

# PODi CASE STUDY

## NATIONAL WWII MUSEUM MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL CAMPAIGN



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## NATIONAL WWII MUSEUM MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL CAMPAIGN

**VERTICAL MARKET:** Not-for-Profit

**BUSINESS APPLICATION:** Direct Marketing/Direct Order

### BUSINESS OBJECTIVES

The National WWII Museum, located in New Orleans, tells the story of the American experience in the war that changed the world - why it was fought, how it was won, and what it means today - so that all generations will understand the price of freedom and be inspired by what they learn.

Founded by author and historian Stephen Ambrose, the museum's facilities are still expanding to offer visitors the full breadth of World War II's complex story—as illustrated by artifacts ranging from personal letters to vintage airplanes to award winning interactive exhibits.

“The ability to achieve the growth we’ve had over the last 10 years is due in large part to our membership program,” says Stephen Watson, vice president and chief operating officer.

Since 2002, the museum's direct-mail communications have been a main driver of its membership program. In recent years, however, response rates to the museum's direct-mail fundraising efforts have flattened out. The museum decided to perform a test to answer two questions:

- Can VDP breathe life into an underperforming package?
- Can a personalized message help build a Sustaining Member Program?

### RESULTS

A test was conducted with personalized versus static newsletters sent to two target groups – active members and sustaining member prospects.

- Response rates from active members saw a lift in response of approximately 30% compared to the static package
- Response rates from sustaining member prospects saw a lift of about 25% compared to the static package

## National WWII Museum Membership Renewal Campaign

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- Average donation from active members increased from \$32 to \$36
- Average donation from sustaining members increased from \$19 to \$21

	# Mailed	# of Gifts	Response Rate	Response Lift	Total Revenue	Average Gift	Revenue per # mailed
Active Control	10,010	138	1.38%		\$4,514	\$32.71	\$0.45
Active Test	10,010	180	1.80%	30%	\$6,587	\$36.59	\$0.66
Sustainer Control	4,740	297	6.27%		\$5,610	\$18.89	\$1.18
Sustainer Test	4,740	367	7.74%	24%	\$7,689	\$20.95	\$1.62

### CAMPAIGN ARCHITECTURE

In its first variable data mailing to active members, the museum sent 10,000 personalized newsletters and 10,000 static newsletters. This allowed it to measure the impact of personalization on donations. To recruit active members for its sustaining membership program—an automatic monthly giving program—it sent an additional 5,000 personalized newsletters and 5,000 static newsletters.

### TARGET AUDIENCE & MESSAGING

In general, the newsletter mail file is composed primarily of members who have made a contribution within the past 12 months. The museum also includes a segment of lapsed donors who have not given in 13 to 18 months in an effort to encourage them to renew their membership.

For the sustainer membership program, the museum targeted members with a giving pattern that suggested they might be interested in monthly contributions. The list contained individuals who had given three or more gifts of \$25 or more within 0-12 months who were not existing sustainers.

The version of the newsletter targeting active members was personalized in numerous locations with the recipient's name. Other personalization included the recipient's state, the number of charter members in that state, and prefilled forms. This personalized newsletter was compared to the performance of the museum's standard package. The personalized newsletter with standard reply saw a 30% lift in response versus the control newsletter package.

The newsletter soliciting sustainer members paired a personalized newsletter with the membership reply form structured for sustaining gifts.

This version of the newsletter also included an appeal letter for a more compelling ask device. Suggested gift amounts in the letter and reply form were based on the individual's previous giving history. The sustainer version outperformed the package with a standard buck slip reply by 24%.

## CREATIVE

The museum's image-rich, 16-page newsletter included personalized text on several pages, including a testimonial letter. It also personalized the text on an image of one of its memorial bricks, which are engraved with a donor's name and installed around the museum's campus.

**Name personalization**

**Name on example memorial brick**

**Name, State, Number of charter members in state**

**Name personalization**

**Name on example memorial brick**

**Name, State, Number of charter members in state**

**Personalized sustainer version of newsletter**

"It's a slick piece. It's [printed on] heavy paper. And we were able to maintain the same print quality," says Terri Burton, associate vice president of membership and new media. According to Burton, many of the museum's members were impressed with the newsletter's image quality. She explains that by combining offset-comparable print quality and personalization, "We were able to offer them a better product for a similar cost."

### REASONS FOR SUCCESS

The museum was very happy with the success of the membership renewal campaign. After the success of the newsletters, the museum further tested the value of personalization with a membership acquisition campaign. The VDP self-mailer test mailed January 2012. Results by August 2012 – the museum had received a total 329 gifts for a response rate of 0.66% and average gift of \$42.21. According to Burton these are good results for a test mailing.

<b>CLIENT</b>	<b>National WWII Museum</b> <a href="http://www.nationalww2museum.org">www.nationalww2museum.org</a> The National WWII Museum, located in New Orleans, tells the story of the American experience in the war that changed the world - why it was fought, how it was won, and what it means today - so that all generations will understand the price of freedom and be inspired by what they learn.
<b>PRINT PROVIDER</b>	<b>One to One Digital Solutions</b> <a href="http://www.onetooneeds.com">www.onetooneeds.com</a> One to One Digital Solutions is a state-of-the-art digital solution provider that produces multi-channel communications using the most sophisticated versioning technology for full-color modular and scalable copy, graphics and photography to achieve a truly personalized message.
<b>CREATIVE</b>	Newsletter: <b>Scott Carroll/Philip Collier Designs</b>  Letter, reply form and membership packages: <b>Barton Cotton in Baltimore, MD</b> <a href="http://www.bartoncotton.com">www.bartoncotton.com</a> After almost 80 years in business, Barton Cotton is one of the nation's leading direct marketing firms serving some of the world's best known nonprofit organizations. With core capabilities that include strategy and analytics of donor insight, creative, direct mail, affinity marketing, and strategic communications, the company has helped more than 150 nonprofit groups meet and exceed their fundraising objectives.
<b>HARDWARE</b>	For the personalized newsletters offset technology was used for the static pages and an HP Indigo 7000 was used for the personalized pages
<b>TARGET AUDIENCE</b>	Active and lapsed donor members
<b>DISTRIBUTION</b>	15,000 personalized newsletters Control group of 15,000 static newsletters
<b>DATE</b>	August 2011