

Viral Campaign Case Study: Purina's *Doggie-Mail* and *Critter Carols*



Overview

Anyone who has ever owned a pet understands how fanatical pet owners can be. Purina created a site, Petcentric.com, which acts as a hub for their customers to learn about pets and share. Purina was interested in growing the site's subscriber list for their newsletter, so they turned to Oddcast to create a viral campaign that would appeal to site members and draw new traffic to Petcentric.com.

Doggie-Mail allows users to customize talking pets to deliver messages and greetings, selecting from a cast of in-house favorites or uploading their own pet's photo for a custom messenger. The campaign was a massive success and twelve months later Purina enhanced the campaign with new cat avatars, additional themes, and more accessory options. For the 2008 holiday season, Purina created a separate version called *Critter Carols* where the pet messengers sang (barked?) popular carols like "Jingle Bells" and "Deck the Halls." The success of the Petcentric.com campaigns led Purina to partner with Oddcast again when the Beggin' Strips brand launched *Beggin' Time* – an application that allows users to upload pictures of themselves and their dogs to star in a hip-hop music video.

You Can Teach an Old Dog New Tricks

Brand marketers often wish for evergreen campaigns, and Purina's viral success is a perfect example: Doggie Mail was built on a strong central concept that has remained consistent, but was refreshed by adding new accessories and assets each season. Hearts and bows renewed interest before Valentine's Day, and holiday trimmings boost usage each winter. The key is to start with a great concept, and then add new components to the mix as time goes on.

Performance Metrics

- More than **2 million** users have participated in the campaign.
- Increased registration for the Petcentric.com newsletter, adding over **650,000** new subscribers.
- Generated **40%** traffic to the Petcentric.com site.
- Users spend an average of **4:30** Minutes interacting with the application.
- Messages were opened approximately **1.5** times each.
- **24%** of message recipients went on to send their own message.