

BECKLEY IMPORTS

The Backstory

Resigning as the head mechanic for the local Mercedes-Benz dealer, Steve Beckley opens his own shop, specializing in the repair and maintenance of European Import automobiles.

Through trial and error (and highly detailed record keeping) Beckley determines that neither television nor outdoor provide an acceptable return. Beckley finds direct mail is consistently the most cost-effective driver of his new customer acquisition program.

The shop grows to a fifteen bay facility serving Des Moines and central Iowa.

The Issue

Continued refinement of Beckley's mail program delivers a consistent 35 percent new customer acquisition rate, but each year approximately 20 percent of Beckley's customers sell their imported automobiles, or relocate out of the area.

Net growth stalls at 15 percent - a full 10 points less than necessary to achieve Beckley's exit strategy timetable.

The Solution

Chuck McKay suggests separate mailings be produced for the owners of each make of automobile (rather than one to all "Import Car Owners.") He recommends replacement of the traditional advertiser-focused copy by simple stories of the car, its owner, and the mechanic.

In February, 2010, the new postcards are designed, printed, and mailed. Sales in March of 2010 set an all-time record, up 29.9 percent from March of 2009. Sales continue at the elevated rate throughout 2010 and 2011.

In the process of preparing the company for sale, Steve Beckley notes that it's running well under his new manager, and profitability is at an all-time high. Steve Beckley is able to retire in 2012, retaining ownership of his company.

Steve Beckley, Owner
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