

BlueHornet Case Study: KFC “Doubles Down”

Combines Email and Social to Drive Increased Engagement



KFC Corporation, based in Louisville, Ky., is the world’s most popular chicken restaurant chain specializing in Original Recipe®, Extra Crispy™, Kentucky Grilled Chicken® and Crispy Strips with home-style sides, Honey BBQ Wings, and freshly made chicken sandwiches including the Double Down™ and the Doublicious™. There are more than 15,000 KFC outlets in 109 countries and territories around the world serving some 12 million customers each day. KFC Corporation is a subsidiary of Yum! Brands, Inc., the world’s largest restaurant company in terms of system restaurants with nearly 38,000 restaurants in more than 110 countries and territories. Yum! is ranked #216 on the Fortune 500 List and generated revenues of more than \$11 billion in 2010.

Challenge:

Capitalize on existing social momentum

The KFC marketing team began experimenting with social media marketing in 2010, by adding social sharing buttons to their communications and measuring results. When they took a look at the subscribers in their email database who had clicked these social sharing buttons in a KFC email, they found surprising results: In addition to sharing KFC emails on social sites, these subscribers actively engaged in other ways with the email program, showing *open and click-through rates 70% higher than the average subscriber*. Once they recognized that their most active email subscribers were sharing news about KFC on social networking sites, they recognized an opportunity to find additional brand advocates on their social sites who may be interested in joining the Colonel’s Email Club.

Need:

Tap existing and create new social influencers

KFC defined a “social influencer” as someone who was sharing news about their brand on social networks. They wanted to turn as many existing Colonel’s Email Club subscribers into social influencers as possible by encouraging them to share news about KFC on social networks. They also needed a way to ensure that social influencers knew about and were participating in their email program.



Solution:

A two-pronged campaign increases email engagement and social exposure

Step 1: Use Email Marketing to Drive Social Sharing

KFC’s first opportunity to integrate social and email came with the promotion of a new sandwich—the Double Down. To initiate some buzz, KFC decided to use the April Fool’s Day holiday to “pre-announce” the product to consumers. Because the sandwich was so visually compelling, the team felt that email provided the most effective way to show the sandwich and encourage loyal Colonel’s Email Club subscribers to spread the word. The subject line read, “The KFC Double Down is Real! No Fooling.” The email contained very little content, just a product shot and a simple call to action—to share the news with their friends via social media.



Double Down Email Campaign Results: Opens, Shares, Web Traffic, and Opt-Ins Dramatically Increase

- The email saw a 40% open-rate (KFC's highest open rate to-date).
- Within the first 24 hours, the email received over 12,000 shares on Facebook and Twitter combined.
- The social media snowball effect created 3 million additional impressions.
- The phrase "Double Down" quickly rose to #2 on Google's Hot Search list and #3 on Yahoo's Buzz Index.
- Visuals of the email were highlighted on numerous news stations and national talk shows.
- Overall traffic to KFC.com sustained a 29% increase due to the buzz surrounding the product launch.
- Facebook and Twitter became two of KFC's top traffic referrers, rankings normally held by the top search engines.
- Opt-ins for the email club went up 30% during this pre-announcement time span.

"We knew the visual of a bun-less sandwich was a great conversation starter, so this was the perfect opportunity to integrate social media sharing into an email campaign. We simply got the ball rolling and our social influencers provided all the momentum. We were amazed that the simplicity of the campaign generated such national attention."

Scott Geiser

**Manager, Digital Marketing & Emerging Media
KFC Corporation**

Step 2: Use Social Media to Drive Email Subscriptions

The wildly successful results of the Double Down campaign prompted KFC to identify further ways to engage their email subscribers and social influencers. Using SocialLoop™, the social email solution from BlueHornet and Shoutlet, KFC implemented an email signup widget on their Facebook page. The SocialLoop widget automatically puts email club subscriptions directly into KFC's BlueHornet email database, where it is segmented by the Facebook acquisition channel. The solution was easy to implement—in less than a day, the form was up and running.

SocialLoop Signup Results: Social Engagement Drives 3% of Email Sign-ups

The KFC Facebook page now drives 3% of all email sign-ups. Quality of the signups gathered from the Facebook page remains high. "We have grown our email database slowly and organically," Geiser says. "That has really paid dividends for us. We have a substantial following and tremendous trust in the brand." KFC also plans to use the data collected from this page for further segmentation by zip code, and collect ongoing data from users over time.



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