

Case Study **Relish, Inc.** **Erie, PA**

Relish, a manufacturing and retailing business, has found great success in a niche market. A marketing plan consisting mostly of events and trunk shows across the country help to drive customers into their e-marketing channel. Their e-based solutions have helped the company survive through an economic downturn.

Profile

Relish was started in Erie, Pa in 1996 by sisters Jennifer Reed and Terri Reed-Boyer. They manufacture and sell custom jewelry and gifts made of glass found along the waters of Lake Erie. What started as a home based business has transformed into a successful studio and gallery – brick and mortar and e-store, www.relishinc.com, over the last 15 years. Relish has several part-time employees, but the majority of day-to-day operations are conducted by Jennifer and Terri. Relish’s target demographic ranges from women ages 25 to 100, offering something for everyone. Due to a changing economy, Relish once primarily targeted only the Erie area, but has expanded nationally. Relish now attends art shows, trunk shows and events (primarily near the water) other viable options to boost sales and build their brand.

Role of E-commerce

This family business conducts all marketing and sales efforts internally. Partners Jennifer and Terri work collaboratively to initiate and execute all marketing plans and share all

responsibilities accordingly. In the past one specific employee was primarily responsible for the technical end of the website, managing all site updates and e-store functionality, while Jennifer and Terri monitor incoming online orders and manage all aspects of the business together. Recently, Relish has engaged a third party e-commerce partner who does their e-commerce strategy.

Relish utilizes e-marketing methods primarily in their marketing approach. They have found that with the overhead of operating a business and the soaring costs of other, more traditional forms of marketing, email marketing and other online avenues gives them the most bang for their buck.

The owners pay close attention to changes involving web trends and SEO and try to stay on top of these changes with courses offered through eMarketing Learning Center. They have found great value in the information that has been learned, but do not always have the time or the resources to implement everything that could provide benefit to the company. Nevertheless, Relish’s marketing has shown positive results over the years. For example, Relish offers a monthly drawing for a \$15.00 gift certificate that anyone can register for once they sign up for their email list, which has been an excellent method of building their list.

Relish’s website has become a great source of product information for customers while also giving the option to make online purchases through their e-store. Their e-store offers



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pictures and product information, giving customers a virtual in-store experience. The images of their jewelry on the etail store are very important. When posting in the e-store each image is detailed so that you can get the look and feel of each piece. Along with more traditional information such as store hours, and frequently asked questions about beach glass jewelry, Relish also sells gift cards through their site and offers product suggestions by price point and occasion.

Relish's homepage changes monthly, highlighting the seasonal and featured products. They also keep customers up to date of in-store events and shows they will be attending. The site also offers promotions, such as free shipping on online orders over a certain price point.

Relish has optimized their website and consistently rank high for keywords that pertain to their business, keeping them in the front position over their competitors. Relish is pleased with their organic search engine ranking results. They also have invested in some pay per click campaigns. They do use Google Analytics and find that is a viable tool to track visitor trends. They often see a spike in visits after attending an art show or similar event, proving that their attendance as well as their marketing is building their brand recognition. They are able to use this information and look for trends among data and compare it to other time periods and events.

Email marketing is a key component of Relish's online marketing plan. They have found it to be a valuable and efficient method for reaching past, current and potential customers notifying them of offers and events. Email campaigns are sent to a list of over 7,200 recipients approximately one to two times per month. They have compiled their list from previous online purchasers, and visitors that sign up at shows or in store. Immediately after an email campaign is sent, traffic increases significantly on their website. They have a low opt out rate for their campaigns, proving a valid interest from their customers. Consequently, they have found that their email marketing efforts increase web traffic and increase brand recognition, which leads to online sales.

Relish has a fan page on Facebook but does not actively engage with fans. They currently have over 393 fans and have the ability to make this a successful way to reach their audience. They have considered implementing multimedia but have not done so at this time.

While email marketing plays a primary role in their marketing efforts, direct mail still has its role in the marketing plan. One direct mail flyer is sent to customers each year to notify customers of their annual "Beach Party." They find this to be a successful way to reach all of their clientele that have not subscribed to email.

As a result of a combination of marketing efforts, sales have continued to stay strong for Relish, in light of a downturn in the economy.



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Relish has built a company that has incredible power with brand recognition – everyone in the Erie and surrounding area knows what Relish is and what they do. This has contributed to the success of their SEO efforts. Relish tries hard to stay on top of emerging e-marketing trends and stay in tune with what is going on around them

Challenges and Lessons

- A downward economy has forced Relish to re-evaluate and adjust their forces and improve their online marketing efforts.
- Relish has found other methods for success including shows outside of their area which gives them national reach and exposure, pushing additional sales to the e-store.