

# A Client Success Story

## Improved Sales by 10% with Free Ice Cream and 800 New Contacts

**G**ail Patrick's Café in Chappaqua, N.Y., had a loyal following, especially since owners Gail and Patrick Filacchione had been running their own catering business for 30 years before opening the restaurant in 2009. Most customers were coming through the door because they had heard about the business from a friend, not because of any direct marketing efforts from the restaurant. Not



a bad thing, of course, but the café wanted to start marketing for itself. So in late 2010, they worked with David Fischer, founder of marketing firm Solutions for Growth, and focused on creating entertaining and engaging email newsletters.

In the beginning, there was one big problem: Patrick and Gail didn't have any email contacts. Luckily, that only proved to be a temporary setback. With David's help, Gail Patrick's Café went from having no contacts to over 800 a year later, and launching email campaigns that increased sales by about 10%. Not bad, considering the café launched the first campaign in late November 2010.

### Email Marketing for the New Year

Since Gail Patrick's Café has been involved in email marketing for just over a year, we thought the café's strategies this year could help small businesses and organizations that are thinking about new marketing programs.

David says that if you're just starting off with email marketing, or looking to make it more effective, one thing above all others is crucial: "Businesses have to have a plan. As long as they have one and stick to it, they're likely to see sales improve," he explains. Solutions for Growth helps organizations with the hardest part: consistency. "Businesses don't often have the capacity to maintain a schedule and don't have the time to create email campaigns, so that's where we come in."

### Building a Contact List with a Lucky Draw

Gail Patrick's Café may have solid email campaigns in place now, but that's not what it looked like last year. So, let's turn back time and follow the business from day one.

First, David and Patrick brainstormed ways to encourage customers to give email addresses without being overbearing, and settled on a raffle that continues today. "Every month, people just fill out a little slip of paper with their names and email addresses, and they're entered into a raffle that can win them a free lunch for two on a weekly basis," David explains. Patrick adds that the deposit box itself has a "Join our mailing list!" sign, so people will expect to start receiving emails from the café.

*Over, please*

The next step was trickier – figuring out what would be in each monthly newsletter. After all, people would probably open one email from Gail Patrick’s Café to see what’s inside but, if the newsletter didn’t entice or engage them, there was a risk that they would unsubscribe.

Patrick and David designed an editorial calendar for the newsletter content and, ultimately, decided that variety would be best. Subscribers can find everything from news about local events to articles about different types of food. However, there’s always one definitive reason for readers to open the email: a coupon.

David says that coupons are fundamental to his retail email marketing “litmus test.” “Everything you write in a newsletter has to answer one question: ‘What’s in it for the reader?’”

Coupons keep people opening emails and content keeps them engaged. Sometimes, the content relates to the offers. If there’s an article about frozen yogurt, for example, you may just find a coupon for that same dessert when you look at the bottom of the newsletter.

### Frozen Yogurt that Heats up Sales

In fact, there’s some power behind initiatives like the frozen yogurt email campaign. As one of the few Constant Contact Accredited Solution Providers, David keeps careful track of each and every email that



the café sends. “In August, we sent out a newsletter about frozen yogurt, with a coupon attached, so that if someone bought one frozen yogurt or ice cream, they got another free,” he says. “Just over 60 people came to the café to redeem their coupon, and most of them bought other things, too.”

The café saw a 10% increase in sales that David says is a direct result from the email newsletter. Other campaigns with coupons have had similar results.

What can be learned from Gail Patrick’s Café is that, when a business starts a marketing campaign, it can be best to use the resources it already has, whatever they may be. The café started with no online contacts, but used free lunches to get in touch with people outside the store, and ice cream to keep them coming back — and encourage them to their friends, too.



“The important part for businesses to realize is that getting an email address and keeping that subscriber engaged is worth a lot more than a free lunch,” David says. “And getting more people into the store is worth more than a scoop of ice cream.”

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