

DM vets 21st Century and PCH to test social

[Cara Wood](#) September 28, 2009

Insurance provider 21st Century Auto Insurance and Publisher's Clearing House — each with more than 50 years of direct mail marketing experience — are partnering on a multiyear affinity program that has both companies trying new tactics in social media.

The auto insurance company's multichannel campaign began on September 25 with the drop of its first direct mail offer to the sweepstakes program's members. Follow-up for this campaign includes e-mail, Web, Facebook and Twitter promotions.

"We want to be able to engage people wherever is most convenient for them — whether they are hearing about our insurance through the mail and then going online to do research and binding a policy, or finding us online and then calling a representative to bind a policy," said Mike Boyd, VP of marketing at 21st Century.

The auto insurance company is offering deep discounts to PCH members in the hopes a bargain-based deal will resonate with the community of more than 9 million hopeful winners.

"There is a natural alignment between people who sign up for PCH and those who want to buy their car insurance directly," said Boyd. "We've seen that they each demonstrate a self-directing tendency that leads them to seek a good price and get insured."

21st Century is using the effort to gain customers. It will measure all response across each of the contact channels: print, e-mail and Web.

In addition, Boyd said its customary for 21st Century to run creative tests across each of the channels to maximize ROI and conversion: "We're used to measuring things from top to bottom, looking at everything from overall response to lifetime value and retention."

Boyd added that brand engagement through Web interaction was a metric that they would be looking at after results from PCH Web programs come in. "In the past that hasn't been something we've paid that much attention to — it's more about direct response," he said.

In fact, 21st Century, which was purchased by Farmers Insurance Group in April, has a long history of using affinity programs and direct to test creative and generate new policies, including renting PCH lists in the past. The company has nearly 100 affinity programs, said Mark Duchene, VP of relationship marketing at 21st Century.

"We're very excited about the partnership with Publisher's Clearing House," said Duchene. "This is huge from our perspective; I could see it becoming one of our top 10 affinity partnerships."

The deal marks a milestone for PCH as well. In mid-October, the company is launching a program for all of its ad partners leveraging Twitter and Facebook communities.

Andrew Zucker, chief revenue officer of PCH Online, explained that the "Deal of the Week" will be a promotion from an ad partner given to Facebook fans and Twitter followers of PCH.

"We're just beginning to dip our toes into what's possible on social media," Zucker said. "What's exciting for me is we've already seen so many of our fans hold conversations about their concerns on our site. If we can inject some of our partners into those conversations about savings or insurance, we will when it's appropriate."

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