



## HOW ATKINS NUTRITIONALS GREW EMAIL MEMBERSHIP BY 1.2 MILLION IN A YEAR

### Company Background

Dr. Robert Atkins, who passed away in April 2003, founded Atkins Nutritionals, Inc. in 1989 to help people enjoy healthier lives by changing the way the world eats. Today, the company continues to provide innovative nutritional and informational products based on controlled carbohydrate nutritional science.

Many people first heard about Dr. Atkins through one of his many popular diet and health education books. His 1972 book, *Dr. Atkins' Diet Revolution*, introduced his approach to controlled carbohydrate nutrition and complementary medical techniques for preventing and combating heart disease, diabetes, and obesity. Twenty years later, his *Dr. Atkins' New Diet Revolution* sold over 10 million copies worldwide and is one of the top 50 best-selling books of all time.

*ListManager easily paid for itself before the first mailing was complete.*

### Goals and Challenges

When Web Technology Director Brian Engler arrived at Atkins Nutritionals in 2001, one of his primary responsibilities was to use technology to help grow the company's online channel. Engler planned to accomplish this via three distinct goals.

The first goal was to generate additional Internet sales of Atkins products, such as books, nutritional supplements, and packaged foods, ranging from meal replacement bars to barbecue sauce.

The company also wanted to grow Atkins' online community, which had existed since 1996. The subscription base for the email newsletter had already reached 200,000—far too many for the existing mail server to handle efficiently.

Another critical goal was to maintain tight security of customer data. "Because our consumers can voluntarily provide us with personal data (including health information), privacy is a huge concern for us," says Engler. **over ▶**



## The Solution

Having used Lyris ListManager in previous companies, Engler quickly made the decision that it would be the right tool to expand Atkins' e-newsletter program and accomplish these goals. He relied on ListManager analytics to track key metrics, particularly those he could directly relate to the newsletter itself: orders generated, web site traffic, user registration, referrals from members, growth of the list, and opens.

ListManager was also the logical choice for security reasons. "There was no way we would consider sending our member database to an outside company," Engler explains. "I knew that with our firewall and ListManager's built-in security features, our patient data would be safe."

In addition to ListManager, the e-newsletter team had another powerful advantage: a deep reserve of Atkins content resources, including thousands of health education articles, recipes, success stories, and product information.

The company expanded the program to include:

- The biweekly main newsletter, which features a personal note from the editor (until recently, Dr. Atkins himself) and inspirational "before and after" stories with photos of successful dieters;
- A biweekly food and recipes newsletter, which also includes cooking tips;
- A monthly product newsletter, highlighting new products from Atkins Nutritionals.

***"You can't beat this software for stability, ease of use, flexibility, speed, and power."***

## The Results

Atkins' e-newsletter program has taken off faster than most dieters drop a New Year's resolution. Within a year, the subscription base has jumped to 1.5 million members—a 650% increase. Much of that growth comes from list members forwarding the newsletter to friends and family members. At the same time, the unsubscribe rate remains low—below 5%. In fact, the most frequent complaint Engler hears from members is that the five newsletters most receive in a month aren't enough!

And the impact on online sales? Each mailing generates substantial incremental revenue over the four days after the newsletter is distributed, so much that ListManager easily paid for itself before the first mailing was complete.

## Future Plans

Engler recently upgraded the company's ListManager license to take advantage of additional features that the Atkins content team has been asking for.

Increased personalization is at the top of the list. For example, since the Atkins membership database includes demographic information (such as members' interest in topics such as diabetes, arthritis, or cancer), editors can use ListManager's segmentation and conditional content tools to personalize their mailings. Engler expects to see an increase in open and clickthrough rates from this advanced targeting, with even better customer loyalty and ROI than Atkins enjoys now.

"I have recommended ListManager to many people," comments Engler. "Once you figure out your needs, you can't beat this software for stability, ease of use, flexibility, speed, and power."

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Founded in 1994, Lyris Technologies, Inc. develops software and services for email messaging and filtering. Lyris solutions are used by more than 4,000 customers, ranging from Fortune 500 corporations to fast-growing startups.

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