebrand was fast and did not require much time from his limited IT resources. "I remember it was really painless, which is often not the norm for advanced technology applications like this." He also adds, "After two and a half years, we've had minimal issues, which I can't say the same for other applications we have been involved with!"

Boosting email performance

Sitebrand offers an optional *Email Marketing Module* with expert consultation services. This complements the core Sitebrand Web Personalization solution and enables eTailers to achieve higher deliverability and ultimately higher conversions through better segmentation, testing, reduced SPAM hits, and superior targeting of personalized, persuasive offers to customers.

Mark Kaiser comments on his specific need: "We were preparing attractive email campaigns that we would blast out to our customers," he says. "Then simply, our customers would respond, come to our site, and buy things – and we would be happy. But there was no way to test different email formats and direct marketing offers. We turned to Sitebrand to take us to the next level."

Audit reveals room for improvement – testing confirms

Following an initial assessment, Sitebrand revealed numerous opportunities to improve email performance. It proposed an easy test to show Legendary Whitetails how it was leaving a lot of

Figure 1:
Dynamic content areas

The Sitebrand implementation resulted in a large dynamic content area being created on all pages and a smaller dynamic area in the footer on the home page. The results have been so impressive that Kaiser plans to introduce dynamic content in all department pages. If a visitor clicks on men's wear, Kaiser wants the ability to present special offers related to that interest area and/or traditional best sellers. Conversely, if the site "remembers" the visitor as a cap buyer, the next time they arrive, the site will automatically profile any special hat offers or other products that are relevant to this category.



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Mark Kaiser, Marketing Manager,
Legendary Whitetails

money on the table by using graphic based emails. According to the *Email Experience Council*, one in five emails is invisible and ineffective due to blocked images. By simply introducing an email optimized format, Legendary Whitetails' open rates shot up an estimated 20% to 27.9% – almost a 30% increase.

Details of this specific A/B split test and the additional revenue generated from the Sitebrand version are summarized in the boxed-in section on the next page. Kaiser comments on the test: “One campaign had graphic emails the way we usually sent them out. The test campaign introduced a format that we now call the 'Sitebrand way'. We did several tests. Each and every time our click through rates went up, our conversion dollars went up, and our bounce rates went down.”

Multiple website campaigns planned

Email was only one part of the Legendary Whitetails success story and Sitebrand solution. The focus in the first year was largely on measurability and documenting the return from different campaigns. Kaiser was looking for hard numbers in response to these types of critical marketing questions:

- What was the real shopping cart abandonment rate?
- Where were visitors leaving the site?
- How did special incentives impact lift?
- What kind of first time visitor campaign would convert best?

Working with Sitebrand, Kaiser planned out half a dozen campaigns to start addressing these questions. Effectively, he was using Sitebrand's analytics to confirm website stats while determining customer thresholds for different offers. Specifically, he wanted to know how much of an incentive was required for different vertical segments to achieve a balance between profit and superior



About Sitebrand

Retail focus

Eight-year track record of helping E-tailers and multi-channel retailers convert more visitors into online or in-store buyers.

Unique real-time technology

Solutions use advanced predictive technology to personalize the website experience of every visitor in real-time.

Comprehensive services

Solutions are backed by professional services to ensure fast time to ROI.

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conversion. "The beauty of Sitebrand is that you always have a control group and it is really easy to see whether a campaign had any measurable impact," says Kaiser.

Initial campaigns yield tremendous lift

Kaiser started with a first-time visitor campaign that offered a discount on a first purchase and a geo campaign that promoted "fast and easy shipping" to Canadian visitors. He used Sitebrand to test the impact that a 5% discount would have on conversion versus a 10% discount. Kaiser was fascinated with the ability to closely monitor the lift using Sitebrand. He discovered the 5% discount had virtually no impact. The 10% discount was a different matter: "We had a 17% lift when we activated the first time visitor campaign that promoted a 10% discount," confirms Kaiser. "But our average order size sky rocketed up 37% on orders that were triggered by that campaign, which more than paid for the discount," adds Kaiser. Heading into the next season Kaiser has plans to test a 20% discount to see what impact this has. "It's all in the numbers. We want to see what shakes out and works the best," reports Kaiser.

Kaiser acknowledges he has barely scratched the surface of Sitebrand's capabilities. "I know this is a powerful tool and I have only been using it for some rudimentary campaigns," he says. Despite this modest use, Kaiser attributes an overall revenue lift of 22% for all campaigns that were run in the course of the last season. "Basically, it [Sitebrand] did exactly what they claimed it would do. The first-time visitor campaign alone pays for our monthly Sitebrand investment 10-fold," concludes Kaiser.

Small Changes Yield Stunning Increase in Conversion Rates

Sitebrand recommended an A/B split to test Legendary Whitetail's image-based campaign against a nearly identical 'email-optimized' version. The new version factored in best practices for preview panel/image blocking software.

Subtle but significant differences

The only difference between the two email versions was that text from the optimized version was coded in HTML versus graphic images. Using HTML ensures the email renders properly even when images were disabled. The two emails looked virtually identical and appear below.



Results: To ensure accurate results the database was randomly split into two with each containing almost 33,000 recipients. The optimized version received significantly higher delivery, open and click rates but the real impact was with conversions.

Dramatic differences in conversion rates:

- The 'before email' brought in 139 purchases — 0.4% conversion rate for a grand total of \$2,667
- The 'after' version brought in a whopping 495 purchases, or 1.5% conversion rate and \$12,786.

The bottom line: by optimizing creative for email Legendary Whitetails generated an additional \$10,000 from a single test campaign.