

# Inspiring journeys the world over.

Virgin Holidays smooths the customer journey to a dream holiday using targeted communications delivered through Adobe Campaign.



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*Saul Lopes, Customer Lifecycle Lead, Virgin Holidays*

## SOLUTION

Adobe Experience Cloud, including the Adobe Campaign solution within Adobe Marketing Cloud

## RESULTS



Creates a **UNIFIED VOICE** for customer communications across the business



Enables managers to build their own **TARGETED CAMPAIGNS** with templates and a simplified data model

**4x**

Higher email **ENGAGEMENT RATES** for trip updates with an 11% increase in upsells

**40%**

Boost in **EMAIL CLICK-THROUGH** rates with integration of Phrasee for AI subject line testing



## Virgin Holidays Limited

Established in 1985

Crawley, United Kingdom

[www.virginholidays.co.uk](http://www.virginholidays.co.uk)

## Partner

Merkle

[www.merkleinc.com](http://www.merkleinc.com)

## CHALLENGES

- Improve service communications to reduce customer anxiety and increase anticipation before a vacation
- Use a single voice when communicating with customers, creating consistency across departments
- Give marketers the autonomy to manage and optimize their own pieces of the customer journey

## USE CASES

- Personalized Experiences
- Customer Intelligence



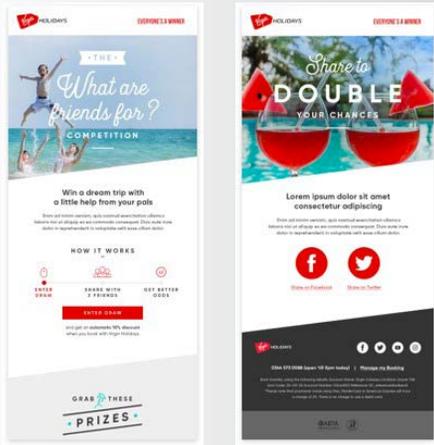
## Exploring the wide world of possibilities

The Virgin Holidays brand bursts with a sense of adventure. For more than 30 years, the company has followed through on its brand promise, helping customers find travel packages that satisfy their desire to explore. Virgin Holidays is dedicated to delivering a compelling customer experience from beginning to end, from the moment a person starts musing about vacation to the day of departure and beyond.

“For us, it’s really important to be true to the Virgin brand, which is all about offering good experiences to our customers,” explains Saul Lopes, Customer Lifecycle Lead at Virgin Holidays.

That means keeping customers happy and engaged, with the aim of earning their loyalty and repeat business. Virgin Holidays finds that one of the most effective ways to win customer loyalty is through relevant, well-timed communications. In fact, ongoing contact with customers, whether through email, direct mail, SMS, or phone, is essential to driving new and repeat revenue. The company also cares deeply about customer satisfaction and loyalty, using Net Promoter Scores (NPS) to gauge its success and tune the customer experience.

To connect with its more than one million active customers and prospective customers, Virgin Holidays uses Adobe Campaign, part of Adobe Experience Cloud—nudging people with relevant communications to help them choose destinations, get ready for trips, enjoy their holidays, and plan their next ones. Since adopting the solution, the Virgin Holidays team has made big enhancements to the customer experience.



“The ability to create workflow templates in Adobe Campaign has been really important to adoption. This enables us to expand the solution to other teams while delivering a consistent experience.”

*Chris Insall, Customer Communications Manager, Virgin Holidays*

Virgin Holidays undertakes extensive consumer research, both implicit and explicit, to understand customers’ emotional high and lows, and also when customers are in the market for certain services like an excursion, airport lounge, or travel money. Such information is then combined with internal business needs (identified through a series of internal workshops) to understand when the ideal time is to communicate with customers and with which message.

“When we started a year ago, all of our objectives were around setting up Adobe Campaign and transforming and improving the customer experience,” says Lopes. “Now, having gained the confidence and autonomy to try new things, we’re setting our sights even higher.”

## Going the distance with Adobe Campaign

Building on its early successes, the Customer Lifecycle team turned its attention to introducing Adobe Campaign to the rest of the business. The number of users has grown from 5 to 30 across multiple departments, including the service team and overseas teams, thanks in large part to the company’s ongoing collaboration with performance marketing agency and Adobe partner, Merkle.

After a few weeks of training from Merkle, new users at Virgin Holidays felt comfortable enough to start sending their own communications. Merkle also helped develop templates within Adobe Campaign, making it easier for various team members to create their own email campaigns. Workflow templates enable users to set up campaigns quickly and accurately, without having to navigate the technical details or worry about mistakes. Content templates simplify email creation, allowing users to pull in HTML files, images and text while keeping the branding intact.

“The ability to create workflow templates in Adobe Campaign has been really important to adoption,” explains Chris Insall, Customer Communications Manager at Virgin Holidays. “This enables us to quickly expand the solution to other teams while delivering a consistent experience.”

With more communications coming from a central platform that supports consistent templates and a common source of data, the company presents a more unified front to customers—one that is familiar and reassuring. Virgin Holidays is seeing this work pay off.

“Our leadership team was amazed at what we achieved with Adobe Campaign,” Lopes remembers. “Email engagement rates were four times higher, while upsell rates rose 11% and customer self-service was up 7%.”



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## Bags packed for success

Adobe Campaign has made a big impact on service communications, which include everything from sales promotions to travel tips to flight updates. By migrating these communications into Adobe Campaign and enabling service teams to use the tool, Virgin Holidays transformed impersonal and often text-based emails into targeted touchpoints infused with the Virgin brand.

For example, the company’s “Ready to Travel” campaign was redesigned to alleviate customer anxieties between booking and departure, making for a smoother travel experience. With better personalization and branding across email, direct mail, text messages, and phone calls, the familiar Virgin voice reassures customers that the company knows who they are, where they’re going, and how to help if something comes up—such as a flight delay.

Other campaigns, covering online and offline touchpoints, have achieved measurable improvements with the move to Adobe Campaign. Liam Savage, CRM Executive at Virgin Holidays, elaborates: “Using Adobe Campaign for our ‘Peak Sale’ campaign, we saw a 20% uplift in sales and an 85% increase in web traffic. We also ran a ‘Save Your Spot’ promotion to drive retail appointments at our stores. The campaign delivered 156% more appointments than it did the previous year.”

Through the “Save Your Spot” promotion, Virgin Holidays created a sense of anticipation among its customers. Each customer received a personalized email with a unique code and an invitation to unlock it for an unknown discount at the nearest retail store, identified through location-based services. Because customers were eager to discover their discount, the campaign also created an ideal opportunity for agents to start a conversation about their upcoming holiday plans.

These dramatic results stem from enabling customer relationship management (CRM) executives to build their own campaigns, with greater speed and more effective segmentation, while keeping them plugged into the Virgin Holidays brand voice. This autonomy to own customer journeys means they spend less time on setup and more time fine-tuning their approach, learning how to better engage customers with each campaign.

CRM executives can make their campaigns even more effective by testing their subject lines. With integration between Adobe Campaign and Phrasee, an AI-powered tool for subject-line optimization, the team boosted click-through rates by 40% compared to a control group.

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*Liam Savage, CRM Executive, Virgin Holidays*

## SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

Adobe Experience Cloud, including:

Adobe Marketing Cloud

- Adobe Campaign
  - Campaign Management
  - Cross-channel Execution
  - Integrated Customer Profile
  - Personalized Targeting

For more information

[www.adobe.com/marketing-cloud.html](http://www.adobe.com/marketing-cloud.html)

[www.adobe.com/marketing/campaign.html](http://www.adobe.com/marketing/campaign.html)



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## Empowered individuals take the team to exciting new places

To make the solution easy for extended teams to learn and use, Virgin Holidays knew it needed a simple data model—one that would minimize the need for complicated data queries and audience selections.

“To bridge the gap between creative, content, and data, we needed a simplified data model at the heart of Adobe Campaign,” explains Beatrice Benavidez, Senior Consultant, Customer Analytics at Virgin Holidays. “By keeping the model light—a combination of reservations and web data—we can make it easy for CRM executives to create targeted campaigns.”

The simplified data model enables users to build dynamic campaigns, selecting target audiences based on characteristics such as current lifecycle stage, browsing behavior, previous bookings, and past quotes. By putting these sophisticated capabilities into the hands of business users, Virgin Holidays has created a team eager to innovate.

“I like the freedom to do what I want—to test and try out new things and then put them into business-as-usual campaigns,” says CRM Executive Liam Savage. “With Adobe Campaign, I just click a button and am done in a few minutes.”

Charlotte Pink, a fellow CRM executive at Virgin Holidays, agrees: “It’s very much part of the Virgin culture to encourage people to fly with their own ideas and take ownership of their own campaigns.”

Rolling out Adobe Campaign across the business is an ongoing process—one that continues to pay dividends in customer engagement and revenue. With 30 users across multiple departments, the solution also kicked off a shift in mindset. What started off as a tactical campaign tool has now become an integral part of the customer engagement strategy at Virgin Holidays.

“The achievement I’m probably most proud of is my team. They are such superstars,” Lopes says. “With help from Adobe Campaign, we changed from a marketing function to an experience function.”