

VENDOR SPOTLIGHT

by Jon Freed

DirectMail.com DMAW's Vendor of the Year

DirectMail.com (formerly DM Group) is a family-owned organization now entering its 40th year of operation. Joseph Salta and John Swain, two early pioneers of modern direct mail marketing, founded the firm in 1970. Their sons, Bob Salta and Kirk Swain, now own the company with the next generation of Saltas and Swains poised to take the company to the next level in the coming years. The firm is credited with numerous industry "firsts," including winning sweepstakes campaigns, matching-check programs, and the use of the name label as a premium.

The company has experienced tremendous growth since its founding, diversifying into aligned fields through a carefully chartered course of acquisitions and technological innovation. DMAW recently recognized Bob and Kirk's strategic vision in naming the firm "Vendor of the Year," noting their ongoing ability to successfully adjust their business model to meet the challenges of changing times.

With more than 250 employees and multiple operating facilities, it would be easy for DirectMail.com to assume a big-company persona and overlook the key ingredients underlying its success: a dedicated staff and an emphasis on giving back. The firm has done neither. Helping individuals, whether in the workplace or the larger community, continues to be a guiding principle.

We caught up with Kirk and Bob recently to talk about DirectMail.com's involvement with DMAW and other local organizations and to hear their thoughts on the year ahead.

What role does social responsibility play in your business?

As individuals and as a business we are committed to the notion of giving back, both within the industry and in the community. We volunteer a lot of personal time, serving on the boards of worthwhile organizations here in Calvert County, such as the chamber of commerce, Lion's Club, Economic Development Commission, Christmas in April, Marine Museum and Jefferson Patterson Park. Beyond that, we support the industry by sponsoring DMAW workshops, being a "Friend of the Bridge Conference," supporting other events and, of course, awarding the John Swain Memorial Scholarship every year since 1986 to a deserving college student.

Best DMAW Memory:

Back in the 1980s, DMAW held a conference featuring the two direct marketing titans of the time: Roger Craver of Craver, Mathews, Smith and Richard Viguerie of The RAV Companies. Each occupied an opposite position on the political spectrum. Richard was a conservative working on behalf of Republicans and the conservative movement. Roger was a Democrat

working on behalf of the liberal movement and its causes. The ballroom was standing-room-only, with overflow filling the hallways, when the two men took the stage. They bantered back and forth about each other's political persuasion and direct mail initiatives. Laughter abounded at the counterpunches exchanged, and a good time was had by all.

Benefits of Being a DMAW Member:

The DMAW unites end-users, vendors, suppliers, agencies, freelancers, educators and students in the shared pursuit of direct marketing success. It is an invaluable shared resource for all its members. DMAW also provides outstanding education and growth opportunities through its programs and the networking events it hosts.

DM Forecast for 2010:

We believe 2010 will be a great opportunity for businesses to reach more prospects and acquire new customers. Direct mail volumes will increase as the U.S. Postal Service holds the line on any new postage hikes. The trend toward coordinated, multi-channel communication and response mechanisms will continue in the coming year as more consumers use more forms of technology. Direct mail responses will trend to the Internet, making micro websites and personalized URLs core methodologies for capturing and tracking responses. Data accessibility and new forms of data segmentation will continue to drive improvements in ROI. Finally, new data-visualization technology will help marketers intelligently connect with customers/prospects and drive increased response rates. All in all, 2010 will be an exciting year!



Bob Salta

Kirk Swain

SELECT CORPORATE AWARDS

Maryland Employer of the Year, ARC of Maryland

Employer of the Year, ARC of Calvert County

Meritorious Service Award, ARC of Southern MD

**Leading Edge Award, Calvert County
Technology Company of the Year**

Vendor of the Year, DMAW

After serving the D.C. area in print-related capacities over the last 10 years, Jonathan Freed now lives in Fort Mill, South Carolina, and is director-southeast for Hub Labels. Though still very active in DMAW and Hub's DC/MD/VA markets, Jon works with the DMA—Atlanta and CDMA—Charlotte chapters, too. Recently, Jon was appointed to sit on the DMA—Atlanta Advisory Board. Reach Jon at 803-396-7708 or jfreed@comporium.net.

