



## Muscling into Europe

### Customer Profile

**Customer** VeriSign

**Challenge** Create effective and cost-efficient lead generation programs in Europe with a limited budget.

**Target Audience** IT managers and professionals responsible for networks and security.

**Solution** Re-purpose a successful U.S. campaign, by adapting it to meet local regulations, standards and preferences, while ensuring a cost-effective result.

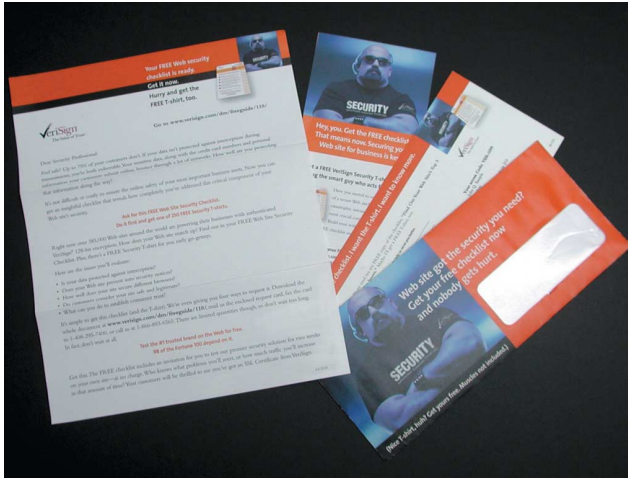
- Results**
- The German and UK b2b direct mail campaigns resulted in high response rates
  - Campaigns produced a high rate of leads who subsequently purchased VeriSign products
  - The cost was 2/3 less than developing a local campaign for each country
  - In the UK, the campaign achieved one of the highest response rates in the history of VeriSign
  - The campaign won the 2004 Silver Beacon Award for Single Direct Mail Piece from the Business Marketing Association, one of the largest marketing associations in the USA.

VeriSign, a company specializing in intelligent infrastructure services to improve the security of Internet and telecommunication networks, had created a successful b2b direct mail campaign to generate leads for their SSL certificates in the U.S. Challenged to generate the same results in Europe, the company now wanted to implement the campaign in the United Kingdom and Germany.

VeriSign turned to MaCS for advice and assistance in how to make the campaign a success in Europe as well. MaCS advised VeriSign that the direct mail campaign needed to be adapted to each local market in order to be successful. More than simply localizing the language, adaptation meant evaluating and adjusting other key aspects as well, such as format and style.

Not only did the adapted campaign result in unparalleled success for VeriSign in the UK and Germany, but it also received a leading industry award from the Business Marketing Association of North America.





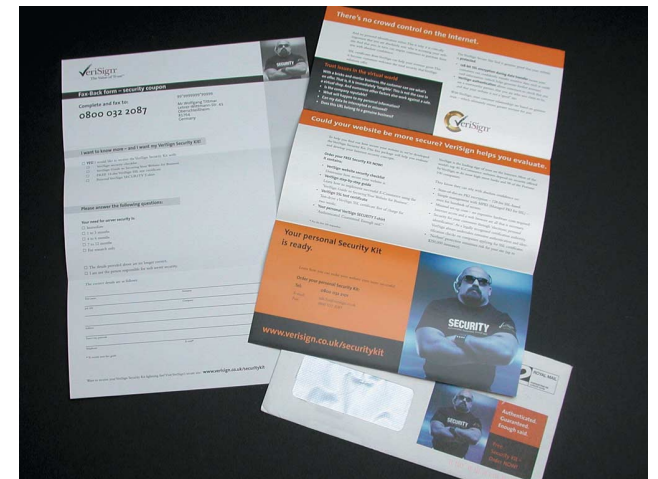
Original USA lead generation campaign highlighted the theme of Internet security.



The effectiveness and cost efficiency of the adapted campaign earned it the 2004 Silver Beacon award from the Business Marketing Association of North America (Northern California Chapter).



MaCS adapted the "muscle man" campaign to meet local postal and communications standards, business etiquette and tastes. Implemented in Germany and the U.K., the campaign proved an outstanding success.



## No need to reinvent the wheel

The VeriSign USA lead generation campaign highlighted the issue of Internet security with an arresting image depicting a muscular security guard. The image and the enticement of a free t-shirt and 14-day SSL certificate had strong resonance within the U.S. market. VeriSign wanted to replicate these results in European markets, but realized that the campaign would need to be localized in order to be effective.

Not wanting to bear the costs of completely developing a new campaign, VeriSign asked MaCS to evaluate the U.S. muscle man campaign for use in Germany and the UK. MaCS acknowledged the strength of the campaign, and proposed adapting it to meet local postal and communication standards, business etiquette and tastes. This meant that VeriSign would not need to reinvent the wheel, saving two-thirds of the cost of developing local campaigns from scratch.

MaCS advised that localizing is more than language, it ensures that the campaign fits the local format. For example, the full color envelope used in the U.S. did not meet German postal standards. In addition, the standard German business letter is personalized. By not localizing the U.S. version, VeriSign would incur higher postal charges and a likely poorer response rate.

## Five steps to a successful European direct mail campaign

The original U.S. mail campaign consisted of four elements:

- Envelope
- Business reply postcard
- Cover letter
- Background flyer

The offer not only enticed the reader with a free t-shirt and 14-day SSL certificate, but also provided a checklist so customers could examine the security of their Internet sites. Responses could be made either by fax, e-mail, Web, or phone. All responses were recorded and followed up by telemarketing. While all of the elements used in Germany and the U.K. were similar to the U.S., significant changes were made. Among these were the following steps:

**Step 1:** Check that layout and visual theme would work, be accepted, and understood in the correct manner in all target countries.

**Step 2:** Ensure envelope meets local postal regulations and business standards:

- Envelopes within Europe require a white border for bar coding. In addition, full color designs run the risk of being perceived as 'junk mail' within the German market.
- Include company logo. With a company logo, the mail would have more authority and not run the risk of being seen as advertising.

- Include an in-country sender address. This not only helped VeriSign look like a local player, but enabled undelivered letters to be returned. This enables measuring the validity of the address lists.
- Ensure envelope meets local standards in terms of weight and size – which can save up to 50 percent of total mailing costs.

**Step 3:** Much of the information included in the U.S. cover letter and response card was combined into a six-page flyer that outlined the offer and its benefits, as well as provided more in-depth information on VeriSign.

**Step 4:** The cover letter is crucial within a European direct mail piece. Personalized, business-style letters are the most effective type of letter – written and formatted to meet accepted local standards. The creation of the flyer enabled the contents of the European cover letter to be reduced so as to strike a more simplified, friendlier tone. Also important, the letter and envelope were personalized so that they directly addressed the intended recipient – a critical requirement if a business wishes to be taken seriously within the European market. The contents of the letter focused on the direct benefits of the VeriSign solution for the recipient, as well as their company.

In Germany, the letter was signed by the Managing Director of VeriSign Germany and mailed from VeriSign in Berlin using the stationary of the local office. This indicated that, while VeriSign is a renowned international company, it is also a vendor who is available locally and easy to do business with – a significant consideration for end-users.

**Step 5:** Even though it is the age of the Internet, a faxback form was included to make it as convenient as possible for people to respond in their own preferred manner. Reply cards are not as common within Europe as they are in the U.S.

“We were astounded with the response – it well exceeded expectations. It also shows the benefit of tailoring collateral to fit the market. By adapting the direct mail to the preferences of the German market, MaCS helped us achieve an outstanding success.”

**Matthias Siegers**  
**Marketing Manager**  
**VeriSign Germany**

## **Campaign success exceeds expectations**

The German adaptation of the USA campaign proved highly successful: the collateral was mailed to 35,000 addresses and achieved a significantly high response rate. Even more impressive for VeriSign management was the remarkably high rate of respondees who went on to purchase VeriSign products.

After the success of the German campaign, VeriSign adapted it for use in the UK. MaCS localized the German text into British English and made minor changes in the format to meet UK postal standards. Directly mailed to some 50,000 individuals, the mail campaign proved to be one of the most successful in the history of VeriSign UK. Understandably, VeriSign management was highly pleased with the results and the campaign was later adapted for Denmark, which further ensured a cost-effective approach for VeriSign.

“We were astounded with the response – it well exceeded our expectations. It shows the benefit of tailoring collateral to fit the exact market. By adapting the direct mail to the preferences of the German market, MaCS helped us achieve an outstanding success,” said Matthias Siegers, Marketing Manager, VeriSign Germany.

His colleague, Andrew Horbury, Marketing Manager of VeriSign UK, agrees. “We needed to execute a direct mail campaign in the UK in a cost-effective and timely manner. By leveraging the muscle man mailer, which had been designed and distributed out of our America office, we were able to save time and money, which is key to our core marketing agenda. The response rate we received in the UK was very encouraging and could have only been achieved through proper adaptation to the UK market. We consider it a very successful direct mail campaign.”

At the end of 2004, the muscle man campaign received the Silver Beacon award from business marketing peers because of the effectiveness and cost efficiency of the campaign. Awarded by the Business Marketing Association of America (Northern California Chapter), one of America’s largest marketing associations, the Beacon award is one of the most prestigious within direct marketing.

To provide even further value, MaCS leveraged the text and format of the muscle man campaign to create a follow-up “shark attack” campaign late in 2004. Run in the UK, the new campaign recorded similar results to the original.

### **About MaCS**

Founded in 1994, MaCS is a full-service B2B marketing communications and PR agency with extensive experience in the European market. MaCS specializes in lead-generation programs, sales tools, and public relations activities for the high-tech industry. Our clients include global and European IT companies, as well as American companies commencing or developing business in Europe.

**MaCS – Marketing Communications Services for Europe**

**MaCS USA:** MaCS Inc. • 795 Folsom Street, Suite 100 • San Francisco, CA 94107  
Phone: +1 415 848 2437 • Fax: +1 415 358 8076 • [www.macs-us.com](http://www.macs-us.com)

**MaCS Germany:** MaCS GmbH • Mittenheimer Strasse 4  
D-85764 Oberschleissheim • Phone: +49 89 31 57 12-0  
Fax: +49 89 31 57 12-48/55 • [www.macs.de](http://www.macs.de)

**MaCS UK:** MaCS • Highbridge • Oxford Road • Uxbridge, UB8 1HR  
Phone: +44 870 735 4150 • Fax: +44 870 735 415 • [www.macs-uk.com](http://www.macs-uk.com)

**MaCS Austria:** MaCS GmbH • Technologiepark Villach • Europastrasse 8  
A-9524 Villach • Phone: +43 4242 9003 4100 • [www.macs-at.com](http://www.macs-at.com)

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