

pushing the envelope

Merry Halloween?

Treating prospects to a dimensional mailer that cut through the clutter was the trick for Manhattan Associates.

by Mindy Charski

When 2,210 executives at multichannel retailers received a plastic pumpkin from Manhattan Associates in the mail last year, they found the candy inside it to be fresher than the enclosed personalized greeting, which read “Happy Halloween.” It was, after all, December.

“We wanted to spark curiosity and make recipients wonder why they got this pumpkin so late after Halloween and what it was all about,” says Malinda Wilkinson, senior marketing manager at the Atlanta-based supply chain solutions company.

Recipients could find the first clues in the eight-page booklet dangling from the pumpkin, which was chosen to represent products with short life cycles. The copy read, “Oops! (Name), getting purchases to your customers too late can be costly and scary,” and went on to explain that the company’s Zero Disappointment Retail solutions can help clients “avoid stock outs and late deliveries.”

“It has a sense of humor,” says chief marketing officer Terrie O’Hanlon of the effort that cost \$12 per piece. “We know losing customers is serious stuff, but we didn’t want to have a fear, uncertainty and doubt message around that, especially in this economy.”

The mailer was the second in a three-phase dimensional campaign promoting Zero Disappointment Retail, which enables

retailers to provide a consistent brand experience across sales channels. The other two pieces spotlighted different inventory misfires by featuring a fancy gift box with an “out of stock” notice inside and, subsequently, a T-shirt that could only fit a baby.

“Mailing to the same people three times is about awareness,” O’Hanlon says. “Manhattan has a history of being known for its warehouse management solutions, so part of the goal of this was to make the right people aware that we do other things.”

Each mailer directed recipients to a personalized URL to download a specific offer, like the Halloween piece’s “definitive guide” to Zero Disappointment Retail. Manhattan Associates was happy to see a jump in the number of top-level decision makers who responded to the second mailing as compared to the first. “These solutions are at a price point that requires executive buy-in,” O’Hanlon says.

In fact, rather than generating a ton of leads, Manhattan Associates hopes the effort nets 10 “opportunities,” or vetted prospects that have a defined project, budget and time frame to purchase. But from a brand perspective — even though results from the third mailing were not available at press time — O’Hanlon has already deemed the effort a success. “It’s about connections and building a personality into how you interact with your customers,” she says. “This campaign does just that.”

THE ESSENTIALS

Company: Manhattan Associates (Atlanta, Ga.). **Target Audience:** 2,210 executives at multichannel retailers in the United States and Canada with more than \$250 million in revenue. **Goals:** Attract 10 vetted prospects with a defined project, budget and time frame to purchase. **DM Vehicle:** Candy-filled plastic pumpkin with personalized messaging (the second in a three-phase dimensional campaign). **Response:** 1.4 percent of recipients advanced to a personalized URL, and response from top-level decision makers jumped.

TASTY TREATS: Candy-filled plastic pumpkins sparked curiosity, causing recipients to wonder why they were receiving the mailer after Halloween.

HELPFUL TRICKS: This personalized booklet explains the company’s Zero Disappointment Retail solutions and how it can benefit marketers.