

Kansas City Star Discovers New Leads in Old Places with Vendasta's Marketing Automation



“It was a great way to start a digital conversation.”

— **Nick Hadley**, Digital Development Manager

The *Kansas City Star* is the largest media company in Kansas City and garners more than a million readers a week. With a weekday readership of over 380,000 and over 622,200 on Sundays, *The Star* also attracts more than 4.3 million visitors to their site each month. Well respected within the community, a recent poll identified that 56% of respondents made a purchase from a business after seeing it in *The Star*.

The Need to Identify

While the *Kansas City Star* has a robust sales process and a power of persuasion, helping their clients move from solely using traditional media to incorporating digital marketing is still a challenge. *The Star* needed a way to easily identify which of their customers was ready to adopt a digital strategy.

In today's local business environment, traditional media companies must adapt to the digital climate to grow their market share and compete with specialized digital agencies. A recent paper by Greg Sterling, VP of strategy and insights at Local Search Association and Neal Polachek, speaks to the importance of adapting to the world of sales transformation. The situation they explain is dire: “Traditional media companies that fail to actively restructure and innovate around sales and sales automation today will see a further erosion of market share tomorrow, ceding revenue to the growing list of digital competitors and alternatives in the local digital market.”

The Process

The *Kansas City Star* was actively looking for ways to identify new sales opportunities and bring efficiencies to their salesforce. They sought out a campaign to more easily identify past clients that were ready to move into digital advertising. Nick Hadley — *The Star's* digital development manager

“I would consider [online reputation management] a cost of doing business. Move it out of the advertising budget to the capital budget. This is something you need to do every month.”

— chose a list of 500 contacts in their system who had “gone dark.” These were people that sales reps had built a relationship with in the past, but who had, for one reason or another, not worked with *The Star* in a period of time ranging from one to two years.

This list was targeted for Vendasta's 10X campaign. The email campaign ran for one month, sending targeted correspondence each week. The call-to-action in each email was a Snapshot report. This report provides customized information about a

— **Nick Hadley**

business regarding their online presence — website, social media, listings, mentions and where they sit in relation to their competition. The campaign emailed these businesses promoting digital solutions. After each email, the sales team received reports on recipient engagement, explaining who had opened the email and who had clicked on the call-to-action. *The Star* was then able to get the interested businesses on the phone, using the emails and Snapshot report for their pitch. They were able to identify those with interest and better streamline sales teams. Using the business intelligence from the Snapshot report, reps could lead a conversation with unique insights about the business.

The Results

The results are impressive. Average industry open rates for marketing, advertising and PR firms stand at 13.18% according to Constant Contact. *The Star* reached a staggering **51.43%** open rate. The click-through rate also hit **79.20%**, while average industry rates for the same vertical sits near 6.58%.

	VENDASTA CAMPAIGN	INDUSTRY AVERAGE
 OPENS	51.43%	10.37%
 CLICK-THROUGH	79.20%	6.58%

The Star made a concerted effort to follow up with each customer that interacted with the emails in as short of time period as possible. During the campaign, they pushed four different package types, all of which were focused only on digital products. Separate, a la carte offerings did include some traditional media like newspaper ads. *The Star's* focus for follow up was on those who clicked through any of the emails. After following up post-campaign, Hadley's team sold to nearly **20%** of those who had that interaction with the emails, awakening past customers who hadn't bought from *The Star* in more than year.

Terminology

Open rate — Percentage of recipients who actually opened the email.

Click-through rate — Percentage of people who clicked the email over how many opened it.



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