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## Rhode Island Marketer Uses Constant Contact to Help Clients Grow Their Businesses

### Precision Web Marketing Offers Mix of Services, Including Email Marketing

Here's a Business Partner success tip you might not have considered: hold a seminar and then offer all attendees a free email marketing account through Constant Contact®.

That's Michelle Girasole's secret weapon for introducing Constant Contact to businesses that wouldn't otherwise consider the service.

In business since 2002, Girasole and her partner, Steven Stacy, manage Rhode Island-based Precision Web Marketing, an online marketing firm that works with small, medium, and large companies as well as non-profits. Named one of Rhode Island's Rising Stars in 2004, the firm consists of ten employees, many of whom work "virtually."

Before striking out on her own in 2003, Girasole managed an international newsletter for her former employer—using Outlook to send PDF files. "Of course, I hit all the classic pitfalls," she laughs. "People couldn't open the PDFs, and I couldn't manage bounces and unsubscribes. I knew when I started my business, I needed a better solution." After some searching, Girasole discovered Constant Contact.

When asked the secret to her success as a Constant Contact Business Partner, Girasole gives the following four strategies:

#### Success Strategy #1: Educate Prospects about Email Marketing

Talk to Girasole for any length of time, and you'll quickly see she's on the ball when it comes to helping her clients achieve success (indeed, she was named one of Providence's young community leaders in 2005). Instead of offering one service, such as web design, her firm offers integrated web design, email marketing, search engine marketing, and analytics.



Precision  
Web Marketing

#### Partner at a Glance

Company: Precision Web Marketing

Location: Providence, RI

#### Services Provided:

Website Design and Maintenance

Search Engine Optimization

Affiliate Marketing

Email Marketing

Analytics

In Business: 5 years

Employees: 10

#### More Information:

[www.precisionroi.com](http://www.precisionroi.com)

#### Business Partner Since:

August 2003

Constant Contact Accounts: Over 100

#### Business Model:

Offers four-step approach that covers the essential steps needed for online marketing success.



Constant Contact®  
Connect. Inform. Grow.

## Precision Web Marketing

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“I started my business with the premise that you can’t do marketing in channels,” states Girasole. “To be successful online, you need a fully integrated approach.”

Because businesses don’t understand how email marketing can benefit them, Girasole and her partner hold email marketing seminars at both their offices or through chambers of commerce or other businesses throughout Rhode Island.

The Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce, for example, holds a monthly “Power Hour” luncheon series that’s always well attended. When Girasole developed her luncheon seminar, she hit on the idea of **offering trial accounts to all 30 attendees**. Here’s how it worked:

**Step #1:** Girasole got the names of registered attendees from the Chamber. Sponsoring organizations will gladly give you, the presenter, this information—especially if you’re speaking for free.

**Step #2:** She then opened a trial account for each attendee before the luncheon. Remember, Constant Contact trial accounts don’t require a credit card so you can easily do this for your seminar attendees, too.

**Step #3:** During her one hour presentation, Girasole covered the following topics:

- Introduction to email marketing
- Benefits of email marketing and e-newsletters
- Why email marketing can deliver better results than direct mail
- Email marketing best practices
- List building
- Brief Constant Contact demo (For in-office seminars, Girasole spends an entire hour showing attendees how to use Constant Contact.)

**Step #4:** At the end of the seminar, Girasole gave each attendee a password to a “free” Constant Contact account.

“Giving Chamber attendees free accounts worked,” says Girasole, “because it gave people the initiative to explore Constant Contact once they got back to their offices. You know how it goes—



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you attend a seminar, you get back to the office and immediately begin putting out fires. The ideas you learned at the seminar get put on the back burner for weeks or months.”

Indeed, Girasole and her partner have determined this method of building relationships with customers so effective, their goal is to sign on 200 new accounts in 2007 by offering two business-building workshops for 100 attendees each—one in Miami and one in Rhode Island. All attendees will receive a free trial sign-up.

### Success Strategy #2: Tie Email Marketing to Other Services

According to Girasole, it's not enough to simply build a website, you have to drive targeted traffic to it through search engine marketing (i.e.: search engine optimization, pay-per-click, banner ads, etc.) and online communications such as email promotions and/or e-newsletters.

Girasole and her partner have structured their services so that clients can enter online marketing at any stage of the game. When a client needs a website, Girasole and her team educate the client on how he needs to drive traffic to the site in order to increase inquiries and/or sales. “Of course, we tell them e-newsletters are a great way to keep in touch with customers and prospects not yet ready to buy.”

If the client is already conducting email marketing campaigns, Girasole and her team help the client get to the next level by offering list building strategies, branding (design), and list management—all of which are enhanced by Constant Contact and its easy to use interface.

“We have clients,” reports Girasole, “who initially come to us because they're using Outlook and need list management help. Usually they're having problems with faulty HTML, or they're doing plain text because they don't have a web design background. Once they see how easy it is with Constant Contact to develop branded email messages, personalize them, and keep track of the results, they switch over.”

### Success Strategy #3: Let Clients Choose Their Level of Service

Like many companies, Precision Web Marketing uses its website to promote its various services, including email marketing. Prospects and customers can also choose the level of service that's right for them, including self-serve, first campaign implementation, and full campaign management:



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Self-serve – Prospects can easily sign up for their own accounts simply by clicking on the Constant Contact link Precision Web Marketing provides on their site. Although considered “passive” marketing in the sense that Precision Web Marketing isn’t directly selling to the client, it allows potential clients to use Constant Contact risk-free and then to call Precision at a later date for additional help, when they’re further along in the sales process.

Campaign Implementation – Many businesses prefer to keep their email marketing in-house, but they also know they need help getting started, so Precision Web Marketing offers a “first campaign” implementation package. This package includes list building, content development, template design, and branding. They show clients how to brand their emails, how to tie them back into the website, and how to use results to enhance future campaigns.

Full campaign management – For companies who want to outsource the entire project long-term, Precision Web Marketing oversees campaigns start to finish.

### **Success Strategy #4: Show Clients Their Results!**

Girasole and her team make a point to sit down with clients every month and explain the email data provided by Constant Contact (this data includes the number of emails opened, bounced emails, and click-throughs). “Clients don’t understand what ‘click through’ means and how this translates into business,” says Girasole. “We show them how

people find them on the web, then sign up for the newsletter, then make a purchase or sales inquiry.”

The company will often add an additional tracking layer for consumer clients to track sales from the e-newsletter and/or e-promotion back to the website. Girasole reports they had a client send out an e-newsletter in 2003 that is still bringing in sales!

### **Constant Contact Helps Precision Web Marketing Grow Her Business**

When she started her company, Girasole had a handful of clients who were either doing email marketing through Outlook or not doing it all. She began bundling Constant Contact into her service offerings and today has more than 100 accounts with about 30% of them considered active.

**Their Business Partner revenue has grown accordingly, increasing 400% since 2003.**

In addition, her email marketing clients, who make up about two-thirds of her business, break down into 10% self-service, 30% using her full campaign management services, and 60% opting in for her email implementation package.

When asked how long it takes a prospect to become a customer, Girasole replied, “It depends. Since we actually set up trial accounts for seminar attendees in advance of the seminars, and we print out the logins for them to take home with them, so for those who are really interested and self-starters, they can get their own thing going within hours of the seminar.”



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For those attendees who don’t become active within the first couple of days, Girasole follows up on the “hot ones” —those that asked a lot of questions at the seminar—within a week or so. The others get added to Precision’s email newsletter list, so that they can cultivate them without any targeted sales effort.

“These types of prospects usually take longer to convert to paying clients,” she reports, “usually because either they are technically challenged or they haven’t developed their marketing strategy enough. Some are just doing research, and aren’t ready to implement. The seminar really jumpstarts our marketing and sales effort, because it helps us identify the most interested and motivated clients, and helps us to use our sales resources wisely.”

Like many service businesses, Precision Web Marketing charges a range of fees. They do not mark up the Constant Contact fee—in fact, the charges go directly to a client’s credit card. For a single, one-time email campaign, fees can range from \$1,000 to \$1,500, which includes implementing the campaign using one of Constant Contact’s templates.

If a client wants a customized template, Precision Web Marketing charges an hourly rate of \$100 per hour, on top of campaign implementation. For subsequent email

campaigns using the same template, costs range from \$300 to \$500—or Precision is happy to show clients how to do it on their own.

### **EFNE Loses Outlook Headache, Adds 1,000 New Subscribers**

“Before we met Michelle Girasole, our email marketing was a chaotic mess,” states Michelle Gonzalez, co-founding partner of the Entrepreneurs Forum of New England (EFNE) and Principal of New Commons, which launches the EFNE campaigns. The three-year-old non-profit was sending 1,500 emails through Outlook, and not having fun doing it.

“We would call people first to add them to our list,” reports Gonzalez, “then send them email. We were also trying to segment the list, which was very difficult to do in Outlook. Our server was becoming clogged and even worse, people were calling to complain because they would ask to be removed from the list and we would accidentally send them email again. Just talking about it brings back the bad memories!”

Gonzalez kept thinking there had to be a better way, and in the Spring of 2004 heard about Constant Contact at the same time she learned Michelle Girasole was giving an email marketing workshop through the Arts and Business Council of Rhode Island.



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Gonzalez reports the workshop was an eye-opener for her. “We started working with Precision Web Marketing in May 2004,” she states. “Michelle really educated us about email, branding, spam, and how to relate our emails back to our website. For example, instead of linking to our home page, Michelle showed us how to link to pages within the site that were relevant to the email’s content.”

Girasole also showed Gonzalez how Constant Contact could dramatically relieve their Outlook headaches with its built-in templates, subscriber management tools, and interest categories. EFNE now manages all their email campaigns in-house, but they still call on Precision Web Marketing for expert advice on how to better reach their customers.

“Constant Contact provides us with three benefits,” sums up Gonzalez. “Because we now have templates, it’s very easy to develop email campaigns, then schedule them to go out for any day or time. Because the emails go out through Constant Contact, we’re no longer clogging up our server. And, it allows us to easily segment our subscribers, which is a huge benefit for us.

“With Constant Contact and Michelle’s help, we’ve grown our list into 2,500 very targeted subscribers who want to hear from us. That’s the power of Constant Contact and email marketing.”

Girasole agrees with Gonzalez. “Email marketing is an integral part of our business,” she says. “By partnering with Constant Contact we’re able to effectively reach prospects through educational seminars, offer our clients the level of service best suited to their business, and most importantly, help them achieve real results.”