

Cottage Homes

Integrated Direct Marketing Case Study

Vertical Market: Vacation homebuilder

Business Objective: To attract second homebuyers to a new community and build a qualified prospect database for future development site marketing.

Services Provided: Integrated direct marketing: direct mail, e-mail, mailing list acquisition, printing, and program analysis

Challenge

Cottage Homes was in the process of developing a new vacation home community in the mountains called Bear Creek Reserve. The company wanted to invite qualified prospects to visit their new community and tour their log cabin model homes and available two to four acre lots. Although the company owns other vacation communities, this one was designed for current homeowners in a higher income bracket, which they did not currently have a mailing list of. Cottage Homes had plans to expand other existing communities they had previously developed as well as build new ones, so another of their challenges was building a database that they could use for future targeted direct marketing programs.

Solution

To best meet both of their objectives, we suggested an integrated direct marketing campaign combining highly attractive direct mail with a personalized URL in order to obtain the information that Cottage Homes wanted for their database. The campaign involved two different types of media: direct mail and print advertising. First, we had to help them purchase a mailing list, so we met with them to determine demographics that best fit the profile of the customer they were looking for, such as where they currently lived, total household income, activities and interests and other characteristics.

Next, we created a direct mail postcard with a personalized URL to drive recipients to a website landing page to either sign up for a personal tour of the community or just to learn more about it by requesting information. The questions asked on the survey form helped the company learn more about the prospects so they could determine if other communities would be a better fit for them. In addition, the form asked for them to update their contact information, helping to ensure that Cottage Homes' future direct mail gets delivered. Additionally, if the card was a pass-along, it was an opportunity to capture the contact information on this new prospect.

We helped Cottage Homes purchase the main URL for this campaign and also used it as a generic URL on another direct mail postcard and in a print advertisement. Generic URLs are used when you do not know the audience you are mailing to or reaching, such as in the case of the print ad. We wanted to drive readers of the magazine where the ad appeared to learn more about Bear Creek Reserve, so the website landing page was a bit more generic and asked them to identify themselves by giving us their contact information. Using this approach helped Cottage Homes measure and track the effectiveness of the cost of the print ad. The postcard with the generic URL was used for one-off literature requests, as handouts at local events and in on-site sales literature packs.

Results

When compared with previous marketing Cottage Homes had done to promote this community, they saw a 30% increase in interest from this campaign. They learned that the postcard pulled a better response than the print ad and based on those that did respond from the print ad, they decided to test an ad in a different publication that they felt might be more widely read by their targeted customer. This analysis helped them save money that could have been wasted on future ads in the wrong publication. Additionally, with the information they received from all recipients they remarketed other properties they own and saw a 5% increase in sales at those communities.