

Discount Dance Supply: 84% Increase In Email Marketing E-Commerce Sales

Discount Dance Supply was founded originally as a brick and mortar store with catalog sales under the name Hill's Dancewear. Over the years, it's undergone a major transformation while moving from catalog sales to online sales in addition to a change of ownership.

The business has transitioned through re-branding the company to the name Discount Dance Supply, a name change in part because of their biggest competitive advantage, price.

John Miller, IT Director, constructed Discount Dance Supply's website as the company expanded its online sales. Their online sales have been so successful over the years that in 2006 they were included in Internet Retailer's top 500 leading online retailers.

Challenges:

E-commerce makes up 80% of Discount Dance Supply's sales, and as their online business grew, so did their overall marketing strategy. "Email marketing plays a very important role in our overall strategy, only second to our PPC (pay-per-click) campaign," said Miller.

Their email campaign is comprised of a weekly offer/marketing e-mail, which was sent as a way to encourage website visitors and to stimulate sales. Discount Dance Supply had used an in-house email marketing solution in their early days of e-commerce but over time dealt with deliverability problems such as issues with ISPs and the timeliness of the delivery process.

"We were sending out one large graphic as our email, which created a lot of issues with rendering, and directly correlates to lower open and click through rates," said Miller. Miller goes on to mention that "sending frequency also became an issue, as we doubled the number of emails we sent, but that didn't necessarily equate to double the conversions."

Prior to Bronto, Discount Dance Supply never measured deliverability; with Bronto they could actively monitor their deliverability per campaign. "Our deliverability increased because of Bronto's established relationships with ISPs, however we still came across a list hygiene issue with our own list," recalled Miller. "It was clear that we had to move to a different solution, that was easier to manage and allowed us to grow without major issues," said Miller. Discount Dance Supply found Bronto Software as a solution to their needs, after comparing Bronto with other large providers, "We looked at other big players in the market, but we knew we didn't need all the bells and whistles they offered. Bronto had 98% of everything we needed while easily fitting into our budget," Miller commented.

Solution:

One of the first steps to improving their practices was a list clean up. "While jumping on board with Bronto, I uploaded small batches of email addresses and weeded out bad or old addresses," said Miller. This list clean-up practice immediately helped improve deliverability. This approach allowed Discount Dance Supply to assure retention of valid and active email addresses while discarding old, inactive emails.

Once their list was cleaned, they added segmentation. "We're getting a little more sophisticated than what we did in the past. Before Bronto we didn't do any segmentation, there was just no real simple way to do it, so we just didn't. With Bronto, there's no excuse, so I've been segmenting based on the last activity of a customer, location, and past purchase behavior," said Miller. Segmentation allowed Discount Dance Supply

to actively and more effectively target customers.

Discount Dance Supply soon found that they needed to redesign their email template. "Before Bronto our email design process was very manual, so it was easy to create one large image, however our Bronto account manager highly recommended that we break up our images and text since more often than not, images are blocked," mentioned Miller. Soon after Miller changed their email format to reflect an even balance of images and text, which greatly improved email rendering in many different clients.

After rebuilding their email marketing program, Discount Dance Supply incorporated special offers and discounts into their email campaigns as a way to engage customers. "Right before Christmas, we gave away free legwarmers to those who purchased \$50 or more. We calculated that our supply would last us 2 weeks. But because of overwhelming response we went through them in 3.5 days," said Miller. These types of campaigns proved to be instrumental in winning back old customers

Results:

In less than a year of using Bronto, Discount Dance Supply has seen a 84% increase in e-commerce sales tied to email marketing, of which email marketing makes up 8% of their overall online sales. Just one successful email campaign has paid for Bronto services for over 3 years, solidifying the great returns of cost-effective email marketing.

"I attribute these great results to email design changes and increased deliverability. In addition to the increase sales, we've also seen an 103% increase in click thru rates. The Bronto team has pointed out best practices and flaws in our previous methods and helped improved the look and feel of our emails," said Miller.

Bronto offers the software and service solutions necessary for your email marketing success. Contact us at 1-888-BRONTO1 for a demonstration or to discuss your specific email marketing objectives.

To read more case studies visit <http://bronto.com/success/>.