

Cover Page

Will Be Added Later

Abstract – for use in database

The Citadel, a small liberal arts military college, needed to increase membership in its Brigadier Foundation for the funding of sports scholarships. Using a unique, personalized poster incentive and a well run cross-media marketing campaign the Foundation saw a 12% increase in membership. The Foundation also got people to renew online which saved them money in administrative costs.

Project: The Citadel Increases Foundation Membership with Personalized Incentive and Cross-Media Marketing

Vertical Market: Education

Business Application: Direct Marketing/Direct Order

Business Objectives

The Citadel is a small liberal arts military college located in Charleston, South Carolina. The Brigadier Foundation is the organization that raises money to fund athletic scholarships at The Citadel. The Foundation raises money by offering memberships that come with certain privileges (such as football seating and parking passes) based upon how much money is given. The lowest level is \$100 per year and the highest is \$12,000.

Most membership renewals took place during phone-a-thons in Georgia and South Carolina during the spring and summer. Membership levels remained constant for several years and in November 2007 the Foundation had only 1,606 members or 6% of known alumni.

The Foundation's goals for this campaign were to:

- Increase memberships
- Encourage current members to renew online, significantly reducing administrative costs

Results

For the overall campaign the results were:

- 22.75% response rate
- 194 new members representing a 12%+ increase in membership
- 97 membership renewals
- Revenue generated to date is \$208,000

The most new members the foundation ever had in a complete year prior to this campaign was around 125. That was due to a new policy on season football tickets requiring alumni to join to get good seats. Normally they got less than 25% of that number. Acquiring 194 new members in six weeks was unprecedented. The school also got people to join who did not live in the southeast. This had not happened very often in the past.



Recipient's name on the parade ground



Recipient's name in the personalized URL (PURL)

Offer

The central component of the campaign was the offer of a personalized poster with a photo of The Citadel's Corps of Cadets spelling out the recipient's name (or another name of their choice) on the parade ground. This offer was exclusive to members of the Brigadier Foundation.

Campaign Architecture

A multi-channel campaign using direct mail, email and viral marketing (word of mouth) was developed to meet the Foundation's goals. The campaign kicked off on Homecoming weekend in November of 2007. This weekend is the largest gathering of alumni on campus each year.

Phase 1 - Viral Marketing

The first phase of the campaign employed viral marketing. This was accomplished in several ways. First, every member of the classes of 1967 and 1977 who were attending their 30th and 40th reunions was given the gift of a 14" x 20" poster with the Corps spelling their name on the field. The caption under the photo read "The South Carolina Corps of Cadets salutes <name of recipient>, November 2nd, 2007, The Citadel, Charleston South Carolina." This gift was only for those who were registered for homecoming activities with their class and would be in attendance that weekend. Each class had around 130 attendees.

Another element of the viral marketing was to flash the personalized photos on the scoreboard in the stadium during the game. When the photo was put



on the screen it was done with no explanation. Also the names being spelled on the parade ground for the scoreboard shots were those of “influencers,” or people who can influence the actions of others. When someone saw the photo on the screen it appeared to the fans in the stadium that the Corps had spelled these people’s names during a parade as a special honor to them for their service to the school.

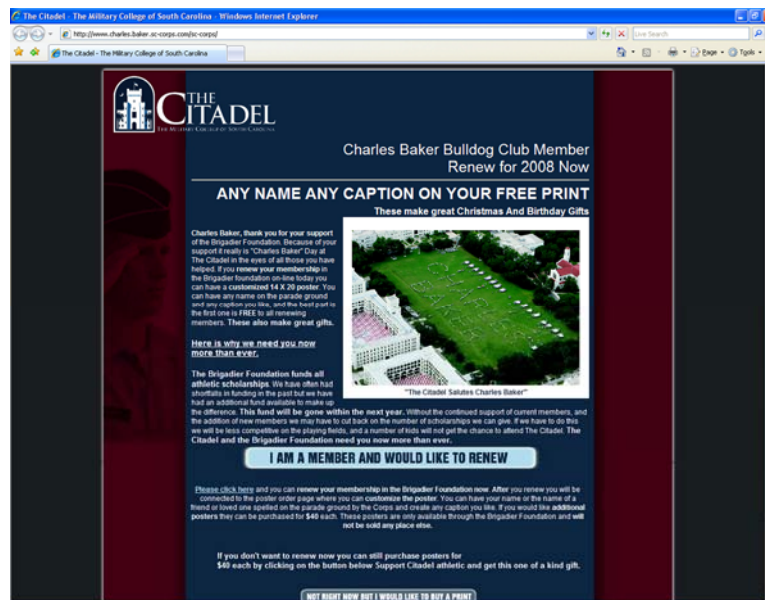
Phase 2 - Direct Mail

Following this campaign launch a direct mail postcard was sent to alumni that encouraged them to visit a personalized URL (PURL) and either join or renew their membership to The Brigadier Foundation.

Phase 3 - Online

After going to the personalized landing page, if the visitor chose to join or renew their membership they were directed to an online form. On this page if someone was not clear about the benefits of each membership level they could click on a button for more detailed information. Once someone joined or renewed they were sent to a site where they could personalize their poster.

On the poster order page alumni typed in the name they wanted on the field and the caption below. They could then view a proof of their poster before placing their order.



Phase 4 - Email

The next phase of the campaign consisted of emails sent to alumni who had not yet visited their personalized landing page.



Phase 5 – Follow-up Direct Mail

Letters were sent to targeted groups of alumni.

Reporting

A password-protected reporting site was created so that the Foundation could track the activity of the campaign in real time 24/7. The reporting site detailed:

- The response rate to date (measured to a 100th of a percent)
- The number of new members to date
- The number of renewals to date
- Total number of contributors
- The amount of money committed
- Number of additional posters purchased
- A listing of everyone who visited the site and how long they stayed

By analyzing the real time data, the Foundation and Kennickell Print and Global Marketing were able to change the email blasts to achieve better results.

Target Audience and Messaging

The target audience for all phases of the campaign was alumni of The Citadel. The campaign was structured at all stages to appeal specifically to this audience. The reasoning behind each marketing channel becomes clear with an in-depth analysis:

Why Viral Marketing?

The purpose of giving the free posters to certain alumni groups at Homecoming was two fold:

- To judge the reaction to the gift in order to understand the value of it to average alumni
- To get people talking about the posters

The reaction of those who received the posters told The Foundation and Kennickell that it would be a coveted gift. Most could not wait to get home and have it framed.

Why Direct Mail?

By showing an image of the recipient's name spelled out by the Corps on the postcard, The Foundation hoped to attract the attention of alumni. Under the photo was a caption reading "The South Carolina Corps of Cadets would like this to be <recipient name> Day at The Citadel. Find out why at <recipient.name>.sc-corps.com

By seeing their name spelled on the parade ground and also in a PURL, it was hoped that alumni would be driven to the site and complete a transaction to join or renew their Brigadier Foundation membership. The back of the card explained that if they went to the PURL they could receive a free gift for Brigadier Foundation members only.

Why Go Online?

On the personalized landing page alumni learned about the custom poster offer. If they were not a member but decided to join they could have the poster version of the mailer with their name or any other name they wanted on the field plus any caption under the photo for free. Current members could have the personalized poster if they renewed online. By giving them the option to use their name or another name, recipients had the opportunity to present the poster as a gift to friends or family.

On the landing page it was made clear that the posters were available only to Brigadier Foundation members and to no one else. Members were also told that they could buy additional posters for \$40.

There were slight differences in the copy on the site for current members versus non-members. Members were told their level of membership so they would renew at the same level or higher.

Why Use Email?

Emails were sent to alumni who had not yet visited the PURL. The message in the email was slightly different from the postcard. After reviewing the real-time response data the Foundation learned that while they had a high response rate (22% of the people went to their personalized landing page) only 4% of those who went to the site renewed or joined. As a result the message on the emails was changed to more urgently express the need to join or renew now.

Why Follow-up with a Letter Campaign?

Because The Foundation and Kennickell were able to track the results in real time on the reporting site, they were able to make adjustments for the final phase. They learned that while they were getting a lot of new members they were not getting as many renewals as they would like.

One of the issues was that some people had just joined four months earlier in connection with football season. There were, however, a large number that had joined over six months ago. Kennickell decided to change the message slightly on the personalized landing pages and in a follow up letter. The new message explained in detail why The Foundation needed people to renew now and not wait.

The letters went to four separate lists – current Brigadier Foundation members, Athletic Hall of Fame members (who were not members of the Foundation), basketball fans on the basketball coach’s database and baseball fans on the baseball coach’s database. These recipients had not responded to the original postcard or emails.

Kennickell drafted the letters so that they appeared to be coming from the coaches. The letter to the current members (which was the largest list) was signed by the head football coach. The football coach was chosen because the football team had just completed its best season in 15 years. Consequently, the coach generated a lot of good will. The Hall of Fame members got a letter from the athletic director and the basketball and baseball fans received letters from the respective coaches. In each letter the writer made a few comments about their sport (the athletic director’s letter was more about scholarship needs) and then made the request for them to join or renew now on behalf of The Foundation.

Each letter explained why it was important to join now. Each letter also added the human element by pointing out that some young men and women could go to the school only with financial help, and their membership provided that help.

List

The school has mailing addresses for around 25,000 alumni.

Creative and Outbound Pieces

The creative on the postcard, emails and the landing page featured the same aerial shot of the parade ground with the Corps spelling out the recipient’s name.

To create the image an aerial photo was taken when the Corps of Cadets were in formation during a military parade. Using software developed by Kennickell it was possible to digitally rearrange the cadets on the field to spell out people’s names. The software does this in a way that appears completely realistic. Were it real, it would be an unprecedented honor to have the cadets spell out your name. Cadets have not done this in the past but it is certainly possible, thus making this believable.

For the emails there were some instances where The Citadel did not have a name associated with an alumni email address in their lists. In these cases the photo had the Corps spelling “Your Name Here” on the field.

Reasons for Success

This campaign was a tremendous success for several reasons.

- The offer was very compelling and only available to those who responded in the desired fashion – joining or renewing their membership to The Brigadier Foundation
- The use of PURLs and a well-designed personalized Web site made it easy for recipients to join The Foundation and to order their customized poster
- The different media channels were well integrated and the initial viral marketing phase helped to create a buzz around the custom posters

The Foundation and Kennickell hope to repeat this success with a similar campaign for membership in 2008. For the 2008 campaign they are taking advantage of The Citadel’s renovated stadium. A photo was taken of the football field and personalized shots of a name being spelled on the field by the Corps in front of a packed stadium will be the focal point.

Client	<p>The Citadel Brigadier Foundation www.citadel.edu</p> <p>The Citadel is a liberal arts military college located in Charleston, South Carolina. The school has approximately 2,000 students. The Brigadier Foundation is the organization that raises money to fund athletic scholarships at The Citadel.</p>
Print Provider & Agency	<p>Kennickell Print and Global Marketing www.kennickell.com</p> <p>Kennickell was founded as a printing company in Savannah in 1892. The company is still owned and operated by the Kennickell family and is now one of the largest printers in the state of Georgia. As a true global marketing services provider, Kennickell now offers services such as fulfillment, leads management, personalized print and database management.</p>
Hardware	Kodak NexPress
Software	Custom in-house programming for PURLs and image generation
Target Audience	Alumni of The Citadel
Distribution	25,000
Date	November 2007 – January 2008