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## IN DEPTH: RETAIL

### E-mail marketing makes its way into dining arena

Anne Robertson  
The Business Journal

Foster's Seafood and 33 American Bistro in Scottsdale say sales are sizzling as the result of an ongoing e-mail marketing campaign started by owner Bill Deacon.

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Deacon said that more than 6,500 regular diners volunteered their e-mail addresses to receive messages from him regarding the restaurants' activities and offerings. Recipients are referred to as the "e-mail family."

As a result, Deacon's businesses have grown each quarter. Sales for Foster's were up 46 percent in summer 2002 from the previous year, and sales were up more than 30 percent at American Bistro during the same time period.

Deacon said that even during the slow season, customers frequent the restaurant to check out the e-mail family deals.

"The number of repeat guests is staggering," he said.

First-time guests at the establishments are told about the program by a staffer and can voluntarily sign up for the service.

Customers receive e-mails with discount offers, incentives, trivia questions, quotes from other guests, and educational bits about the seafood served.

Deacon said the program allows him closer contact with customers. Guests will sometimes send special requests for particular items, which Deacon will then order for the specified restaurant.

Foster's is a traditional New England seafood house. American Bistro touts itself as an upscale bistro that serves comfort fare including pasta, chicken, fish and steak dishes.