

Evolving Paper Coupons into a New Mover Goldmine for 45 Years



Global Business Magazine (August 2017) – Right now, thousands of moving trucks are crisscrossing the country, hauling furniture and other belongings to new locations. Summer means making “the move” for many single professionals, couples, and families, so they have the time to get used to their new homes before the job and/or school year starts. During that all-too-critical time when new movers are actively searching for new go-to restaurants, grocery stores, dry cleaners, hair salons, etc., what’s the best way for local businesses to reach them first in ways that cultivate long-term relationships?

Believe it or not, the answer lies in the mailbox, not the inbox – valuable gift certificates presented to new residents in Our Town America’s warm, personalized new mover welcoming package.

And no, this isn’t your standard, “spray and pray” direct mail coupon campaign. Our Town America, the nation’s fastest growing new mover marketing franchise, has consistently evolved the coupon since its inception in 1972 – turning coupons into targeted, trackable, valuable gift certificate gold for thousands of local sponsors across the country.

Not to trash coupons, because 2017 marks the 130th anniversary of the paper coupon. (Coca-Cola issued the first product coupon in 1887 for a free glass of Coke.

The success of THAT coupon now spans generations.) In fact, at least 90% of Americans, from every demographic, use them to save billions every year.

Our Town America, headquartered in Pinellas Park, FL., is also celebrating a significant milestone: it's 45th year in business, partnering with local companies to create deals exclusively for new residents with trackable gift certificates that generate exponentially higher response rates than the average direct mail couponing campaign.

"Our gift certificates outperform 'spray and pray' coupon programs because we're reaching people when they're actively searching for new local businesses," says CEO Michael Plummer, Jr. "Put simply, our gift certificates have changed the game for the 'couponing' industry because we help local businesses deliver valuable, often completely free, offers to new movers as soon as they get to town. I'm proud to say that our ability to evolve the concept of 'coupons' into highly targeted and results-driven gift certificates has been the key catalyst to our 45 years of success."

Plummer says there has been a great response to their "45th Anniversary Edition" welcome package envelope and gift certificates. The distinctive rich packaging seems to beg the recipient to open it first...and recent company growth suggests it's working. Our Town America generated nearly \$9 Million in revenues last year and expects to grow another 6% in 2017. The tremendous growth can be attributed to an average customer response rate of 16% in some industries, such as pizza. That's more than 3 times the average response rate generated by coupon companies like Valpak.

Dick McKean is one of the thousands of local sponsors nationwide who is a firm believer in the Our Town America program. He's the executive manager of Lake Norman Infiniti in Cornelius, N.C., about 20 miles north of Charlotte. The suburb has boomed with new residents. In 1990, there were just 2,581 people living in Cornelius. Today, there are more than 28,000.

In a recent article, McKean credits Our Town America with getting those new residents in the doors of his dealership, and has kept them coming back, by using the service to send gift certificates offering discounts on service costs, as well as free oil changes, and no cost alignments.

“For what we’re paying, this is the best return rate we’ve gotten,” says McKean. “And Our Town America doesn’t just bring customers in trying to score a one-off deal like other couponing companies. We’re really starting to see customers return, which is important.”

Michael Plummer says this is just another example of how Our Town America can help any business, ranging from restaurants to retailers to fitness centers and beyond, attract new customers while building brand loyalty. Using target programming to focus in on specific prospective clients, those businesses can get more bang for their buck, rather than wasting efforts on a more broad-based approach.

“Most coupon companies offer a shotgun approach,” says Plummer. “We’re more of a rifle.”

Our Town America is also rapidly expanding its franchising footprint. Since 2005, the company has grown to 54 franchises in 27 states, and has been consistently honored as a **“Top 50 Franchise by Franchise Business Review**, recently becoming a charter member of the FBR Hall of Fame. The company’s consistent and sustainable growth has created a need for expanded support at the corporate office. To make room for the 35 new employees they’re hiring in the Tampa area this year, Plummer is moving the Our Town America staff to a brand new 44,000 square-foot office.

Our Town America’s franchisees are impressed – pointing to Plummer’s leadership, the company’s excellent training, and the consistent hands-on support all franchisees receive.

But no matter the stratospheric growth, and lofty plans for the future, Plummer is adamant about staying true to the ideals of his father, Michael Plummer, Sr., company founder, who passed away in 2009.

“We’re evolving with the times while staying true to our core value proposition – helping new movers across the nation get settled and develop long-term relationships with local businesses,” says Plummer. “In today’s increasingly technical world, people aren’t truly connecting with neighbors and local business owners in meaningful ways. Our ability to fill that void will be the key to our next 45 years of growth and success!”

Since it's 1972 inception, Our Town America's mission has been assisting new movers adjusting to their community, helping businesses gain new and loyal customers and providing franchisees with an excellent opportunity. The eight million households who receive Our Town America's welcome packages each year prove that Our Town America is committed to following through on that mission statement.

Things look good for the future of coupons/direct mail as well, as a recent study suggests 88% of all consumers (and 91% of millennials) use paper coupons and 30% of coupon users have recently increased their use of paper coupons. And no company is better positioned to capitalize than Our Town America - the company that has evolved coupons into tech-savvy, targeted and memorable gift certificates that fit beautifully with modern day new mover needs and expectations.

*To become an Our Town America sponsor, please complete a **Contact Form**, or sign up online with our **New Movers on Demand** portal!*

You may also give us a call at 800-497-8360 and mention the 'Global Biz Mag article'.

Source: Global Business Magazine