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Partner at a Glance

Name: Kampgrounds of America

Location: Billings, MT

Number of Franchisees: 475

Franchise Partner Since: 2012

URL: www.koa.com

Kampgrounds of America: How a Unique Campground Found a Unique Email Marketing Partnership

There's camping. And then there's KOA.

That's the slogan for Kampgrounds of America (KOA), which has been offering a unique camping experience to families across North America for the last 50 years. From Key West to Cape Cod to Reno to Bar Harbor—KOA has gained national attention while still providing a local adventure to all of its visitors.

Since its start in 1962, KOA has grown to over 475 campgrounds and 60,000 sites in the US and Canada. Over that time, marketing efforts for KOA and its franchisees have been handled by the KOA Home Office in Billings, Montana.

“As a franchisor, our job is to provide national marketing on a brand level while still giving franchisees the tools and training they need to grow and attract new customers locally,” explains Polly Mulvaney, Director of Marketing Services for KOA. “There has always been a pent up demand for more affordable marketing services.”

Starting an email marketing adventure

Looking to bolster the marketing support it provides its local franchisees, KOA decided to try email marketing.

“We were relatively late to the email game,” Polly recalls. “And it really took us a long time to find a program that made sense for us and our franchise locations.”

Polly's first attempt at email marketing was an internally-managed program that she had put together for her franchisees. Without a partner, Polly and her staff of seven were left to handle the marketing all on their own.

“We decided that we would handle everything. We would create the content, design the emails, and send them out to their local contacts,” Polly recalls. “Not long after, we were managing the email marketing for over 50 people with a staff of seven—it became a full-time job.”

Overwhelmed and unsatisfied with the type of results KOA had generated from its first try at email marketing, Polly set out to find the type of support she desperately needed.

That's when she discovered Constant Contact.



Kampgrounds of America

Finding the right email marketing partner

“We were familiar with Constant Contact but didn’t realize that a program exclusively for franchises existed,” says Polly. “What we found when we did some research was that the partnership with Constant Contact would have everything we were looking for—an affordable product with the education, training, and support to back it up.”

KOA officially launched its partnership with Constant Contact in April 2012, after a successful test phase which included 15 of its franchise locations. Within the first six months of marketing this program, 66 of its franchisees had set up accounts to send email communications to their existing and prospective campers.

“The response has been great and those who have adopted the program have seen great results,” Polly explains. “We expect to double the amount of franchises using the program within the next year.”

In addition to finding an email marketing partner that provided its franchisees with a tool to help reach new campers and strengthen ties with returning visitors, KOA has been able to overcome some of their biggest marketing challenges, both at the franchisor and franchisee level, since partnering with Constant Contact.

Mastering communication and awareness

As a franchisor, Polly says that awareness and communication are always one of the biggest challenges of KOA.

“With Constant Contact, there’s no reason why all of our franchisees shouldn’t be taking advantage of using email marketing,” Polly explains. “The biggest challenge is always communicating that message to our locations.”

To help KOA and its more than 475 franchisees get started with email marketing, Constant Contact put together a custom marketing plan that would reach all of the locations across North America. Through email communications, custom online training, and personal coaching by phone, Constant Contact is able to help each individual location to upload their list of contacts and to send a professional and effective email campaign.

Prior to KOA’s 50th Annual National Convention, the Home Office provided Constant Contact the attendee list in order to set up a free trial for each campground owner. This enabled Constant Contact to co-promote a dedicated Email Marketing panel discussion at the event, and to meet with interested attendees and show them how to access their free accounts and preview the new KOA email templates.

“After the convention we saw a lot of people who were really excited about signing up and getting started,” Polly explains. “It really took the pressure off to convince people that email would be right for them.”



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Maintaining a brand in the marketing wilderness

With locations across the US and Canada offering varied and unique experiences to all who stay at their sites, KOA was looking for a way to offer local marketing without undermining their national branding.

“It’s crucial to us that we’re able to protect the integrity of our brand while also offering our franchisees the flexibility to speak to their audience,” says Polly.

To help KOA maintain the brand that so many campers have come to recognize, Polly worked with Constant Contact to develop custom templates designed specifically to meet the needs of KOA.

“For us, the templates are a way to not only control our brand, but also to make it as easy as possible for people to create and send emails,” Polly explains. “The home office offers templates for those that declare themselves as less tech-savvy, or just want this done for them, as well as those with a bit more technical experience, who may want to customize more of the message.”

Currently, KOA offers its franchisees 22 custom-designed templates and have plans to roll out 40 by the end of the year.

Adding an on-call marketing team

As a franchise, KOA is committed to providing its franchisees with the training and education they need to give customers the complete KOA experience.

The same has been true when it comes to helping franchisees market their campgrounds.

“We’ve done our best over the years to provide our franchisees with the marketing training and support they have needed,” Polly explains. “With Constant Contact, all of our franchisees now have a trusted marketing team at their disposal that can offer the type of help we’ve never had before.”

In addition to having a Relationship Manager dedicated to meeting the marketing needs of KOA and its franchisees, KOA also has access to syndicated content, phone support, and training that was customized for their network.

Constant Contact will also have a presence at KOA University training sessions which the franchise hosts for new owners throughout the year.



Kampgrounds of America

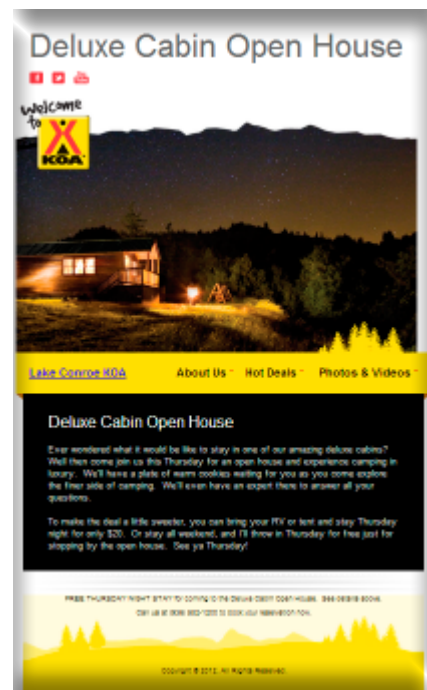
The value of a perfect partnership

As more and more people begin to take advantage of the email marketing program being offered by KOA and Constant Contact, KOA is beginning to hear incredible success stories from their franchisees! One of those stories came from Aaron Williamson, owner of Lake Controe KOA in Montgomery, Texas. On one of the biggest weekends of his first season using email marketing, Aaron saw revenue increase by \$7,300 over the previous year after sending a targeted email to his list of contacts who lived within a 100-mile radius. Of the 150 new reservations the email generated, 70 booked nights at deluxe cabins which would have otherwise been empty.

“More revenue and more camper nights—that has been the biggest benefit of partnering with Constant Contact,” says Polly. “Our people are already seeing the results.”

Grow your franchise and your bottom line

When you team with Constant Contact as a Franchise Owner, you're choosing to bring easy-to-use, cost-effective marketing tools to every franchise in your organization.



What franchisors get

- Constant Contact will work with your marketing team to ensure brand consistency
- Customized on-demand and live training
- Flexible payment options, including discounts for franchisees accounts
- Getting Started Kit to help you get up and running, fast
- Dedicated franchise marketing expert to work with you and your team
- Access to the Constant Contact product suite

What franchisees get

- Easy-to-use marketing and social campaign tools that makes your marketing a snap
- Social media integration — making it easy to share your message
- 400+ self-serve email design templates
- Free coaching and support

Call (866) 899-3710 and we'll develop a plan that works for you and your franchisees. Or visit constantcontact.com/franchise to learn more!