



Butler Raises the Roof with Xerox-Enabled Dealer Direct Mail Program from Lexinet

Specialist in Variable Data Printing and Fulfillment Helps Leading Building Supplier Get on Top of Its Dealer Re-Roofing Opportunities



The management team at the Lexinet service bureau that produces the Butler direct mail pieces at its facility in Council Grove, Kan. includes, left to right, Lisa Boyer, partner; Jan Lerner, vice president, Client Services; and Dan Adler, partner.

As a provider of the highest quality metal roofs, the Butler Roof Group rarely represents the low-price option for re-roofing projects. Rather, the Butler advantage is roof durability, longevity and low maintenance that delivers lower cost of ownership and greater reliability over time.

Nonetheless, Butler's 1,500 dealers (independent builders and contractors) often rely upon public bidding processes in which their higher prices can be a liability. Consequently, by the late 1990s, Butler made a strategic decision to help its dealers increase their opportunities to win negotiated (non-bid) contracts within the private sector.

To support the new direction, the Butler Roof Group developed a quarterly direct mail program that its dealers could use to generate leads. The program was

successful, but left room for improvement in such areas as:

- Program management. Once leads were delivered to dealers, Butler had no system for tracking dealer follow up and sales success.
- Participation rate. Builder participation was low, at less than 15 percent of dealers.
- Flexibility. Mailing lists were typically updated only once a year. Dealers were offered a one-size-fits-all mailer that went out on a corporate-specified date each quarter.

"In some cases, the mailers made offers our dealers weren't prepared to fulfill," said Craig Mohr, national sales manager, Butler Roof Group. "One piece offered free roof inspections, and one dealer let me know he charged for those. Reactions like that made me realize I shouldn't be sitting here in Kansas City making decisions on behalf of builders around the country."

Using the Web to Support Direct Mail

Mohr discussed these issues with his direct mail consultant, Earl Hogan, Hogan & Associates, and Dan Adler, president of their personalized printing and direct mail fulfillment house, Lexinet of Council Grove, Kansas. At one such meeting, Hogan described a recent project one of his clients had developed for a national restaurant chain that involved printing customized menus for local restaurant franchisees from a Web-based ordering system. Then Adler described Lexinet's Web programming expertise, and

Customer:

The **Butler Roof Group** is part of Kansas City, Mo.-based Butler Manufacturing Company, the world's leading producer of pre-engineered building systems and a supplier of specialty components and construction services for the nonresidential construction market. Founded in 1901, the company's products today cover a wide variety of steel structural framing systems, and metal roof and wall systems.

Application:

To facilitate direct mail lead generation and fulfillment programs for 1,500 authorized Butler Builders the Roof Group provides a Web-based system that permits its builder/dealers to select and edit customized promotional mailings and prospect lists. **Lexinet**, a service bureau, developed the Web-based system and manages it on an outsourcing basis. Lexinet also produces the mailings — overprinting on offset-produced mail pieces with a fleet of two Xerox DocuTech 6100 printers, a Xerox DocuColor 12 Copier/Printer and a Xerox DocuColor 2060 Series Digital Color Press — and manages lead collection and fulfillment. Builders record their lead

Continued page 2

generates a lead notification sheet that is faxed to the dealer, and a personalized letter from the dealer to the prospect. The letter is produced on the Xerox printers for next-day shipment with a fulfillment kit, which is picked in the warehouse.

With the prospect's background onscreen, Lexinet staff can immediately post the lead and prospect information on the builder's Web site, in a section that permits the builder to record notes on their follow-up activities. Previously, contractors tracked lead follow-ups in binders provided by the Butler team.

Every time these pages are altered — by the initial lead entry and follow-ups by the builder — e-mail alerts are automatically sent to the Butler marketing team. And whenever the builder or Butler management wants to see a complete record of all the leads the program has generated — and lead follow up — they can find it on the Web, presented in a printable format.

This increased visibility into the follow-up process permits Butler to better manage the program. Butler can now send reminders to builders whose follow up is slow — or augment the follow up with its own personnel. Should a dealer question the program's results, Mohr can quickly check their claims.



Lexinet Customer Service Representative Kristy Barber initiates the Butler Roof automated fulfillment program by entering the unique number on the returned reply card to call up the prospect's background for automatic posting at the dealer's Web site.

The site also promotes the program with dealer recruitment materials and a spreadsheet for dealers to calculate and compare the actual cost per contact of their direct mail programs and in-person sales calls. Builders can enroll online, too.

Web Helps Double the Participation Rate

The system's benefits to Butler are numerous. Dealer participation has nearly doubled to about one third of the 300 Butler builders who run retrofit roofing businesses, accounting for nearly 50,000 direct mail pieces per quarter (400 to 500 per dealer), up from about 23,000.

Staff time spent working on the system has been cut from 80 percent of an administrator's time to five percent, and from 60 to two percent for Mohr. "It practically runs itself," he said, permitting staff to focus on other areas. For instance, Mohr's role recently expanded to include sales management as well as marketing.

One additional Butler benefit — the dealers pay \$1.50 per address, which covers the cost of the program.

Lexinet also benefits. "This system gives everybody more flexibility," Adler said. "It is more responsive, eliminates manual labor, reduces error, cuts administration and distribution costs, and accelerates turnaround — which can mean faster time to revenue for our direct mail clients."

From a business perspective, the program enables Lexinet to build on its expertise in providing customized and personalized variable data printing services in support of dealer direct mail and fulfillment programs. The firm already has signed several new clients to run similar programs, and actively markets the capability. "It's great that we can offer this service," Adler said. "It provides another avenue to reach dealers,

“This system... is more responsive, eliminates manual labor, reduces error, cuts administration and distribution costs, and accelerates turnaround.”

Continued from page 1

follow-up activities on their Lexinet-maintained private, secure Web site. Each dealer's site is also accessible to Butler program managers.

Service Provider:

Lexinet is a service bureau based in Council Grove, Kansas that has specialized in variable data printing since its founding in 1991. More than 80 percent of the firm's business is highly personalized direct mail that is contracted through U.S. corporations to support dealer or agent marketing. In support of these programs, Lexinet services include Web site development and hosting, database management, laser printing and mailing services, scanning, and label printing.

Customer Benefits:

- The program enables Butler to provide its dealers with more control of their direct mail programs through a choice of corporate-approved mail pieces and the capability to customize promotions and their mailing lists to meet the unique needs of their businesses.
- Dealers benefit from faster turnarounds on lead distribution — which can result in faster time to revenue — and for updating mailing lists, improving list accuracy and currency.
- The system requires far less administrative and management time from Butler staff, yet improves management by providing the first capability to monitor lead follow-up activities.

Continued page 4



Butler non-residential metal roofs are known for their longevity, durability and aesthetics, making them the high-quality option for many re-roofing projects, such as this one at the Anderson Mental Health Center in Anderson, S.C.

the idea of moving the Butler system to the Web was borne.

The team followed up by surveying Butler dealers on their Web usage — 80 percent either were making use of it or planned to — paving the way for development to begin in the summer of 1998.

Some processes in the two-month direct mail piece development cycle were not affected. Hogan continues to develop the pieces in conjunction with Mohr and a design firm. Lexinet still maintains two databases — one on Butler builders, the other for their customers — and uses Xerox VIPP to program variable data printing on two Xerox DocuTech 6100 printers, a Xerox DocuColor 12 Copier/Printer and a Xerox DocuColor 2060 Series Digital Color Press. The personalized messages are overprinted on offset-produced direct-mail pieces and mailed by Lexinet. And Lexinet still receives reply cards, distributes leads and handles fulfillment.

The processes that moved to the Web included mailing list management, ordering and providing customizing information for mail pieces, and lead tracking. A key requisite: the system had to be quickly accessible and easy to use, thereby assuring more widespread participation by Butler builders, Mohr said.

So Lexinet's "E-Squad" of programmers — who also specialize in the database and variable data printing applications — developed what Adler calls a "very user-friendly" site. Developed in Java and ISAPI (Internet Service Application Process Interface) to run on a SQL server at Lexinet head-quarters, the system

went live in summer 1999, kicking off Butler's new "Leads to Profits" program.

The Web Streamlines Lead Development

Now, participating dealers are assigned PIN numbers to access a private Web site for managing their direct mail programs. Mailing lists are maintained online, enabling builders to make additions and changes any time they want, rather than getting printed lists for review once a year via surface delivery. The added convenience and faster turnaround has improved list quality, cut delivery costs and eliminated time-consuming data entry by Lexinet staff, because builders now enter changes directly in the database via the Web.

Builders also select their quarterly direct mail pieces online from among two or more self-mailers, post cards and letter packages, and they can provide information on the company and its recent projects for customizing mailers.

Every mailing includes a business reply card addressed to Lexinet, which uses unique identification numbers on the cards to automate fulfillment. Inputting the number in their computer system calls up background information on the prospect and automatically



Lexinet Laser Operator Drew Montgomery inspects a quarterly Butler direct mail piece that was personalized for dealers and prospects on the Xerox DocuTech 6100 Production Publisher, behind him.

one that many corporate dealer programs are investigating these days.”

Future Plans

Lexinet plans to continue building its capabilities with a recently acquired Xerox DocuColor 2060 Series Digital Color Press that will eliminate the need to pre-print direct mail pieces on offset presses by providing both near-offset quality and personalized printing. That could improve turnaround and scheduling flexibility for direct mail programs like Butler’s.

“We’ve talked to Butler about giving their dealers the ability to do mailings on-demand, rather than on a fixed quarterly schedule,” Adler said. “Some of our other clients already provide that option,



In the lettershop, Joyce Rice, front, and other staff members sort mail pieces for distribution.

to get a mailer out within a few days of ordering it, and the DocuColor 2060 would make on-demand mailing easier by eliminating the need to store quantities of the pre-printed stock.”

Mohr concurs. “Our future plans are to make this a mailing on demand system,” he said. “There’s nothing magic about quarterly mailings, you just need to have consistency. If it was my business, I might do mailings when climatic conditions dictate. For example, if I was in the Northeast, I would do several mailings in February, March and April — after the heavy snows and rain had subsided, until I had filled my construction schedules. Then I’d stop the mailings for a while. That is the type of increased flexibility the Web will bring to us.”

Continued from page 2

- The Web site helps Butler market the program to its builders with a complete program description that includes a spreadsheet for calculating the costs of direct mail versus direct sales calls.

Provider Benefits:

- Mailing list updates are made directly online by Lexinet customers, cutting staff time devoted to mailing list maintenance while improving accuracy, eliminating overnight delivery costs, and improving turnaround on updates.
- The Web-based agent and dealer direct mail program represents a new Lexinet business opportunity that the company is actively marketing. Several new customers already have signed on. ■

For more information about the solutions discussed in this document, please contact your local Xerox representative.

THE DOCUMENT COMPANY

XEROX

www.xerox.com