



## USO Revitalized Brand and Drove Donations with Bronto

For more than 66 years, in times of peace and war, the USO has consistently delivered its special brand of comfort, morale and recreational services to U.S. military personnel and their families. The USO currently operates more than 130 centers worldwide, including ten mobile canteens located in the United States and overseas. The USO is a nonprofit, charitable organization, relying on the generosity of the American people to support its programs and services.

### Challenges:

Today, the USO remains an essential connection for service members far from home, but seeks to improve both brand relevance and create a larger, consistent support base for their activities. The USO spent a number of years creating emails with a desktop publishing application, which were then distributed using Outlook to a small list of corporate partners. The results, however, were disappointing. The simple emails generated little web site traffic or awareness. The USO faced several challenges preventing the organization from meeting its goals:

- Low e-newsletter distribution numbers and outdated contact lists
- Lack of easy method to distribute e-newsletters to large groups of people
- Desire to collect contact data (i.e., email addresses) from website with little or no additional operational resources required
- Lack of cost-effective solution allowing organization to segment contacts and track newsletter effectiveness.

### Solution:

To address these challenges, the USO implemented a strategic email marketing program in 2005 to use Bronto for the distribution of regular e-newsletters and donation-solicitation emails. Prior to implementing Bronto, email played a small part in the organization's marketing plan. However, as the USO's contact list continues to grow, e-newsletters and donation emails take on a larger role in its overall strategy.

Bi-monthly e-newsletters are now used as information pieces to:

- Inform service members, family members, USO partners, and troop supporters about USO activities, programs, entertainment tours and ways they can get involved and help our soldiers
- Communicate to soldiers ways in which the USO is helping and how they can take advantage of its centers and programs offered
- Inform readers about corporate partners and partner promotions
- Get supporters involved in other online campaigns, keeping them interested in USO activities and current on the latest USO information
- Drive readers back to redesigned USO World Headquarters website via embedded link

Email campaigns have been employed to:

- Solicit donations that help support organizational programs and center operations
- Raise money without requiring additional operational resources

### Results:

The USO has seen tremendous results since implementing Bronto. E-newsletters have proven to be a highly successful means of communication with service members, strategic partners, military family and friends, as well as the USO's World Board of Governors and Congressional Caucus.



### Segmentation and smart design the first step in driving results

Timely, targeted emails soliciting donations have been a very effective way to raise a substantial amount of money in short periods of time with low operational costs. After redesigning both their website and newsletter in early 2006, the USO now positions the e-newsletter as an avenue to lead readers back to their web site. Embedded links drive an increase in web site traffic and online donations after each e-newsletter distribution. In 2006, the USO received nearly \$100,000 in online donations from e-newsletters and donation-solicitation emails, a 10:1 return on investment.

### Tactical list management improves deliverability

Bronto's "Forward to a Friend" function and opt-in features combined with tactical list management are integral to the USO's email marketing program success. The organization initially began with approximately 33,000 contacts in its database. This outdated list was built from people who donated through the website; many had not been active contributors for several years. Bronto's deliverability features allowed the USO to:

- Cull its initial list following the first e-newsletter distribution (February 2005) from 33,000 inactive and invalid contacts to 15,000 active and valid contacts
- Significantly improve deliverability rates by removing bad addresses from the database and targeting only those who truly wanted to receive newsletters
- Slowly and purposefully increase contact list – 10,000 people signed up for newsletter in 2006, almost doubling the number of subscribers
- Contact list has increased to approximately 28,000 contacts to date

### Bronto lowers operational costs

The USO notes that Bronto's easy-to-use solution helps save the organization valuable time and resources. "Email marketing is no longer a time-consuming project for our organization," observes Emily Swanson, USO Communications Specialist. "Bronto's client services team helped us create a high-tech, strategically designed e-newsletter and donation email template that clearly has increased our organizational branding and driven support for our efforts."

### Conversion tracking proven to be most beneficial email marketing tool for USO

- Funds raised following typical newsletter distribution average only \$4,000 in an 8-week period
  - Veteran's Day email, asking supporters to remember our troops and donate to the USO, raised almost \$10,000 in just one week
  - Subsequent holiday email generated approximately \$35,000 to \$40,000 in donations, a truly amazing result for the organization
- Conversion tracking results allow the USO to segment donors and send targeted, follow up messages asking for their continued support and involvement

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