



Using Customized Cards to Create Amazing B2B Customer Experiences

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CABELA'S, THE WORLD'S FOREMOST OUTFITTER of hunting, fishing and outdoor gear, knows its customers, and has built an amazingly robust gift card program that matches the grandeur of its legendary stores. Each location features large-format merchandising to highlight an impressive selection of products and gift cards (right next to the large tank of trout and the waterfall.) Cabela's B2B program follows suit, taking card design to a whole new level. The program's main driver is a technology enabling clients to co-brand their company on Cabela's gift cards. Two-thirds of the card can feature a custom image while the remaining third is branded with Cabela's artwork.

"We've had this program live for five years now. Hundreds of clients use this technology," said Colleen Dorwart, senior manager for Cabela's Gift Card Services. "Gift card demand is shifting to personalization and customization, and we've been doing that for years. It started as an internal program, and then we decided to expand and offer it to our customers."

"We love working with the Cabela's gift card group. They are great people, and they have truly partnered with us. We're a team," said Glenn Frazee, account executive for Travel Tags.

"Cabela's does the sales, of course, and then they upload images into the portal. We take care of the printing, which happens digitally, and then we send the final products to the Cabela's warehouse to be included in their existing distribution process. We print about 500 cards per average order, but can accommodate digitally printed orders from 1 to 25,000 cards, depending on Cabela's clients' needs."

Client experience is paramount in Cabela's B2B program. "Our corporate customers love it," Dorwart said. "We call it our 'custom program' and do fulfillment in house, which helps expedite things. Since we didn't have to create any new processes, it helped it catch on quickly, and since it was part of an existing program, it was easy to understand and accept from a client perspective."

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

"Cabela's was doing some amazing things with its clients – making those purchase experiences really special. We asked if we could incorporate a gift card into that program, which seemed like a natural inclusion. It took off from there," said Frazee, "At the time, most clients were resistant to cobranding their card but Cabela's took a step in a direction that no other merchant was really exploring yet."

"Five years ago, when we first started with Travel Tags, this concept was new to the market," Dorwart said. "They were interested in working with us to create a process for custom cards with different minimum quantities. As it has continued to evolve, we now have no minimums for our custom program. No matter if they want one card or five thousand cards, turn-around time is very short."

"The Cabela's team knew what they wanted - something quick and straightforward. The ability to drag and drop designs or photos into templates was a critical feature for them, as well as having an intuitive order platform



that the team could access at any time," Frazee said. "The process is simple. First, we obtain thousands of card numbers prior to any order. Once we receive an order via email or an FTP site upload, those card numbers are individually linked to the digitally printed cards. Orders are processed once a week, shipped within seven days and delivered to the Cabela's warehouse. This method allows orders to be placed at any time, and then we can combine runs to minimize costs. We continue to work on our order portal technology to improve the process flow and better meet Cabela's needs."

CLIENT IMPACT

While incentive programs and aggregator relationships usually require set designs, the nature of Cabela's direct business is such that clients are looking for more personalized designs that brand their business as well.

"It's exciting for our clients; especially those who use it for employee incentives or customer rewards," said Dorwart. "They create a meaningful image or message and know every time the recipient looks at or uses the card, they are reminded of the reward. For the Cabela's team, we recognize it reminds every level of the organization that we truly value our client partners; the program can be used to grow existing accounts and also generate new business."

And the personalization doesn't end there. Cabela's has integrated co-branding efforts into promotional pieces as well. "We have used an oversized gift card shape as a promotional tool," Dorwart said. "It's unique for the client to have a "large" representation of their gift card which can also be made into a live functional gift card. Glenn made it happen for us. It's a unique way to support our clients' programs."

"This is one of the pioneer programs," Frazee said. "We expect the success and learning from this program to shape the future of what short-

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run digital card programs look like. We've started to hear questions in the industry around how these kinds of programs work, and we are ready to accommodate those requests and continue to drive value for the Cabela's program."

"The real challenge now is where to take this amazing program," Dorwart said. "We're always looking for ways to improve the process, such as a shorter turn time, extra options for the card and presentation, and how we utilize the program to complement our other company initiatives. We are constantly working with Travel Tags on accommodating the customer even more based on their needs. It's been truly instrumental for the program in partnering with such a great vendor. We enjoy working with Glenn, who has been the mentor and expert for us on how production works, and Travel Tags has been flexible and accommodating to our requirements as the program grows. The credit for the success of this unique program belongs to Travel Tags for being a great visionary partner. We expect high standards, and Travel Tags has set a pretty high standard for themselves. The end result is truly priceless."

"The Cabela's gift card department is amazing," Frazee said. "Their dedicated team has a primary

focus on managing the gift card program. When we see that kind of commitment from a company in the gift card space, we know their program will continue to grow."

THE FUTURE OF THE PROGRAM

"Our Custom card program has great potential and we've just scratched the surface," Dorwart said. "It's about providing clients a great experience, choices, and accommodating their needs. For example, with recent emphasis on health and wellness programs, a custom card message can reiterate and support milestones or rewards in this category. We want potential clients to understand how we support our customers and how this personalized card elevates the incentive experience."

Frazee spoke about how Travel Tags sees the future, "This is an ideal solution for any number of merchants who want to create small quantity, customized cards, and that's where the future lies for high experience B2B. he said, "There are implications in other sales channels as well and we expect to see this process grow as a complementary program to traditional large-run processes."