

Chocolate Works Builds Sweet Franchise Network with Constant Contact Online Marketing

When humans began fermenting and roasting cocoa beans millennia ago, they couldn't have imagined where it would lead in the 21st century.

Today, annual chocolate sales in the US top \$20 billion. And in 2011—the latest year for which figures are available—the average citizen consumed about 10 pounds of the stuff. That's the equivalent of a hundred chocolate bars!

This is good news for Chocolate Works. An offshoot of the legendary family-owned 5th Avenue Chocolatière, the company delivers everything chocolate—along with a huge assortment of candy, fruit, nuts and other snacks—through its network of franchise stores located in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut.

Each franchise location has an event space for birthday parties and workshops. They also offer gift baskets, custom logo treats for the corporate world and a range of custom-designed favors for all occasions.

Thanks in part to a strong partnership with Constant Contact they are growing fast - very fast. In fact, by the time you read this, their network will likely have expanded from 14 stores to 18, with another 24 in the works.

Partnering for fast and furious growth

When growing a franchise network that quickly, marketing is critical. In the digital age, that means email and online marketing first and foremost.



Customer at a Glance

Name:

Chocolate Works

Location:

Freeport, NY

Number of franchisees:

14 and growing fast

Customer since:

2013

URL:

www.chocolateworks.com



Chocolate Works COO Sherri Adler is well aware of this. And she knew exactly the kind of email marketing organization she needed to help with the task.

“When I came on board I looked into the usual suspects when it comes to email marketing companies,” she says, “and I saw that Constant Contact was the only one that could offer the kind of partnership we were after.”

An important component of that partnership is Constant Contact’s free, award-winning support. It ensures that all Chocolate Works franchisees, whether technically savvy or not, get the help they need when they need it. This leaves Adler and the corporate team free to focus on other ways to grow the business.

“I need a turnkey approach and companies that are willing to support their products,” Adler explains. “I’d much rather the franchisee call Constant Contact and ask how to upload their contact list than to call me, because I just don’t have that kind of bandwidth.”

In short, the only way Chocolate Works can expand so rapidly, says Adler, is “by having strong partners like Constant Contact to help us and our franchisees.”

Templates for quick and easy emails

At the core of Chocolate Works online marketing efforts is email marketing. That’s not surprising when you consider that research firm VB Insight says email marketing is consistently “the highest revenue generating marketing channel,” and that participants in their email marketing study reported “an average of 222 percent ROI.”¹

They also note that email marketing is set to grow, as marketers learn to take better advantage of the tools available to help them and “embrace more personalization/automation features” for targeting customers.²

¹ Email marketing, that digital workhorse, primed to grow in 2015.
<http://venturebeat.com/2015/04/07/email-marketing-that-digital-workhorse-primed-to-grow-in-2015/>

² Ibid.

QUOTE

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Chief Operating Officer
Chocolate Works

Chocolate Works is ahead of the curve on this. They use Constant Contact's customized email templates to generate emails at the corporate office that franchisees then modify to address local market needs.

As an example, Adler cites a recent Easter email campaign.

"We created an email with space to add content like 'Come and meet the Easter Bunny,' or 'Join in an Easter egg hunt,' or 'Decorate your own egg,' that sort of thing, so that each franchisee could focus on the type of event they were holding."

With the number of franchisees growing quickly, Adler knows the company's Constant Contact templates will save more and more time by enabling the corporate office to engage franchisees in the marketing process – the results of which have already proven significant and measurable.

Significant and measurable results

The benefits of the event-centered, customized email approach through Constant Contact were made very clear to Chocolate Works after a recent major email campaign.

"After Valentine's Day we really looked at the data," says Adler, "and we saw how much our franchisees used Constant Contact, and who used it and who didn't."

Adler gathered this information using the Constant Contact Franchise Administration Portal, a centralized location for managing all aspects of the company's online marketing activities. The portal helps her stay on top of franchisees' performance and provide data points to motivate underperformers.

"We had a big franchise-wide meeting after Valentine's Day," she explains, and I said 'Look, these franchisees used Constant Contact and their sales were 10-15% better than those that didn't use it.' "

It didn't hurt that the franchisee that makes the most frequent use of Constant Contact is also their most successful store, providing a powerful incentive for other franchisees to leverage the marketing

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tools that Constant Contact makes available to them on a more regular basis.

Party! Party! Party!

One particular challenge when marketing a product often associated with Easter, Valentine's Day and other special times is keeping sales consistent throughout the calendar year.

Chocolate Works has successfully met this challenge with a business model that focuses on chocolate-themed special events. Birthday parties for children or adults, bachelorette parties, ladies nights, school and camp trips and similar events make up an important revenue stream, and Constant Contact is the key to getting news of these events out to consumers.

Just the start

Chocolate Works has been building their franchise network for two years now. And their partnership with Constant Contact, along with impeccably high-quality products, has driven their remarkable success.

In some ways though, the benefits of their partnership with Constant Contact are just beginning.

"As we build our new website," says Adler, "we will capture more email addresses. We want to make sure our franchisees' microsites include the Constant Contact 'Join My Mailing List' feature, to automatically push new email subscribers to their accounts without them having to do it themselves."

She adds that "In one of the Constant Contact tutorials we learned how to push out social media campaigns, and that's something we'd like to do more of in the future. And a colleague who was on another tutorial was telling me about Constant Contact's survey feature and how cool it is, and we are looking at how we might use that."

QUOTE

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Sherri Adler

*Chief Operating Officer
Chocolate Works*

FRANCHISE CASE STUDY

Constant Contact will continue to help Chocolate Works grow with its full suite of great online marketing tools along with its strong support. So Adler's answer when asked if she'd recommend Constant Contact to other franchise networks isn't surprising.

"Absolutely I'd recommend Constant Contact," she says. "There are lots of franchises out there that can't do it all in-house, and Constant Contact is something they could really benefit from."

About Constant Contact

Constant Contact makes it simple and fast for restaurant franchises to grow. We have been revolutionizing the success formula for franchises since 1998, and today work with more than 850 franchise brands. Our all-in-one online marketing platform helps drive new and repeat traffic into your restaurants and keep existing franchisees happy; all with centralized and local controls to maintain a consistent brand and a local feel. Only Constant Contact makes online marketing simple for both you and your franchisees with affordable, easy-to-use tools, free award-winning support, do-it-for-me services and an extensive network of educators, consultants and technology partners. Through its Innovation Loft, Constant Contact is fueling the next generation of restaurant marketing technology.