

## CASE STUDY FROM MASS EMAIL TO 1:1-MARKETING

There has been a fundamental change in the use of emails for marketing of services and products: Permission marketing is the magic word. A business, which has followed this change consistently, and which uses an innovative software solution, is the marketing agency GFB & Partner - with branches in Munich, Salzburg, Innsbruck and Zell am See. We met the director Stephan Kalinka in Munich to find out how GFB uses email marketing for their clients.

The interview was performed by Lothar Witte, a freelance management (corporate/executive) consultant for eBusiness and new media.



*Stephan Kalinka  
Agenturleiter  
GFB & Partner München*

### INTERVIEW *(translated)*

**Question: “Mr Kalinka, can you give me an overview of GFB & Partner’s marketing services?”**

“GFB & Partner is a full service marketing agency. My department is the Munich office. There we look after around 50 clients in tourism, sport and lifestyle, and deliver full service in all aspects of marketing. We also advise them in strategies for their internet appearance, create concepts and develop all possibilities for advertising on the internet, and support them when using email marketing tools - for permission marketing for services and products through emails and SMS. Quality instead of quantity is our doctrine - to the advantage of our clients.”

**Question: “What are the most significant factors for successful newsletter campaigns?”**

“A significant factor is that the information presented in our newsletters is attractive. Another important point is that the selected addresses are of a high quality. This is the only way we reach the right target groups with our newsletter transfers. The third important factor is that we are supported by a powerful, state of the art email marketing system which is easy to use and intuitive with a high degree of automation - a system which relieves us from doing routine work in all phases of our newsletter campaigns.”

**Question: “Which quality characteristics are the most important in terms of the content and appearance of your newsletters?”**

“Let me start by mentioning a negative example from our past: Years ago we produced uniform (standard) mass emails in text format with simple software solutions. Compared to today there was less work involved, though the response was significantly less as well.

Today we design our information material exclusively in HTML emails. They are clearly laid out and easier to read in comparison to text emails. This is reinforced with matching colours, photos, graphics and text elements. Through this strategy we increase the attractiveness of our newsletters, which means that the opening rate is over 60%, and click and response rates are increased by many percent.

Additional engagement is achieved through personalisation of the HTML emails. The personal greeting with the recipient’s name helps to generate interest in the content. Personalised text emails are also used alongside HTML emails, though only to reach recipients with older email systems.”

**Question: “What role does the quality of addresses play?”**

“Again a negative example upfront: Email transfers which are carried out using unchecked address profiles will lead to disappointing response rates. Those spam mailings can also be legally challenged. In permission marketing we solely work with carefully reviewed and selected address profiles. Those are addresses which visitors submit in an online form on the clients website and which are approved in a second step. GFB uses the generally approved double opt-in method.”

**Question: “Which software does GFB & Partner use to reach such high quality goals?”**

“We’ve been using the ASP solution EVALANCHE from SC Networks for many years now, and have been using the new release EVALANCHE V3 since 2007. This software runs on a fail safe ASP platform in the service data processing center. We login via a browser and a secure SSL connection from our normal work place.

After logging in we can work on several projects in parallel. The intuitive graphic user interface supports all phases of the newsletter transfer: the maintenance and selection of addresses, the design and personalisation of HTML and text emails, the building and integration of feedback forms, the online monitoring of the transfer and the concluding success control through the analysis of feedback and statistical data.

We currently use EVALANCHE to service over 50 accounts for our clients and we are sending newsletters to approximately 1 million private clients, who have subscribed to our newsletters.”

**Question: “How do you construct the concluding success control?”**

“Every newsletter transfer ends with a success control. The link tracking offered by EVALANCHE yields precious information. The link on every webpage of every email is automatically encoded in a special way, so that we can later determine which link the recipients have clicked on and how often. This way we get clear feedback on which propositions in our email were perceived as valuable and which weren't, allowing us to optimise our email content in future campaigns.

The most precious success control EVALANCHE offers is the interactive online form generator. This enables anyone to create feedback forms without any HTML programming skills, adjust their colour, layout and font to the client's CI and easily integrate the forms into the client's website. Links within the HTML email lead the recipient to the website where they have the option to submit their address details. Every response created this way can clearly be assigned to one person. This enables us to create a 1:1 dialogue with this individual.”

**Question: “Can you give us details about the average costs and time involved in the execution of a newsletter transfer?”**

“I'll use the example of a monthly newsletter transfer for a hotel where we send HTML emails with custom designed content and layout to approximately 5000 recipients, all of whom are regular guests and interested parties who subscribed on the website.

All costs for the HTML design of the newsletter and for the transfer including analysis of the feedback are approximately 1000 Euro. This comes to 20 eurocents per recipient. The actual transfer (including personalisation and individualisation) takes approximately 1 to 5 minutes per newsletter.

Those are dream prices compared to the costs and the time involved in creating and sending traditional direct mailers. Depending on the complexity of the newsletter, the transfer of traditional mailers can be between 1.5 and 5 Euros per recipient. It also takes a lot more time. And the biggest downfall of direct mailers is the missing feedback from the recipient.”

**Questions: “What possibilities are there for your clients to use EVALANCHE themselves?”**

“Some of our clients use our full service. Others want to plan and drive their marketing campaign themselves under their own label.

In this case the client structure of EVALANCHE is very useful. This structure enables us to cater for the whole bandwidth of our clients wishes. All we have to do is to create a new client account with password protection within our own global account. Immediately after the setup our clients are able to use the software the way we do. Our own workspace and the workspace of our clients are clearly separated through user permissions.”

**Question: “How does the software create differentiated invoices for all your clients?”**

“EVALANCHE gives us the freedom to choose the suitable rates for each project. Based on the rates we individually decide on with every client we can automatically print out a complete invoice at the end of the month by clicking one button. This invoice considers the fluctuating volume rates - depending on email and SMS usage - as well as the basic fees for the initialisation of system resources. This automation is essential for efficient commercial use.

Further efficiencies are realized through the integrated CMS tool in EVALANCHE. It enables the creation of templates for HTML newsletters. This way staff can administer text, graphics and links to websites in a newsletter in an easy manner and without HTML programming skills.

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