

DaySpring Case Study

DaySpring increases effectiveness of email campaigns by reducing delivery time from three weeks to one day



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Stephen Bos
Director of Customer Strategy – Internet
DaySpring



DaySpring
Siloam Springs, AR
www.dayspring.com

Industry
Consumer Goods Manufacturer

Employees
450

Return on Investment

- > More frequent marketing mailings
- > Improved transactional e-card service
- > Improved performance of internal systems

Key Benefits

- > Increased scalability
- > Improved and expedited email delivery
- > > 100% visibility into deliverability
- > Support for email authentication
- > Easy integration into existing data center with custom and third-party applications
- > Low maintenance

Products & Services

- > StrongMail® Message Studio
- > StrongMail® Email Integration Server
- > StrongDelivery Tools

Integrated Business Assets

- > Microsoft SQL Server
- > Off-site Data Center
- > Yahoo! E-Commerce Platform

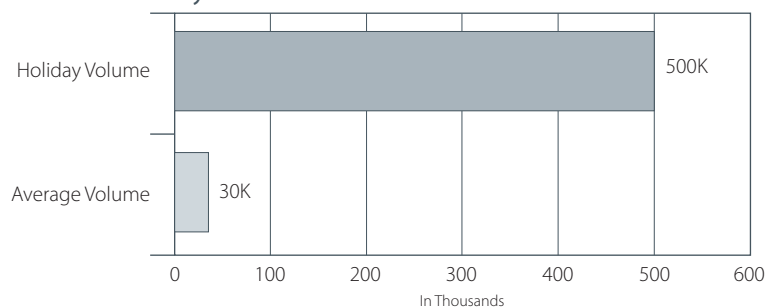
Improving Transactional Services and Marketing Campaign Performance

DaySpring is a leading manufacturer and distributor of Christian greeting cards and other gifts. A wholly-owned subsidiary of Hallmark, DaySpring offers thousands of products through more than 10,000 retail outlets worldwide. Many of its products, including its popular e-card service, are available through its website, which attracts 45,000 visitors daily.

The daily traffic to Dayspring.com generates a significant volume of email as visitors make purchases, send e-cards and opt-in for marketing communications. The process of delivering transactional and marketing email became especially challenging during holiday periods, where visitors would generate upwards of 500,000 e-cards a day. With each e-card generating three emails, this extremely high volume placed a large burden on its existing email system and affected its ability to send out its transactional and marketing email. Given the time-sensitive nature of e-cards, any delay could result in customer complaints or attrition.

In order to support its escalating email volume, DaySpring began looking for a reliable and cost-effective solution that would be able to scale with its seasonal peaks and growing customer base.

Daily Transactional E-Card Volumes



High-Level Project Goals

- > Manage peaks in transactional e-card volume
- > Send marketing email faster and more frequently
- > Gain scalability to meet future needs
- > Increase email deliverability rates and visibility
- > Integrate with off-site data center
- > Leverage email authentication

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A Challenging Email Environment

Prior to StrongMail, DaySpring generated marketing email with Gammadyne Mailer and transactional email through an integration with its Microsoft SQL Server database. The email was then delivered over a network of IMail servers. As the company's email volumes grew, the system was unable to handle the higher volume of emails generated by its email marketing campaigns and seasonal e-card activity. Furthermore, the system provided no visibility into deliverability and had extremely inefficient bounce management tools.

“When we sent out a large mailing, the volume of bounce messages coming back would shut down internal systems,” said Stephen Bos, business unit director for Internet activities at DaySpring. “Gammadyne Mailer would scan mailboxes and look for bounces, but it took forever and was very resource intensive.”

Sending out marketing emails was also problematic. Due to the list size, and the limited capabilities of their existing email infrastructure, it would take about three weeks to send to the entire list. Not only did the three-week time frame pose problems for time-sensitive messages, it also prevented them from sending out email marketing campaigns in more frequent intervals.

Why StrongMail?

Given their scalability and visibility problems, DaySpring knew they needed to find a better solution. After evaluating solutions from IronPort and services from CheetaMail and other email service providers (ESPs), they found that an in-house commercial solution from StrongMail provided the best platform for solving their email challenges around their marketing efforts and transition-based e-card service.

“Our previous solution lacked the infrastructure necessary to solve our transactional e-card problems,” explains Bos. “With StrongMail we could solve our issues with both transactional and marketing email.”

StrongMail's high-performance architecture provided the perfect solution to solve the bottleneck and visibility issues with its marketing email. Now, DaySpring's e-card volume doesn't affect its ability to send out marketing email. The improved performance allows DaySpring to send out an email marketing campaign during a seasonal period of high e-card activity.

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Low Cost, High Rewards

Cost and deliverability were critical factors in DaySpring's decision to standardize on StrongMail's email platform. On the cost front, StrongMail offered all the capabilities DaySpring needed in a more affordable package than comparable solutions from a variety of ESPs.

“We were open to outsourcing, but it came down to cost,” explained Bos. “With the size of our lists and the frequency we wanted to do, it was the cost. Over time, StrongMail would pay for itself. It has already made an impact in driving customers to DaySpring.com.”

With a mailing list approaching two million names, DaySpring is able to control its mailing costs by using StrongMail instead of going with an ESP's less economical CPM cost-structure.

High-Performance Architecture Speeds Delivery

StrongMail's high-performance architecture also played a major role in improving the frequency of its marketing email. With StrongMail, DaySpring can now handle the high email volume that is generated by simultaneous holiday marketing campaigns and e-card activity. Plus, getting through large email lists in a timely manner is no longer an issue.

“By going to StrongMail, it has opened up opportunities to get our mail out faster,” explained Chris Gildner, manager of consumer technology at DaySpring. “We can do marketing email more frequently, and we can get through lists in one day instead of three weeks.”

Not only can DaySpring send out marketing email faster, they are more targeted and achieve better delivery rates. With StrongMail, DaySpring can handle the seasonal peaks in e-card emails and marketing campaigns, which enables the company to drive more revenue and ensure the quality of its anchor e-card service.

Increased Visibility Leads to Improved Deliverability

In terms of deliverability, StrongMail provides DaySpring with the visibility and tools to identify and correct any delivery problems. Identifying deliverability issues was a major priority, but prior to StrongMail they didn't have the resources to address it.

“In the early days, AOL didn't care what we were doing, but as our scale expanded we had to get smarter about deliverability, like dealing with white lists and blacklists, and deliverability to different domains,” said Gildner. “With StrongMail, we can build lists faster and test faster. It's expedited our delivery.”

By using StrongMail's bounce management capabilities and StrongDelivery Tools, DaySpring is able to identify problems, monitor where its email ends up at the major ISPs and corporate domains, and be notified of any blacklisting events. And because of improved deliverability and the efficiency of its smart bounce management tools, StrongMail has eliminated the issues DaySpring previously had with processing large volumes of bounce messages from its email marketing campaigns.

StrongMail Live Updates also makes sure DaySpring uses the latest throttling limits, bounce codes and domain rules for optimal deliverability to the major ISP and corporate domains. Extremely powerful and easy to use, StrongMail

provides DaySpring with a comprehensive solution that can be effectively managed with minimal IT involvement.

“We are pretty lean in terms of internal staffing. So, we knew we would have to develop email management expertise or partner with someone who could solve problems about blacklists, deliverability rates, etc.,” said Gildner. “StrongMail offered the best solution for our needs.”

By partnering with StrongMail, DaySpring gained unprecedented visibility into deliverability rates and issues. In one instance, DaySpring used StrongDelivery Tools to quickly detect and solve a configuration problem with the company's firewall that was affecting email delivery.

Improved Deliverability with Email Authentication

After using StrongMail to gain visibility into the deliverability of its email, DaySpring discovered that email authentication would enable them to improve its delivery rates at key ISPs. Using StrongMail's integrated support for all emerging authentication protocols, DaySpring was able to get up and running quickly with the Domain Keys email authentication protocol with minimal IT support.

“Our increased visibility into deliverability made it apparent that we had some problems with certain ISPs junking our mailings because we weren't using authentication, so we knew we needed some form of authentication,” said Bos. “Being able to stratify issues like authentication and bring focus to it, that's been immensely valuable to us.”

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Chris Gildner, manager of consumer technology at DaySpring





About StrongMail Systems, Inc.

StrongMail's online marketing solutions for email and social media enable businesses to reach, engage and influence their target audience using the most powerful channels available to marketers today.

StrongMail gives email marketers the control and support they need to improve campaign performance, boost deliverability and lower costs, while also leveraging the power of social media to extend the reach of their campaigns and brand to new audiences. Combining an easy-to-use email marketing application, high-performance delivery system, viral-marketing tool, social media integration, and a wide range of deliverability, strategic and supporting services, StrongMail makes it possible for companies with all levels of resources and expertise to take advantage of its proven solutions.

Headquartered in Redwood City, CA, StrongMail's clients include global leaders across virtually every industry.

To learn more about StrongMail, please visit www.strongmail.com.

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StrongMail's Products and Services

Email Marketing Solutions

StrongMail's email marketing solutions empower marketers to drive the highest value from their email marketing programs. Our wide range of solutions combine StrongMail's industry-leading platform with the strategic and deliverability expertise to drive conversions, increase brand awareness and improve customer satisfaction.

Social Media Solutions

StrongMail's social media solutions were developed with a direct marketer's perspective in mind. Our products enable marketers to launch direct-response campaigns into social media and reach and identify key brand influencers across blogs, Twitter, Facebook and other social networks. Every social media product enables you to analyze and track campaign performance all the way through to the conversion so you can truly understand the business impact of your social media efforts.

Customer Acquisition Solutions

StrongMail's customer acquisition solutions enable marketers to leverage the combined power of email, social media and expert strategy to expand their reach to new audiences. StrongMail's next-generation referral marketing platform enables you to identify key influencers, motivate them to share your brand with their networks and create powerful influencer segments for future remarketing efforts.

Transactional Email Solutions

StrongMail's transactional email solutions enable marketers to take control of the branding, content and promotional elements of event-triggered email, such as order confirmations and shipping notices. A straight-forward integration with existing data sources and applications allows StrongMail to efficiently assemble and immediately deliver fully branded and personalized messages that properly reflect customer preferences, purchase history and previous interactions with your brand.

Email Strategy and Optimization

StrongMail complements its email marketing and social media solutions with a wide range of strategic services to provide the best practices, guidance and hands-on services that will enable you to optimize your online marketing programs for greater returns. Whether you're looking to acquire new customers, increase customer loyalty or improve campaign performance, StrongMail has the expertise to drive the highest ROI from your program investment.

High-Performance Email Technology

StrongMail overcomes the challenges of high-volume email delivery with a highly scalable, reliable and manageable system that can easily replace and consolidate underperforming commercial or open source MTAs. Free up IT resources with a proven platform that was specifically designed to overcome the challenges of today's ever-changing sending environment.

