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Project:	Linn Companies Drive Auto Services Business
Vertical Market:	Retail - Automotive
Business Application:	Direct Marketing/Traffic Generation

Business Objectives

The Linn Companies is a family owned auto services chain in Minnesota that operates 15 retail locations and owns and manages 19 commercial properties. Linn Companies has a lot of data on its customers and realized that they could do a better job of using that data to send targeted promotions. Working with their service provider, Sexton Printing, they decided to run a test program for one Goodyear Service Center to see if targeted, personalized direct mail could drive profitable business for their service centers.

The objectives of the program were to:

- Gain profitable timing belt replacement business from current customers
- Cross-sell additional services, including oil changes and water pump replacements

Results

- The total revenue from timing belt and water pump replacements and oil changes was \$11,099
- Based on a profit of over \$4,700 after labor and materials, the ROI for this program was 141%

Campaign Architecture

The Linn Companies decided to promote timing belt replacement service because it is a highly profitable job that typically bills out at hundreds of dollars per sale. It would not require a lot of sales to recoup the cost of the direct mail campaign. Water pump replacements were also promoted since the water pump often has to be removed to gain access to the timing belt. Thus it might make sense for the customer to replace the water pump at the same time.

One of the challenging aspects of this campaign was identifying which makes and models of cars use timing belts. The service provider compiled this list of information by reviewing catalogs from different belt manufacturers. This was a slow and manual process but the information can be reused for future campaigns.



Our records show that your Nissan Pathfinder timing belt is due for replacement

Call by **June 14, 2008** to receive your **FREE TIMING BELT**

Pay only the servicing charge.
Service must be performed within 6 months.

You are protected by the Magnuson-Moss Warranty Act! You do NOT have to service your car at the dealership to maintain your new car warranty.

John, Call today to schedule your appointment
651-738-9202

ALSO PRESENT THIS CARD FOR AN
OIL, LUBE & FILTER For **\$17.95** (reg. \$23.95)
Includes: Lube, where applicable • New oil filter installed • Up to 5 quarts of Kendall brand oil
FREE PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE CHECK (on request)

Must present card at time of service. Fluid filter disposal charge may apply in some areas.
Most cars & light trucks. Vehicles requiring synthetic or diesel oil & filter may be extra.
No other discounts apply. Offer ends 06/28/08. Additional charges for shop supplies may be added.

GOODYEAR
1707 Weir Drive
Woodbury, MN 55125

Presorted
Standard
US Postage Paid
St Paul, MN
Permit No. 1096

We beat Nissan dealership prices!

Paramount Auto Service
1707 Weir Drive
Woodbury, MN 55125
651-738-9202

12 MONTHS SAME AS CASH. SEE STORE FOR DETAILS

John, keep your Nissan Pathfinder on the road.

Call by **June 14** to receive your **FREE TIMING BELT**

Pay only the servicing charge.



Two versions of a 5.5" x 8.5" variable data postcard were designed to promote the timing belt replacement service. All the postcards were mailed at the same time.

While they were pulling customer data for the campaign, the service provider's team spoke with the technicians in the auto services shop. They explained the campaign to them and the importance of collecting and tracking any postcards that were brought in. The Operations Manager for the shop reiterated this message with the technicians. To make the collection easier, a box with an example postcard taped to the top was left in the shop. Technicians were asked to write the services performed on the postcard. This level of involvement from the technicians was important to accurately track results.

Target Audience and Messaging

The target audience for the campaign was current customers of The Linn Companies. The postcards were personalized with the customer's name and the make and model of their car.

Offer

Recipients who scheduled their service by the deadline were given a free timing belt – a value of approximately \$75. A discount was also offered for oil, lube, and filter service.



List

The list of customers was pulled from The Linn Companies' own database. Customers who owned selected cars with mileage between 80,000 and 150,000 were targeted.

To pull this information the service provider was given access to The Linn Companies' database.

Creative and Outbound Piece

All of the creative work was done by the service provider. There were two designs for the postcard:

- A picture of an open road with a Goodyear billboard sign to the side
- An image of a car broken down by the side of the road

Each design was mailed to half of the targeted audience. There was no noticeable difference in the response rates to the different designs.

Reasons for Success

The Linn Companies was happy with the results of the campaign and Sexton Printing plans to sell this type of program to other automotive service centers who typically have a lot of data on their customers.

Best practices learned from this campaign include:

- **Communicate with a select, targeted audience.** The Linn Companies was able to send a very relevant and timely message to its customers by mining its customer data and presenting an offer most likely to appeal to them.
- **Educate your frontline.** Informing the auto service technicians about the campaign was important. They were then familiar with the promotion when customers started calling about it. Their cooperation was also critical for tracking results and proving the success of this campaign.
- **Make your offer very specific.** The postcards promoted defined services as opposed to the message of "we do everything."
- **Use a strong call to action.** The call to action was prominently displayed on the postcards and recipients were given a deadline by which to respond.

Client	The Linn Companies www.thelinnco.com The Linn Companies is a family owned auto services chain located in the Twin Cities. It currently operates 15 retail locations and owns and manages 19 commercial properties. Partners include Goodyear, BP, Holiday, and NAPA.
Print & Marketing Service Provider	Sexton Printing www.sextonprinting.com Sexton Printing is a commercial sheetfed printer specializing in multi-color, multi-page production and self mailers, located in St. Paul, MN. They provide a one-stop-shop for customers with design and mailing departments. They are also developing a new division focused on marketing effectiveness by means of strategic communications.
Hardware	Xerox DocuColor 7000
Software	Meadows DesignMerge
Target Audience	Previous customers who had vehicles that: A) Use timing belts B) Have the correct amount of miles on them to require timing belt replacement.
Distribution	3,856 postcards
Date	April 2008



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- Theresa Cloutier, Principal, DMM

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