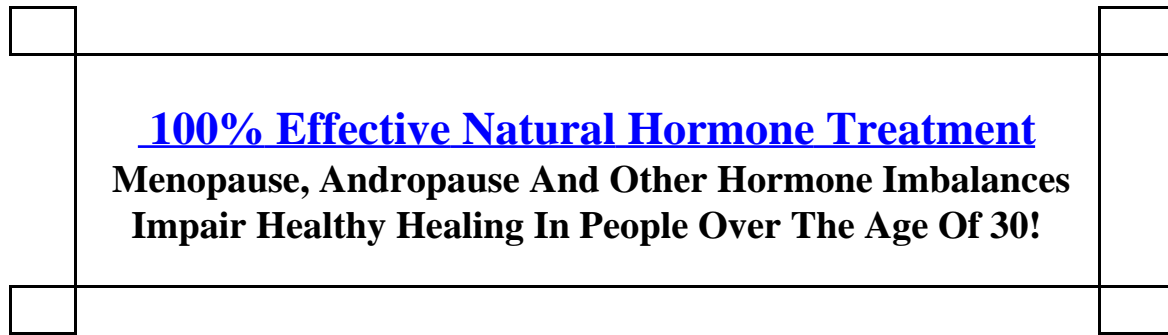


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Times Square vs. chocolate e-mail marketing

By Jesse Stein

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Times Square is a marketer's ego wall. With more billboards than there is coffee at an AA meeting, Times Square is the Internet's ground zero for spray-and-pray marketing. Definition of spray and pray: (1) in near panic, spray fresh VC funding on big image advertising; (2) pray in several languages that the right people come to your site; (3) tell VCs your dog ate their money.

Because our VCs would never believe the dog story, we decided to spend our marketing dollars on other, less glamorous, measures. I'd like to tell the story of one particular campaign, because it yielded a 36% click-through, added tons of people to our permission database, and exposed a qualified group of people to our brand.

1000 pounds of chocolate

It all started with the bare essentials of an e-mail campaign: a targeted opt-in e-mail list, an intriguing subject line, a personalized message, and 1000 pounds of chocolate. Okay, let me explain the chocolate. We knew we had to come up with a compelling offer that would elicit response and enhance our brand, so we co-marketed with a well-known chocolatier to give away wrapped boxes of truffles.

We blasted the mass e-mail out with the subject line, "mmm...c h o c o l a t e !" When users opened the e-mail, they were told they could give chocolates to a special someone simply by registering on our site. In Pavlovian reaction, respondents flooded the site and over 20% of those who visited converted into opt-in registrants. Though it took only a minute, the registration process involved answering several demographic questions; giving us your gift recipient's name and e-mail; and filling in five e-mails of people you think would be interested in giving chocolate to a friend.

After the registrant hit "submit," the five people they recommended were instantly e-mailed with a personalized invitation to come to our site and give a gift of chocolates. The gift recipient got an e-mail notifying them they had been gifted by their friend – with the giver's personal message embedded in the e-mail – and to claim the gift on our site. Over 80% of the recipients visited the site and claimed their gift. We made sure these people also filled out some demographic information. Within a week, the person received a wrapped box of truffles and a gift card telling them who we were.

Love fest

The result was a love fest. The gift giver looked like a spontaneous Santa Claus. The recipients were excited because they received an unexpected goodie from a friend. Lastly, our company got more mileage out of the campaign than a '76 Datsun in Tijuana. First, a vast majority of the registrants opted in to our e-mail list, so we ended up with a big database of potential customers to whom we could send relevant and tailored marketing messages. (Ten percent of the number of people we originally e-mailed ended up on our opt-in list.) Second, we gained a detailed snapshot into our prospective customer, as thousands of people told us everything from income to dressing style. Lastly, the nature of the gift and the spirit of the campaign reflected well on our brand.

All told, it cost us less than \$3 to acquire an opt-in user about whom we have several data points. By

comparison, it can cost more than \$7 to execute the same campaign through a big affiliate network (the "per form" deal).

With the venture community growing increasingly critical of the viability of B2C business models, a humble e-mail marketing campaign with a twist might make more sense than a Times Square billboard.

Best Recipes: Old Fashioned Chocolate Milkshake

By Donna Monday

Is there any drink more delicious to chocolate lovers than a tall glass of frosty chocolate milk?

How about a chocolate milkshake?

Chocolate milkshakes are easy to make and a delicious indulgence to have with your classic restaurant meal consisting of hamburger, shake and fries. Instead of heading out to the closest fast food joint when you feel that chocolate milkshake craving coming on, why not get out the blender and make it yourself?

Chocolate milkshakes are easy to make and you can control how much chocolate syrup and ice cream you use - and best of all, you decide the quality of ingredients that go into your glass of chocolate heaven.

Here's a quick and easy chocolate milkshake recipe:

Old Fashioned Chocolate Milkshake 1 cup chocolate or vanilla ice cream ½ cup whole milk 3 - 4 tablespoons chocolate syrup

Directions

Put all the ingredients a blender.

Blend until smooth.

Enjoy!

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Donna Monday

Easy to make - fun to drink

Best Recipes: Old Fashioned Chocolate Milkshake

The Ultimate Chocolate Chip Cookie Experience

Best Recipes: Chocolate Peanut Butter Milkshake

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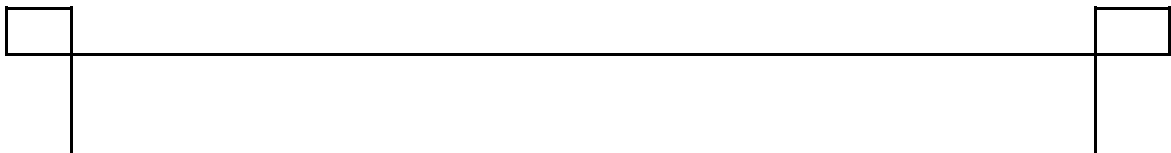
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