



CBRE Increases Exposure to a New Audience with LinkedIn Sponsored InMail

“LinkedIn has proven to be a very powerful tool for delivering our content to the right people and amplifying our voice and brand.”



Paul Suchman
Global Chief Marketing Officer
CBRE

Bringing digital marketing to the forefront

CBRE is a commercial real estate services and investment firm that helps investors, owners, and occupants solve their most demanding real estate challenges. Employing more than 75,000 people, and serving customers in more than 100 countries, CBRE is the largest professional services company of its kind.

In the past, CBRE primarily relied on traditional communication channels, like print and out-of-home advertising, to reach audiences. But over the past four years, the marketing team has undergone a massive transformation. “Digital marketing has become our core strategy,” says Paul Suchman, Global Chief Marketing Officer. “Today, up to 75% of our marketing investment is in digital and social media.”

Although CBRE is primarily a B2B service provider, their passion for the cities where they do business led them to create the annual Urban Photographer of the Year (UPOTY) competition, which challenges professional and amateur photographers to capture the essence of the urban environment. While the CBRE team had previously

Challenge

- Deliver personalized content to active audiences
- Increase contest entries

Solution

- LinkedIn Sponsored InMail

Results for Urban Photographer of the Year campaign:

- 54% open rate
- 28% click-through rate (CTR)
- 41% increase in contest entries for 2016

used digital marketing channels to promote the UPOTY program, they felt they could be doing more to reach and engage creative audiences, and sought to augment their strategy with a more targeted and measurable digital channel.

A new channel for a new audience

The LinkedIn platform was already a key ingredient in CBRE's go-to-market strategy, as they had successfully used Sponsored Content to promote branded material, research, and thought-leadership pieces to their core B2B business audience. But this would be their first time using LinkedIn as a platform to promote UPOTY and target a more consumer-oriented audience.

"We knew that LinkedIn could play an interesting role in helping us connect with photographers around the world, but we didn't know which of their solutions would necessarily work best," says Teresa Bosso, Global Team Marketing Manager. "After discussions with LinkedIn about Sponsored InMail and its capabilities for hypertargeting and one-to-one communications, however, it became the smart choice."

Precisely targeting a highly active audience

With a primary goal of increasing contest entries overall, CBRE's marketing team knew they needed to target not only professional photographers but hobbyists as well. The combination of LinkedIn's wide-reaching network and Sponsored InMail's demographic and interest-based targeting filters gave them direct access to both audiences.

Sponsored InMail also gave CBRE the confidence that their messages would be received by active and engaged audiences that would be more likely to enter the contest. "Because Sponsored InMail is only delivered to recipients who are online and active on LinkedIn, we knew that our messages weren't getting missed," says Bosso. "There was a receptive audience on the other end, reading and responding to our communications."

A human-to-human marketing platform

To best leverage the platform, CBRE partnered with media agency m/SIX to create content that would speak directly to their photographer audience, using captivating imagery from previous UPOTY contests to create a visually rich and arresting campaign. Samantha Grossman, Manager of Media Strategy and Planning at m/SIX, says, "When it comes to social channels like LinkedIn, we've discovered that there's a lot of value in

tailoring your message to the specific interests and job titles of the various audience segments you're targeting." Using this strategy, the resulting communications from CBRE felt like one-to-one conversations, not mass email blasts, with CBRE taking a personal interest in the work of individual photographers.

Suchman believes that Sponsored InMail's hypertargeting capability was particularly instrumental in building strong connections with their audience. "LinkedIn connects us very specifically to the people we want to have a conversation with," says Suchman. "We no longer see the platform as B2B or B2C. It's more like human-to-human."

Exceeding expectations and benchmarks

CBRE's 2016 Urban Photographer of the Year competition was a record-breaking year, receiving more than 29,000 entries (a 41% increase from 2015). This far exceeded previous efforts, a result that CBRE believes was due in large part to the effectiveness of their LinkedIn campaign. "Sponsored InMail produced a significant amount of qualified web traffic compared to other paid media channels," says Bosso. "When people visited our site by way of Sponsored InMail, they had a very high probability of entering the competition from there."

CBRE also surpassed LinkedIn benchmarks, with an open rate of 54% and a click-through rate (CTR) of 28%. "At the end of the day, it's all about engaging content plus hypertargeting," says Suchman. "Getting the right content to the right audience in an engaging way is what drove our great open and response rates. It's easy to ask for, and hard to deliver, but LinkedIn made it happen."

Sponsored InMail

The image shows a screenshot of a Sponsored InMail message. The message is titled "Urban Photographer of the Year" and "Win a Photo Trip of a Lifetime". It is addressed to "Hi Charis," and asks if the recipient could be the 2016 Urban Photographer of the Year. The message invites the recipient to enter the prestigious 2016 Urban Photographer of the Year competition, which is the largest global competition of its kind. Prizes include a photography trip of a lifetime, drones, GoPro packages and more. For a chance to win, the recipient is asked to submit up to 24 photographs that embody the connections they see in the urban environment at their website, CBREUPOTY.com. The competition is free to enter and open now. The recipient is directed to CBREUPOTY.com to find out more, register and upload their photos today. The message is signed "Sincerely, CBRE Urban Photographer of the Year team" and includes an "Enter Now" button. At the bottom, there is a disclaimer: "This is a promotional message from a marketing or hiring partner and was sent to you based on your browsing activity or non-personal information such as job title, primary industry or region. You will only receive a maximum of one promotional message every 90 days. You can unsubscribe here. For LinkedIn's privacy policy, your name and e-mail address have not been disclosed. Learn more."

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