

Email Software and Managed Services Company, Delivra is helping Businesses And Organizations Execute Profitable Email Marketing Campaigns

**Business Services
Email Marketing**

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Neil Berman
CEO

BIO:

Neil Berman, award-winning entrepreneur, President and CEO of Delivra, has been providing email marketing software and services to clients for over a decade. Featured in such publications as BtoB, Media Post, MarketingSherpa and INC, Neil's commitment to his employees and customers has led the company to accolades such as: INC 500/5000 recipient, Indiana Company to Watch, and Indiana Best Places to Work.

Prior to founding Delivra in 1999, Neil, a classically trained pianist, worked as a CPA in public and private practice. Tired of the corporate hub-bub, he noticed a groundbreaking need to deliver communications via the Internet, a novel idea at the time. With an idea and a kitchen table, his email business was born as was one of the very first ESPs in the marketplace.

Neil attended the University of Minnesota. He is the proud owner of a Calico cat named Cali. Neil enjoys traveling and just recently returned from New Zealand. In the near future, he plans on visiting China. In his free time, Neil enjoys playing blues music on the piano or playing a quick game of Angry Birds.

About Delivra:

Delivra has been providing email software and professional services for more than 13 years. Delivra helps businesses and organizations execute profitable email marketing campaigns by providing dynamic software and professional services – from all inclusive consulting engagements, to help as needed in the areas of design, production, deliverability and testing. Delivra was voted one of Best Places to Work in Indiana in both 2011 and 2012 and one of Inc 5000's fastest growing companies in 2011 and 2012. Delivra partners with business and organizations across all industries and verticals and is committed to putting the customer first.

**Interview conducted by:
Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor
CEOCFO Magazine**

CEOCFO: Mr. Berman, what is Delivra?

Mr. Berman: Delivra is an email software and managed services company that helps marketers fill the gaps in email expertise, resources and execution.

CEOCFO: Would you give us an example of how you work with your customers?

Mr. Berman: Our customers are looking to become better email marketers and they are looking for a partner in that success. We have a three-step methodology that we use to help our customers. One of those we call Consult, the second is Manage and the third is Deliver. In the consulting piece, we are acting as strategic partners to assist with data segmentations, strategy development, creative design, testing, measurement, list hygiene... that sort of thing. For our manage process this is less of a strategic investment and more about help when you need it; for example, a template or two there or a deliverability audit; the third piece of consult; manage. Deliver is the deliver part and that is the technology platform, our software. We make sure our software functionality is the most robust on the market and that our clients emails are delivered into the inbox.

CEOCFO: What is the biggest misconception about emailing for businesses?

Mr. Berman: The biggest misconception I see is that people "think" it is the cheapest marketing channel out there. What they do not understand is they do not own the email addresses in their databases. The people that agree to receive

those marketing messages are in control of the message. Marketers need to be sensitive to the level of engagement, the relevance of the message in order to achieve results.

CEOCFO: Would you give us an example of what you were able to do for a company that had a problem?

Mr. Berman: Sure, we work with an ecommerce company that sells home décor online. Prior to us helping them, they were simply batching and blasting emails out to their entire database. That database was not growing and the results were marginal. We went in and in addition to the batch and blast, we added the following tools. We analyzed their shopping cart abandonment rate and integrated with our system so that we can send reminders to people that did not complete the sale. Secondly, when people signed up or bought something we sent a series of welcome messages with the cadence of maybe five times with additional offers. Finally, we have what we call a post purchase series where if someone buys something we send an email to a complimentary product, so if you bought a tablecloth, we are going to automatically send out emails with matching napkins and silverware and so forth. The batch and blast clip rate runs about 4% and if we trigger out the cart abandonment, we are getting response rate of 8%. A typical marketer is going to have a difficult time executing on these database driven emails, which are by far much more effective than just sending the same message to everybody.

CEOCFO: Is 8% on cart abandonment more than the industry standard?

Mr. Berman: My standard answer to that is you need to benchmark where you are starting and improve upon that because every customer list is acquired differently. Therefore, there are different expectations and they are selling different products and

services. It is best to benchmark and level up from there.

CEOCFO: How does your organization have the expertise to work with so many different clients selling so many different items?

Mr. Berman: How can you help me if you do not know my business? We do not know everybody's business but we know what works in email marketing and all businesses have very similar needs and very similar challenges around email marketing. As an example, I read a survey recently put out by eConsultants, they do this

“Our customers are looking to become better email marketers and they are looking for a partner in that success. The secret for the marketer is to know your recipient and to tailor the content, the timeliness and the offer to their interests. Email marketing is a subset of direct marketing, which is a subset of database marketing. It all really gets down to the data and being able to understand and analyze data in order to get the best results. Email marketing is mission critical. If you are selling online and you want to increase sales you are going to call Delivra. If you are a business-to-business organization and you need to drive prospects through a funnel and nurture those leads in order to keep your name in front of a prospect so that they buy, you are going to call Delivra.”- Neil Berman

annually. The problems they list that the respondents identified were quality of database, lack of strategy, lack of segmentation, poor measurement and analytics. These are problems that are generic across all industries and all vertical segments and those are the problems that we attack on behalf of our clients.

CEOCFO: How vital is email to the marketing program and how do you work with your clients so that they understand the role it plays?

Mr. Berman: If we are looking at digital communication, email being one channel, social, texting, and viewing those digital communications

on mobile devices as well, we find that subscribers are expecting different kinds of messages in each channel. If you are sending a marketing message chances are unless it is an alert or reminder, you are not going to want to get many of those on your telephone as a text. With a regard to social, that is also very personal and you are sharing with friends. You might occasionally post an offer from a business that you are familiar with because you think your friends might be interested, but email is the only outbound marketing tool digitally that people will accept marketing messages and calls to action, so it is still working. It is interesting that last month being a heavy email month; the largest volume centered email in the world was Facebook with over sixteen billion emails so it appears to me that email is the backbone of the internet and connects everything.

CEOCFO: What is the secret to getting an email read?

Mr. Berman: The secret for the marketer is to know your recipient and to tailor the content, the timeliness and the offer to their interests. Email marketing is a subset of direct marketing, which is a subset of database marketing. It all really gets down to the data and being able to understand and analyze data in order to get the best results. I think many people spend an inordinate amount of time on design, color and placement. With marketers that is predictable but analyzing the reason people are opening and clicking through and buying from you or opening, clicking through and contacting you for additional information, is a higher level of skill and it is not as much fun but it is where you see results.

CEOCFO: Is it strictly being able to do numbers and statistics in the appropriate way or does the experience at Delivra when you are looking at these results come into play?

Mr. Berman: By experience what I hear you saying is “Ok Neil so I log

into Delivra's software program and I see graphs and charts. I may or may not know what they mean but in addition to that, I want to be able to lift up the phone and have an account manager that knows me and the history of my company be able to have an intelligent conversation." By experience, we are putting the people piece and the technology piece together for best results.

CEOCFO: Do businesses understand the need for a specialist like Delivra in the email segment or is that still something people try to handle themselves?

Mr. Berman: It depends on the maturity of your email program. There are many small businesses, home-based or homeowners' associations with five or fewer employees that probably do not need much help and have a limited audience. They can use an entry-level easy-to-use software program at low cost and be very satisfied. On the other hand, if your marketing needs and business is large and more complex, the task ahead of you becomes more complex and that is where you are going to look outside for some kind of help or consultancy.

CEOCFO: How do you reach potential customers?

Mr. Berman: We practice inbound marketing and we participate in webinars and tradeshows. Inbound marketing is active management of your website. It is SEO and direct marketing. The push marketing is partnering with associations like the Direct Marketing Association, the American Marketing Association or publishers who attract marketers and stage events around email marketing

or marketing topics. Finally, we have sales people that are smiling on the telephone as well.

CEOCFO: What is the competitive landscape for you, are there many companies that focus on the email itself?

Mr. Berman: Email business is about a dozen years old. There are many flavors of competitors out there and I would suggest maybe in the hundreds. Although they are offering similar tools, they are different in that some have a very limited functionality so that you can operate the system yourself without needing much help. Others are very robust for those organizations that have business processes that require customization. You need to find a vendor that understands you and with which you enjoy working.

CEOCFO: Why should people choose Delivra?

Mr. Berman: Email marketing is mission critical. If you are selling online and you want to increase sales you are going to call Delivra. If you are a business-to-business organization and you need to drive prospects through a funnel and nurture those leads in order to keep your name in front of a prospect so that they buy, you are going to call Delivra. On the other hand, if you are just sending out a monthly newsletter to 200 people telling the events of the organization, you probably do not need us and could find an alternative less expensive solution.

CEOCFO: What surprised you most as the business has developed?

Mr. Berman: I started out in the business during the dot.com boom

before people had email addresses on their business cards. I took a leap of faith that the postal mail and phone calls would be replaced with the convenience and the speed of email. I did not at the time realize how huge the market was. It is just gigantic. I guess I am continuing to be surprised after all these years that the volume of email continues to grow and that it appears to be in a sense a utility, just something that everybody uses on a regular basis.

CEOCFO: How is business these days?

Mr. Berman: Fortunately, we are in the internet space and that keeps on growing. I think we are riding the wave and I would like to think we are smart people but it might possibly just be that we are in a sweet spot. Business is excellent, thank you for asking.

CEOCFO: Why should the business and investment community pay attention to Delivra?

Mr. Berman: Delivra is what I would refer to as a boutique email marketing company and by that I mean we are on the cutting-edge of those tools and ideas and thought leadership that can really help those organizations that are looking to step up as opposed to very large competitors that are factories of email. If you are looking for thought leadership and a hand up, we are the people you should follow either on Twitter or on our blog or get our email and talk to us directly.



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