



# Solutions Through Knowledge

## Hunter Mountain Fully Integrates Marketing Initiatives for Effective, Targeted Customer Relations and Communications

### RESULTS

- Gained efficiencies from integrated email and direct mail databases.
- Saves staff time and allows a new campaign rollout quickly based on factors that affect business flow.
- Hits 10,000 to 100,000 more impressions with LTG's integrated system.
- Return on investment has gone way up.

### Background

Hunter Mountain, located in New York's Catskill Mountains, is a four-season resort serving day and destination guests from New York City, Long Island, Westchester County, and Connecticut. In addition to winter and summer activities at the mountain, there is also a timeshare hotel called The Catskill Mountain Club (KMC) and luxury units above the resort's main base lodge are currently under construction.

When Marketing Director Rob Megnin arrived at the resort more than five years ago, direct marketing services and the resort's database management system were archaic. Megnin inherited a master database that had been created, literally, by hand. Staff would collect guest information through season pass and rental applications or other in-resort paper forms and then manually enter the information one at a time into the resort's dated database software. Every mailing was handled by in-house staff, stuffing paper into envelopes one at a time. Email communications were sent out through the resort's ISP in mass, resulting in clogged servers and a high SPAM rate.

"We would send out a mass of paper in a manila folder to every contact in our database," said Megnin. "We didn't have any way to generate more names or new leads or create targeted lists, and if I needed to send something out at a moment's notice to a specific group, I couldn't. Everything we did was very labor intensive and time consuming. When I arrived, these were things that needed to be addressed right away."

Without an efficient way to gather information about his customers, or to organize and segment that information and then use it to communicate relevant, personal and timely messages, Megnin was wasting precious staff time and valuable marketing resources. He turned to Leisure Trends Group (LTG) and its Customer Relationship Management (CRM) program to effectively communicate with existing and prospective guests.



### Challenges for Hunter Mountain

Megnin needed to address several issues:

- Find a dynamic database system to integrate all areas of direct marketing that would allow him to create campaigns with targeted offers to guests with specific interests.
- Eliminate the pressures existing direct marketing campaigns placed on marketing staff, production and software/hardware systems.
- Create a data capturing method that was effective and efficient regardless of where the information came from and then manage that data in real time.

Megnin called on Leisure Trends' CRM division to put a plan in place. And while he expected he would receive the "tools" that would help him conquer his challenges, he never expected to receive the outstanding level of customer service that came with bringing LTG onboard as a strategic partner.

### The Solution

"My account manager is one of the main reasons why I stay with Leisure Trends," said Megnin. "The one-on-one she gives me is amazing. She knows when all of my programs are supposed to hit and gently cues me of that. I don't even have to look at a calendar anymore. There's nothing I can't throw at her. From an experiential standpoint she's one of the best I've ever dealt with and a tremendous asset to have. They make me look good all the time."



LTG solved key issues for Megnin:

- **Database Management**—LTG created a relational database with reporting capabilities and ultimately tied this database to the Exact Target email system so data and lists flow seamlessly between the two systems. This means that all of Hunter's customer information and data is in one dynamic system that allows staff at Hunter to create targeted email or direct mail lists.
- **Database Capture**—LTG set up a Customer Registration (CR) program on-site at Hunter. LTG provided Megnin with all the tools necessary to capture customer data including forms, distribution and collection boxes, pens, and even air bills to return the forms to LTG for data entry. The CR program collects contact, demographic and lifestyle information about Hunter's guests and the data is uploaded into the database for future use with direct mail and email marketing initiatives. Currently, Hunter uses an online version of the program in which business cards are handed out at touch points at the resort. The business cards drive recipients to Hunter's website to complete a survey and earn a chance to win a prize. All of this experiential information is now housed in Hunter's master database at LTG.
- **Email Distribution Services**—The Exact Target email system allows staff at Hunter to create email blasts with templates, a photo library, text/HTML options, and more. Hunter is now approaching nearly 1 million "sends" annually and has analytical tools to measure campaigns, which it didn't have before. The system is so dynamic and fully integrated with the master database that Megnin can capture customer information via email and use it in his next direct mail campaign, or vice versa.

- **Direct Mail Services**—LTG works along side the Hunter staff from start to finish on the resort's direct mail campaigns, from generating specific targeted lists through the mail processing and delivery to the post office. Information from the database management portion of LTG's services is integrated into the entire direct mail process each time there is a new campaign.

"We now have a dashboard where we can see how we're doing with data gathering at specific points of collection like rental or food and beverage," said Megnin. "It's a lot more scientific than it ever was and we now have a much higher return on open rates and click-throughs with our email blasts. We can read the history of guests, learn when they visit, and now have the ability to turn around a program quickly. It's very powerful."

### The Results

Prior to using LTG's services, Megnin admits he just simply couldn't do it all. He has gained efficiencies from integrated email and direct mail databases. This saves his staff time and allows him to roll out a new campaign quickly based on factors that affect his business flow, such as weather (no snow, rain, or a huge snowstorm), or by driving traffic into a specific time period or for an event.

"The expense in my direct marketing line item has grown but the return on my investment has gone way up as well," said Megnin. "I am hitting 10,000 to 100,000 more impressions than I was prior to using this integrated system. LTG has the knowledge of direct marketing and the knowledge of snowsports. They help craft new ideas and bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to the program. I absolutely attribute part of our success to working with these guys."

For more information about Direct Marketing Services at Leisure Trends Group, contact Jorja Darby at 802.773.3131 or [jdarby@leisuretrends.com](mailto:jdarby@leisuretrends.com).



Corporate Office  
1680 38th Street  
Suite 110  
Boulder, CO 80301

Phone: 888.732.7373

Email: [info@leisuretrends.com](mailto:info@leisuretrends.com)

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## About Leisure Trends Group

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