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For Immediate Release

Kinerase Introduction Excels Using Advanced Technologies for Direct Mail Sample Requests

OVERVIEW

New technologies employed by ConServIT Integrated Teleservices assist ICN Pharmaceuticals, Inc. in distributing new product samples to target market consumers. The direct response campaign increased marketing effectiveness and resulted in low per call costs to service consumers quickly and efficiently.

GURNEE, ILL. – In the recent new product introduction of Kinerase, an anti-aging skin cream and lotion, the use of advanced technologies increased responses obtained from media promotion. Additionally, the cost to capture each response was reduced using advanced technologies.

Kinerase, a product of ICN Pharmaceuticals, Inc. of Costa Mesa, California, was introduced last summer as a superior product to reduce wrinkles resulting from skin aging without often-encountered side effects. The mission assigned to the agency, Abelson-Taylor, Inc. of Chicago, Illinois, was to get a large group of samples to an identified target audience, cost effectively and quickly. Being an expensive sample package, the company also wanted to limit each respondent to a single sample. That is a tough, but frequently encountered, combination of objectives.

The clear media choice was advertising placements in several large magazines, known to be read by the target clientele. By running the campaign over several months, the expenditures could be controlled, as was a continuity of response. Simply increasing the number of ad placements, or extending the life of the program would deliver the target number of samples. No more, and no

more ►

less. ICN avoided the undesirable alternatives of going over budget because of costs associated with a large additional run of samples, or being left with samples on the shelf. They wanted a balanced program.

The problem faced, however, was how to get samples to prospective users of Kinerase inexpensively and quickly. The clear response medium was implementing a toll free telephone number. That vehicle maximizes the response, while getting product in the hands of consumers the fastest.

But the stumbling block was how to answer the caller, take the name and address, the phone number and capture the source of the lead. Live telephone centers were too expensive and could lose calls when callers called in peak period. In addition, occasionally there are huge peaks in the caller volume, often at odd hours, such as Sunday morning. These peaks could swamp a live telephone center, creating busy signals for callers responding to the ad. With generic IVR voice machines and voice mail, too many callers hung up, or the information was incomplete and inaccurate. The cost per lead could skyrocket with these alternatives.

Ableson-Taylor teamed up with Direct Response Resource of Northbrook, Illinois, for fulfillment and ConServIT Integrated Teleservices, a service of Conversational Voice Technologies Corporation of Gurnee, Illinois, for telephone services to make it happen and meet the objectives of ICN Pharmaceuticals management. ConServIT obtained the number 1-877-KINERASE for ICN.

ConServIT's advanced proprietary technology handles calls just as an operator would, but automatically. It converses with callers and is virtually indistinguishable from a live call. If a caller doesn't spell a last name, it will say "And how is that last name spelled?" If the caller doesn't provide a ZIP code, ConServIT's technology will ask for it. The secret is ConServIT's proprietary patented intuitive voice processing with intelligent branching. The conversation will change depending on how the caller responds. There is no touch-tone, and there are no remedial directions given to the caller on how to use the system.

As a result of this advanced technology, Kinerase doesn't lose calls. In fact, a high percentage of the callers provide complete information. (Only a couple of percent is made up of wrong numbers, pranksters and so forth, common with advertised telephone numbers).

But just capturing the complete information is not enough; it has to be accurate. Inaccurate information means these expensive samples are returned undeliverable, phone numbers won't work or can't be matched against a database, and names are misspelled. Not only does an undeliverable result in substantial cost without delivery of the item, but either the lead is lost, or the caller will call a second time wondering where the sample is, doubling the cost of the single lead. This "returned undeliverable" figure was only a couple percent using ConServIT.

One of the concerns of Abelson-Taylor was the number of callers that would call multiple times for multiple samples. Although these would be deduped, there would still be the expense of taking the call. Because of the lifelike presence of the way the call is handled, and because the caller hears the same voice if a second call is placed, the number of calls deduped was significantly low.

Once ConServIT services the callers, the caller information is processed by computer-assisted editors who enter the caller information and verify the automated computer conversions, including the coding of the source of the response. Additionally, if a caller has a special need, that information is passed on to ICN for special handling. Such an event happened, for example, when a doctor called and needed specialized information. That call received special attention.

The caller information, after it has been converted from voice to digital text, is sent to Direct Response Resource where the samples go out promptly. By having samples go out so quickly, the number of duplicate calls is dramatically reduced because callers are not calling a second time to inquire whether their sample was sent out, or seeking a duplicate thinking that the first request was lost (which it might be using a outsource facility with a lower rate of accuracy).

“This has been a very successful, smooth running campaign,” states Myles MacCormack, vice president of direct marketing services for Abelson-Taylor. “We are very pleased with the results achieved with ConServIT’s advanced call handling technologies, working in combination with our other partner, Direct Response Resource.” Myles also notes that, because of its success, the program has been extended beyond its original duration.

About ConServIT, a service of Conversational Voice Technologies

ConServIT provides automated inbound teleservices using proprietary voice processing, switching, and reporting technologies. ConServIT is a leading provider of automated call handling services and database management of information. More information, including a real telephone call handled by ConServIT, is available at www.conservit.com or 1-800-994-4400. E-mail: sales@conservit.com.