



# MOODY MARATHON

## CLIENT PROFILE

Moody Bible Institute is one of the nation's most historic and prominent Bible schools. Founded in 1886, the school equips people to move forward the cause of Christ through advanced and continuing education. Moody's reach extends well beyond higher education through a variety of publishing and media channels. Today in the Word is a devotional guide developed by Moody that reaches more than 11,000 people daily. Moody Radio, another ministry of MBI, owns and operates 36 radio stations and broadcasts on more than 400 affiliate stations. The organization reaches millions of people across the globe through the broadcast, internet streams, and podcasts, providing yet another channel to further MBI's mission.

### CHALLENGE

The challenge for Moody was to identify a fresh approach to rejuvenating and expanding the ministry's donor base. a 128 year-old institution with a storied history of media innovation, Moody was looking for a way to acquire new prospective donors and re-engage lapsed donors in advance of their annual fundraiser, Share 2012.

"We recognized that in order to build the type of multi-channel communication strategy needed to effectively reach today's donor, we needed to increase the amount of information we had for current donors in our file as well as look for ways to acquire new names," said Bruce Everhart, Moody's Vice President of Donor Development and Channel Strategies.

### SOLUTION

In the fall of 2011, **Moody** partnered with Pursuant to develop the strategy for an interactive virtual marathon that would offer incentives for Moody radio listeners and Moody Bible Institute donors to join the online race, participate, and recruit others. The online game campaign launched just before Share 2012, Moody's annual fundraiser, timing which enabled Moody to quickly engage and convert a new audience gained through the power of a social campaign.

To promote the January 2012 launch of the Moody Virtual Marathon website, Moody employed a multi-channel strategy that used postal mail, email, and Moody's broadcast platform. A postcard with a personalized URL (PURL) was sent to Moody's house file inviting their participation. Subsequent



promotional emails were sent to drive traffic to the website. The PURL and promotional emails enabled Moody to track who visited the website and from where those visitors came.

The social game gave participants an appealing and highly engaging experience—key elements for a successful Social Acquisition initiative. Participants were given daily passwords on air and a chance to answer daily Bible trivia questions so they could advance toward the 26.2-mile final goal. Virtual runners were encouraged to “pass the baton” and recruit friends to join the marathon. Prizes for completing the marathon and earning the most distance included high-value rewards like an iPad or Bose headphones, culminating with a Grand Prize trip to Israel.

Once the campaign was over, Moody leveraged the information and insights gathered from participants to launch a strategic conversion series. New names that were acquired through the game were sent a strategic welcome series to make a contribution. Moody followed up with current donors who participated in the campaign with a strategic cultivation campaign with augmented solicitations based on their previous giving history.

## RESULTS

Moody’s Virtual Marathon, which ran for three weeks in January, was a resounding success. The challenge produced a bulging pipeline of new prospects, reactivated lapsed donors, and increased the average gifts of existing donors. The game bonded donors more fully to the ministry and introduced new supporters to the broad spectrum of Moody, including the education, radio, and publishing branches.

“The results speak for themselves,” said Bruce Everhart, Vice President of Donor Development & Channel Strategies at Moody. “For example, of the almost 35,000 participants engaged in the Moody Marathon, more than 70 percent were brand new email names. Hoping to move more of our direct mail donor into online engagement, we were able to re-engage 6,800 lapsed donors.”

90 days after the race ended, almost \$58,500 had been raised from new and reactivated donors. Current donors who participated in the marathon gave more than \$93,500 above their existing gifts. These numbers represent a 40 percent lift in the reactivated donors’ average gift and a 12 percent lift in the existing donors’ average gift. Even better, giving from new and reactivated donors grew to 93,199 nearly seven months after the marathon finished.

“The Social Acquisition campaign created an opportunity for Moody to fully engage the 21<sup>st</sup> century audience that lives in the online space. For us, it was a powerful strategy for donor acquisition, stewardship, and upgrading existing donors all rolled into one.” Everhart said.

