

PCH Takes Insurance Co. To Facebook, Twitter

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Fifty-year-old 21st Century Insurance will find a way into social media next month, led into the fire through a direct affinity marketing agreement with Publishers Clearing House (PCH) announced this week.

21st Century's walk into social media highlights the "PCH Deal of the Week." It will give Facebook fans and Twitter followers special offers if they apply for an auto insurance policy from either of the social media links during the promotion. The social campaign also has a "send to" friend feature to help drive the viral campaign.

The campaign includes a 21st Century Insurance pre- and post-roll video ad on PCHTV.com, which previews in October. The 30- or 60-second spots turn PCH programming into the show. This is the first time that Publishers Clearing House will launch a campaign that taps all its communications channels, from lottery to games. The deal also relies on email marketing, online videos, banner advertising, and offline marketing, such as direct mail.

The program targets 9 million members through the PCH network. It is the first affinity-based partnership to launch for 21st Century since being acquired by the Farmers Insurance Group of companies in July 2009.

Although the social media strategy is not fully developed, Mike Boyd, vice president of marketing at 21st Century, says the benefit will become that two-way dialog with consumers that every marketer hopes to gain. "The caution is people can speak about the brand, good and bad, but it allows us to have a deeper conversation with them," he says.

"The good thing is social media will allow us to get noticed by people that may not have heard of us."

Historically, the company has been known in California, but is slowly moving into other states across the U.S. Ideally, PCH will help 21st Century expand the brand, while giving members an opportunity to save hundred of dollars through the insurance company, especially through deals on Facebook and Twitter.

Andrew Zucker, PCH chief revenue officer, says the Facebook page will market to PCH members, but threads could appear on fan pages of other members.

"It's exciting that we found a digital blueprint that creates multiple touchpoints, but at the end of the day there's still a lot of traditional marketing, too, in this campaign," Boyd says. "It's about taking marketing 360 degrees. It's not all about getting that rate quote. There will be an appropriate time for that message."

21st Century also has affinity relationships with the Teachers Association and Boat U.S. Affinity programs typically have a common thread that binds members together.