ZEROCOMPANY
PERFORMANCE MARKETING
SEO, PPC, WEB DESIGN

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CASE STUDY

BAY AREA RAPID
TRANSIT DISTRICT (BART)

ba BART

**Bay Area
Rapid Transit**

OVERVIEW

San Francisco's Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) is the 5th most used rail transit system in the US and therefore faces many challenges. With a massive ridership of more than **430,000** a week and **126 million** annually, communication with so many customers is vital.

The majority of BART trips are made by commuters going to and from work during the week. BART service runs on the weekends, but there has been a decline in weekend ridership over the last few years. BART's Marketing Department zeroed in on this segment and devised a marketing strategy focused on weekend ridership. The strategy centered around developing a new "BARTable" section of its website.

In short, BARTable is a website about cool and interesting things to do near BART – visitors will find articles about what to explore in the Bay Area, plus contests and discounts to local events. BARTable readers have responded positively to the program, calling it a fun and easy-to-use resource to discover things to do near BART while skipping traffic.

The program saw explosive growth in its first years, but then saw a slow-down in new user acquisition.

BART's Marketing Department teamed up with Zero Company to develop a multi-channel digital media marketing strategy to increase the number of opt-in subscribers to their weekly "BARTable This Week" e-newsletter and drive traffic to the website.

BAY AREA RAPID TRANSIT DISTRICT (BART)

HEADQUARTERS
Oakland, CA

INDUSTRY
Public Transportation

SERVICES RENDERED
- Display, Search
- Social Media
- Retargeting
- Gmail Advertising

bartable

OBJECTIVE

Substantially increase opt-in subscriber base, drive site traffic and build digital audiences for future campaigns. Keep BART top of mind for the rider and increase weekend rides to leisure events. Deploy a variety of digital strategies and channels to communicate marketing initiatives and win the moment on mobile, tablet and computer devices. The initial campaign would be based around a travel sweepstakes giveaway with a simple landing page.

STRATEGY
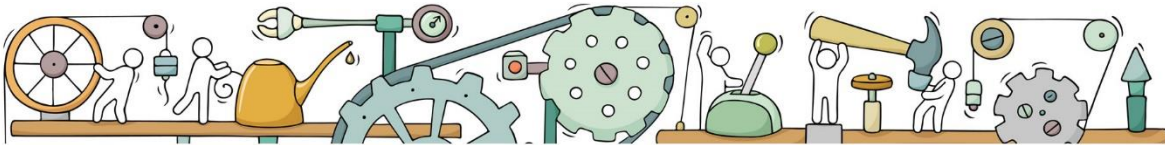
Target relevant audiences in Display, Search, Social Media and Gmail. We zeroed in on retargeting as a key component of the campaigns. Because ongoing communication and future digital campaigns would benefit from building equity here, we made sure we had a retargeting component to key marketing channels.

GEOTARGETING:

Geotargets were set up around all of BART's stations to target ads to commuters.

DISPLAY:

We targeted several types of audiences for this channel. Since our giveaway theme was travel-based, we targeted to two campaigns with audiences that were "in-market" travel related -- meaning these were people that were actively shopping for travel services within our geotargets. We also targeted an in-market Bus & Rail audiences within the geotarget. These are individuals likely to use BART. Additionally, we built campaigns based around certain affinity audiences (groups with predefined interests) and specific site placements.

DISPLAY RETARGETING:

Retargeting allows you to market to people who have previously visited your site. We retargeted previous site visitors that did not convert after an initial site visit. Any visitor that came to the site from any marketing channel was shown display ads to remind them of the message and promotion.

As mentioned, building these retargeting lists was essential for future campaigns. When we shifted gears later to promote another campaign such as a line closure, we had audiences already in place who had been to the BART sites. This allowed us to communicate important line closure updates to a large, "need to know" highly targeted audience.

SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING:

Our search campaign targeted a variety of specific brand and non-brand keywords of users searching on Google. We also added retargeting overlays to our campaigns (meaning we were aggressive at showing our search ads to users who have previously visited the BART sites). Multiple ads and messages were split tested to improve results.

FACEBOOK:

We had three campaigns for Facebook. First, a **custom audience** segment for retargeting visitors. Again, it was crucial for us to build retargeting lists for future campaigns. Leveraging equity built with this ad campaign into future campaigns allowed for efficient/effective ad spend as the year of campaigns continued.

Second, we again built **lookalike audience** modeling into this campaign to target users within our geotargets. The lookalike audience campaign uses machine learning to target highly engaged traffic similar to our site visitors. This had the lowest cost per conversion of the three Facebook campaigns.

Lastly, we targeted a **travel-interest audience** within our geotarget to drive conversions. All three campaigns had spectacular results and were among our lowest cost per conversion.

TWITTER:

Again, we used Twitter's pixel to build a retargeting audience for this marketing channel. We also used similar audience modeling based on our existing site visitors to find users within the geotargets that might be interested in the campaign. Additional campaigns were build based around keywords.

GMAIL:

Because we were driving traffic to an email submit campaign, we targeting Gmail as another marketing channel. Like the display campaigns, we used "In-Market" and affinity audiences for targeting. Like the other campaigns, we split tested ad copy whenever possible to improve results.

RESULTS

During the campaign:

- The site saw record traffic with more than 83,000 users and 111,000 sessions.
- Site traffic increased a staggering 175% over the previous month.
- Pages per session also increased 48%.

Impressively, there were nearly **50,000** sweepstakes entries and **25,000** new subscribers during the campaign.

The campaign had **9 million** ad impressions over a few weeks.

Past performance in working with other government agencies allowed us to spend our budget efficiently and wisely. The conversion rates for these campaigns were sensational. Among the best were:

Twitter: 61% Conversion Rate

Facebook: 38% Conversion Rate

Search Engine Marketing: 16% Conversion Rate

Display: 11% Conversion Rate

Our Current Remarketing Audience Size: **2 million visitors**