

PARTYLITE FANS THE FLAMES OF SUCCESS WITH IMN E-NEWSLETTERS

A Company Ignited by Relationship-Based Selling

PartyLite®, a major Brand of Blyth, Inc. (NYSE: BTH), is the largest direct seller of candles and home accessories in the world, conducting business in 13 countries on three continents. Since 1973, the company has fanned the flames of its success by developing highly personalized customer relationships. Consumers purchase PartyLite products at home shows, and stay in touch with the company through local consultants. This relationship-based selling strategy has lit a path to corporate growth. Today, in North America alone, PartyLite has approximately 46,000 active consultants, including 37,000 active consultants in the United States.

Internet Revolution Kindles New Opportunities

About six years ago, PartyLite U.S. embraced a new opportunity to extend its direct selling model. The company established an extranet to enter customer orders, thereby providing a rich and untapped repository of customer data.



"We wanted to give our consultants fresh opportunities to stay in touch with their customers," said Peggi Peaslee, manager, extranet services at PartyLite. "Why not put our database filled with great customer information, including e-mail addresses, to good use? The next logical step was to make customer e-newsletters available."

To leverage the enormous potential of this e-communications strategy, PartyLite chose IMN (iMakeNews, Inc.) as its trusted e-marketing partner. IMN offers Party Pulse™, an e-communications service designed specifically for the direct selling industry. Party Pulse facilitates communication

to multiple tiers – corporate-to-consultant and consultant-to-customer – through e-newsletters that build network-wide relationships, maximize the effectiveness of selling events, and drive higher sales performance.

With the Web-based Party Pulse service, PartyLite can easily communicate with its consultants on an ongoing basis, keeping them up to date regarding new products, promotions, sales incentives, and selling techniques. At the same time, Party Pulse makes it easy for PartyLite consultants to stay in touch with their network through a personalized e-newsletter that provides product highlights and engaging lifestyle content created specifically for the target market. With IMN's multi-tier e-communications service, PartyLite is able to enhance consultants' sales performance and foster stronger relationships at all levels of the selling network – all while maintaining control over corporate branding and messages.

Offering powerful reporting and analytics, IMN Party Pulse enables PartyLite to gain valuable insight into customer interests and preferences, helping the company to plan future promotions, drive new product development, and enhance forecasting to minimize back-orders and sell-outs. What's more, Party Pulse analytics show PartyLite what content interests readers the most, so the company can continually improve the e-newsletter over time to increase customers' brand loyalty.

Candle Connection Sparks Customer Interest

Working with IMN, PartyLite successfully launched its e-newsletter, *Candle Connection*, to all its U.S. consultants. The number of users has grown in number from 6,729 to 14,000 in the past three years and now cumulatively they send over one million issues to customers each month. PartyLite's Canadian and German operations recently started offering the Party Pulse e-newsletter service to their consultants as well.

Using IMN's Party Pulse service, which includes content management, design, subscription management, data analysis, CAN-SPAM compliance and more, PartyLite centrally develops, distributes and analyzes results of every *Candle Connection* e-newsletter send. Although the e-newsletters are produced and distributed from PartyLite's Plymouth, MA headquarters, each issue appears to have been sent from an individual consultant to her "exclusive" customers. Content in each consultant's e-newsletter is identical; PartyLite simply inserts all variable fields, including consultants' names, photos, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and web site links, to personalize the e-communication. The result? PartyLite controls corporate branding and key messages - even as thousands of consultants communicate monthly with their customers through an appealing, engaging, and personal e-newsletter.

Candle Connection conveys images of beauty, warmth, and family living through its elegant design and captivating photos. Each issue contains on average four articles on hostess specials (rewards for hosting PartyLite events), entertainment and decorating tips, guest specials (purchasing incentives), consultant opportunities, and other timely messages.

According to Peaslee, customers genuinely look forward to receiving the newsletters, and many read them immediately upon receipt. Each issue has an open rate of about 46%, and 9% of those who open an issue click through to the hostess specials. About 6% click to the entertainment and decorating tips and information on guest specials. Of the people who open the newsletter, 26% spend more than three minutes reading the issue. Best of all, *Candle Connection* boasts an extremely low opt-out rate of less than 1% per month.

Illuminating Data for Sales and Marketing

Party Pulse's reporting and data analysis services enable PartyLite and its consultants to adapt their communications, marketing, and sales strategies based on customer behaviors. In addition to monitoring open rates and click-throughs, PartyLite can study page views, delivery rates, and navigation patterns according to several variables (by

day of the week, week of the month, issue date, topic and article content, subject lines, etc.). Detailed readership reports help PartyLite understand which articles and product features interest readers the most, so they plan future e-newsletter content accordingly and increase readership with each send.

Party Pulse reports also help PartyLite identify readership trends related to e-newsletter send schedules. "For instance, we have learned to send newsletters close to the weekend, when our customers have more time to read them," said Peaslee. "That's when they will open them almost instantly. We also e-mail them toward the end of the month, when incentives for customers to host PartyLite events are most effective."

The e-newsletters often drive immediate customer orders, as well as offers from customers to host a home show. In addition, they provide up-selling and cross-selling opportunities. For instance, if a consultant has just mailed a newsletter featuring Coral Hibiscus-scented candles, she has the chance to highlight related items, such as the Coral Hibiscus votive pair and other accessories, at her next event. What's more, because the e-newsletters are personalized with the consultant's contact information, the customer knows who to call to place an order, book a party or have questions answered, rather than calling PartyLite directly.

PartyLite consultants often study the data before making follow-up customer calls. "Cold calls are tough for many consultants, but Party Pulse makes calling more natural," Peaslee said. "For example, if a consultant knows that a customer has read an article on this month's hostess specials, there is a good chance that she'll welcome a call related to hosting a party."

Burning To Do More

PartyLite expects to delve further into Party Pulse's reporting tools to fine tune results – adapting templates to better suit reader behavior. In addition, the company may consider using Party Pulse's customer segmentation features to develop more strategic mailings on a region-by-region basis.

Since its inception, PartyLite has always been driven to succeed, and the widespread adoption of electronic communications has introduced new opportunities to propel the company to new levels of growth and profitability. With the help of IMN Party Pulse, PartyLite is confidently forging ahead – lighting the path to deeper customer relationships, enhanced brand loyalty, and higher sales volume.