

RBFF STATE INNOVATIVE R3 PROGRAM GRANTS NEBRASKA GAME & PARKS COMMISSION AUTO-TRIGGER CUSTOMER CARE EMAILS

PARTNERS

- Nebraska Game and Parks Commission Communications, IT and Fisheries Divisions
- State of Nebraska Office of the Chief Information Officer
- GovDelivery

OVERVIEW

The program objective was to create the ability to send auto-trigger email messages to anglers purchasing any type of fishing permit. These customized messages were made to thank anglers for their purchase, increase angler engagement by providing useful information and encourage license renewals through reminder emails. Emails included a conservation message, a reminder to “take someone with you” and provided a chance for an upsell of licenses.

The Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation (RBFF) granted the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission \$22,904 to assist in creating automated, personalized emails to easily continue engagement with anglers.

Thank you message:



METHODOLOGY

Three parts of the project:

- The Data: The backend of the permit system was programmed to pull out eligible permit holders within certain parameters
- The Message: Email templates were created with an Application Program Interface (API) that would automatically merge the data pulled with the appropriate email message
- The Send: Emails deployed automatically with a reporting function to show deliverability, open rates, and click throughs all the way to purchase

Swanson Russell, Nebraska Game and Parks’ advertising agency, ensured that the look and wording of email templates matched other branded materials.

SUPPORT

“We believe customer-focused digital communications will keep anglers engaged with Nebraska Game and Parks, remind them of their role in conservation, and that time outdoors is time well spent,” said Commission Director Jim Douglas

BENEFITS

- Ability to automatically thank anglers for their purchase
- System can track individual email opens and clicks through to license purchase
- While delivering basic information on angling in Nebraska, emails can also contain a message about how their purchase supports the resource
- Ability to engage anglers throughout the year with information on additional resources and opportunities
- Emails can encourage anglers to introduce others to the sport of fishing
- Offer helpful reminders to renew permits, or consider upgrading to an annual permit, based upon previous behavior and permit expiration dates
- Created to be able to easily segment audience and send targeted emails

Upsell message to encourage 1-day permit holder to buy annual license:

Get an annual permit and explore all of Nebraska's incredible fishing opportunities



**EXPLORE ALL OF NEBRASKA'S
INCREDIBLE FISHING OPPORTUNITIES**

— ALWAYS BE READY TO GET ON THE WATER WITH AN ANNUAL PERMIT —


We appreciate your recent 1-day permit purchase and encourage you to get an annual permit so you can continue to experience the outdoors, spend quality time with friends and family and have more adventures out on the water.

And remember, your permit purchase helps support conservation efforts, such as water quality enhancement and angler access, across the state of Nebraska—making your time spent fishing, time well spent.

[BUY ANNUAL PERMIT](#)

Post-expiration message:

Renew your Nebraska fishing permit now.



**DON'T LET THE SEASON
GET AWAY FROM YOU**

— GET YOUR 2016 PERMIT NOW! —

[First Name],
Your [Permit Type] has expired, it's time to renew your permit for 2016. You won't want to miss out on any of the incredible fishing opportunities Nebraska has to offer, this year. We make it easy to purchase online, just click the link below and follow the steps.

And remember, your permit purchase goes to supporting conservation efforts, such as water quality enhancement and fish stocking, across the state of Nebraska—making your time spent fishing, time well spent.

[GET YOUR NEW PERMIT](#)

CONTACT INFO

Jane Gustafson
Marketing Manager
Nebraska Game & Parks
Commission
jane.gustafson@nebraska.gov
(402) 471-5481

RESULTS

- Due to the timing of the system development, when the system was ready, it was not the ideal time to send email messages encouraging the purchase of an annual permit as the permits operate on a calendar year
- Auto-trigger renewal emails were sent to expiring 3-year fishing permit purchasers beginning November 20, 2015
- Auto-trigger messaged, timed for the beginning of the calendar year, were sent to remind all annual permit holders (plus any 3-year purchasers) who have not renewed their license yet that they need to purchase their 2016 fishing permit
- More results to come upon full scale use of the new system

LESSONS LEARNED

- Having good, flexible partners is a benefit, and sometimes partners overestimate what they are able to do and increase costs
- Partners were able to work outside the box and change the original plan of which partner would handle each step; which ended up creating a better, more robust auto-trigger system than anticipated
- This project was a priority to the agency and the Communications Division which helped prioritize funds so the permit vendor could create the needed customized programming
- Fishing permits can be purchased as a gift for another so there is contact information for both in the permit system. This posed the question of which contact should get the email messages as to not ruin a surprise. It was determined the message would be sent to the gift recipient, and to suspend "thank you" messages during holiday buying times to avoid letting gift recipients know about their permit gifts in advance.

FUTURE PLANS

- Will begin to deploy the remaining 1-day upsell, 3-day upsell, annual renewal, 5-year renewal, thank you and engagement messages
- Working with GovDelivery to get all purchasers automatically added to master email lists for targeted mass communications
- Continue to test personalized messages to target groups
- Test A/B messaging and other parameters to increase open rates and license purchases

This case study was produced by RBFF in January 2016. For more information on RBFF's State Innovative R3 Program Grants, please contact Joanne Martonik at jmartonik@rbff.org or 703-778-5153.