

CASE STUDY

BACKGROUND

Starz Entertainment, LLC, is a premium movie service provider operating in the United States. It offers 16 movie channels including the flagship Starz® and Encore® brands with approximately 16.3 million and 30.7 million subscribers respectively. Starz Entertainment airs more than 1,000 movies per month across its pay TV channels and offers advanced services including Starz HD, Starz On Demand and Vongo®. Starz Entertainment (<http://www.starz.com/>) is an operating unit of Starz, LLC, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Liberty Media Corporation, and is attributed to Liberty Entertainment Group, a tracking stock group of Liberty Media Corporation.

CHALLENGE

Starz packages are sold primarily through affiliate partners in 1,200 call centers. Within these centers, more than 125,000 customer service representatives (CSRs) are tasked with selling services from multiple cable, satellite and telco service providers.

In a call center environment where CSRs are trained to lead a sale by offering customers high-margin products such as high-speed Internet and digital telephone services, premium television service providers such as Starz are challenged with keeping their product offerings top of mind with CSRs who influence each sales opportunity.

To help achieve their business goals and objectives, Starz devised a strategy to motivate its affiliate CSRs to more assertively communicate the entertainment value of its programming and close more Starz sales.

SOLUTION

In the initial development of an ideal reward vehicle for its numerous CSR incentive programs, Starz confirmed the value of prepaid cards to motivate behavior.



“We researched several motivation strategies and confirmed that prepaid cards are our single, most effective method to motivate behavior and ultimately drive sales,” said Karen Abene, point of sale director for Starz Entertainment.

Several divisions within Starz had already leveraged prepaid card programs as incentives for various sales and marketing campaigns. While the prepaid card approach had yielded desired results, running numerous programs simultaneously proved to be logistically cumbersome and inefficient.

Starz searched for a new prepaid card provider that was capable of supporting all facets of the program. Springbok Services’ tailor-made programs and one-on-one client support persuaded Starz to forge this new vendor relationship.

“Of all the prepaid card companies we interviewed, Springbok clearly led the pack. They pulled from all functional areas, card operations, tech support and client services, to deliver a comprehensive program that reaches beyond simply producing prepaid cards,” said Abene. “Springbok’s all-encompassing service offering made them the right vendor to support our strategic sales initiatives”.

Springbok is the only prepaid card provider with a complete service offering, from program and card design to manufacturing and fulfillment to reporting and program measurement. Specific to the Starz CSR program, Springbok built a tailor-made ordering process, analytical reporting tools and measurement system – all specifically designed to streamline and simplify the management of the program for Starz.

Any Starz sales personnel can originate their Springbok prepaid card order electronically. Confirmation emails and invoices are auto-generated to the originator and appropriate managers, and order fulfillment closely follows.

“In addition to excellent, hands-on support, Springbok delivers orders quickly, offers its product at a competitive price-point, and provides the additional customizations that make this program a more efficient process model,” said Abene. **“Springbok has become an invaluable service partner.”**

RESULTS

▶ Starz has realized several advantages since launching its CSR incentive program using Springbok prepaid cards.

Starz sales personnel can place orders anytime and from anywhere using the customized and convenient tools developed by Springbok.

The Starz-branded cards are maintained at Springbok and the prepaid cards are funded via a prepaid escrow account. These efficiencies enable Springbok to load and reload payments onto cardholders' cards faster. This means incentives are paid near-immediately when CSRs achieve their incremental sales goals.

▶ In addition, Starz is required to comply with IRS guidelines to issue Form-1099s for annual payouts that exceed \$600. To streamline this accounting process, Springbok has created a secure website where Starz cardholders must report personal information prior to activating their cards. Acting as an agent for Starz, Springbok files required 1099s annually with the IRS.

“Springbok has been instrumental in developing, simplifying and strengthening our motivation strategy,” said Abene. **“We have designed a program that makes sense for our business and has been very well received. We continue to appreciate Springbok’s commitment to Starz and expect this to be a long-term relationship.”**



ABOUT SPRINGBOK SERVICES

SPRINGBOK SERVICES has been a leading provider of customized MasterCard and Visa prepaid card programs since its inception in 1998. End-to-end creation and management of these programs uniquely positions Springbok Services to motivate desired behaviors and to enhance loyalty among both employees and customers.

Springbok Services, headquartered in Englewood, Colorado, provides leading-edge services to more than 5500 clients, including almost half of the Fortune 500. Springbok is PCI certified and a founding member of the Network Branded Prepaid Card Association (NBPCA).

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT
www.springbokservices.com



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