

Case Study: ACD Systems Doubles Response Rates with BlueHornet  
Double Opt-In Solutions

Authored by: ACD Systems and BlueHornet, Inc.



This document brought to you by  
The Email Experience Council, LLC

## More Partnerships.

BlueHornet® Case Studies

# ACD Systems Doubles Email Response Rates with BlueHornet Double Opt-In Solutions

ACD Systems (www.acdsee.com) is recognized worldwide as the leader in image management and technical illustration software. Their family of products gives consumers and professionals everything necessary to manage, create, edit, share, and publish content for print, presentation, and the Web. Email marketing has long been an important component of the company's take to market activities.

### Problem:

#### Large List, but Low Activity and High Vulnerability

ACD Systems collects email addresses from their users across several touch points. Their multi-channel approach to list growth has always produced a substantial database--historically several million addresses.

ACD gathers the largest percentage of email addresses through software trial downloads, especially those for their popular flagship product, ACDSee Photo Manager. However, the company faced declining response rates and lower conversions to full versions of their software. This occurrence was partly a result of the data collection techniques employed through ACD's previous email service provider. Because no systems were in place to ensure a closed-loop subscription process, many of the addresses entering their database were unmonitored or bogus.

Perhaps even more importantly, ACD's previous data collection methods left them vulnerable to malicious activity. Without a mechanism in place to protect their valuable customer database from so-called "honeypots" and other deliberately planted spam traps, ACD's email marketing team struggled with plunging delivery rates, ISP-level blocks, and consumer complaints. Their massive list, long considered a tremendous asset, was beginning to seem like a liability.

### Need:

#### Immediate List Clean Up and Long-Term Database Protection

ACD needed a way to clean up their customer list so they could drive higher sales and regain positive brand exposure from their email marketing campaigns. Their situation called for a two-pronged approach to provide immediate clean up of ACD Systems' existing list and built-in safety mechanisms to ensure long-term list hygiene.

### Solution:

#### BlueHornet's Comprehensive Double Opt-In (DOI) Program

First, BlueHornet's SureSend deliverability pros performed diagnostic delivery tests and other investigations to determine ACD's pain points. These included domain delivery reports to identify ISP-level blocks, authentication validation, and bounce trend analysis. BlueHornet conducted issue mediation with ISPs on ACD's behalf, removing them from blacklists by assuring the ISPs that the company was committed to moving to 100% Double Opt-In (DOI) data collection methods.



## More Partnerships.

BlueHornet® Case Studies

Next, ACD's BlueHornet account development manager worked with their marketing group to develop a plan that combined a low cost promotion-based reconfirmation campaign with a complete conversion to real-time DOI:

### Reconfirmation Paired with a Promotional Offer

- All subscribers in the existing ACD database were asked to reconfirm their interest in receiving offers and information from ACDSsee.
- Subscribers were encouraged to reconfirm with an appealing offer: The chance to win an iPod or ACDSsee software. The company kept the cost of their giveaway to a minimum by using their own products to sweeten the pot.
- ACD allowed four weeks for the re-confirmation process. Every address that was not among those who replied was permanently removed from the company's email marketing list.

### Ongoing List Quality through Real-Time DOI

Now that their existing list was healthy, ACD Systems was committed to keeping it that way. Migrating from their previous ESP to BlueHornet offered the software company a comprehensive "out of the box" Double Opt-In solution that automatically runs all potential new subscribers through the DOI process before adding them to the ACD database.

- DOI was implemented through all newsletter signup touch points. This step was "plug and play" through BlueHornet's web-based user interface. No changes were made to ACD's existing signup process.
- Though not a required component of double opt-in implementation, ACD chose to deploy BlueHornet's application programming interfaces (APIs) to upload subscribers who sign up through a pop-up in the trial version of ACDSsee software. Just like all subscribers who join from Web locations, these subscribers now receive a DOI confirmation automatically after upload. APIs automate this entire process; no additional resources are required.

### Results:

#### More Revenue and Important Brand Protection

- The existing ACD subscriber list was cut by nearly 50%.
- Open rates and clickthroughs rose by more than 50% from before DOI.
- ACD Systems now achieves consistently higher inbox delivery rates across all ISPs, which directly impacts the revenue generated from every campaign.

"In addition to significantly improving the quality of our existing subscriber list, the Double Opt-In process now prevents bogus emails from bloating our database," said Genevieve Lambert, Campaign Manager. It is still technically possible for trial downloaders to submit a "dummy" email address that they rarely check. But the reporting tools in our BlueHornet system allow us to easily monitor our ongoing email performance and remove any unresponsive subscribers, thus improving relative email performance without losing overall revenue."

## With Double Opt-In, Results are Twice as Nice!

### ACD Systems doubles their email response rates after implementing BlueHornet's Double Opt-In solutions.

*"To be honest, we were reluctant to implement a Double Opt-In program because our focus had always been on increasing the size of our list. Without the long-term benefits of a smaller but much more engaged list, we would not be enjoying the success we see through our email marketing efforts today. And since DOI is built into the BlueHornet system, it's like having an 'insurance policy' on future list hygiene."*

Brian Harris  
Director Marketing and ESD  
ACD Systems



## The Email Experience Council, LLC

The Email Experience Council, LLC is a champion for digital communications centered on the point of view of the inbox owner. We are a global professional organization. We strive to enhance the image of email marketing and communications, while celebrating and advocating its critical importance in business; its ROI value. Through the active proliferation of email and digital marketing best practices, case studies, trends, cutting edge technologies and strategies, the eec is an actionable resource for professionals and a beacon for the evolution of the email channel.

The eec is committed to regularly conducting a broad series of email initiatives for a variety of organizations that highlight the positive impact and importance of email as a marketing tool, communications vehicle and branding device. eec members are representative of other trade organizations and the leading agencies, advertisers, technology partners, service providers and brands focused on the potential of email and digital marketing.

For more information, please visit  
[www●emailexperience●org](http://www.emailexperience.org)  
or call: 1.888.804.4521

\*The opinions, beliefs and viewpoints expressed by the various authors and participants of this or other related documents and on the web site do not necessarily reflect the opinions, beliefs and viewpoints of The Email Experience Council, LLC and/or its advertisers and partners or official policies of The Email Experience Council, LLC.