



“Every time we tweak a little bit, we get tons of emails and people in the hallways, at meetings, congratulating us for making it that much better.”

Abby Bronstein

Internal Communications Strategist, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

PoliteMail Metrics Improve Aesthetics and Open Rate of Hospital's Emails

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia initially started using PoliteMail to make its emails look better, but the metrics included have been a huge help, too.

Not too long ago, Abby Bronstein, internal communications strategist at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, and her team sent email newsletters as essentially lists of links, copied and pasted from Microsoft Word.

Bronstein wasn't totally satisfied with that setup, so she started using PoliteMail to give the newsletters a better look and make them instantly more compelling. It was only after the changeover that she noticed PoliteMail's various metrics were a huge benefit, too.

Now, the hospital is looking at some ways it can reach out to a large number of employees who don't seem to be in the loop.

Making the Choice

Bronstein wanted to improve the aesthetics of the newsletters, so that they'd be easier and more enjoyable for employees to read. So she started reaching out.

“I just started doing Google searches,” she says. “I was talking to other people that I know who are working at small, nonprofit organizations. I was just cold-calling places where I like their newsletters.”

Bronstein says she checked into tools such as Constant Contact, but she settled on PoliteMail because it could integrate directly into her Outlook and Active Directory.

“A lot of our distribution lists are dynamic, so they change based on our employee census,” she says. “There's no way I could update those distribution lists accurately on an ongoing, constant basis.”

PoliteMail enabled HTML newsletters so that the hospital's three main emails – one that goes to all employees, one from the CEO for leaders, and a third from the chief medical officer directed at medical staff – could include branded, standardized graphics, banners, and headers.

“We are getting such great, positive feedback,” Bronstein says.

Measurement

PoliteMail's metrics capabilities came as something of a surprise to Bronstein, “a really awesome added bonus,” she says. “That's something we're utilizing, really, a lot.”

Along with Google Analytics, the open rate and click-through numbers from PoliteMail make Bronstein considerably better equipped for meetings.

“It's so helpful to say that, in the last month, only six people clicked on it in the CEO message, but 300 people clicked on it in our all-staff message,” she says. “We can give better feedback to our clients.”

In the past, the communications team “tried to blanket everything” with every message, Bronstein says. Now, communicators can guide leaders toward targeting those messages more effectively.

Even so, Bronstein says, “We haven't really gone beyond just being able to look at [the statistics] yet.”

She's discovered that those numbers are fairly consistent. About 55 percent of the people who get the leadership email open it. In the CMO's emails, the most clicks are on a section that recognizes physicians for their accomplishments. About 3,000 out of 14,000 recipients open the all-staff email.

Bronstein says she's discovering some unexpected trends through PoliteMail's data. For example, she can see exactly when people open messages. Some wait until three weeks after they're sent, which means some evergreen content would be useful to them.

Goals

Staffers at Children's are intrigued by PoliteMail's potential. So far, only Bronstein is trained to use it, but she's planning training sessions for the other three members of her team. She says people who don't even have the license to use PoliteMail want to attend those sessions.

Over the next year, Bronstein hopes to work on the hospital's distribution lists. “We can do a much better job at targeting our segments,” she says. “Getting that down, it's kind of our missing link.”

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia's staff is spread out, with locations in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Bronstein thinks the emails could be localized to appeal to people in different areas.

“We're really advertising a lot of things that happen at our main campus,” she says. “I would guess some of the people that work in New Jersey say, ‘None of this applies to me. I'm not opening it.’”

The hospital is overhauling its intranet this year, adding Newsgator to personalize information. Bronstein theorizes that change may prompt a shift in how her email newsletters work. It'll make them more personal, too, and whereas the newsletters currently link to intranet articles, the links will probably become something more like supplements to the intranet.