

October 2, 2006

A Supplement to DM News

DM NEWS

ESSENTIAL

GUIDE

to

E-MAIL

MARKETING

Relevancy Is No. 1 Issue

By David Daniels, JupiterResearch

**What We Need From Accreditation
And Reputation Solutions**

By Michael Della Penna, Epsilon Interactive

**Classic DM Tactics Are Spam
For Filters**

By Dave Larson, Ovation Marketing

**Control Your E-Mail for Better
Delivery and Results**

By Greg Martz, The Motley Fool

**Don't Design – or Redesign Your
E-Mail – Without Reading This**

By Stephan Spencer, Netconcepts

Top Tips for the Holiday Season

By David Baker, Agency.com

**Five Factors to Optimize the
Marketing Potential of
Transactional E-Mails**

By Dave Lewis, StrongMail Systems

Key Rules for E-Mail Delivery

By Barry Abel, Message Systems

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Editor's Note

Generally satisfied, but overwhelmed. That's the sentiment of most e-mail marketers, according to David Daniels, top e-mail analyst at JupiterResearch and the keynote interview in this edition of DM News' Essential Guide to E-Mail Marketing.

This year we've got more than 50 of the nation's leading e-mail marketing services experts to comment on the issues and opportunities facing e-mail — the ideal online vehicle for customer retention. The acquisition side still has challenges. But there can be no doubt that e-mail is entrenched in the online marketing mix alongside search, banners and rich media advertising.

Spending on e-mail marketing this year is expected to be slightly under \$1 billion, per JupiterResearch projections. Though not as much as search, it's meaningful enough to make a difference in customer outreach efforts.

That said, e-mail has its issues: phishing, spam, deliverability, clutter and declining open rates. Plus, there's the issue of meeting requirements of prickly Internet service providers and e-mail box owners. It can be frustrating negotiating these shoals as the stakes grow higher each year for the consumer's share of wallet.

Here to help readers are senior executives who handle campaigns for virtually every major e-mail marketer in the United States. Topics discussed within these pages include creative tips for copy and subject headlines, integration with other channels, crafting win-

ning opt-in offers, gaining relevancy and winning trust, growing house lists, deliverability issues and the similarities and differences between online and offline direct marketing.

Also included is content on best practices for associations, health care and nonprofits, tips on optimizing transactional e-mail, post-click analysis, Web analytics with e-mail, using purchase behavior for relevant campaigns, designing e-mails, landing pages, subscription management and preparing for the holidays. And, of course, there are must-read articles on authentication, accreditation and reputation — the rally cry of the industry.

Several case studies exemplify these best practices and tips. Among them are BabytoBee, RE/MAX of Michigan, Tridel, Balance Spa, Road Runner Sports, Avenue You, Studio Arena Theatre and Overstock.com.

Many thanks to the contributors and columnists who helped make this book a must-read and a year-round keepsake. Thanks also to art director Sophia Jongsurasithiwat and assistant production manager Robert Vaglio for their help and hard work.

The article to start with is Mr. Daniels' interview on the state of e-mail marketing. Do please turn every page of this guide and feel free to e-mail those who've contributed to make this book essential reading.



Mickey Alam Khan
mickey@dmnews.com



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Relevancy Is No. 1 Issue: Daniels

Some of the same issues that bedeviled e-mail marketing last year continue to haunt the medium today – phishing, spam, deliverability, list churn and declining open rates. E-mail service providers are collaborating with Internet service providers and e-mail marketers to ensure these issues are minimized or eradicated. The stakes are high and consumer patience is running low. Marketers realize that aside from search and Web sites, e-mail is possibly the most effective online marketing tool to reach out to customers and prospects.



David Daniels

David Daniels, research director at JupiterResearch, a New York consultancy, explains the key issues facing e-mail marketing today. He also offers best practices. DM News'

Mickey Alam Khan interviewed Mr. Daniels, who is widely recognized as one of the top analysts in the field.

What's the mood of e-mail marketers?

Generally satisfied, but overwhelmed. The majority of e-mail marketers are tethered to the production process of getting their weekly mailings out and often do not have time or the resources to think strategically about how to improve their mailings.

In fact, "knowing where to begin to optimize our mailings" was the top challenge that e-mail marketers cited recently in a JupiterResearch executive survey.

Are the hot-button issues of last year still the same this year? What are they?

In a sense, yes. Deliverability is still a top concern, but increasingly the hot-button issues are data integration, automating repeatable mailings and a desire to make e-mail a more central and strategic part of the overall marketing mix. Not that delivery is a simple issue to fix, but these items transcend technology and get to the heart of how a company organizes

around e-mail.

The issues of integration and a more strategic approach are really being driven by the No. 1 hot-button issue, which is relevancy. Increasingly marketers are beginning to adopt the notion of targeted and relevant mailings over conventional spray-and-pray broadcast tactics.

What are some of the advances you see in e-mail marketing?

The usability of some applications is improving, the introduction of Web 2.0 – Ajax and the like – into e-mail applications is making it easier for marketers to get their job done in a more efficient manner.

Additionally, the ability to associate Web traffic behavior with e-mail data is beginning to get easier.

However, most marketers are still not taking advantage of more proven and sophisticated tactics, such as segmentation, targeting and testing.

What are e-mail vendors doing to make life easier for retailers and marketers using e-mail for customer acquisition, >



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< retention and reactivation purposes?

The aforementioned usability improvements are helping, and many have made significant strides in the reporting and analytical portions of their applications.

However, this year many e-mail vendors have been doing work behind the scenes to make their platforms and applications more scalable. These product developments are long overdue, as many of these applications were designed eight to 10 years ago when the order of the day was simply broadcasting e-mail.

As marketers embrace the notion of relevant mailings, the elephant in the board room of some vendors are the underpinnings of their applications, for if all marketers embraced a one-to-some approach to their mailings, some applications would have a difficult time scaling with that level of complexity.

Are Internet service providers succeeding in the battle against spam and phishing?

They are succeeding in some of the battles, but it is still a war and the arms race between ISPs and disreputable senders continues and shows no sign of stopping.

Until there is a universal identity, reputation and feedback mechanism for senders and ISPs alike to adhere to we will continue to have things fall through the cracks.

The ISPs however have made significant strides over the last few years in reducing the amount of unwanted e-mail and have demonstrated a real commitment to working with legitimate senders in implementing and trialing systems and processes to identify the good senders from the bad.

What are JupiterResearch's predictions for spend on e-mail marketing this year and the next and also 2008 and 2009? Where does it stand in comparison to search marketing expenditures?

E-mail marketing spending is still dwarfed by search marketing spending, but that doesn't make it any less important – it actually means it is more cost efficient.

E-mail spending will continue to grow, but not at the rapid pace that it was at a few years ago. In 2006 spending will reach \$950 million dollars and grow to about \$1.1 billion in 2010, representing just over a 4 percent CAGR [compounded annual growth rate].

What tips would you offer e-mail marketers?

First figure out what an e-mail address is worth to your organization. Once you understand the value of your e-mail

clients you can begin to make real decisions on how much money should be spent to manage list churn, acquisition and, of course, retention.

Secondly, think of the customer behaviors that drive conversion and engagement and focus on them. Develop an engagement quotient that illustrates the health of your subscribers, which will also help in implementing behavior-oriented segmentation.

Third, stop mailing to non-responders. If someone hasn't clicked on your links in six or eight months, try one more reactivation mailing, then get them off your list.

Lastly, test, test, test – time of day, day of week, content, templates, segmentation. E-mail marketing lends itself to continuous improvement and the only way to continuously improve is to test.

Reach him at ddaniels@jupiterkagan.com.

The Digital Divide: Differences Between Online and Offline Direct Marketing

By Kevin H. Johnson

Since you are reading DM News, it's reasonable to assume you are a direct marketer. But are you a traditional direct marketer or a digital marketer? Too few marketers in either discipline realize just how big the difference is.

The true divide between digital and direct marketing is driven by one simple economic fact: cost per incremental online contact is effectively zero. Once you have set up an e-mail program and a Web site, each incremental e-mail or page view can be delivered for tenths of a penny (or even less).

Compare this to direct mail, where the cost of each incremental delivery is exponentially higher when paper, printing and postage are included.

Due to the cost of offline contact, traditional direct marketers must carefully

select their target audience for maximum potential response.

The typical direct marketing campaign starts with an offer and the universe of consumers. Direct marketers then "cut a list" – a small subset of the prospect universe – by carefully eliminating great swaths of the population who are less likely to respond to the offer. Thus the key to good direct marketing is good list selection.

“The true divide between digital and direct marketing is driven by one simple economic fact: cost per incremental online contact is effectively zero.”

Good e-mail marketers, on the other hand, take precisely the opposite approach. They start with every person for whom they have permission to mail and then carefully select the best offer for each individual on the list – every ZIP code, DMA, Simmons segment, Personix cluster, every single address.

Digital marketers have no economic reason not to contact everyone, short of increasing opt-outs through over-mailing. Hence the key to good digital marketing is good offer selection.

The difference in imperatives has broad implications.

Direct marketers moving online must reverse their marketer-centric approach. In fact, the concept of a campaign is almost losing its meaning online.

Today's dynamic content technology allows a single communication to contain multiple offers specific to each individual. And the best marketers allow individual customer profiles to determine the precise selection of those offers.

Just as customers drive content, they also drive the timing of communications. Of course, marketers still have a marketing calendar that drives campaigns according to company imperatives, but an increasing share of messages are driven by prospect and customer actions.

Virtually any prospect or customer action – purchases, registrations, downloads, abandoned purchases, Web inquiries, telephone calls and e-mails – can trigger single or multi-stage communications appropriate to each individual's >



Kevin H. Johnson

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< can trigger single or multi-stage communications appropriate to each individual's situation. As you would expect, such customer-triggered messages generate far higher response rates than an old-fashioned weekly blast.

Segmentation is still valuable online, but not to eliminate potential targets. Instead segmentation should be used to imply individual preferences where they are not available and to guide the development and presentation of content.

For example, if "toys & tots" is a dominant segment in your list, you will need to be sure you develop offers appealing to parents with school age children and present them with family-friendly imagery and text.

The good news for traditional marketers shifting online is that you have the data. Direct marketers use richer data than digital marketers have typically had, including multichannel purchase, demographic, psychographic, indexing and other information. All of which can be used to develop rich and robust content to match individuals for a maximum response.

While digital marketers may have mastered the concept of mailing everyone, and may even let data drive content and customers drive campaigns, few use all data available to drive relevant communications.

Most are using a mere fraction at best, such as (online) stated preferences, click behavior, basic demographic and a subset of purchase data. Too few are using the sophisticated demographic and psychographic, scoring/indexing/profiling data traditionally used offline.

Of course, all this is about to change now that every major and some minor e-mail service providers have been acquired by database marketing companies. More detail on offline/online data combinations is something to look out for in the near future.

Kevin H. Johnson is president of Axiom Digital, San Francisco. Reach him at kevin.johnson@axiom.com.

The Long Tail of E-Mail Marketing

By Chris Baggott

Chris Anderson's book, *The Long Tail: Why the Future of Business Is Selling Less of More*, contains a lesson or two for

e-mail marketers.

The theory of the Long Tail argues that when constraints of shelf space are eliminated, the opportunities for selling niche market merchandise are unlimited.

Although sold in small quantities, niche merchandise can be quite profitable because of falling distribution costs. In aggregate, these niche markets represent significant sales.



Chris Baggott

"E-mail marketing is the perfect, cost-effective channel for communicating individually in a world where shelf space is unlimited, products have a niche market and buyers are unique."

The Long Tail concept busts up the traditional "80/20 rule." In the 80/20 world, you only stock merchandise to satisfy the needs of the 20 percent of the customers who drive 80 percent of your revenues.

With limited shelf space, it is virtually impossible to stock items to satisfy all your potential customers, especially if they are only occasional shoppers. With limited shelf space, the greatest amount of shelf space must be devoted to the group that will return the greatest revenue to you.

CONSTRAINTS SHELVED ONLINE

In the virtual world of the Internet, the issue of shelf space is eliminated from the equation and minority interests can be served at no additional expense.

For example, Netflix, the world's largest online movie rental company, carries 65,000 titles, including obscure movies that would never make it onto the shelves of your local Blockbuster. There is no 80/20 rule at Netflix.

Most marketing efforts rely on the 80/20 rule; 80 percent of our revenues come from 20 percent of our customers. We make budget decisions based on this ratio and create marketing plans that support this assumption.

Using the old rule, it follows that our

direct marketing efforts focus on trade ads, brochures and mass mailings because we could not justify the cost of talking individually to every customer and prospect.

Yet e-mail marketing provides the tool that the Long Tail marketers have been waiting for, enabling companies to leverage their customer data and make it easier for marketers to talk to everyone as if they are the most important customer or prospect on the planet.

E-mail marketing is the perfect, cost-effective channel for communicating individually in a world where shelf space is unlimited, products have a niche market and buyers are unique.

Planning and creativity are required to collect and compile actionable data. Armed with a handful of well-maintained subscriber attributes, audiences can be identified and segmented, which provides creative teams with the information they need to develop appropriately targeted messages.

The finishing touches come through data-driven personalization, such as dynamic content, that make the message truly relevant at an individual level.

80/20...who needs it? We've got the Long Tail.

Chris Baggott is co-founder of ExactTarget, an Indianapolis developer of on-demand e-mail marketing software solutions. Reach him at chris@exacttarget.com.

CASE STUDY

Switch to E-Mail Newsletter Cuts Costs for Real Estate Franchisor

By Joe Colopy and Dan Troup

RE/MAX of Michigan is the regional real estate franchisor for all territories outside of the Detroit metro area. Currently serving the state with 101 offices and more than 1,200 sales associates, RE/MAX of Michigan holds responsibility for communicating essential company information to all regional agents, brokers and owners in a timely, cost-effective manner.

Until recently, RE/MAX of Michigan used a monthly paper newsletter as the primary medium for communicating to >

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< employees, distributing surveys and other corporate announcements on an as-needed basis.

COULDN'T PAPER OVER PROBLEMS

However, producing and mailing a paper newsletter each month proved both time consuming and costly, forcing RE/MAX of Michigan to depend on third-party vendors and providers for execution and delivery.

Moreover, the newsletter content varied depending on the recipient – with different subject matter for agents, brokers and owners – further increasing production costs and execution time.

Considering the regularity of print newsletter distribution, RE/MAX of Michigan also lacked a fast, efficient method for communicating unexpected or urgent announcements.

Additionally, RE/MAX of Michigan would often conduct employee surveys after events in order to gain valuable feedback. But the method involved relying on attendees to complete a paper survey during the event and then on employees to manually review and record all data. The process was time consuming and survey response was low.

Lastly, there was no way to track whether a particular person did in fact receive an announcement. With increasing amounts of mail delivered to each employee's inbox, the corporate announcement or newsletter was easily lost in the shuffle.

BRONTO PRONTO

RE/MAX of Michigan adopted an online strategy for its internal communications efforts a year ago by implementing Bronto's e-mail marketing technology.

As content differs according to job title, three separate online newsletters are sent each month to the 1,326 contacts in its distribution list – segmented by owners, brokers, and agents – with surveys and other announcements sent out as needed.

By switching to online newsletters and other online announcements, RE/MAX of Michigan eliminated layout, printing

and postage costs altogether. The newsletter and announcements are now produced in-house from start to finish, also saving substantial time.

The online communications strategy also makes it quick and efficient to send surveys following corporate events.

By using online surveys, RE/MAX of Michigan IT manager Dan Troup can easily increase survey participation rates by including incentives like free registration for an upcoming event or the chance to view photos from the previous one. People love to see pictures and RE/MAX of Michigan has gotten great responses by making the photos available upon completion of a survey.

Bronto's e-mail solution provided an API (application programming interface), enabling RE/MAX of Michigan to integrate Bronto with its existing database of subscribers. This integration allows for easy data synchronization and greater flexibility for updating lists.

An online newsletter also provides accountability, allowing the regional office to ensure receipt of the message and track reader click-through rates. The newsletter contains essential company information, so it's important to know the message is being received and read.

PAPER CUT, COSTS TRIMMED

Since implementing Bronto's e-mail marketing solution, RE/MAX of Michigan has reported tremendous cost savings. Prior to implementing Bronto, the company paid \$18,000 in design costs, \$16,800 printing costs and \$7,000 in postage for its paper newsletter – for a total cost of nearly \$42,000 each year.

By switching to Bronto's e-mail marketing software, the company is now saving 92 percent of those related costs.

The online software's ease-of-use has also resulted in substantial time savings – layout and design is quick and easy, and there is no time lost waiting on third-party vendors. Also, important announcements can be sent out instantaneously.

With Bronto, RE/MAX of Michigan can now easily capture and maintain vital employee feedback through online surveys. Since adding incentives, employee response has increased dramatically.

Joe Colopy is CEO of Bronto, Durham, NC. Dan Troup is IT manager at RE/MAX of Michigan, Detroit. Reach them at joe@bronto.com and dtroup@remax.net.



Joe Colopy



Dan Troup

RESEARCH

Spam or Not: Relevancy and Trust Hold the Key

By Luc Vezina

Marketers considering new or increased investment in e-mail marketing should not be concerned that the consumer's inbox is saturated. A recent independent survey of consumers commissioned by GOT Corp. (www.campaigner.com) has found that two-thirds of people read the marketing e-mails they receive.

When savvy consumers today look at their mailbox, they can quickly determine what is spam and what is not. Over time, consumers have seemingly developed an internal filter to censor which marketing dialogue is important enough to open, and which messaging is not.

The survey reconfirmed that creating a trusting relationship with customers is a critical aspect of a successful e-mail marketing campaign. Sixty-six percent of the people surveyed wanted marketing e-mails that are personalized to their interests. Seventy-seven percent are opening marketing e-mails from sources they know and trust.

Clearly, consumers want relevant information and content that talks to them personally. One-to-one marketing is the current industry mantra and for e-mail marketers this means investing in trust and relevancy.

Online, trust starts right from the get-go when the consumer opts-in and builds over time as the buyer and seller's relationship get stronger. For the marketer, this means constantly reinforcing the identity and credibility of your company at every turn – the use of welcome e-mails and dynamic content to recent subscribers, for example.

Relevance is all about creating respect: honoring the consumers' opt-in preferences and always keeping the context of the moment in mind, understanding that what a subscriber deems relevant today could and will change tomorrow.

Context can depend on demographics, purchase history or time of year. For example, consumers may welcome weekly gift ideas in the holiday season, but >



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There are many self-serve e-mail tools on the market today, and it has never been easier for marketers to build trust and create relevance through one-to-one e-mail.

While there's no denying that e-mail sensitivity is still an issue, there's never been more openness among consumers to receiving good e-mail. This is good news indeed for online marketers.

Luc Vezina is director of strategy and product management at GOT Corp., Montreal, Quebec. Reach him at luc@gotcorp.com.

How to Design Your E-Mail Copy to Maximize Response

By John Murphy

All too often e-mail marketers make mistakes that can easily be avoided with an understanding of the subtle differences between postal and e-mail campaigns.

In the postal world, there has evolved an area of expertise in the design of direct mail pieces. Consultants regularly tout their success in developing "controls" – mail pieces with a proven track record of high response.

Unfortunately, the e-mail world has some catching up to do. A committee often designs e-mail messages, generally with less than ideal results.

The key to developing an effective e-mail campaign is to remember that everything about your e-mail copy should be focused on one objective – getting the recipient to click through to your landing page. Everything else, including branding, product details and awareness, is secondary.

Understanding this is just the first step. Common, yet easily preventable mistakes, include:

Too much copy. Unlike direct mail, the longer the copy the lower the response. The point of e-mail copy is to motivate the recipient to click on the links that take them to your landing page, not to sell the product.



John Murphy

Lengthy subject line. Subject lines of 35 characters or less are best. Why? Most e-mail clients automatically cut off the subject line after 40 characters (look at your own and count them).

Only one thought per subject line, please. Use the subject line to communicate one clear idea. Remember that you may be competing with hundreds of other e-mails in the inbox.

At that volume, the recipient can only scan the subjects, and if your subject is too complicated they'll hit the delete button. Take your cue from the leading e-mail marketers – the spammers. Their subject lines are short, to the point and rather effective.

No clear call to action. The subject line should compel the recipient to take action. The subject is no place to for branding, product announcements or listing the products benefits. Ask the recipient to DO something.

Hard-to-find URLs. Fit your link in the preview pane. The top two inches of your message is the most valuable real estate. Put your landing page URL in that space so the recipient does not have to hunt for it. URLs that are set apart in large boxes with a different color also tend to do well.

Too many offers. Make one offer and stick to it. Resist the temptation to load your message with too many offers. Again, remember that the job of the e-mail is not to sell but to get the recipient to click. More than one offer requires the recipient to give too many items consideration before making a decision, which decreases response.

Poorly worded opt-outs. Word the opt-out carefully. Spam filters are designed to find words that are unique to promotional messages. Words or phrases like "remove me" or "unsubscribe" are rarely, if ever, used in personal correspondence, so you need to avoid these obvious marketing terms.

Try something innocuous such as "If you don't want to hear from us" and be sure the URL does not contain trigger words either.

Failure to get spam scored. If you're renting an e-mail list, ask your list firm if it can spam score your e-mail. If it does not offer scoring, look into commercial products from providers such as Return Path (www.returnpath.com) or investigate open source alternatives such as SpamAssassin (www.spamassassin.org).

Bad timing. Ask your provider what times tend to work best for your type of offer. For business to business, we find

that from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. EST works best for a nationwide offer. For consumer offers, we find that weekends yield the highest response.

Poorly designed landing pages. Make it obvious what you want the recipients to do. Whether they just need to give their e-mail address or fill out a qualification form, put it right up front. Do not fill your landing page with a lot of text, requiring the recipient to scroll down to fill out the form. Never force recipients to click to another page before they can take action.

John Murphy is vice president at Rubin Response Services Inc., a list firm in Schaumburg, IL. Reach him at johnm@rubinresponse.com.

Key Elements of A Winning Opt-in Offer

By Tony Ostian

Did you know that if you're not using a highly visible and irresistible opt-in offer on your Web site to encourage Web visitors to give you their e-mail address, you're missing up to 90 percent of your potential sales?

Studies show that less than 1 percent of your first-time Web visitors will ever buy your product. In fact, the best marketers with the most successful sites seldom convert more than 5 percent of their Web visitors into customers.

So what happens to the 95 percent of your Web visitors who came and went?

For most sites, absolutely nothing. Those prospects are gone forever – never to return. That's why it's critical to have an opt-in mechanism on your site.

In short, you must offer an irresistible and easy way for your Web visitors to give you at least their first name and e-mail address. By capturing this vital information, you can now build a relationship with that new prospect through a series of follow-up e-mails.

Remember, if you're not using follow-up >



Tony Ostian

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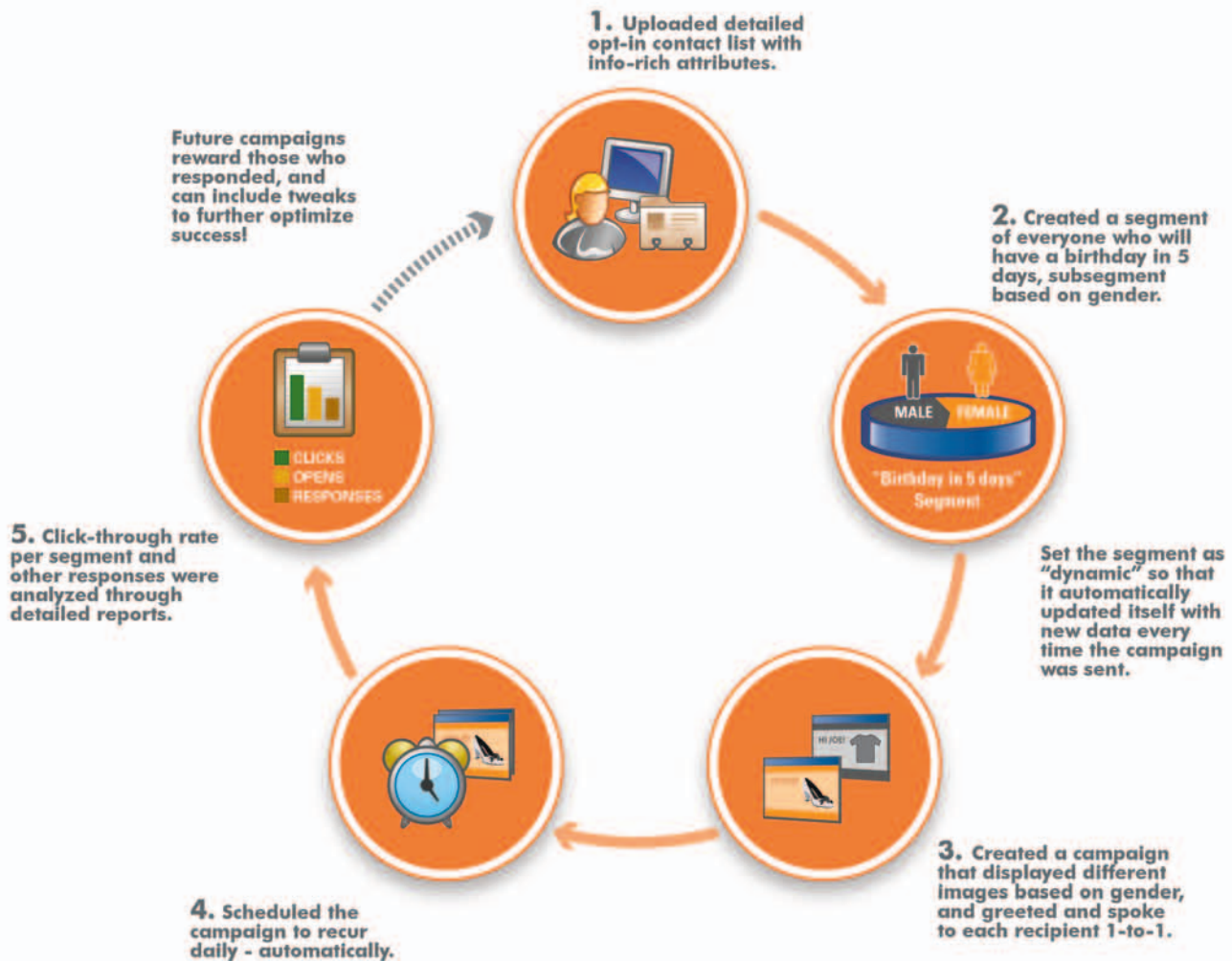
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RetailCo uses CampaignerPro, 1to1 Email Marketing made simple. RetailCo, a fashion retailer of men's and women's clothing, wants to send out a birthday promotional campaign to its customer base. Using CampaignerPro's powerful dynamic segmentation feature, RetailCo can send out automated emails with different content to male and female recipients. Sending targeted 1-to-1 campaigns to specific segments, for example gender, has been proven to result in higher click-through and coupon redemption rates.

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< e-mails as part of your online marketing strategy, you're missing out on 90 percent or more of the potential profits of your business.

Here are key elements of a winning opt-in offer.

- A compelling benefit-driven headline. You want a title that speaks to the needs of your target audience.
- Have your descriptive text provide a summary of the appetizing benefits they will receive. Plus, give your opt-in offer (your bribe/bonus gift) an implied value. You can do this by saying something like, "This Special Free Report is a \$19 value." Show how easy it is ("Simply fill in your name and e-mail address below") and how fast they're going to get it ("It will be sent to your e-mail box automatically within minutes.")
- Assurance of privacy. People want to make sure you don't sell their contact info to third parties.
- The form script itself. In terms of priority, you want to get their e-mail address, followed by first name and last name (last name is not imperative but the first name is, so you can personalize your follow up e-mail messages.)

Tony Ostian is a Web copywriter and president of The Web Copy Guy, Elk Grove Village, IL. He is also author of "8 Sales Robbing Mistakes Your Website Copy is Almost Certainly Making and How to Fix them Fast." Reach him at tony@tonyostian.com.

Writing Subject Lines That Get Your E-Mail Opened

By Derek Gehl

There's no doubt that e-mail is one of the most effective marketing tools available to any business. But did you know that your entire campaign will ultimately hinge on just four or five words?

It doesn't matter how incredible your offer is. Your promotion will bomb if people delete your e-mail message without ever reading it.

And there's a good chance they will – unless you immediately answer the two questions at the top of every recipient's mind: "So what?" and "What's in it for me?"

Good subject lines will answer these questions by...

- Making an announcement or sharing news,
- Making the reader curious,
- Creating a sense of urgency, or
- Emphasizing how the reader will benefit from opening your e-mail.

These approaches work because they don't try to sell anything; they just create enough interest to get your e-mail opened in the first place.

But how your subject line looks matters, too.

For instance, a subject line that reads like personal e-mail from a friend or colleague is much more likely to be opened.

So format your subject lines like a sentence, not a headline. Compare "Want to see a movie?" with "Want To See A Movie?" or even worse, "WANT TO SEE A MOVIE?"

Which one would you open?

It's also crucial to write subject lines that your recipients can scan easily. To do this, here's a cool formatting tip you can use:

Make sure to include a balance of ascenders (letters like t, l, k, h, etc., that are higher than letters like o, m, s, etc.) and descenders (letters like g, p and y, that stick out below the other letters) in every subject line.

Your subject lines will pop out to your readers and they'll be more likely to open your e-mails.

Take a look at these ones for instance:

OKAY: Bob, seminar schedule here

GOOD: Bob, your schedule for today

As you can see, the "GOOD" subject line has a balance of ascenders and descenders, which makes it easier for your eyes to read.

Finally, make your subject lines short – 50 characters or under – so your carefully constructed subject lines aren't cut off mid-word when they're displayed.

To make sure your e-mails get opened, think like an e-mail recipient: busy, impatient, and dealing with an avalanche of e-mail every day. Don't waste their time. Write short, punchy subject lines that let them know immediately why this e-mail is worth opening.

Derek Gehl is president of The Internet Mar-



Derek Gehl

keting Center, Vancouver, British Columbia. Reach him at derekgehl@marketingtips.com.

E-Mail's Place in the Marketing Mix

By Paula Chiocchi

With the advent of e-mail marketing, direct marketers now have the ability to reach a large audience at a much lower cost and greater frequency than most media.

With costs a fraction of direct mail, coupled with immediate response and measurement capabilities, it makes sense to incorporate e-mail in the marketing mix.

E-mail is most effective when integrated with other channels. Campaign integration with targeted television, radio, freestanding inserts, print ads and direct mail leverages real world branding with online branding and direct response.

Whether used as an upfront soft lead in to receiving direct mail or as a follow

up to direct mail or other media, e-mail has been proven to create significant lift to these strategies.

E-mail content is a key component to a successful campaign. Each e-mail message can be individually

personalized and should be consistent with other campaigns and corporate branding efforts.

The use of rich text, HTML and now streaming video in e-mail increases response rate. Even a TV commercial can be sent to a targeted prospect in e-mail.

The growth in e-mail marketing is in acquisition. By incorporating e-mail, a marketer can drive prospects to the Web site and target those prospects that open but do not click with a follow-up e-mail, direct mail or telephone call.

The proper campaign implementation depends upon whether your goal is an online transaction or developing an offline lead.

The use of available technologies or outside service providers for analyzing campaign effectiveness across all platforms is paramount.



Paula Chiocchi



THE MYSTERY OF YOUR MISSING EMAILS.



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Take Control of Your Email Marketing



< This allows for the immediate tracking of results of e-mail campaigns in real time, producing instant feedback. Campaigns can be adjusted midstream as results are gathered.

Start thinking of your company as multichannel by incorporating e-mail with other forms of marketing.

Paula Chiocchi is president/CEO of Outward Media Inc., Los Angeles. Reach her at paula@outwardmedia.com.

How to Create E-Mail Advertising That Doesn't Suck

By Robert Rosenthal

Most e-mail advertising sucks. There, I said it. And I don't think many direct marketers – or consumers, in particular – are going to disagree.

Anyone with an inbox knows how rare it is to receive e-mail with the seemingly intangible attributes found in great ads. Like porn, many of us know it when we see it.

But if it's so tough to define the qualities of great e-mail advertising, is it even worth it to aim for excellence?



Robert Rosenthal

Just think about the volume of e-mail you receive. Then consider all the other advertising your target group is exposed to every day.

According to the Union of Concerned Scientists – you know it's bad if they're involved – the average American is exposed to about 3,000 advertising messages a day.

Basically, it's a good idea to create e-mail that doesn't suck. Here's how to do it:

Treat e-mail advertising as...advertising. Stop viewing e-mail simply as a medium for text memos and start treating it like other advertising media. If you want your e-mail to stand out like great print

advertising, put a comparable effort into creative development.

Get the input you need. Don't just accept any input you're given. Develop your own set of specific questions to get the background information you need, reach consensus, define your playing field and evolve a creative strategy. If you need to collect different perspectives to do your best work, conduct one-on-one interviews.

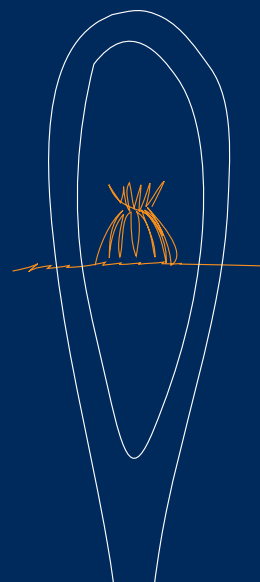
Explore a full range of ideas. Never – repeat, never – stop with your first idea. As you go through all the input, collect a lot of ideas. In the beginning, go for idea quantity. Think about the problem from a variety of angles. Engage in free association.

Embrace the hybrid. The best e-mail ads unite unconventional concepts with textbook direct marketing techniques. If your ad contains a concept on par with great print advertising, combined with direct marketing elements that would make the famed late BBDO copywriter John Caples smile from ear to ear, you're all set to succeed.

Play the emotion card. Very often, the most powerful ads connect emotionally with readers. Yet many, if not most, e-mail

There is more to email marketing than meets the eye.

It's like trying
to find a haystack
in a needle.





ads lead with a feature/function approach. Once you understand the psychology of the situation, play into the readers' fears and uncertainties – as well as their hopes and dreams.

Tell me a story. The late, great copywriter Victor Schwab urged copywriters to take the reader from where he is to where you want him to be. The best copy tells a fascinating story with a beginning, middle and end. Remember: The last thing you ever want to do is induce boredom.

Design it properly. Ever wondered why the most profitable companies on Earth spend serious money on first-rate graphic design work? Because it consistently pays. Yes, it isn't easy to make HTML text look beautiful. But virtually all e-mail advertising can incorporate the elements of good graphic design.

Unveil new offers. Great creative that carries a tired old offer is tragic. Very often, the best offers are educational. But also include a component tied to the chosen concept. One business-to-business e-mail ad suggested readers get the metaphoric monkey off their backs. It offered free King Kong movie tickets to

qualified respondents. The ad hit shortly before the debut of the movie, and the results were outstanding.

Leverage multimedia. If most of your prospects have high-speed Internet connections, why limit your e-mail presentations to static images and text. Granted, programs like Microsoft Outlook aren't exactly multimedia friendly. But when recipients of your e-mail advertising click through, why not give them a television-like experience with video – or at the minimum, a radio-like experience using audio?

Integrate it. The best campaigns don't merely maintain consistent type and colors across media; they're connected via a consistent attitude. But today's e-mail advertisers also have opportunities to run integrated campaigns in ways that were unimaginable just a few years ago. Now your e-mail ad can link to a blog or short movie or MySpace page. The only limitation is your imagination.

Lose the excuses. Don't accept statements like, "We're a conservative company" or "Our prospects are no-nonsense types" or "Our e-mail needs to be cost-effective, so we can't afford original pho-

tography." There's never a good reason to run boring, trite, uninspired concepts. Advertising that costs less upfront but ultimately fails is very costly, and an approach that costs more initially but succeeds could be your most cost-effective option.

Robert Rosenthal is founder of Mothers of Invention, a direct marketing agency in Maynard, MA. Reach him at robert@themothersofinvention.com.

Control Corporate Messaging With News E-Mail

By Barbara Kalkis

The Internet's dazzling ability to tap prospective customers can cause marketers to overlook one of the best advantages of direct e-mail: communicating news to build brand and image. >

Alterian empowers Marketers with "email-ability"!

Alterian Dynamic Messenger™ empowers thousands of marketers on a daily basis, allowing them the ability to create effective email campaigns, which are personalized, dynamic and measurable.

This powerful but easy-to-use solution will change the way you look at email marketing. To find out more about Alterian's approach to email, download a complimentary whitepaper – 10 steps to Effective Email Marketing at www.alterian.com/10.

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unconventional wisdom. **ALTERIAN**



< For corporate marketers tasked with public relations, underestimating this channel is a crucial error in building brand and customers.

News e-mail delivered to the desk of astutely defined recipients opens communications with influential audiences everywhere. Small companies gain the same global reach as the largest multinational.

Companies commonly rely on commercial wire services because they perceive news dissemination as a tactic. Wrong. It is a competitive gold mine. News mails help nurture brand, build mindshare, cultivate advocates and initiate conversations at a higher level than straightforward promotions can.

Total reliance on external wire services distances a company from its database and, therefore, its constituencies. News e-mails let you control your database and the vast information within it. You know who receives the news and when, so your contact database stays fresh. Search engines help you tabulate coverage. You can spot trends in how news is reported or ignored.

Recipients often comment about news, so you provoke conversations that share versus sell. The subtle switch creates constituencies and new ears for companies.

Publications often confirm postings, giving important delivery and feedback that can be evaluated, analyzed and even ranked by relevance. By adding coverage data, the picture of global brand perception gets the color fill of a high-resolution photo.

To leverage this database, define target audiences. Include pertinent industry, business and consumer journalists; market and financial analysts; industry influencers at universities and think tanks; industry bloggers; and suppliers. All these people talk about your company, so start talking to them.

Like any marketing tool, news e-mails need to be opened to be useful. Here are some basic starters:

Subject line. Keep the subject line short. Insert the word “news” to delineate the mail as information. Insert the company name in a factual statement.

Mail format. Highlight the message’s news content with the words “News Release” or “For Immediate Release.” The next line should state the news topic, fol-

lowed by details. Keep paragraphs to three to four lines for easy reading, and content brief but factual – about 300 words.

The news “call to action.” End with a short company descriptor, street and Web addresses and telephone numbers. Include media and marketing contacts, office and cell numbers and e-mail addresses.

Barbara Kalkis is principal of Maestro Marketing & PR, San Jose, CA. Reach her at kkalkis@compuserve.com.



Barbara Kalkis

CASE STUDY

E-Mail Boosts Consumer Direct Value Chain for BabytoBee

By Robert Moore

BabytoBee is an online company that helps expectant parents meet and do business with consumer direct marketers. Moms- and dads-to-be (our audience) and infant care brands to beat (our advertisers) know and trust BabytoBee. This allows us to engage both parties in a meaningful,

BabytoBee depended on telemarketing and offline direct. E-mail marketing has helped us increase value across the consumer direct value chain. It’s now BabytoBee’s leading revenue channel by a significant margin.

“Event-based, contextual e-mail campaigns help BabytoBee’s audience members and advertisers to reduce relationship stress.”

BabytoBee’s e-mail audience engagement campaigns are event-based. This means that the expectant parent drives the campaign by requesting news and offers relevant to him or her. BabytoBee’s audience often engages BabytoBee and its advertisers in care updates, infant apparel discounts and diaper ratings within the first few days.

To date, event-based engagement campaigns outperform others 5:1. The factor can be as high as 10 times. There’s no analytic gap. Datran Media helped us recognize how to reverse traditional e-mail marketing campaign strategies to provide our audience with the steering wheel.

Expectant parents are a tricky category for advertisers. Even the best brands find it challenging to resonate with those awaiting the stork. The exciting change of life is often stressful. Communication with this coveted audience needs to be increasingly relevant and have high perceived value.

Event-based, contextual e-mail campaigns help BabytoBee’s audience members and advertisers to reduce relationship stress. Demographics and attributes

are nice, but events associated with an emotional situation like, “What do I do if my infant becomes ill?” have far more >

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241 total clicks
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97 total clicks
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[Click Here](#)
177 total clicks
[Sign up and receive FREE samples, special offers & coupons, paid surveys, support groups, and expert advice.](#)

128 total clicks

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E-mail is BabytoBee’s leading revenue channel

commerce-centric relationship.

Prior to partnering with Datran Media to launch e-mail marketing efforts,

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Qualified Business Professionals**

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for Big
Results!**

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BEN is proving to be a very successful addition to any **DIRECT MARKETER'S TOOLKIT!**

Now with more rollout potential than any other business email file on the market.

The BEN database is your single-source email access to the most qualified b-to-b buyers in the U.S. from 417 response list sources including magazine and newsletter subscribers, product buyers, book and seminar buyers and conference attendees.

Select from job function, industry, sales volume, employee size, products purchased, geography and more.

For a multi-channel campaign that's sure to bring you success, BEN's postal partner BRAD, managed by Edith Roman offers matching postal addresses.

>>JOB FUNCTION

Advertising/Media	591,604
Architecture/Design	596,652
CEO/Owner	34,344
Corporate Management	3,527,998
Design Engineering	162,657
Education	1,319,004
Engineering Management	1,986,448
Information Technology	2,303,956
Middle Management	1,846,308
Training/HR	1,706,660
Sales & Marketing	1,284,511
Travel	677,814

For more information on **BEN** or multi-channel opportunities with **BRAD**, contact: Michael at **800.409.4443 x860** or **michael.spohn@epostdirect.com**





< impact because they touch the heart and soul of the expectant parent.

Since adding e-mail marketing to our model, more future parents and advertisers have joined BabytoBee. This is evidenced by new subscription growth. Top-tier incumbents are also spending more as evidenced by clicks and conversions. The increased value across the chain benefits us all.

BabytoBee measures click throughs, conversions, sales, viral referrals and myriad other business growth indicators. We call these numbers and statistics up in real-time reports that can be accessed anywhere.

This helps BabytoBee strategically execute the most relevant campaigns on behalf of our audience and advertisers. In the end, it's our hope that it's the babies-to-be that ultimately win the most.

Robert Moore is CEO of BabytoBee, Pomona, NY. Reach him at robert@babytoBee.com.

Breaking Barriers With Creative E-Mail Marketing

By Carla Wilson

E-mail is a valuable marketing tool for conveying short, simple messages. But sometimes the barriers to sales and usage are more complex. In cases where the message is not very straightforward, marketers have to find creative ways to use e-mail to sell products and drive usage.



Carla Wilson

Getting customers to adopt a new product is one type of challenge. Convincing them to switch from a trusted product or service presents another. Trying to accomplish both in a single e-mail is a true marketing dilemma.

For example, companies often find that they want to cross-sell a product to customers who may or may not be using a competitive brand. In doing so, the level of education a customer may have about a product can be difficult to judge. You may be convincing one group to start using your product and asking another to switch from a competitor.

By taking a creative approach to e-mail marketing, companies can often overcome such a challenge.

For example, developing a single e-mail with two distinct, graphic sections – one with a “Why Switch?” message and another with a “Why Start?” message – allows potential customers to scan the e-mail, choose the message that is most relevant to them and then click on the appropriate call to action.

Users can then be directed to separate jump pages that answer each question. When done correctly, companies can expect that their response rates will be approximately 10 percent versus control groups.

BARRIER-BASED MESSAGING

E-mail can also break barriers to entry and change customer behavior.

This is often the case with services such as online financial management, where customers can be distrustful of the technology and fear breaches in security and privacy. Using a single e-mail to address all of these issues at once means that the messages are diluted and none of them come through loud and clear.

The most effective way to change behavior is to create a series of e-mails to address each barrier separately. Delivering single-minded messages about ease of use, security and privacy measures in close succession can improve the education process and significantly lift use of the service.

Using e-mail to break down barriers to sales and change customer behavior can be challenging. However, analyzing the situation and applying informed, yet creative, approaches can be the key to unlocking new opportunities.

Carla Wilson is director of client services at Wilson RMS, New York. Reach Ms. Wilson at cwilson@wilsonrms.com.

Integration of E-Mail With Other Channels Needs Work

By Jason McNamara

E-mail marketing is the most popular form of online marketing today. Forrester Research reports that 83 percent of all marketers have implemented programs to date

and estimates that another 10 percent will begin using the channel by the end of 2006.

But while e-mail use is growing, the integration of e-mail into multichannel campaigns is still a struggle for marketers and the service providers that support them.



Jason McNamara

Alterian recently gathered more 70 executives from leading marketing service providers to spotlight the challenges of integrating e-mail with other marketing efforts. Here is what

they had to say.

First, the good news. A whopping 90 percent said their clients use e-mail for customer retention and cross selling, and 72 percent stated their clients do so for customer acquisition. Not far off the Forrester mark.

Also, 48 percent reported their clients use e-mail for transactional communications. About 50 percent confirmed that e-mail is part of a combined online and offline tactical mix. And only 14 percent of marketers said they use e-mail as a standalone effort.

CHALLENGES STILL LOOM

But now the bad news. Nearly half of marketing service providers polled said their clients face significant e-mail challenges.

These include making online channels targeted and addressable at the individual level, integrating online marketing together with the customer database and offline channels, complying with privacy and regulatory concerns and managing individual communication preferences.

Here's the problem. Too often, separate teams still manage e-mail and database marketing programs and don't coordinate these direct programs under one strategy. They also use multiple technology applications that don't integrate workflow and share data between them.

That's got to end.

Organizations that consolidate these applications across departments and programs will have a competitive advantage over others who don't.

That's the next lesson in e-mail marketing.

Jason McNamara is Valencia, CA-based president of e-mail and online solutions at analytics provider Alterian. Reach him at jmcnamara@alterian.com.

Five Creative Tips For Permission-Based E-Mail

By Dan Henry and Hugo Campos

Marketers have been using e-mail as a marketing tool for more than a decade. Yet it's surprising that so many marketers, drawn to this relatively inexpensive and highly effective means of communicating with customers, still misuse it.

The most common mistake that many marketers make is that they apply the same concepts that worked so well for them in print to e-mail, assuming that what worked perfectly for one will be ideally suited to the other. But the two media are distinctly different and each requires a unique approach.

Here are key creative tips for using e-mail:

Forget the fold. Marketers still discuss e-mail design in terms of what content appears above or below "the fold," as if equating its real estate to a newspaper. Keep in mind that there are more than 40 different e-mail providers and systems, and each will render your e-mail message in a different way.

Instead, think of the preview pane. Design your e-mail creative so that the key messaging elements — company logo, headline, product image, response mechanism or calls-to-action — appear as high in the layout as possible to ensure visibility.

Simplify the message. Because e-mail marketing is such a cost-effective channel, it's tempting to load your e-mails with multiple messages and offers. Instead, keep it simple.

Elevate your main message so that it becomes the thrust of your communication, and construct a clear message hierarchy that leads the reader through any supporting information. Make sure your communication is clear, concise, and easily noticed by readers who scan — not read — their e-mails.



Dan Henry



Hugo Campos

Consider the user experience. Your customers don't interact with e-mail in the same way they do with print ads, television commercials or Web pages. And they don't print their marketing e-mails; they view them in segments on their screens.

Design your e-mail so that pertinent information, particularly calls to action and hyperlinks to landing pages, are likely to appear in the segments readers see as they scroll down and interact with your message.

And remember that many major Internet service providers and e-mail clients block your images. Always include important information, such as a headline or call to action, in HTML text so that the primary element of the communication won't be lost if images do not appear.

Aim for deliverability. Big, sexy images do make an impact. But they won't bring results if they set off spam filters that deliver them to bulk e-mail folders. Run your e-mail sends through test spam filters so you know they rate an acceptable spam score and will make it to the inbox.

Respect the customer relationship. Remember, your customers have given you permission to communicate with them via e-mail. Don't abuse that privilege. Be considerate in terms of frequency of your messaging. And whenever possible, give your customers the opportunity to select the type of content they'd like to receive and how often.

Dan Henry and Hugo Campos are associate creative directors at Merkle|Quris, the Denver-based e-mail marketing agency of Merkle. Reach them at dhenry@merklequris.com and hcampos@merklequris.com.

Six Secrets to Get Customers and Grow Your E-Mail List ...

By Josh Perlstein

Folks, I am happy to report that after approximately 10 years of Internet marketing, we have a relative consensus.

In surveys conducted about Internet marketing over the last few years, e-mail to

a marketer's own database is consistently ranked as the No. 1 or No. 2 most successful, most profitable marketing tactic.

This is no surprise to long-time direct marketers who know that their house file is their gold.



Josh Perlstein

Still, not all online marketers have success with their e-mail marketing efforts to their own database. Their lack of success is typically due to multiple factors, including suboptimal e-mail strategy, frequency, content or execution.

Often, we find that poor e-mail house file returns are caused by poor e-mail acquisition practices. Today, more than ever, e-mail marketers are challenged to find ways to successfully scale their e-mail efforts to responsive, willing prospects.

Over the last 10 years of optimizing our clients' online media campaigns, we have established some best practices for profitable, successful e-mail address acquisition and e-mail database growth. Some of the key best practices include:

First, ask for your customers or prospects' e-mail address prominently, on every Web page.

Second, if someone wants to get e-mail from you, he or she will ask you for it. E-mail appends and compiled "partner" opt-in lists are bad for response and for your image.

Third, use the most efficient online media tactics to acquire qualified e-mail addresses, such as co-registration, search and in-ad data capture rich media. Only use non-incentivized sites and networks that tell you which specific sites are running your offer. Then take the time to actually check the quality and e-mail usage of those sites. Otherwise, you'll be paying for unqualified, unresponsive e-mail addresses.

Fourth, send your first e-mail within 24 hours of a signup to maximize lead value.

Fifth, nail down your e-mail strategy before you begin asking people for their e-mail address. If not, you are throwing away the money you spent to acquire that address.

Finally, create a good reason (value proposition) for someone to want to sign up, by asking, "Why would someone want to receive e-mail from me?" Make it relevant to your nirvana (selling them something), but more than just that. I >



< assure you, most people are not just interested in you selling them something. Create value in your relationship. Value is a two-way street in e-mail.

Josh Perlstein is president of Response Media, Atlanta. Reach him at jperlstein@responsemedia.com.

... And Six Winning Strategies to Grow Your E-Mail Lists

By Janine Popick

One of the most challenging aspects of e-mail marketing is mailing list development.

In fact, of all the questions we're asked by thousands of our small business customers, the one we hear most often is "How do I get a bigger e-mail list?"

Each case is unique but, in general, we favor an approach that strives for bigger and better lists to produce the highest return possible for e-mail marketing campaigns.

Here then are some tips you can use to build your own robust list of qualified recipients.

PLAN THOROUGHLY

Many list building programs flounder due to lack of focus. It's important to identify

your target audience and their interests as precisely as possible. If you cater to your members' concerns and make it clear what they can expect to gain from getting your e-mail, you'll collect a lot more addresses and limit turnover.

INCLUDE A REGISTRATION FORM ON YOUR SITE

Make it easy for people to register by placing a signup form on your Web site homepage. In fact, you may want to place multiple forms on your site in order to track where visitors are signing up the most. We recommend that you put a link or even include the actual e-mail address signup box on as many pages as possible within your site.

DON'T PRY

Try not to interrogate visitors. Collect the



Janine Popick

information you need for registration and basic analysis and leave it at that until you've developed a relationship with your members.

POP-UP WINDOWS

When someone prepares to leave your site, why not try a pop-up window as a last ditch effort to encourage signups for your newsletter? You'd be amazed how many people will register on the way out if the presentation is compelling.

LEVERAGE OTHER WEB SITES

Contact other sites that appeal to your target audience and discuss partnering with them. By working together, each party can include the other's signup form in its outgoing communications so you can grow your newsletters collectively.

GOT AN OFFLINE BUSINESS? ASK FOR THE E-MAIL

Don't forgo real world promotion. Old ideas like placing a fishbowl on the counter for depositing business cards still work. There's a reason they've been around so long. Alternatively, you can place a registration book on the counter asking people to sign up for your special offers. Then, once a week, enter them into your contact management systems

Lastly, remember that building a mailing list is like growing a plant: it requires time and care, but the results are priceless. If you employ these techniques, you'll be reaping the benefits for years.

Janine Popick is CEO of VerticalResponse, San Francisco. Reach Ms. Popick at janine@verticalresponse.com.

Critical Factors for Building House Lists

By Jere Doyle

E-mail is dead. You don't have to look too far back to find this bold statement issued by many marketing and technology pundits, commentators and even industry analysts.

But we all know that e-mail today is alive and well and thriving like never before.

According to the ad:tech 2005 Year End Survey, marketers ranked e-mailing their house list as one of the most effective marketing tactics – second only to paid search ads – and beating out rich

media ads, behavioral targeting, search engine optimization and banner ads.

Consumer companies, in particular, are using e-mail marketing more than ever before, and with more sophistication by segmenting their lists for better targeting.

Marketers are also being more strategic in finding the right consumers who are interested in their brands and products, and who are eager for special offers, promotions and discounts.

The key to success is to find the right consumers who want to hear from you. Many consumer brand marketers today are using online customer acquisition to do just that, as can be seen in the incredible growth this sector has experienced in the past few years.

In fact, online customer acquisition spending grew by more than 200 percent between 2004 and 2005, dramatically outpacing online advertising spending, which grew by 24 percent during the same period (source: "IAB Advertising Revenue Report," September 2005).

This incredible growth in spending on online customer acquisition programs for building highly targeted house files demonstrates that consumer brand marketers are definitely on to something. But like every hot trend, there are pitfalls to avoid and best practices that when followed will lead to greater success.

The following are a few tips and guidelines for building a strong house file that when marketed to with e-mail and other channels will help you find, engage, acquire and keep profitable customers:

The Famous Five

First, select a reliable, proven online customer acquisition provider who:

- Abides by best practices
- Offers a pay-for-performance model
- Is trusted by leading consumer brands

Second, target precisely to find the right customers:

- Enhanced optimization technology with behavioral, personalization and contextual targeting yield more of the right consumers
- Multiple online channels expand your reach and opportunities for finding the right customers

Third, collect the right consumer data

- How much data depends on the brand, offer, nature of questions



Jere Doyle



- Understand “must haves,” “good to have,” “nice to have” consumer profile data
- Make sure the data is properly cleansed

Fourth, analyze campaign results

- Conduct pre and post-campaign analysis
- Finally, immediately begin a direct dialogue through e-mail and multichannel marketing

Jere Doyle is president/CEO of online customer acquisition provider Prospectiv, Woburn, MA. Reach him at jdoyle@prospectiv.com.

CASE STUDY

Eloqua Hits Home For Tridel E-Mail Program

By **Stacey Fruitman**

Tridel is Canada's leading developer and builder of condominium residences

with more than 70 years of home-building experience. The company is the largest developer in the greater Toronto area and has been responsible for producing more than 66,500 homes. As one of the first Canadian developers to launch a Web site, the company has made online marketing a priority for many years. However, as the marketing program became more integrated in the early 2000s, Tridel needed a way to incorporate past prospect history and partner information on potential prospects into its e-mail marketing campaigns.

E-mails were being sent to prospects generically and often lacked a sense of personalization from the marketing team. There was no easy way to leverage the value of a prospect's history and tailor each e-mail to meet a prospect's specific interests and needs. Tridel turned to



Stacey Fruitman

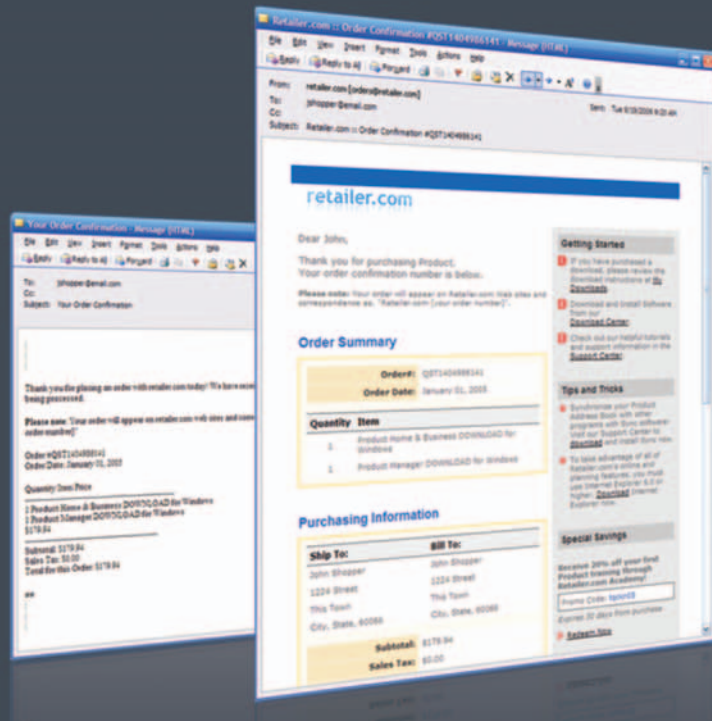


Eloqua slots prospects based on prior and specific property interests.

the Eloqua Conversion Suite, a demand-generation solution that offers marketers a common platform for integrating e-mail marketing and direct mail, Web site marketing, lead generation and sales force automation to produce a continuous flow of qualified leads for its sales force.

The Eloqua Conversion Suite enables >

Is your email not getting the message across? Get a Transactional Message Makeover!



Now, it's easier than ever to enhance your best assets. StrongMail provides a flexible, in-house solution that can get you up and running in weeks — not months.

Transactional emails are opened and read more than any other email. Make the most of your customer's undivided attention.

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< Tridel to combine automation with the human element of intuition. Using Eloqua's platform, Tridel developed an eSales program that employs highly personalized e-mails for prospects based on their past history, partner information and the sales coordinator's knowledge of prospect needs.

An automated Eloqua program categorizes prospects based on their response to marketing campaigns and specific property interests. This information is instantly delivered to the online sales coordinator who responds with a specific marketing template that is easy to customize. The Eloqua Conversion Suite helps Tridel qualify, sort and quickly respond to leads with a personal touch. It is the balance of automation and human intuition that has made Tridel's implementation successful.

This combination has had a significant impact. Tridel was able to increase its e-mail response rates by 100 percent, from 20 to 40 percent. Eloqua also offers Tridel this same balance with its service team. Eloqua has become an extended partner of Tridel's online marketing team, working internally to adjust the eSales program as it grows.

With the assistance of Eloqua, Tridel can link e-mails and prospect visits to Web sites to closed business, giving greater visibility into which messages are peaking prospect interest, increasing the effectiveness of each marketing program, ultimately resulting in increased sales.

Stacey Fruitman is director of corporate marketing at Tridel Corp., Toronto, Ontario. Reach her at sfruitman@tridel.com.

The Engaged Customer: One Answer to the Deliverability Challenge

By David Dabbah

Deliverability is definitely the Holy Grail these days of e-mail marketers: how to ensure that your e-mails get delivered to your recipients' inbox.

While deliverability is important to e-mail marketing, one aspect of deliverability that has nothing to do with your content or

your status with Internet service providers is your relationship with your recipients.

In terms of deliverability, it shouldn't just be about getting into the inbox. It should be about engaging your customers and providing them with the content they want, relevant content that's delivered with appropriate frequency.



David Dabbah

Because if you don't engage them, if you provide different content than they thought they were subscribing to, if you e-mail them too often—you'll lose them. You may get into their inbox because they've opted in to your e-mail and you've optimized your deliverability with the ISPs. But they could still hit the spam button because you haven't delivered on their expectations.

It takes a new perspective. Not "What do we want to send, what is the message of our next e-mail campaign?" but "What do our customers want to receive?"

CONSUMER'S CONTENT?

E-mail marketers need to ask themselves "What is the value to our customers of opting in to our e-mail and are we providing it?"

Because you can optimize for deliverability to the end of your days, but if your customer decides that your content is irrelevant or you e-mail too frequently, you'll become a spammer in their eyes nonetheless. At best, they'll delete your e-mails. At worst, they'll mark your e-mails as spam. Another customer lost.

Fortunately, the solution is simple: Set expectations clearly when you ask your recipients to subscribe. Then meet those expectations. There's no magic formula for any one e-mail marketing campaign in terms of what content and how often.

Maybe you need to segment your list so you can provide different content to the different segments. Maybe you need to conduct a survey of your customers to find out from them what their interests and preferences are. Maybe you need to run some A/B split tests, just to see if different content will provide different responses. It's not rocket science, but it's also not simply blasting, hoping for the best result.

You may end up sending fewer e-mails, but you'll have customers that open and read the e-mails you do send because they want to, they're interested, they're engaged. And if you can do that, you'll

truly have found the Holy Grail of e-mail marketing – the engaged customer.

David Dabbah is director of sales and marketing at Lyris Technologies Inc., Emeryville, CA. Reach him at ddabbah@lyris.com.

Educate Consumers On Phishing, Not Just Trade

By Eamon O Neill

Phishing, or the practice of sending fraudulent e-mails to gain personally identifiable information (e.g. credit card numbers, social security numbers), is still e-mail's albatross.

The industry is wise to it, and legislators are starting to take notice, but perpetrators posing as friendly neighborhood retail banks or trusted e-commerce sites continue their war of attrition on the channel.

Measures are being taken, but we still have more work to do in consumer awareness and on the technology side to ensure AAR – authentication, accreditation and reputation.

The Anti-Phishing Working Group reports that approximately 150 million phishing e-mails are sent daily, which will grow if left unchecked.

Or consider this statistic released at the E-Mail Authentication Summit in April: 300 trillion messages will be sent in 2006, and 80 percent will be illegitimate.

NIMBY? THINK AGAIN

Brand leaders like Citibank and Bank of America have been outspoken and proactive about identity theft, including phishing, in both the business community and at the consumer level.

But it's not just their problem, nor should it fall to Internet giants like eBay. Any Web site retaining consumer information is at risk, even more so if you act as guardian of financial information. Though you'd be surprised how many regional banks consider it a problem for the bigger brand names.

The reality is, smaller companies are >



Eamon O Neill



< vulnerable, as phishers become more creative and more insidious.

“150 million phishing e-mails are sent daily, which will grow if left unchecked.”

E-mail service providers and Internet service providers need to make this part of their dialogue as well. Thankfully, key players are stepping up the program. Microsoft's Internet Explorer 7.0 browser has stringent anti-phishing guards, and soon we'll see how that works in practice.

Further, New York governor George Pataki recently signed into law making phishing illegal, authorizing ISPs, trademark holders and the attorney general to bring action and collect damages.

But phishers rely on consumer naiveté, so it's time for widespread consumer education, including more public service announcements and more corporate advertising, a la Citibank.

SEALS MUST BE OBVIOUS

The Anti-Phishing Working Group's sound guidelines (e.g. "Be suspicious of e-mail requests for personal financial information" or "Consider installing a Web browser tool bar to help protect you from known phishing Web sites") may not be as mainstreamed as we'd like, and more advertising can only help spread the word.

We're also integrating more technological measures to achieve AAR.

For example, we have e-mail authentication tools such as Sender ID or SPF authentication, which is akin to a license plate that shows from where the e-mail originated. We also have DomainKeys authentication, which is akin to an autograph and shows that an e-mail has not been tampered with since it left the legitimate server.

Studies show that 35 percent of domains are now sending authenticated e-mails, and 1 billion e-mails a day sent to Yahoo are authenticated.

We also participate in accreditation programs and reputation monitoring programs. But how many consumers today recognize what all these stamps of approval mean?

In the end, marketers need to not only

recognize these threats and demand such protective measures, but consumers also need to be educated.

Remember, the stakes are much higher with the phishing threat than with spam, which is only irritating or offensive, because phishing can ruin someone's livelihood and credit.

Eamon O Neill is vice president of product management at Bluestreak, Providence, RI. Reach him at oneill@bluestreak.com.

CASE STUDY

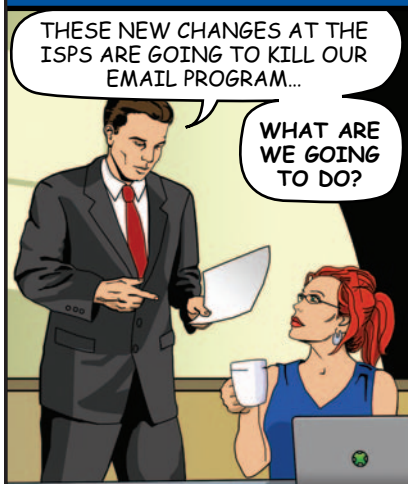
Spa Gives Customers The Daily E-Mail Treatment

By Gail Goodman

Working for an e-mail marketing service for small businesses, I'm constantly addressing the issue of e-mail frequency - >

Want the highest overall business value* from your outsourced email solution?

The answer is Silverpop.



You don't need psychic super powers to know what's ahead in email marketing, just a best-in-class email service provider like Silverpop. A leading provider of permission-based email marketing solutions, strategy and services, Silverpop anticipates industry developments and proactively offers marketers the information and technology they need to stay at the forefront of email marketing. So marketers can actually focus on *Marketing*.



Your partner for email marketing success.

For more information about Silverpop, visit www.silverpop.com or call 866-SILVPOP.

*JupiterResearch ranked Silverpop as the email service provider with the highest overall business value for enterprise-level (mailings over 150k pieces) email marketers for each of the last two years.



< – in articles I'm writing, during speaking engagements and when I'm talking with



Balance Spa e-mails 25 percent discounts on next-day open slots.

small business owners and entrepreneurs.

The most important thing to remember regarding frequency is to respect your subscriber's wishes. For consultants and business services professionals, once a month is usually sufficient. Retailers have sales and special promotions, so weekly contact can be effective.



Gail Goodman

It's a rare business model that can effectively send e-mails communications on a daily basis, but I found one great example in Balance Spa (<http://www.balancespa.com>), a day-spa retreat in Tewksbury, MA.

As the owner and operated of Balance Spa, Nan Vardaro has the challenge of making sure her staff hours are booked throughout the day, whether it is for a facial, a massage or a full body treatment.

But as in any personal services business, appointments can fall through or be rescheduled at the last minute. When this happens, Ms. Vardaro sends daily e-mails to her subscriber list.

The e-mails offer 25 percent-off sales on the next day's open slots – bringing customers in the door and coming back. Using e-mail this way yields Ms. Vardaro instant results and revenue.

E-mail marketing is so immediate that Ms. Vardaro can look at the day's sched-

ule, determine what last minute openings are available and offer those services to her valued clients at a great discount.

As a result, Ms. Vardaro and her staff at Balance Spa have a full schedule of appointments every day, which is the bottom line when it comes to achieving profits in the personal services businesses.

Does e-mailing every day make her a spammer? Certainly not. She has simply taken accepted best practices for e-mail marketing frequency – don't be a nuisance to your subscribers by e-mailing them too often – and adapted it to the unique aspects of her business and clientele.

One thing I learned from Ms. Vardaro's story that is relevant to businesses of all types and sizes is that e-mail marketing best practices are excellent guidelines, but each business has a unique message and audience.

As long as you deliver the right message to the right people at the right time, just as Ms. Vardaro does, e-mail can be one of the most effective tools in helping you grow your business.

Gail Goodman is CEO of Constant Contact, a Waltham, MA, provider of e-mail services to small businesses, associations and nonprofits. Reach her at ggoodman@constantcontact.com.

The Case for an E-Mail Preference Center Program

By Elaine O'Gorman

As the busy online shopping season approaches, savvy marketers are toiling to develop e-mail campaigns that are timely and relevant. Key to relevance is a solid, robust preference center program.

Preferences allow you to personalize communications for the specific needs of your customers. Using preferences as a key component of your e-mail campaigns will move your e-mail program from the old,



Elaine O'Gorman

marketer-centric system to the more effective customer-centric approach, yielding greater results over the long term.

The preference page should consist of two components: administrative and content options. On the administrative side, marketers often include:

- A clear and easy way to unsubscribe (or subscribe) from all mailings;
- Password change (if appropriate);
- E-mail change of address.

On the content side, you need to figure out how much control you can give recipients without offering an unmanageable number of preferences.

The No. 1 mistake marketers make is providing too many content choices on the preference page. If you include more than eight to 12 options, you might bewilder your customers and drive them to just opt-out of everything by default.

When you list your message choices, be sure to include a description of each option and, wherever possible, a link to an example of the type of e-mail the customer could expect to receive.

You should also include a box that "selects all" and "unselects all" so the customer won't have to manually click a bunch of boxes. Anything that makes the experience easier for the user, the better.

OPTIONS PREFERRED

Another benefit of the preference page is the ability to catch customers before they opt themselves out of all communications.

By driving a customer to a preference page to opt-out of communications, you provide an additional opportunity to remind or inform a customer of all your communication offerings.

In a world without preferences, the only option for recipients is to opt out of all communications, resulting in an unfortunate end-of-the-line for your e-mail relationship.

Preferences bring individual choice back to e-mail communications. They make the customer an equal partner in the transaction with a stake and an interest in the outcome.

When the customer is involved in the communications, the messages become more relevant and the sender's brand value soars. And that is the power of preferences.

Elaine O'Gorman is vice president of strategy at Silverpop, Atlanta. Reach her at elaineogorman@silverpop.com.

People Instead of Profits: E-Mail Marketing for Nonprofits

By Jeffrey E. Barnhart

Nonprofit groups and associations face an uphill climb when launching an e-mail marketing campaign to their potential members: selling an idea rather than a product on a limited budget.

Many of the same techniques of conventional online marketing translate, but there are major differences in assessing your audience, copywriting and the use of the group's Web site. It is important to tailor your e-mail campaign to the demographic whose time and money you hope to win.

Assessing your audience. When assessing the target prospects for nonprofit organizations, it is essential to consider their profession and how they might relate to your organization.



Jeffrey E. Barnhart

Although education is often touted as an all-encompassing benefit, the main attraction for members who join associations is networking. Building work relationships through common organizations helps people learn more about the industry through mentors and provides connections to help further their careers.

People can also relate to your organization independently of their profession. Charitable giving continues to steadily increase around 2 percent every year, according to recent reports. While corporate clients are restricted to appealing to the prospect's business interest, some nonprofit organizations are able to tap into personal connections or special interests.

Connecting to the content. The language of the e-mail must speak directly to the person whose inbox you have infiltrated. Keep subject lines brief and try asking a question that is specific to his or her interests: "Looking for networking opportunities in your field?"

The benefits of joining the organization should always be front and center.

For example, in an e-mail announcing the organization's annual confer-

ence, the educational theme must be prominently displayed and supported with details to hook the prospect personally to the event. Buzzwords like "trends" and "future" can be used to show timeliness, persuading the prospective member to attend in order to stay up to date on their field.

Instant information from Web sites. One of the nonprofit's major goals is to increase traffic to the Web site. Nonprofit organizations have benefited tremendously from the convenience of the Internet. By linking from the e-mail to the Web site, prospects can instantly act on their impulse to find out more and can quickly gain access to online registration and event information.

Plus, most marketing companies can interpret the return on investment by analyzing the number of views the Web site receives. Databases that accurately track leads and store information are used to predict the e-mail's success.

A nonprofit e-mail campaign that considers all of these factors is sure to increase membership and therefore drive revenue. Paying extra attention to how your prospect will connect with the organization's goals and keeping key information readily accessible will help keep your e-mail from hitting the trash bin.

Jeffrey Barnhart is president/CEO of Creative Marketing Alliance Inc., a Princeton Junction, NJ, marketing communications firm. Reach him at jbarnhart@emasolutions.com.

CASE STUDY

Road Runner Sports Energizes First-Time Buyers With Behavioral Targeting

By Arthur Sweetser

Since founding Road Runner Sports (RRS) in 1983, CEO Michael Gotfredson, fondly referred to as "Chief Runner," has made the most of every opportunity to interact with his customers about their shared passion for running and fitness. First-time buyers are responding especially well to the special attention they are given in e-mail.

As opposed to receiving a stream of promotional e-mail messages already in progress, Road Runner Sports' new customers are placed into a permission-based First-Time Buyer (FTB) program.

They are addressed personally by the Chief Runner and educated on all that the multichannel fitness store has to offer, including shopping resources and expert advice to help them stay active and injury-free.

To implement the FTB program, Road Runner Sports relies on e-mail service provider e-Dialog to provide the strategy, analysis, technology and tools to manage the program based on recency and relevancy.



Arthur Sweetser

Upon making an initial purchase and signing up for the e-mail newsletter, first-time buyers are sent a sequenced stream of messages. The automated series begins with a welcome message that promotes the brand, educates consumers on the non-promotional benefits of RRS, and encourages additional purchases.

Customers receive one of two versions of the FTB e-mail sequence based on whether or not they are members of RRS' loyalty program, the Run America Club. Both versions are similar in nature. However, appropriate content is published dynamically based on the user's affiliation to the club.

Subsequent messages in the FTB stream include health news and information on injury prevention and shoe rotation, as well as a foot-sizing chart, shoe fit tips, expert gear reviews, running tips and fitness advice. What's more, they provide the opportunity to extend the customer-retailer dialog via voice and online channels.

FTB EQUALS ROI

Using additional tactics such as customization, catchy subject lines, animated images and enhanced creative, the FTB program has generated remarkable results when compared to standard promotional campaigns:

Nearly 100 percent increase in open rates;

200 to 300 percent increase in click rates;

Nearly four times the revenue per message delivered;

Quicker second purchase at a very high average order value. >



< RRS recognizes that the foundation of a solid one-to-one customer relationship lies at the beginning of the customer interaction. The FTB program provides a platform to harness that opportunity by introducing and educating the consumer, building the brand and increasing loyalty.

By capitalizing on both recency of purchase and Road Runner Sports' brand and customer service philosophy, long-term customer relationships are being built to provide value for both the runner and for Road Runner Sports.

Arthur Sweetser is senior vice president of marketing and professional services at e-Dialog, Lexington, MA. Reach him at asweetser@e-dialog.com.

Classic DM Tactics Are Spam for Filters

By Dave Larson

More and more well-intended e-mail is ending up in the junk box as companies and individuals tighten the screws on their anti-spam systems. Currently, seven out of 10 e-mails are being flagged as spam.

According to Postini, a third-party provider of e-mail security services, the makeup of spam looks like this: 97 percent bulk mail; 1.4 percent "Get rich quick"; 1.2 percent sexually explicit content; and 0.4 percent special offers



Dave Larson

Here lies the problem: the nebulous definition and perception of bulk mail. Some people automatically equate the term bulk mail with spam.

The fact is, if you are using best practices and are sending bulk e-mail to customers or prospects that have asked for it, your bulk mail is not spam.

Yet today's spam-detecting options are doing so well at flagging any bulk mail as spam that legitimate e-mails are getting unfairly stopped.

In the interest of keeping it simple, there are two key areas to consider: the sending method and the content of the e-mail.

A crack IT group familiar with the

authentication and authorization communication that occurs between mail servers will help ensure that you are meeting all the best practices for sending e-mails. As marketers and content providers, we all should understand how the second area – the content – affects delivery.

KILLER SCORES

We recently tested more than 200 e-mails, both business to business and consumer, and ran them all through SpamAssassin, a leading anti-spam program, to see what e-mails were getting tripped up and why.

SpamAssassin conducts more than 750 tests on any given e-mail to determine if it is spam. Each item is given a score. A positive number is bad. A negative one is good. Only a handful of the items it looks for are of the good, negative variety meaning over 700 of them can give you a bad, positive number. (Sounds like a double oxymoron.)

The scores range from a very miniscule .0001 for "message has unparseable relay lines" to a killer 100 for "address in the user's blacklist."

The default setting within SpamAssassin scores a total score of anything of 5.0 or over as spam. Many companies customize SpamAssassin settings, usually making the criteria more stringent so that even lower scores result in the e-mail being flagged as spam.

Want to shoot your scores over the line and assure your mail winds up in the junk folder? Then try these seemingly harmless tactics. Some of these would be considered classic direct marketing tactics in some marketers' eyes. Yet SpamAssassin and other spam filters will disagree, assigning them higher "point values."

Subject line:

- Starts with "Hello"
- Contains "Your family"
- Contains "Your own"
- Starts with "Buy" or "Buying"
- Is all capitals
- Starts with dollar amount
- Contains "For only"
- Contains "FREE" in CAPS
- Starts with "Free"

Body of e-mail includes:

- Removal phrase right before a link
- Asks you to click below (in capital letters)
- Click to be removed
- Claims compliance with spam regulations
- Offers a full refund

- Contains "Dear (something)"
- Money-back guarantee
- Why pay more?
- Receive a special offer
- What are you waiting for
- Compete for your business
- Lowest price
- If you want to subscribe

HTML links

- Says "push here" or similar
- Says "opt out" or similar

The whole point is that an e-mail that's seemingly safe on the surface can be penalized for very obscure items. It's critical to have someone on staff or from an outside resource that stays current with spam filters forwards and backwards to protect your e-mail from being flagged as spam.

A must for any marketer is to run any e-mails they plan to send through a program like SpamAssassin and to send them to test e-mail accounts at all your top recipient domains (e.g., AOL, Yahoo, Hotmail, MSN, Gmail). Then you'll know ahead of time exactly what any potential problems are and be able to fix them accordingly.

Dave Larson is account planner at Ovation Marketing, La Crosse, WI. Reach him at davel@ovationmarketing.com.

Make E-Mail Testing A Line Item in Your Marketing Budget

By Arthur Einstein and Mark Klein

In 1921, a young copywriter named John Caples sat down and wrote "They Laughed When I Sat Down at the Piano" for the U.S. School of Music. The headline was

a huge success. And Caples knew precisely how successful it was because the advertisement he wrote contained a coupon – marketing's first scientific measurement tool.

Caples was an early champion of testing and his book, "Tested Advertising Methods," added an element of science to selling. The book is still in print and >



Arthur Einstein



< continues to draw raves from Amazon reviewers.

The power to measure campaign results has exploded in the past few years. And as the Internet continues to level the playing fields of marketing, testing e-mail campaigns is a bigger deal than ever.

"If you can't measure it, you can't manage it," management guru Peter Drucker said. We'd only add beware of spending time and money measuring parameters which won't be actionable.



Mark Klein

So what should e-mail marketers test? Headlines, subject lines, copy, mailing lists, offers, timing and any other variable they

believe they can use.

Before e-mail testing was available, it was often impractical to test so many variables because by the time tests were put in the field and responses analyzed, conditions in the market had changed.

Now, e-mail can be sent and results analyzed almost overnight. It's fast and

50 times cheaper than the United States Postal Service. And, e-mail testing can produce good information that can be used offline, in sales, marketing and advertising.

OFAT VERSUS FACTORIAL DESIGN

The classic A/B split, or OFAT (one factor at a time), still makes sense. But factorial design, in which two or more variables – price and subject line, for example – can be measured in the same test, produces more information and is ideally suited to e-mail testing.

Factorial design tests multiple factors simultaneously and beats OFAT in several ways. You learn more, faster. You save time and money because you won't need to send as much mail to test more than one factor. And factorial design provides richer information – not just the effect of each factor, but the interaction between the factors.

If there's a problem with factorial design it's that you need someone on hand who understands the math and can interpret the results, a talent which can be outsourced if your statistics are rusty.

But in the end, accountability for mar-

keting spend is here to stay and e-mail testing needs to become a regular line item in your marketing budget. The dividends in revenue and customer insight simply can't be ignored.

Arthur Einstein is vice president of marketing and Mark Klein is CEO of Loyalty Builders, Portsmouth, NH. Reach them at arthure@loyaltybuilders.com and markk@loyaltybuilders.com.

Five Factors to Optimize the Marketing Potential of Transactional E-Mails

By **Dave Lewis**

There's been a lot of hype around the potential of transactional e-mail to deliver marketing messages – and it's well >

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- 87 million **consumer e-mail** subscribers
- 8.8 million **business email** subscribers
- 8.4 million direct-response **buyers**
- 7.1 million **e-mail appends** annually
- 3.6 million **mobile phones** with email
- 1.5 million **donors** with email
- 4.3 million **hotlines** monthly
- 246 **managed lists**
- 4 marketing **databases**

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< founded. Nothing is more potent than delivering a cross- and upsell message that's tightly tied and perfectly timed to consumer behavior.

With spam filters wreaking havoc for e-mail marketers, the convergence of marketing and transactional e-mails isn't surprising. Unlike bulk marketing e-mail, transactional messages stand a better chance of reaching the inbox and being opened since they contain valuable consumer information that is desired and expected.

Yet, realizing this potential takes more than slapping a pretty face (HTML) on your plain text transactional e-mails. It also takes more than balancing your transactional and marketing content, satisfying CAN-SPAM requirements and applying other best practice tips.



Dave Lewis

The core challenge comes down to whether you have the right infrastructure to generate transactional e-mail with the right marketing message in the first place.

To that end, here are five factors you'll want to consider:

Integration. Your first priority should be to ensure that your e-mail infrastructure is tightly integrated with your backend business processes and data sources.

By doing so, you'll be able to effectively trigger e-mails, customize messages to customer preferences and behaviors and ensure a consistent customer experience across multiple touch points.

Without such integration, you simply won't be able to leverage the marketing opportunity that transactional e-mail affords you.

Relevancy. Having achieved the right level of integration, you'll then need to have a dynamic content engine to actually assemble and generate relevant messages.

This is especially critical for transactional e-mails, since customers have the expectation that you know them. Sending them a generic marketing message is not only a wasted opportunity. It could relegate your transactional e-mail to the same fate as your bulk marketing e-mail – the junk folder.

Immediacy. Transactional e-mails are business-critical communications that require expedited delivery. Any delay can erode profits through an increase in customer service calls.

Consequently, you need to ensure that your marketing messages can be automatically inserted into your transactional e-mails and sent promptly and securely to your customers.

Anything less and you run the risk of negating the advantages provided by marketing-orientated transactional e-mails and potentially diminishing the value of your brand.

Reporting. Sending out customer e-mails without any insight into their deliverability or open and click rates is akin to flying blind.

Accurate, detailed and real-time reporting is essential to properly manage your transactional and marketing activities. Without such information, you give

Delivery issues?



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up the opportunity to default to alternate channels in delivering your important transactional messages or to capitalize on the most successful marketing messages associated with them.

Flexibility. In order to be successful with your marketing efforts, you need the flexibility to test different creative approaches and quickly adjust your templates and content blocks accordingly. If you're locked into a rigid process or one that's costly to change, you'll be powerless to take advantage of new learnings.

Taking advantage of transactional e-mail is more than just adding offers and graphics. You have to do it right, and that's only possible with an e-mail infrastructure that can accommodate the factors discussed above.

If your current e-mail infrastructure comes up short, you'll need to select a new solution that can deliver on all five fronts while accommodating future growth.

With the right solution in place, you can quickly realize the marketing potential of transactional e-mails. It's really not that complicated, but you do have to think before you transact.

Dave Lewis is vice president of alliances and market development at StrongMail Systems Inc., Redwood Shores, CA. Reach him at dlewis@strongmail.com.

CASE STUDY

E-Mail Builds Global Presence for Avenue You Beauty Site

By Brandon Milford

Avenue You is a one-stop beauty shop with a 24/7 shopping experience located at www.aveyou.com. The online store was developed from a prototype store siblings Brian and Lisa Esposito launched in the upscale area of Deal, NJ.

The Espositos' father, Anthony, owned a chain of beauty supply stores known as Beauty Plus, which offered products at great prices. They never carried the more expensive beauty products and catered to every day purchases for everyday people.

As the store transitioned to a more upscale approach, resembling the look and feel of Sephora, it began to specialize in superior customer service and product availability. Avenue You's distribution division allows them to carry some of the best beauty lines usually available only at fine salons and spas.



Brandon Milford

Through the use of e-mail marketing and online advertising, Avenue You is able to reach a larger, more affluent audience, capitalizing on the need for high quality products on demand. >



< The money that would have been spent on television and print is instead being used for research and development of new lines and the promotion of these new lines in major search engines, comparison shopping and e-mail marketing. This has led to a large increase in newsletter subscriptions and registered shoppers.

BEAUTIFUL RESULTS

Avenue You uses e-mail marketing to send monthly specials, new products or coupons to registered shoppers. List segmentation, easy-to-use templates and the option to keep old messages to resend or reuse old templates allow Avenue You to send e-mail campaigns to more than 10,000 customers, twice a month, virtually effort-free. As a direct result of e-mail marketing campaigns, Avenue You has seen an increase in online sales of more than 25 percent since it started using e-mail marketing.

Plus, these efforts have developed Avenue You's international presence in Japan, Australia, Britain, South Korea and Canada. International shipments are now reaching about 5 percent of total sales.

By combining e-mail marketing efforts with online advertising partnerships, Avenue You is becoming a major player in the online beauty world. Next step for the firm: combining its e-mail marketing efforts with RSS feeds and blogs. All of this is designed to build strong brand loyalty to Avenue You.

Brandon Milford is vice president of marketing at IntelliContact, Durham, NC. Reach him at brandon@broadwick.com.

How Do Your E-Mail Campaigns Perform After the Click Through?

By Jordan Ayan

You're a savvy e-mail marketer who reviews your e-mail messages and campaigns by looking at open rates and click-through rates.

While these statistics are invaluable to understanding a certain level of your e-mail success, they don't give you the full

picture in trying to determine return on investment or message effectiveness. Did your readers complete the intended action after they clicked?

There is tremendous value in digging a little deeper to understand what happens after a reader clicks on one of your links.

Imagine the insight you could glean if you knew what readers did after they clicked. Did they make it to the checkout page? Did they purchase? How long did they spend on the destination site? Knowing the answers is essential to understanding the effectiveness of your message.

Integrating e-mail tracking with Web site tracking enables you to do just that.



Jordan Ayan

By looking past the click through, you can truly gauge the effectiveness of your e-mail campaigns by tracking visitor behavior from the inbox through to the shopping cart, and every point in between. Integrated e-mail and Web analytics can show you:

- Where did visitors go after they clicked on a link?
- Did they go to the area you had hoped?
- How much time did they spend at the destination?
- Did they purchase?
- If so, did they purchase what you sent them to the site to purchase?
- Do your e-mail visitors behave differently than your other site visitors?

These and other insights enable you to evaluate how effective your e-mail campaigns are in completing their goals, and allow you to measure ROI. They enable you to adjust future campaigns to be more effective. They can point to areas of your Web site that may need to be revised to be as effective as possible at reaching and influencing visitors coming from your e-mail campaigns.

Additionally, the knowledge gleaned from integrated e-mail analytics allows you to send targeted follow-up messages to recipients you know to be most receptive. People who spent a lot of time on your destination site, visited several pages or made it all the way to the checkout page are great prospects.

At SubscriberMail, we're finding our clients are increasingly interested in taking that extra step to integrate analytics into their e-mail marketing campaigns. It only makes sense for the greatest possible

campaign effectiveness and ROI.

Jordan Ayan is CEO of SubscriberMail, Lisle, IL. Reach him at jordan@subscribermail.com.

Combine Web Analytics With E-Mail

By Steve Webster

What many marketers don't realize is that Web site behavior information is exactly what you need to get accurate return on investment reporting, combat list fatigue and improve the relevance of your e-mail campaigns.

By working with your e-mail service provider, you can place Web analytics tracking codes into your HTML e-mail content. This will fool your Web analytics system into thinking your e-mail content is just another page on your site, and you'll get revenue reporting, click paths and all the other analytics reporting – but for your e-mail campaigns.

Your Web analytics system will reveal detailed per-campaign revenue data, typically down to the individual subscriber. You'll learn what links in your e-mail content actually make money, and exactly which customers are spending it.

You'll also see who hasn't completed a transaction – when an online customer browses your site and places an item in a shopping cart but then abandons the process.

Your Web analytics system will give you an opportunity to reach out to that customer, to encourage him or her to resume



Steve Webster

the shopping process. You can also find out what pages individuals visit from your e-mails, how often they visit and at what time. Depending on your analytics program, you can also determine demographic interests – how different groups of visitors interact with your site. You can follow and respond to trends, and monitor activity in specific timeframes. All this information will help you better plan your campaigns, and better address your customers' wants and needs.

To make your integration as simple as possible, be sure your e-mail service >

< provider offers automatic, seamless integration between your HTML e-mail and your Web analytics program.

This will enable you to focus your energy on strategy and creative, rather than technical headaches. Then you can take advantage of your Web analytics and e-mail integration to the fullest.

Steve Webster is chief strategy officer of iPost, Novato, CA. Reach him at srw@ipost.com.

CASE STUDY

Leveraging the Power of Data at Overstock.com

By Josh Lemaitre and Scott Burk

With data warehousing, customer relationship management and other technologies, marketers today are able to generate one-to-one personalized

messages that dramatically affect the bottom line.

It is a fact that customers today have less time to shop and therefore demand more from their e-mail subscriptions. If e-mail marketers are not generating relevant content, customers can remove themselves from a business' only free tracked channel with a single click.



Josh Lemaitre

There is something that can be said about batch 'n' blast techniques if you subscribe to the more-sends-equals-more-revenue theory of e-mail marketing. However, until marketers harness the power of the hidden gems buried deep within the data mine, they run the risk of stale advertising and customer fatigue.

MIND THE DATA

About a year ago, we realized that we had a problem. The e-mail marketing department was responsible for a

tremendous portion of total Web site sales. But at the time there was nothing innovative about the process. There had been no attempts to tie multiple campaigns together, use customer lifecycle knowledge, leverage behavioral patterns or even deploy segmentation models.

We were in a holding pattern, driven by hunches rather than empirical evidence, which put a glass ceiling over our progress.

Management responded by dedicating resources to innovating our marketing efforts. The team, comprised of business users, data miners and designers, began exploring all data sources that could be tied back to specific customer activity touch-points.

The wheels really started turning after a business analyst overheard a conversation: "How great would it be if we were able to tie pages clicked back to the customer?"

Without the team's knowledge or suggestion, the data architects were, in a roundabout way, already collecting this information for unknown purposes. >

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< COLLABORATION IN STOCK

So, the first lesson was to foster a working relationship between our marketers and the database team.

We immediately began leveraging data like never before, creating event-triggered dialogs, content-based recommendation engines and simple collaborative filtering algorithms.

We were able to generate personalized product recommendations, fire off reminders and effectively segment our customers based on a fusion of purchase histories and click logs.

Once we began testing how effective we could be when armed with data, everything that we hypothesized would be a good idea resulted in performance lifts, ranging from 5 percent to 300 percent, with an overall measured effect approaching 10 percent.

The control groups became a necessary evil in that they incurred an opportunity cost while being an essential piece to measuring return.

The initial investment of a data warehouse can seem insurmountable from an ROI perspective. However, with dedicated resources and measurable experimentation, the results in both direct marketing efforts and long-term customer retention will provide the farthest reaching net benefit to your business: a more efficient customer experience.

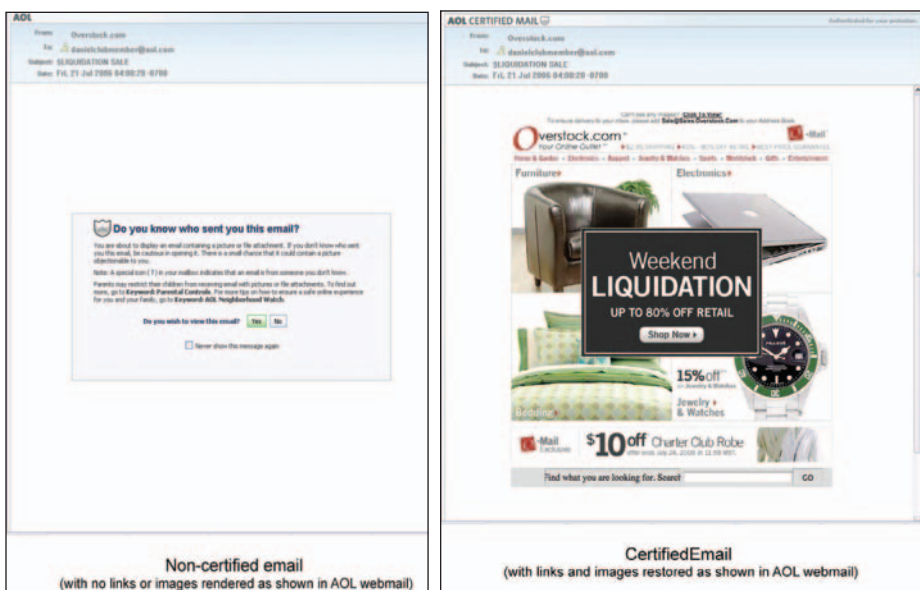
Josh Lemaitre is director of Web site and e-mail optimization and Scott Burk is chief statistician, both at online retailer Overstock.com, Salt Lake City, UT. Reach them at jlemaitre@overstock.com and burk.scott@gmail.com.

CASE STUDY

Overstock.com: How The "Big O" Beat The "Big X" Using Goodmail's CertifiedMail

By David Atlas

Overstock.com is an online closeout retailer offering brand-name merchandise for sale over the Internet at 40



CertifiedEmail recipients showed a 19 percent higher clickthrough rate and 22 percent more revenue per e-mail.

percent to 80 percent discounts. A multi-vendor Internet outlet store, it offers customers a convenient opportunity to shop for bargains while providing suppliers an alternative inventory liquidation distribution channel.

Named the second fastest growing retailer in the United States by the National Retail Federation's Stores magazine and the only pure-play Internet retailer to make the top 10, Overstock.com is known as a sophisticated direct marketer with a capable e-mail marketing program.

BEATING THE BIG RED X: RESTORING E-MAIL LINKS AND IMAGES

However, like most volume commercial e-mail marketers, Overstock.com is challenged by the practice of Internet service providers blocking links and images in e-mail messages (ISPs routinely disable anything in e-mail that could possibly be a security risk to consumers).

Robust, attractive e-mails carefully designed with pictures and graphics featuring merchandise for sale often appear blank or with the familiar big "red x" warning message. Aside from brand dilution, the blocking of links and images severely hampers e-mail marketing effectiveness.



David Atlas

CertifiedEmail is Goodmail's service for restoring trust to e-mail communications among volume e-mail senders and their consumer recipients.

Accredited senders with the best e-mail practices can choose to send their marketing and transactional messages via CertifiedEmail, which imprints a cryptographically-secure token on outgoing e-mail messages.

This lets participating ISPs and mailbox providers like AOL and Yahoo assure delivery of those messages to the server-level inbox, with links and images intact, and presented with a unique trust icon indicating message authenticity.

TESTING CERTIFIEDEMAIL

Overstock e-mailed 600,000 AOL customers who had purchased something within the last six months, and members of its Club O, who are frequent purchasers that belong to a paid-for program that provides exclusive e-mail promotional offers.

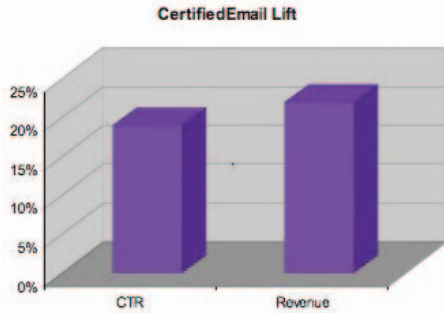
These customers were divided into two groups, a CertifiedEmail test population, and a non-CertifiedEmail control group. Over the course of a month, six e-mail campaigns and 3.4 million e-mail messages were sent to the persistent test and control groups.

RESULTS: UPLIFTED E-MAIL METRICS

The aggregate response rates for the CertifiedEmail recipients as compared to the non-CertifiedEmail recipients >

< showed the following increases:

Click through rate: 18.5 percent
Per customer revenue per e-mail: 18.4 percent



CertifiedEmail showed a statistically significant lift across all metrics. The only differences between the non-CertifiedEmail messages and the CertifiedEmail messages was that the CertifiedEmail messages were all delivered with links and images rendered intact and were presented with a unique trust icon indicating CertifiedEmail.

The automatic rendering of links and images and the trust icon caused the increase in metrics and positively affected Overstock.com's return on investment, making the test of Goodmail's service a success.

David Atlas is vice president of marketing at Goodmail Systems, Mountain View, CA. Reach him at david@goodmailsystems.com.

CASE STUDY

Best Practices for An Association

By **G. Simms Jenkins**

CoreNet Global, the world's premier association for corporate real estate and related professionals, is typical of many professional associations in the way it markets and communicates itself to its industry, members, prospects and other vested interests surrounding it. Its use of traditional and electronic marketing is constantly analyzed and optimized.

BrightWave Marketing, an e-mail marketing boutique services firm, has been a CoreNet partner for over three years and has collaborated on establishing an e-mail marketing program that



has driven registrations (i.e. revenue) for its Global Summits and membership benefits and information to key constituents.



G. Simms Jenkins

This program was launched and spearheaded by Richard Kadzis, CoreNet Global's director of special projects and media relations.

While declining delivery and response metrics have plagued the industry, BrightWave Marketing and CoreNet Global have focused on a strategy that has turned down the volume and more effectively targeted CoreNet's global customer base along their lines of interest, preference, geography and other delineations.

This demassification, when combined with the use of graphical and text sidebars that allow cross promotion of other programs, provides an opportunity to reduce the frequency and quantity — particularly those that are irrelevant — of e-mails a member receives.

As a result, metrics have maintained their perch well above industry benchmarks while over \$800,000 of annual revenue is generated from targeted e-mail campaigns. Member retention rate is in the 88 percent to 90 percent range — well above the association industry average of 83 percent.

These impressive numbers are the

results at least in part to well thought-out and tested e-mail messaging that is relevant and beneficial to its members.

CoreNet Global has also excelled at the local level where its chapter leadership and constituents have streamlined their processes and strategies in order to deliver consistent messaging and branding.

Metrics have, without fail, been almost 20 percent higher than industry averages and just as importantly, provided communications that the local membership can immediately benefit from and expect on a regular frequency without cannibalizing global efforts.

With a worldwide audience and staff that ranges in locale from Sao Paulo to Shanghai, best practices are critical in presenting itself (and its messaging) as forward thinking organization.

Spam law compliance is just as important and varies by country to country. CoreNet Global was compliant on the U.S. CAN-SPAM law well before it was signed into action in 2003. We worked hand in hand with CoreNet Global to ensure proper interpretation of a complex new e-mail-related law governing China and continue to monitor other geocentric e-mail laws.

G. Simms Jenkins is principal of BrightWave Marketing Inc., an Atlanta-based e-mail marketing and CRM firm. Reach him at sjenkins@brightwavemarketing.com.



Use Purchase Behavior to Create Relevant and Personalized E-Mail

By Mubina Benitez

Marketers today are being told that the days of the batch-and-blast e-mail are over. Instead, the goal is to create relevant, customized e-mails that speak directly to the recipient, creating a one-to-one relationship with each individual consumer on your e-mail file.

The benefits of sending relevant communications to consumers are many. Marketers who have employed the techniques that will be discussed below have seen conversion rates double, seeing increases of more than



Mubina Benitez

100 percent in average order size and increases of 70 percent to 150 percent in revenue per e-mail.

In addition to double- or even triple-digit increases in revenue per e-mail and conversion rates, other benefits can include better customer relations and lower opt-out rates. Most marketers will agree that they want to send more relevant campaigns, but the question is how.

The foundation for creating more relevant communications is data. Understanding the overall behavior of your customers across retailers and channels is the basis of an effective communications strategy.

Examples of purchase behavior data and how it can be used include:

RFM. When was the last time you heard from your customer? Are your consumers actively purchasing in the market? A consumer who buys from you multiple times a year will be motivated to purchase differently from someone who has not bought from you in the last 13 months.

By using RFM (recency, frequency,

monetary value) in segmentation strategy you can develop campaigns that acknowledge the loyalty of your most frequent shoppers. You also can develop separate campaigns designed to re-engage a consumer who is actively purchasing in the market but who has not bought from you.

Past product purchases. If you have a broad product offering, you may have customers who consistently only purchase from one or two of your product categories. Tailoring your messages based on the types of products that consumers have a demonstrated interest in is one of the most powerful ways to create relevance.

Putting the right set of products in front of a consumer in the body of the e-mail message can have a dramatic effect on conversion and revenue.

Behavioral. Multichannel consumers have a variety of options when making a purchase. They may see an item that they like in a catalog and then go online to purchase. They may see an item in an e-mail that they like but then go to a store to purchase.

When analyzing purchase data to create a segmentation strategy, looking at behavior in a single channel may only give you a piece of the overall picture for a specific consumer.

Marketers can achieve the segmentation discussed above by using both house-file and outside data.

For example, catalogers who are members of a cooperative database can get an overall picture of a consumer's behavior among other participating members. This insight is invaluable in creating a segmentation strategy.

Using all of the data that is available to you to segment buyers and send the most relevant offers increases both customer satisfaction in the communication they receive from you as well as your revenue.

Not every e-mail will appeal to every consumer every time. However, by looking at the purchase behavior of your consumers' patterns it will appear that can help guide your overall communication strategy and ensure that your messages are relevant to the recipient.

Mubina Benitez is product manager for e-mail services at NextAction Corp., Westminster, CO. Reach her at mubina.benitez@nextaction.net.



Don't Design — or Redesign — Your E-Mail Without Reading This

By **Stephan Spencer**

In your e-mail campaigns, the wrong tactics, the wrong words or the wrong HTML can doom your campaign.

According to studies, fully one-third of permission-based e-mails are not even delivered. If you're lucky enough to reach the recipient's inbox, you still have to worry about getting your e-mail opened and read.



Stephan Spencer

For most recipients it is a split-second decision whether or not to delete your e-mail — a decision based almost entirely on the From line and the Subject line. And if

that doesn't sound harrowing enough, there are plenty of other hazards in the design and layout of the e-mail.

WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

So many designers of e-mail campaigns make the fatal mistake of designing the e-mail to be viewed in its entirety. E-mail doesn't work like that. E-mail is scrolled through and in very small windows.

If you design the e-mail to look like a Web page and allocate valuable screen real estate at the top of your e-mail to mast-head graphics and branding messages, you relegate the key messages to reside "below the fold" of the preview pane.

If your recipient doesn't get your key message from what displays immediately in the preview pane, they probably won't invest the effort in reading your e-mail or taking your desired action.

Cut to the chase. The first paragraph should be very easy to scan and should be a good overview of the key messages that you are trying to impart. The From line and the Subject line is where your branding goes — the From line in particular — rather than in gratuitous graphics.

Decide what is the one point that you want to get across and make that point in your Subject line. A Subject line of "September edition of ABC Company's e-mail newsletter" is not compelling, as it offers no value proposition or clue as to the e-mail's contents.

Scrolling through five screens within the preview pane is too much to ask of your recipient. If you have a lot of copy, move most of it to one or more landing pages. If your e-mail is full of images, move those to landing pages as well. People are not nearly as tolerant of slow download times in their e-mail clients as they are in their Web browsers.

PICTURE PERFECT?

Making life even more difficult for e-mail marketers, some e-mail clients like Outlook 2003 and Web mail services like Gmail don't display images by default.

Thus, any important content locked up within images won't be readily accessible to many recipients, particularly if the image doesn't include an "alt" attribute (alternate text that displays when image loading is turned off). >



“ The best vendors are those that aren't vendors at all — but are partners. I want to thank you personally for the work you and your team do and for your approach to this partnership. ”

- Becki Dilworth, *Director of Interactive Operations for the Denver Newspaper Agency*, in an e-mail to her e-Dialog account manager

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DENVERPOST.com

Precision E-mail Marketing. A Partnership in Excellence.



Ranked by JupiterResearch as the best service-oriented e-mail marketing provider. To learn more visit www.e-Dialog.com or call 888.256.7687





< Likely, the image height and width attributes were not defined, because if they were, the image placeholder box would take up an unnecessarily large amount of screen real estate.

Then there are the campaigns that don't look "designed" at all.

These are the e-mails that could have been created by the office assistant using Microsoft Word. If the e-mail has too many conflicting styles – too many different font faces and colors and a lack of consistency in their use – then it will look like spam.

If you don't have the resources to design a properly formatted, professionally designed e-mail campaign, don't try to muddle through it. Rather, refrain from any formatting more extensive than bolded headings and bullet points.

Even able designers shouldn't try to get too sophisticated with CSS (cascading style sheets), because some e-mail clients won't be able to display them properly.

CSS is fine for setting font faces and sizes, but trying to lay out the page with CSS would be a mistake. Use tables instead. I know that is a very '90s thing to say, but for e-mail marketing that is what you need to do. Try to use as few tables as possible, and avoid the use of nested tables.

“Refrain from any formatting more extensive than bolded headings and bullet points.”

Every graphically rich e-mail needs to have a message at the very top stating something to the effect of “If you can't read this message, click here” which will take the recipient to a Web page containing a properly formatted version of the e-mail.

There is no point having such a message five lines down into the HTML code, because your recipient isn't going to scour the HTML code looking for the link.



TEXT CONTEXT

Including within your e-mail a plain text version (using “multi-part MIME”) isn't just good for recipients running e-mail clients incapable of displaying HTML. It also makes your e-mail more palatable to the spam filters. That's because many spammers don't bother making multi-part e-mails.

Within the HTML “part,” aim for a high ratio of text copy to HTML coding. Spammers often rely on images to hide text that will get picked up by the spam filters – phrases like “free access,” “best rates,” “big savings,” “call now,” “full refund,” “guaranteed,” “incredible” and “opportunity” – resulting in a low text to HTML ratio.

Crafting an e-mail that will get past the spam filters is not straightforward.

Thankfully, spam-scoring tools exist, such as the free tool at www.gravitymail.com/spamscore.php (excuse the plug, please). It will run your e-mail through SpamAssassin, one of the most popular spam filters among Internet service providers, and generate a report detailing the penalties that you racked up.

Never send a campaign out before scoring it first.

ADDRESS MATTERS

As previously stated above, your

From line should, in most cases, include your company name or brand name. Only include a personal name in the From line if the recipient is going to recognize that name.

If, for example, you are a hotel sending out a campaign to previous guests and your e-mail is “From” your general manager, nobody is going to know who that is and your e-mail will be deleted.

Oh, and by the way, don't forget to include your physical address at the bottom of the message for CAN-SPAM compliance.

E-mail is a very different medium from the Web, and it requires a different approach. If you don't see to its exacting demands and the seeming minutiae, your campaign will fall short.

You can't just hire a Web designer to design you an e-mail template and expect them to do a good job. Nor can you simply bang out an e-mail in WordPad and expect it to get past the spam filters.

Welcome to e-mail marketing's second epoch.

Stephan Spencer is president of search engine optimization agency Netconcepts and e-mail service provider GravityMail, both Madison, WI. Reach him at sspencer@netconcepts.com.

What We Need From Accreditation and Reputation Solutions

By Michael Della Penna

Last year, an article we contributed to this guide urged marketers to learn about – and implement – emerging e-mail authentication standards. In the time since then, marketers have shown their support for authentication in force, and the core audience of legitimate high volume senders are on board.

Internet service providers now have the critical mass of compliant legitimate senders they need in order to move to the next phase – accreditation and reputation. Early forms of these solutions have been in existence for several years, but they continue to evolve and expand their adoption by ISPs.

The marketing community's job over the coming months will be to communicate our needs and collaborate with ISPs to ensure that emerging accreditation and reputation solutions are built on a foun-

ation of fair principles and accurate data. To be viable, these solutions must:

Prove they are worth the investment. First and foremost, for any solution to be successful, it must guarantee benefits and demonstrate a positive contribution to return on investment. Providers must prove to marketers that their schema, along with other best practices, will result in an incremental lift over the current methods used to optimize the success of their campaigns.



Michael Della Penna

Be accessible to large and small senders alike. We must not erode the level playing field enabled by the Internet, and any fee-based program should be structured in a way that's affordable for a wide variety of e-mail senders.

Prioritize end-user preferences. The decision to receive or not to receive e-mail from a sender should reside with end-users, not arbitrary heuristics. Consumers should be given granular feedback options

aside from "Report Spam," including an "Unsubscribe" button, which will protect authenticated, whitelisted marketers from overblown complaint rates.

Hold marketers responsible, not IP addresses. Authentication facilitates domain- and even message-level reputation scoring, and it is imperative that ISPs move expeditiously to do so. Delivery decisions should affect the marketers and campaigns responsible, not entire IP addresses and those who may share them.

Be transparent. Marketers must have access to information that explains why their reputation is what it is, so that they can correct their mistakes.

Much progress has been made over the past year. Spam is down, and the focus has shifted to ensuring delivery of legitimate e-mail. My hope is that industry will continue to work together, and that next year's column can report on the progress made on the recommendations above.

Michael Della Penna is chief marketing officer of Epsilon Interactive, New York. Reach him at mdellapenna@epsilon.com.



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E-Mail Plays Well For Buffalo's Studio Arena Theatre

E-mail marketing is revolutionizing the marketing of theatre and cultural organizations. PatronMail (www.patronmail.com) is a key e-mail provider for more than 700 arts and cultural organizations. **Eugene Carr**, president of New York-based Patron Technology, interviews client **Bil Schroeder**, director of marketing at Buffalo, NY's Studio Arena Theatre.

How did you make the transition to e-mail marketing?

In 2004 we began analyzing our database, which included a demographic/psychographic append. Suddenly, our audience appeared wealthier and more tech-savvy than we had suspected.

This led to a progression/regression analysis of three seasons of buying habits, which showed us that we were great at attracting new single-ticket buyers, but were having difficulty getting them back into the theatre. So, our database is full of households who know our product, have plenty of disposable income, but need a more compelling invitation back to our theatre.

We needed a solution that was not only more economical than direct mail, but could be deployed more discretely – for special discount offers – faster and much more frequently.

How did you solve the value-add equation for e-mail?

We developed an e-club which offers discounted tickets and “insider information” to the patrons on our e-mail list. If a performance isn't selling well we create a special discount and promote it only to e-club members.

We also offer information and juicy tidbits about the productions – stories that the news media doesn't pick-up – exclusively to this audience. Essentially, our e-club acts as a ticket and information clearing house, and everyone wins. The effectiveness was first apparent when we were launching Ring of Fire, which up until two months before opening was a complete unknown as a show. No one knew what to expect.

We began a series of e-mails where we shared “insider information” and

sales jumped. We sent several e-mails, which generated an increase in sales of about \$1,500 to \$2,000 per day for a period of about three days after each e-mail. So we put our inventory management skills to work, picking out performances that were underperforming at the box office and offering specials, like a free wine tasting along with a ticket discount or free parking. The inventory moved.

Details about the show that we were not able to get the media interested in covering became exclusive information that our patrons could and did share.

E-mail was a significant factor, along with radio and print ads, in taking Ring of Fire from an unknown to a huge success.

E-mail gene@patrontechnology.com.



“Insider-information” e-mails filled seats.

Why E-Mail Works for the Arts

By Eugene Carr

E-mail marketing takes advantage of the very personal relationship individuals have with arts organizations. In 2006, we analyzed over 11,000 responses to our own nationwide survey of arts patrons. We found that 42 percent claimed that they read opt-in arts e-mail as carefully as they read mail from their friends.

And arts patrons say they actually prefer e-mail to other communication methods.

Beyond that, arts patrons are eager to receive e-mail from arts organizations, with 51 percent responding that they would subscribe to a newsletter of an organization whose events they had never attended, but were interested in.

There's something else going on which explains these patrons' willingness to receive arts e-mail. They know understand how expensive regular mail is, and that e-mail marketing can save money.

This is demonstrated by the fact that 78 percent claim that they “feel good” by getting e-mail from an arts organization, because they know they are helping the organization save money. It's almost as if they believe they are making a donation by receiving arts e-mail.

ARTS E-MAIL HAS MULTIPLE LIVES

Another reason why arts e-mail is more valuable for the arts than other kinds of marketing is because it has a longer shelf

life. Here are some ways that patrons extend the life of an e-mail message:

- Forward to a friend: More than 36 percent of Patron Technology arts patrons report that they have recently forwarded an arts e-mail to their friends. This makes sense, since the arts are typically a communal experience.
- Read now, read later: More than 60 percent claim that after they first read an e-mail, they save it and refer to it again later.
- E-mail transforms into direct mail: More than 37 percent claim they print out an e-mail. It goes into a briefcase or on the refrigerator until they're ready to take action.

And, once they join a list, arts patrons don't view this e-mail negatively at all. Indeed, they welcome it. About 91 percent expect that when they sign up for an arts mailing list, they will hear from the organization at least once a month. And 19 percent say that they expect something at least weekly.

So, for nonprofits and arts organizations, e-mail is becoming the direct marketing method of choice.

This is based on a survey of arts patrons conducted in April 2006. The article is an edited excerpt from Mr. Carr's book, Wired for Culture: How E-Mail is Revolutionizing Arts Marketing.

Control Your E-Mail For Better Delivery And Results

By Greg Martz

The rumors of e-mail's demise as a profitable, secure and sustainable marketing channel have thankfully died down. To be sure, it still faces its share of major threats. Yet, over the past year, the industry and marketers alike have pulled together to combat these dangers, allowing e-mail to again flourish.

But now what? How do marketers take control and take e-mail to the next level?

The following is a list of top actions marketers can – and should – take now to improve delivery and results from their e-mail programs. Some of these are tactical



Greg Martz

items you can do today while others are larger concepts that will help you long-term.

Authenticate your e-mail. This is a no brainer (and hopefully many of you are skipping to the next point). It is relatively easy to do, is required by accreditation and reputation services, not to mention major marketing trade organizations, and is simply an e-mail best practice.

It's worthwhile to publish all available authentication protocols – for example, don't bother waiting until a full-blown standard comes along for DKIM. Authenticate now.

Understand the complete lifecycle of your e-mail. As marketers, we may be in total control of the message, the design and the audience. But what about the actual mechanics of e-mail? That well-formed e-mail creative on your hard drive doesn't send itself, you know.

Get to know (make that, really understand) how an e-mail makes it from your initial idea to your recipient's inbox. There are myriad factors that go into determining success (i.e., inbox) or failure (i.e., bulk folder), so

be prepared to invest time, effort, and dollars into ensuring higher delivery rates and better returns.

Also, e-mail is wildly dynamic – unique rules for each Internet service provider, new versions of e-mail software – so be proactive and vigilant in staying ahead of the curve.

Make deliverability a primary e-mail metric. Chances are if you don't have some form of delivery monitoring after you hit the Send button, you have bad delivery. Make e-mail delivery a key metric right along with clicks and conversions.

Clean list = less problems, better results. Don't be afraid to cut dead weight. The hidden costs of maintaining an outdated, "dirty" list are real and having a huge house file does not outweigh them.

Don't be fooled by the seemingly negligible cost of sending more and more e-mail by continuing to send to invalid addresses. It will catch up to you, specifically when it comes to deliverability, as mailbox providers will penalize you for trying to send to invalid or bounced e-mail addresses. >

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< **Educate – and get buy-in from – the rest of the organization.** Everyone uses e-mail, but few understand how a piece of creative makes its way from the marketing manager's desk ultimately to the thousands or millions of recipient's inboxes.

E-mail can be a large cost center, so it pays to educate the entire company on its benefits, its complexities, and how it fits into the overall strategy. Become an e-mail evangelist at your company.

Marketers should lead or play a major role in e-mail operations and delivery. World-class copy writing, elegant design and irresistible product offers mean nothing unless your prospect receives the e-mail. Marketers should insert themselves in all facets of the e-mail delivery workflow by forming a partnership with your IT or Ops team.

At the very least, become part of the solution. Even better, invest in a leading e-mail service provider or (if you are so suited to) bring it in-house, under your control.

Be relevant and meet your customer's needs. By now, it's almost a cliché – be relevant – but when it comes to e-mail, most marketers have yet to even scratch the surface of personalized, targeted and relevant e-mail.

And the reality is that everything else you do is, well, irrelevant (bad pun intended) unless you deliver on your initial opt-in promise and stay relevant to the reader. This is of course true for any marketing channel, but rather acutely for e-mail.

E-mail remains the killer app. Blacklists, "This is Spam" buttons, Phishing, Oh my! It's a big bad e-mail world out there. ISPs and mailbox providers are on the defensive and there seems to be a "guilty until proven innocent" label on even the most reputable company. It can cause the best marketing team to run for cover.

The threats of spam, phishing and whatever else is on the horizon are very real. And certainly, best practices such as those outlined above are to be followed. Yet none of this means marketers should abandon e-mail as a primary marketing channel and business driver. Indeed, it should be, for many marketers, front and center. The key is in fully understanding e-mail, from the inside out.

Greg Martz is Philadelphia-based director of new member experience at The Motley Fool. Reach him at gregma@fool.com.

E-Mail Marketing Is Working. Now, About Those Landing Pages...

By Loren McDonald and David Terry

The conversion process. Everyone's talking about it, and it takes real skill to convert leads successfully.

Research shows that e-mail conversion rates for online retailers, for example, typically stand between 1 percent and 5 percent, while some are seeing conversion rates well beyond 10 percent.

So how do you maximize your marketing budget to generate more conversions and increased return on investment for the organization?

One answer lies in the crucial interplay between e-mail marketing and landing pages. Too many marketers forget the simple premise that if someone clicks on an e-mail, he or she is looking for more information.

As a result of clicking through from the e-mail, that visitor has to be satisfied. In other words, the landing page must directly convey the information or "reward" for making the click.

HOW DO YOU REWARD VISITORS?

In order to reward the visitor at the landing page, it's vital to have clear objectives in mind during the page design phase. Because landing pages have five standard "calls to action," it's necessary to decide on the primary objective for the page, and optimize the page accordingly.

These calls to action can include:

- To click through
- To buy
- To give permission for the sending organization to follow up
- To tell a friend
- To learn something



Loren McDonald



David Terry

In the case of e-mail marketing, the landing page should clearly have as its primary objective something directly connected to whatever was offered in the original e-mail. Essentially, the page has to close the deal.

It typically contains such Web content offers as the product, pricing, features, major selling points, and order forms and applications. To the degree the page offers the visitor a customized or personalized experience, conversion rates are more likely to rise.

Pre-fill any forms with name, shipping address, or other information that is already known. Linking integrated CRM personalization techniques to a dynamically generated Web page can be especially powerful.

ENSURING YOUR LANDING PAGE WORKS

How? Test, test, test. With landing pages, testing is actually relatively simple, so don't over-think it. If you create two pages, and one consistently performs better than the other, use that one.

Landing pages are specific, measurable offers. You can determine if they are working by adding Web metrics to measure the entire process, from opens to click throughs, to landing page conversion to the corporate site.

Analysis of this data provides powerful behavioral feedback for a campaign, and may point to areas where the interaction of e-mail, analytics and Web publishing are complementary and demonstrably boost ROI.

Loren McDonald is chief marketing officer of J.L. Halsey, Menlo Park, CA. Reach him at loren@emaillabs.com. David Terry is vice president of sales and marketing at J.L. Halsey's Hot Banana, Barrie, Ontario. Reach him at david@hotbanana.com.

Multichannel Integration: Tracking The Incremental

By Alan Rimm-Kaufman

How much of your e-mail marketing generates incremental benefit? How do you know? How incremental are your >

< search marketing programs? Your affiliates? Your catalog mailings?

Understanding what drives response in today's dynamic fast-moving multichannel world is challenging. It is too easy to make a poor choice on the basic mechanics of tracking e-mail. It's even easier to make the wrong choice on your method for allocating orders across channels.

Multichannel direct marketing is in its infancy. As an industry we're still developing the necessary tools and the expertise. Retailers, service providers and technology firms need to come together to crack the multichannel puzzle.

In the days before cheap e-mail, direct marketers sent prospects and buyers catalogs or direct mail infrequently. Because the interval between contacts was large – measured in weeks or months – marketers could treat each mailing as independent. It was easy to compare the cost of a mailing to its



Alan Rimm-Kaufman

resulting sales, letting marketers test lists and offers accurately. We could say, "This order was driven by that marketing effort."

In the Age of E-Mail, the interval between contacts is measured in days, not weeks. And channels overlap: prospects and buyers encounter a barrage of e-mails, catalogs and search ads during their consideration cycle. While most marketers have understand the costs of their various marketing programs, determining which program gets credit for which sale is no longer easy.

How should e-mail marketers respond?

TAKE THE BIG PICTURE VIEW.

Don't evaluate your e-mail program in isolation. Taking e-mail results out of context can lead to bad decisions. For example, one national retailer adopted a strict "last-marketing-contact-gets-credit-for-the-order" order allocation rule.

With weekly e-mail blasts and quarterly catalog mailings, this rule grossly undercounted catalog orders. The retailer shrank circulation and harmed its sales.

Another retailer used its tracking to monitor its new multivariable testing platform.

On each visit, the what-did-we-show-them tracking code overwrote the where-did-they-come-from tracking code, artificially depressing the results of e-mail. Always evaluate your e-mail in the context of your full marketing efforts.

ENCOURAGE YOUR SERVICE AND TECHNOLOGY PROVIDERS TOWARDS INTEGRATION.

Whether your marketing database is outsourced or in-house, smart marketing requires a clear understanding of contacts, costs and sales associated with every buyer and prospect.

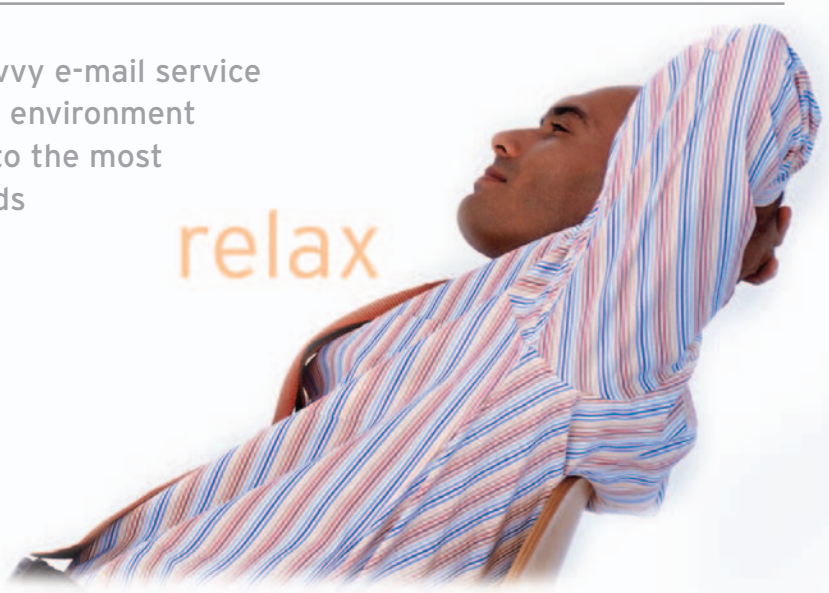
Such data demands solid integration between your e-mail provider, e-mail broker, database provider, search agency, list broker and merge-purge house.

This isn't easy today. Few marketers understand the interaction of e-mail and catalog in driving sales. Few marketers manage search bids based on the actual lifetime value of the resulting buyers. Few marketers understand the non-incrementalism of their affiliate programs. Few >

e-mail relationships complicated? costly? confusing? compliant?

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< marketers accurately track list rental conversions that occur online.

Such integration will become the norm over the next few years. Gain a competitive edge by partnering with vendors and technology providers already heading down that path.

Alan Rimm-Kaufman is president of the Rimm-Kaufman Group, Charlottesville, VA. Reach him at alan@rimmkaufman.com.

Reputation, Not Content, Affects Whether Consumers Receive Your E-Mails

By George Bilbrey

When it comes to e-mail deliverability, most marketers get hung up on finessing content in the hopes of beating spam filters. Newsflash: worrying over exclamation points and FREE is not going to help you reach customers via e-mail.

When it comes to e-mail deliverability, delivery hinges on having a good reputation. Most marketers don't have a clue where to start when it comes to determining delivery issues, much less in figuring out what Internet service providers think of them.

Consider this: 97 percent of IP addresses have reputation Sender Scores so bad that they will likely get blocked by e-mail receivers – and fewer than 1 percent are good enough to get delivered (Return Path Sender Score Reputation Monitor, 2006).

Knowing where your e-mail program fits in that spectrum is critical to your programs success. The higher your score, the higher the likelihood you'll make it to the inbox.

Reputation in the eyes of receivers is based on several factors, including complaint rates, volume of e-mail sent, unsubscribe functionality, unknown user rates and e-mail infrastructure.

The good news is that you control most – if not all – the factors that ISPs consider



George Bilbrey

when forming opinions of you.

Here is a quick checklist of the actions you can take today to improve your e-mail reputation and subsequent delivery rates:

Clean your list. Remove unknown users from your file. Set up a bounce handling process to remove them from your file. Remove non-responders after a set period of time. Run e-mail list hygiene and ECOA to update incorrect or expired addresses. A little list maintenance goes a long way to minimizing the spam appearance with ISPs – an increasing delivery of your entire campaign.

Be relevant. If your customers want your e-mail, they are much less likely to hit the “This is spam” button to get rid of you. Content relevancy is the only way that content does affect delivery rates in that it keeps your customers happy and responding. Look through your “Reply to” e-mail, customer service inquiries and ISP feedback loop data to find out what customers think of you and what factors could be hurting your program.

Get authenticated. Make sure that your e-mail program is using the e-mail authentication protocol that makes sense for you, whether it is SPF, Domain Keys or Sender ID. Read our authentication primer, for full instructions: http://www.returnpath.biz/resources/archives/2006/03/implementing_em.php

Honor unsubscribes. Make sure that you honor every unsubscribe request immediately. If you mail to them or harvest them for other purposes, your reputation is mud with the e-mail receiver community.

The first step is to know what your e-mail reputation is so that you can improve it. Return Path can tell you your Sender Score or you can gather other reputation data from companies like Habeas.

Any data you can get should be used to improve your inbox reach. The time spent finding your reputation will be much more valuable than changing minor words in your latest e-mail to trump spam filters.

George Bilbrey is general manager of delivery assurance at Return Path, New York. Reach him at george.bilbrey@returnpath.net.

Delivery and Relevancy Advice From a List Firm

By Deirdre A. Blohm

MeritDirect in July hosted its 7th Annual Business Mailer's Co-op and Interactive Marketing Conference. When asked to moderate a panel, I decided that I wanted to stay away from the “Introduction to E-Mail Marketing” subject and focus on “Topics and Trends in E-Mail Marketing Today.”

With that in mind, I wanted to select a panel that could speak to those topics. No deployment companies, no consultants, just the actual marketing folks that are watching the trends and making them work.

Our panel consisted of Cathy St. Martin, marketing manager at Avotus Corp., Burlington, MA; Timothy Skennion, vice president of sales at Email Data Source Inc., New York; Judi Virgulak, director of esolutions at Reed Exhibitions, Norwalk, CT; and Ashley Weisser, target strategist at MRM Worldwide, San Francisco.



Deirdre A. Blohm

It was a breath of fresh air not having to cover the lengthy details of CAN-Spam compliance, the difference between HTML and text, and answer questions like “What is a URL”? Finally, a seasoned group of e-mail professionals to discuss relevant new topics.

Our topics were deliverability, list sources, creative that works and e-mail analytics.

Judi Virgulak with Reed Exhibition in Norwalk, CT, is tasked with the overall responsibility for 60-plus Web sites at Reed and provides “e” strategic insight and education as it relates to e-mail effectiveness and Web site usability.

Judi manages the communications with the Reed customer files and realizes the importance of deliverability. These are her customers: she can reach a targeted group, get immediate response and it's inexpensive – as long as her message gets delivered and continues to get delivered.

With e-mail volume projected to increase from 1.5 trillion in 2003 to 2.7 trillion in 2007, it is becoming more difficult >

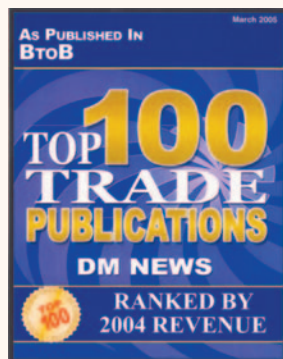
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We expect this comprehensive Guide to be the last word on state-of-the-art list selection, data management and customer relationship marketing!

In addition to DM News' regular print circulation of 50,300 recipients, the Guide will be distributed from our booths at all industry trade shows, ranging from DMA events to Ad-Tech and Search Engine Strategies conferences throughout 2007. The entire supplement will also be posted in PDF form on our newly revamped web site, www.DMNews.com, where it will be consulted as an authoritative resource throughout the year.

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< to gain direct access to your customers (source: EmailLabs).

That becomes a greater challenge if your e-mail is considered spam. All list owners should be sure that they or their deployment company is white listed and subscribe to an authentication system and/or reputation vendor.

These accreditation services are important when an Internet service provider is considering the fate of your message: block, filter or deliver.

FACTORS FOR DELIVERABILITY

What else can a mailer do to encourage deliverability?

Judi's tips included:

- Never use images for important content like headlines, links and any calls to action. If images are blocked, so is your message.
- Add a text-based link to a Web version of your design at the top of your e-mail.
- Ensure your most compelling content is at the top and preferably to the left.
- Test your design in a preview pane, full screen and with images turned on and off before you send it.
- Ask your customers to add your From address to their address book.
- Use alt text for all images.

Finding the right list source was also a topic for discussion. All panelists agreed that a third-party e-mail list must be a well-branded and recognized list that communicates regularly with its customer file.

How to accomplish that? List owners should make certain that every outgoing communication includes their name in the From line: newsletters, thank you e-mails or third-party offers. This practice creates consistency across messaging.

As a mailer, you should request that list owners use their name in the From line and settle only for "List Owner on behalf of Mailer" if your name is required.

Another factor that contributes to a quality list source is relevance. It is critical that list owners only send relevant third-party messaging to their subscribers: honor what the end user signed up for. Consistent, relevant messages are recognized and more likely to be read.

With deliverability and list source covered, the next order of business was using creative that works.

Cathy St. Martin manages the customer communications and acquisition at Avotus Corp. in Burlington, MA. It is a mid-sized

business-to-business company with a limited marketing budget and uses third-party e-mail as its primary acquisition tool.

MIND THE LINE

Cathy emphasized to our audience that the open rate is most heavily influenced by the subject line and offered up some tips to influence opens:

- Know the persona of the recipient, and let the creative speak to that title or industry
- Be honest about the content
- Showcase the perceived value upfront — white paper, sample product offer
- Subject line words that work for most audiences: Thank you, You are invited

What doesn't work: webinars and webcasts

We went on to cover reporting and tracking and the importance of recognizing seasonality and trends on internal and external lists. While some mailers use very complex tracking codes, others simply (and successfully) use 800 numbers. The vehicle becomes as important as the exercise.

Remarkably, many of our original "seasoned" discussion points filtered down into sub-topics that would easily be considered E-Mail 101: From line, subject line, relevance, reporting ...

It is apparent that the building blocks of E-Mail 101, those sub-topics, remain an important element in e-mail marketing today. Perhaps, they carry even more weight now with historical results from tried-and-true marketers.

Deirdre A. Blohm is vice president of interactive services at MeritDirect LLC, a lists firm in White Plains, NY. Reach her at dblohm@meritdirect.com.

Future of Healthcare DM Lies in E-Mail

By Terry Nugent

E-mail marketing is on the rise in the healthcare vertical market, both in the business-to-business and the consumer segments.

As the marketplace and the industry focus on return on investment, and online information seeking becomes ubiquitous

among the health professionals and their patients, then measurability and cost-effectiveness of e-mail marketing emerge triumphant.

It is apparent that the future of healthcare direct marketing lies in e-mail and other online marketing methods.

In fact, the future is now, in the sense that medical marketing, in general, and pharmaceutical marketing, in particular, are devoting substantial and growing shares of their marketing spend to online tactics, including e-mail marketing.

Pharmaceutical BTB marketing primarily involves companies persuading prescribers — principally physicians — to prescribe their products. This is done in many ways. Direct pitches promoting a product and directing physicians to a Web site for details are often employed.

But techniques unique to the prescription drug industry are also used, including:

- E-detailing — Pharmaceutical companies rely heavily on personal sales. Since there is a glut of sales representatives — 90,000 so-called detailers calling on a core high-prescribing audience of perhaps 100,000 physicians — face-to-face access has become challenging.

Physicians are in the business of selling their time, so they are reluctant to make time for sales pitches. Therefore, pharmaceutical companies employ e-mail to generate virtual sales calls.

Referred to as e-detailing, this technique has proven very successful. As a result of its success, e-detailing has become almost as competitive as the real thing.

- CME — Pharmaceutical marketers also use continuing medical education (CME) to inform physicians about how their products can be used to treat various diseases and conditions.

In some cases, CME is the only way to disseminate information about indications that are "off label," i.e., indications that are not yet formally approved by the Food and Drug Administration, the federal agency that regulates the ethical drug industry.

Because of the success of these techniques, competition to recruit physicians to participate has become intense. >



Terry Nugent

< **START WITH THE LIST**

Thus it is crucial to use best practices, starting with the best data, namely, the American Medical Association (AMA) Physicians List, which allows precise targeting of physicians whom the pharmaceutical companies want to reach.

“Physicians are in the business of selling their time, so they are reluctant to make time for sales pitches.”

While the AMA has not made physician e-mail addresses available, some of its database licensees (list managers) have developed broadcast services using non-AMA e-mail addresses. It's very important to use a service that obtains e-mail addresses from physicians themselves. Quality is more important by far than quantity, as responses are the key metric, not the number of messages sent.

The usual messaging best practices are essential for success.

Messages should be short and quickly scannable in the preview pane. Content should be legible within all popular e-mail programs and take into account graphics disabling by using primarily text.

Also, copy should be tested against spam filters, a particular challenge for pharmaceutical products due to the proliferation of consumer spam from illegitimate marketers of counterfeit prescription drugs.

It has been said that to achieve optimal response the ideal quantity for an e-mail campaign is one, in the sense that no matter how many messages are sent, each must be written in as personalized a fashion as if it were addressed to just one particular individual. So it is in medical marketing.

Fortunately, quality broadcast sources have the requisite data to tailor appeals by specialty, age, gender, geographic area and even prescribing profile.

Another unique aspect of pharmaceutical marketing is the offering of honoraria for participation in certain marketing activities, such as market research. Honoraria should be competitive and

vary based on specialty and other physician characteristics.

So, for successful online marketing in the healthcare BTB vertical, use industry best practices, including the selection of a vendor with extensive experience in the field and quality data as opposed to quantity of data.

Terry Nugent is vice president of marketing at Medical Marketing Service Inc., a health-care list manager and e-mail broadcaster in Wood Dale, IL. Reach him at t-nugent@mmslists.com.

Key Rules for E-Mail Delivery

By Barry Abel

You've defined the target audience, constructed the perfect e-mail and pushed send.

Miller time, right?

Unfortunately, much like vehicles on a >

Already Under Contract With E-Mail Marketing?



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< congested highway, e-mail messages often get detoured or blocked en route to their intended destinations.

There are a number of issues that can cause e-mail messages to be delayed, junked or blocked. The bottom line is that failing to address these issues dramatically reduces the effectiveness of your campaigns and essentially cripples the expected return on investment.



Barry Abel

Further, the bigger and unforeseen issue is the potentially damaging effects that failing to address proper sending practices can have on your company's reputation.

So you ask, "What can I do to make sure my customers get the mail I send? Equally important, "How can I insure that my company gets the rewards that it deserves and at the same time be seen as a good net citizen to the Internet service providers of the world?"

AUTHENTICATION, ACCREDITATION, REPUTATION

To shed some light on some of the roadblocks of the e-mail super highway, let's take a look at a few best practices that can make a world of difference.

Authenticate, authenticate, authenticate. The ISP community is moving down a track where unauthenticated e-mail could suffer the consequences of an adverse policy decision.

Simply stated, if the receiver can't be sure you are who you say you are, your e-mail more than likely will be subjected to additional filtering. At some point in the not-so-distant future, failing to authenticate your mail could be reason enough for rejection.

Accreditation and reputation are terms that have drawn immense focus by the e-mail industry over the past year and with good reason.

The list of ISPs who make use of reputation data is growing daily. Having the ability to mark up your mail with a seal of approval from one of the mainstream reputation vendors can provide dramatic results in ISP deliverability.

In essence, a mail marked with this certification is deemed as coming from a quality sender and generally by passes most ISP content filters.

Everything starts and stops with your MTA, or message transfer agent. We can

think of the MTA as the engine that moves mail through the Internet.

The No. 1 cause of most deliverability issues starts with antiquated or poorly configured MTAs that cannot manage the e-mail volumes or ISP policies. In looking at message systems, look for performance, policy management, bounce categorization, reporting and adoption of emerging standards.

Consider these aforementioned best practices to insure your next campaign is traveling in the express lane.

ELEMENTS TO WORKING WITH ISPS

Each one of us remembers reluctantly playing with the kid who never learned how to play well with others. So we learn early on that playing well with others is a clear path to acceptance.

E-mail deliverability is no different.

Your business depends on getting your e-mail delivered to your customers' inboxes, so learning early in the game what it takes to be a good sender is critical. So much time and money is spent creating compelling campaigns that will deliver the desired result.

However, even the most expensive, sophisticated and compelling campaign will never deliver the desired results if your customers never see it because the e-mail was never delivered.

Because your business depends on ISPs responding to your requests to have e-mail delivered to your customers' inboxes, it's imperative that you learn their rules and that you adhere to them.

How do you play well with ISPs? By understanding and making use of the technology available.

Below are four basic rules that will help make the difference between fair play and foul play on your e-mail campaign.

Establish a good reputation. Work with a reputation service that will continually monitor your sending activity and determine a reputation score based on predetermined criteria. This score is used by ISPs to filter your mail for delivery or determines if you are not going to get delivered.

Get "Certified." Use an accreditation service, a third-party white list program that assures the receiver that mail from you is "certified," which means it is "safe for delivery." This is done through sender policies and is a key contributor to your reputation.

Get recognized. Use authentication

standards such as DK/DKIM or Sender ID, which signs outgoing messages to assure ISPs of the identity of the sender. Recognized senders get delivered faster. Without authentication you may not get delivered at all. The final destination of your e-mail campaigns could be the junk folder.

Keep data current. Put a feedback loop in place. ISPs use automated systems that communicate with "approved senders," providing them with feedback on mail in their system. Most of this communication is restricted to complaints and opt-out requests giving the sender the ability to update its system. Keeping your system current helps build and maintain strong ISP relationships.

Play by the rules and your e-mails campaigns will get delivered.

Barry Abel is vice president of operations at Message Systems Inc. (formerly Omnitel), Columbia, MD. Reach him at barry.abel@omnitel.com.

E-Mail Response: Digital Marketing's Last Mile

By David Daniels

There's a hidden problem in marketing's last mile requiring attention.

Most organizations' direct response investment is in contact centers – agents field communications that are service or support related. Marketing's communications are out of the loop. Plus inbound response solutions are engineered for contact centers, without utility for digital marketing. The irony is digital marketing increases customer satisfaction.

Marketing launches outbound e-mail campaigns. Audiences are reached. Before commercial transactions are initiated, the consumer initiates an inbound response. Increasingly this takes the form of an inbound e-mail.

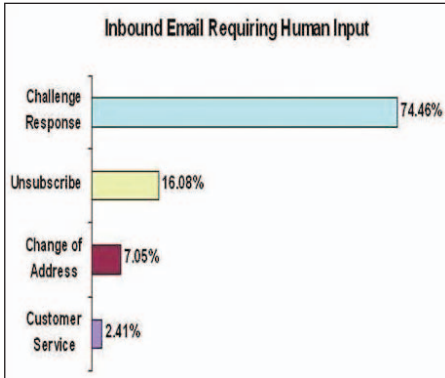


David Daniels





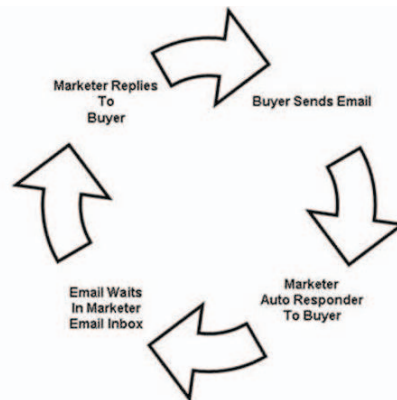
< What marketers receive is not just the messages from clients ready to buy. They also get spam, Out of Office, Unsubscribe Requests and Challenge Response that requires human input.



Some companies use auto-responders. When an auto-reply message is received, that individual is required to take additional steps. Most will simply give up. They don't take the extra steps, generating more dissatisfaction. It's no wonder that most fail in responding to customer e-mail.

Let's go behind the scenes when an

inbound e-mail is initiated:



Step 1. E-mail sent: The message, addressed to a corporate e-mail address such as info@ is received into an inbox.

Step 2. Auto-response: An auto-responder sends an acknowledgement back giving the opportunity to find the answer to the query by going to a Web site.

Step 3. E-mail waits: E-mail waits patiently for a human to read/respond.

Step 4. Reply: An agent assigned to this task on a part-time basis processes the inbox and responds.

Step 4 is the "last mile" where things slow down. In some cases the response isn't initiated for weeks. This may be due a lack of resources or poor technology or processes. The answer is probably a bit of each.

Marketers must do better. The stage is set for e-mail response. The marketer's mission is to filter the flow of its marketing messages to ensure that they reach the right buyer at the right time. The buyer's mission is to ensure that he or she only receives the ones perceived to be the highest value.

The win-win is having inbound response handled properly so not a single inbound e-mail is lost. The buyer gets closure on the first try, the marketer gets to secure new clients and retain existing ones.

Attaining the standard of 100 percent e-mail response within 12 hours is possible and should in fact become the new standard towards which all organizations must adhere.

David Daniels is vice president and general manager at Email Response Systems Ltd., Oakville, Ontario. Reach him at ddaniels@inboundsys.com.

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Why Subscription Management Centers Make Sense

By Jim Herbold

There's an unmistakable change in the air: customers and subscribers are taking greater control over their e-mail subscriptions.

Enhanced Internet service provider tools and software applications make it possible for individuals to control almost all of what goes into their inboxes. In an era of rigorous spam control, trust remains a key issue.

One easy, often overlooked, e-mail marketing best practice involves development of a subscription management center, also known as an administration center.

Typically located at the bottom of the page in a footer, the administration center provides a standardized set of parameters that enable subscribers to quickly update information, view privacy policies and delivery preferences, opt-out of future mailings and retrieve the company's contact information.



Jim Herbold

WHY USE AN ADMINISTRATION CENTER?

EmailLabs' 2006 Audit of Best Practices found that of some 203 commercial e-mail messages, just 18 percent of marketers had deployed an e-mail administration center. So why include it?

CAN-SPAM Act: The law requires it, to a degree. CAN-SPAM mandates that commercial e-mails contain a working unsubscribe function (reply-to or link) and a postal mailing address. That's why companies that previously did not have a centralized administration center are now consolidating this and other information in a single location.

Retention: E-mail address churn is a huge challenge for e-mail marketers. To make it easy for subscribers to change their e-mail address, experienced marketers include a link to a "profile update" page on their Web site. The update form also enables subscribers to change preferences and add or update demographic information.

Permission best practices: There is a

growing acceptance of the need for permission best practices, such as providing clear privacy and e-mail policies. The administration center enables marketers to present this information (or links to it) in an easy-to-find location within the e-mail.

Trust: While CAN-SPAM sets a baseline for e-mail marketing practices, sophisticated e-mail marketers understand that building trust, not just legal compliance, is critical. An administration center provides quick information linking a subscriber to the company sending the e-mail, increasing the chance of addressing issues in a timely manner.

Subscriber acceptance: As companies deploy administration centers, consumers become increasingly familiar with the concept. The appearance of these centers in the commercial e-mails they receive will be a key differentiator for subscribers when determining what is and isn't spam.

Inclusion of a subscription management center should be an important part of all e-mail campaigns. By including these key parameters in a location at the bottom of the e-mail, thereby creating a de facto industry standard, savvy marketers will prevent a decline in subscribers.

They can also increase trust in the brand and ultimately in revenue, and lend credibility to the e-mail marketing industry as a viable channel to reach valued customers.

Jim Herbold is general manager at EmailLabs, Menlo Park, CA. Reach him at jherbold@emallabs.com.

E-Mail Can Take Cues From Search Analytics

By Shane Atchison

Direct marketers looking to bring greater efficacy to their e-mail campaigns should take a close look at recent developments in paid search, the darling of online advertising.

There, companies are increasingly turning to sophisticated analytics to improve their return on investment. In other words, they're trying to find out what happens after the click.

Reaching your target audience is difficult enough as you've read: spam filters

and an overwhelming amount of untargeted and off-base messages conspire to generate a feeling of apprehension. But the battle doesn't end when an e-mail is opened. That first click could be the last.

So what are smart companies doing to solve the problem? Market leader Google has invested in software that allows marketers to do online analysis of visitor behavior.

Google understands that its advertisers want to know how their search buys increase revenue and provide ROI. Using analytics, they can get in-depth information about their users' behavior and adjust their campaigns to maximize results.



Shane Atchison

As direct marketers, we should take these best practices from Web analytics and apply them to e-mail marketing. To do this, we need to realize that traditional measures of success, such as click-through rates, are not enough. Instead, we should apply sophisticated metrics to gain useful information.

Below are three examples of how we can gain greater insight into our customers' behavior.

Segmentation: Segment the traffic of people coming from an e-mail campaign — not just on the initial visit, but for every visit. This process will help determine if letter receivers are higher value customers or if mailing lists need adjustment.

Intelligent comparison: Compare the results of traffic coming from an e-mail campaign to a site's general audience. Do the e-mail visitors visit more pages or generate more revenue per order?

Behavior tracking and metrics: Measure not only the clicks an e-mail generates, but also the behavior of users once they reach the site. Examples of desired behavior and corresponding metrics include:

Behavior: Purchase
Metrics: Average order value and visit to purchase-conversion rates

Behavior: Registration
Metrics: Visits to registration and registered users to purchase-conversion rates

Behavior: Web self-service
Metrics: Customer satisfaction surveys and offline call-center cost-deflection rates >

< Sophisticated metrics like these can deliver a deep understanding of customer desire and motivation. By tracking them closely, you will be able to better serve customers and drive your company's agenda — both before and after the click.

Shane Atchison is CEO of Zaaz, a Seattle interactive agency owned by Wunderman. Reach him at shane@zaaz.com.



Keith Wardell

demand has not kept up. This has led to product parity in many industries, as competitors have been quick to copy the latest product features and pricing. Industries experiencing product parity can only look to the quality of their customer relationships to develop a sustainable advantage.

If you are relying on your customer relationships to provide a competitive advantage, do your e-mail programs reflect this approach? When planning your campaigns is your first consideration which products and what offer? Or do you start with an understanding of who you are trying to reach and with what message, based upon their stage of relationship and previous purchasing history?

Your e-mail planning process should use two tools

that can help companies execute customer-centric campaigns. These are the Campaign Hierarchy and the Personalization Rules Generator.

CAMPAIGN HIERARCHY

To be truly relevant to your customers will require a variety of campaign types. These campaigns should address the stage of relationship that exists between the company and the consumer. Then, each campaign should employ a personalization rule. A Campaign Hierarchy might look like the following:



Relationship and Relevance Are Key To Effective E-Mail Programs

By Keith Wardell

Are you customer-centric or product centric? Improvements in productivity over the past 10 years have increased supply, while

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< **CAMPAIGN TYPES**

Campaigns can be divided into two types, event and scheduled, where:

- Event-triggered campaigns are often sent based on an action at a certain stage in their lifecycle
- Scheduled campaigns go to your active buyers and prospects.

Being truly relevant to customers requires a variety of campaign types that should address the stage of relationship that exists between the company and the consumer.

These might include the following campaign types:

Prospect Conversion	Welcome
Sales Add-On	Replenishment
Education	Upsell
Cross Sell	Liquidation
Reward	New Product Introduction
Catalog Support	Store Support
Seasonal	Re-Activation

Because multiple campaigns are being delivered either simultaneously or in succession, it is important to understand which campaign an individual should get and when. What is required when developing a hierarchy is to take into consideration which campaigns are most important for someone to receive and when they should receive them.

A company can develop a program that dictates the rules for delivering your various campaigns to individuals. Once again, this takes into consideration both who the campaign is being sent to and also the campaign type.

For instance, a new customer may be in line to receive a welcome e-mail, a sales add-on and a scheduled liquidation campaign while a multichannel shopper might receive cross-channel coupons, all promotional mailings and new product introductions. The hierarchy determines which of the eligible campaigns each individual customer should receive.

Consumers are demanding that their e-mail, Web and print communications become more relevant. Using blast e-mails or even simple segmentation will not get the job done. Companies must think more strategically about their personalization.

Designing campaigns to address the various stages of the relationship (using the campaign hierarchy) will also help to improve e-mail performance. Personalization provides a process for developing data-driven rules for mer-

chandising each e-mail based on prior purchase behavior.

While most personalization addresses the products and offers to be received by the consumer, other types of content should also be considered.

For example, educational content in e-mails might dramatically improve conversion rates for high priced or complex offerings. Such content can also serve to improve the relationship with your customers by offering value not tied to a purchase. Recipes based upon prior purchase patterns or including the weather forecast for the destination for which you purchased a ticket are other examples.

A critical element of an effective communication strategy is the understanding of the areas of potential value perceived by the consumer.

PERSONALIZATION RULES

Once the types of campaigns that are to be sent are

defined, the next step is to select the rules for personalizing their content. During this process, it is necessary to create rules that let each customer receive information that is relevant based on his or her prior purchase behavior. These rules have five common elements:

- An objective for the campaign
- A method for targeting customers (i.e. brand, sub-category, product affinity, individual products purchased).
- Criteria for classifying customers (i.e. latest product purchased, average order value).
- A means for selecting the appropriate products to be used with the selected rule (bestsellers, new products).
- The selection of a promotional offer if one is to be used.

A complex segmentation would use one or more products from every category in which the customer has purchased up to the number of products in the template.

The categories used for each consumer might be prioritized based upon the number of units purchased. Finally, the products used for each category might be selected from among seasonal items.

A brand affinity campaign would populate an e-mail with products from brands with a high affinity to those purchased by the customer. The brand used for each customer might be selected based upon highest dollars spent. The products could be recent new products from each brand.

The result of each personalization rule is a table that defines the content to be received by each customer. These tables play a crucial role in the ability to use these rules across multiple marketing channels.

COMBINING RELATIONSHIP AND RELEVANCE

Once you have defined the campaigns you wish to send based on the stage of relationship with the customer and the personalization rules to be used, you are ready to execute. To implement this approach, companies must be able to deliver several campaigns containing individually relevant content.

Each customer wants to be able to see in their communications that the company is aware of their past interactions and can recognize their stage of relationship. New customers should be treated differently – not better or worse – than long time-valued customers.

Applying the campaign hierarchy and the personalization rules enables companies to achieve this level of communication with their customers. This improved relationship will inevitably lead to more satisfied customers and higher lifetime value.

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Improve Retention	Category Affinity	Highest Total Units	Seasonal	Premium
Increase Customer Value	Product Affinity	Highest Price	Liquidation	\$ Off
Prospect Conversion	Educational	Date of Most Recent	Category	BOGO
15 Options	18 Options	10 Options	18 Options	18 Options

EXAMPLES

A product affinity rule would populate an e-mail with products having a high affinity to each customer's most recent purchase. Such a campaign could use 200 to 500 products in thousands of combinations.

Keith Wardell is president/CEO of Exemplar Inc., an analysis-based marketing services firm in Fairfax, VA. Reach him at kwardell@exmplar.com.

The Secret of Good Viral Piracy

By Mike Adams

We recently discovered an e-mail marketing method we call “viral piracy” that inadvertently created an explosion of ebook sales on a Web site called Truth Publishing (www.truthpublishing.com).

On that site consumers can find a number of cutting-edge natural healing books I've authored that show people how they can get healthy and reverse chronic disease using only 100 percent natural methods (no drugs, doctors or surgeries).

From that site we conducted a research survey and I promised participants I'd give them a copy of the ebook that was based on that research when it was published.

Several months later, I e-mailed all those people (763 of them) and gave them a “secret” URL where they could download the ebook at no charge. I also gave them permission to share that secret download URL with a maximum of three people who might benefit from the book.

You can probably guess what happened. Within 24 hours, 763 people each told three people, and all those people told even more people, and so on. Two days later, the “secret” book had been downloaded over 10,000 times, and our sales were skyrocketing on other books available on the same site.

The book I posted was being pirated like crazy, so to speak. But because Truth Publishing offered a whole collection of other related books, many of the 10,000 readers wanted more, and they were willing to pay for some of the other titles that they couldn't download for free.

This is what I call “viral piracy,” and personally, I don't think viral piracy is a bad thing.

PIRACY IS A STEAL

Some authors might go nuts thinking that 10,000 people “stole” their book. But personally, I think the campaign was an accidental, yet phenomenal success.

Reaching 10,000 new people would



Mike Adams

Viral vs. Interruption Marketing

By Mike Adams

Many people have a distorted view of what viral marketing really is. Some people believe that viral marketing is interruption marketing attached to a viral gimmick.

One example of this is to create outrageous video clips and then tack on a sponsor's logo at the end of the clip. When people see the videos, they find them funny or outrageous, and send them to their friends.

This has been described as viral marketing, but it's really a poor implementation of viral marketing concepts. It is actually interruption marketing, because the logo at the end of the video is just another billboard ad or another television-like ad inserted at the end of the interesting video.

This is not viral marketing. It is

interruption marketing that simply has a curious word of mouth popularity factor.

True viral marketing is where your product, service or information is – in and of itself – interesting enough for people to share with others or that the very use of your product or technology results in viral marketing taking place.

Hotmail is a classic example of a successful viral marketing system. When people use the product and send e-mail to others, a small advertisement for Hotmail is attached to the bottom of the e-mail, telling people they can get a free e-mail account at Hotmail.com.

The person sending the e-mail with Hotmail is demonstrating the use of the product while simultaneously making you aware that you could be using the same product at no charge. That's viral marketing. ■

have cost us tens of thousands of dollars through search engine advertising. Yet we were able to achieve that level virtually overnight by simply giving away a digital item that cost not much more than a few gigabytes of bandwidth to fulfill.

Think about your own products or services. Is there something you can give away that people will want to share with their friends?

If it's interesting enough, and you structure the offer correctly, you may find that viral piracy is actually a brilliant marketing strategy.

Just to repeat, I stumbled across this by accident. The free download offer was never intended to be a marketing gimmick. It just happened to benefit from large-scale word-of-mouth advertising.

And, by the way, I don't call these 10,000 people pirates. I call them readers, and I value their interest in the books I write, whether or not they pay for them.

Mike Adams is Cody, WY-based president/CEO of Arial Software LLC, a developer of e-mail marketing automation software in Tucson, AZ. He is also author of “Permission Wave,” a book on advanced permission-based e-mail marketing. Reach him at mike.a@arielsoftware.com.

Convergence of E-Mail and Direct Mail Marketing

By Sari Tamilio

When interactive marketing was in its infancy, many experienced, knowledgeable and intimidated direct marketers stood back and let elite teams of techies and dot-com cowboys direct their forays into the rapidly evolving world of transactional Web sites, e-mail campaign management, and search engine optimization.

These experts, by default, became responsible for marketing strategy along with technology and operations.

Most organizations realized soon enough that the strategic aspects of marketing had been misplaced in the hands of the technologists.

As interactive media matured, marketing organizations began to shift interactive marketing ownership back to true marketers whose skills were much more appropriate for directing creative development, solving Web site usability issues, implementing data capture techniques, and measuring, interpreting, and acting on email response behavior.

Control of interactive marketing >



< gradually returned to the marketing sphere, albeit to specialists who have a high level understanding of technology as well as deep expertise in direct marketing.

COMPLEMENTING CHANNELS, NOT COMPETING

Today, interactive marketing has taken its rightful place as a member of the direct marketing family, where it is viewed as the darling bouncing baby of channels, achieving double digit growth, quarter over quarter, year over year with seemingly little effort. Its more established siblings – catalog and retail – have to work much harder for less.

However, despite its remarkable development, interactive marketing is often not reaching its full potential. Far too frequently interactive and direct mail channels compete against each other, resulting in an almost unseen dysfunction that stunts both short term revenue and long-term customer value.

The answer? A truly holistic approach to multichannel marketing that capitalizes on the powerful convergence of e-mail and direct mail. By coordinating these promotional channels and working together towards a common goal, the marketing organization can result in greater revenue and return on investment for the entire organization.

In order to create a unified approach, marketers must recognize that while each channel has its strengths and that differences do exist, a core set of direct marketing principals govern both.

The key metrics for direct mail and e-mail are the same: delivery rates, response rates, revenue, lifetime value, cost-per-promotion, incremental lift and ROI. The importance of testing offers, creative and timing stands. The need to close the loop and collect meaningful data, analyze customer behavior and create marketing insight in order to adjust future campaigns is essential for moving forward.

ACKNOWLEDGE DIFFERENCES FOR STRENGTHS

The differences between the channels are probably best expressed in terms of the timing and the granularity of the data available for analysis.

E-mail campaigns are direct mail cam-

paigns on steroids. With e-mail campaigns, the timing from concept to deployment is often days, not months. Response can be seen almost immediately and the time period for measuring campaign results is similarly truncated, enabling e-mail marketers to change direction midstream and redeploy for better results.

In addition, sophisticated e-mail deployment systems provide marketers with a real-time dashboard view of their customers' behavior as they receive promotions, click through, browse a Web site, purchase, pass along or delete an e-mail communication.

While direct mail managers can only imagine how many of their catalogs or packages end up on the trash heap unread, e-mail managers have precise measurements of this behavior. The copious amounts of data produced as a result can be daunting but savvy marketers have learned to glean the important metrics and use them to their advantage.

E PLURIBUS UNUM

Once marketers understand that there are more similarities between the channels than differences, they are poised to reap the benefits of the power of their synergy.

The first step to implementing a unified approach is to effectively consolidate the direct marketing team, including all channel-focused groups, under a single leader, with a common set of marketing objectives and P&L reporting structure.



This reorganization is absolutely critical to a brand's ability to speak to its customers in one voice and eliminate the wasteful and redundant expenditure that occurs when channels contend for the same marketing dollar.

This structure helps avoid the mistake of creating channel-specific offers that confuse and frustrate the consumer into inaction or drive them into the arms of

more flexible competitors.

Consumers have demonstrated again and again their desire for choice in how to purchase, how to pay and how to be communicated with. If granted this freedom, consumers will always purchase more.

The exception to this freedom of choice rule is when you are encouraging targeted groups of single-channel buyers to try a new channel in order to turn them into higher-value multichannel buyers.

In addition, this structure supports a marketer's ability to create a global contact strategy that is both effective and efficient.

Too many marketing dollars are squandered on over-promoting the most valued customers to the point of annoyance while under communicating to groups with lower current value but high potential for the future.

“E-mail campaigns are direct mail campaigns on steroids.”

A coordinated, synchronized contact strategy involving both e-mail and direct mail gets better results by reiterating and reinforcing the marketing message.

Many mail production houses now offer a service that precisely tracks the arrival of a direct mail campaign in home, enabling marketers to send a corresponding e-mail communication before, after or

on the day of arrival.

Given the busy lives of today's consumers, these double-hit messages have been proven to drive incremental response, especially for catalogers.

ALL TOOLS IN KIT?

Now that the marketing team has been consolidated, they must be armed with the best tools to be successful. >

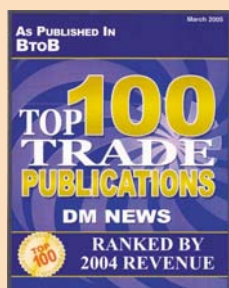
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Past editions of DM News' OUTLOOK, featuring thoughtful articles by experts and suppliers in every sector of direct, database and Internet marketing, were described by readers as "indispensable intelligence briefings" and "the best annual reports and forecasts of the year." Long shelf-life, avid readership and distribution at various industry trade shows and conferences are just a few of the benefits to advertising in DM News' OUTLOOK.

Editor-in-Chief Mickey Alam Khan has commissioned articles from the best minds in the business to forewarn and forearm our readers on the opportunities and pitfalls that lie ahead in 2007.

As the only dedicated annual report on direct, database and interactive marketing, DM News' OUTLOOK is a vital tool for marketers. For supplier companies, it represents a marvelous opportunity to reach customers and prospects in an outstanding editorial product that will be read and respected by an audience extending far beyond our primary circulation. A full PDF of OUTLOOK will be posted on our web site.

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< To create a true understanding of the impact of multichannel communications (e-mail, direct mail, space advertising, television) on an array of transactional channels (Web, retail, call center), the right tools are needed.

It is essential to create a comprehensive marketing database and employ a marketing automation system that manages campaigns and matches back results accurately to the promotional event that drove the response.



The e-mail campaign deployment solution should be linked to this consolidated database in order to carry all the essential information needed to make the right contact strategy decisions.

The best of the campaign management tools allow marketers to create virtual campaigns that measure results across multiple promotional events, channels and time frames.

These systems use multiple matchback methodologies to identify the source of an order, including tried-and-true source code tracking, as well as matching by name and address elements, and other proprietary techniques.

As if blinders have been removed, these tools enable marketers to discern, for example, whether an e-mail communication influenced a customer to purchase in the store or through an 800 number, not just on the company's Web site.

These tools empower marketers to better measure the value of their channels and implement and expand programs that are beneficial to the entire organization, not just their channel of focus.

Marketers should always be aware, however, that no matchback system is perfect and 100 percent accuracy will never be achieved.

Be prepared to implement business rules to allocate unmatched orders and understand the impact these unmatched

orders have on your key P&L metrics. Revisit them on a regular basis as the marketplace is ever changing and new business rules may be called for.

The e-mail marketing channel no longer intimidates direct marketers, but there is still much to learn. They realize that, like children with individual personalities, quirks and talents, each channel has its strengths and weaknesses.

By combining the high impact and staying power of direct mail with the immediacy and low cost of e-mail, marketers can optimize marketing programs for the greater success of the entire organization.

Sari Tamilio is vice president of interactive services at MBS, a division of World Marketing, a Central Islip, NY, marketing services provider. Reach her at tamilio.sari@mbinsight.com.

Seven Lessons in Seven Years in E-Mail Marketing

By Sarah Barber

Call it a seven-year itch, but I think it's high time for a look-back at my time in e-mail marketing and reflect on what I have learned. What follows are some pearls I pass along to clients when appropriate.

PAY ATTENTION TO THE SUBJECT LINE

This medium has been around for about nine years and marketers continually make this the last minute, throw-something-together part of the campaign and it ends up being flat.



Sarah Barber

Advice: State a benefit to the receiver in the subject line.

ALWAYS TEST SOMETHING – ANYTHING

Audience? Test different targets/segments or different list sources. Offer? White paper versus free consultation, free shipping versus percent off. Creative? Subject lines.

Advice: Create a test matrix that maintains a constant while testing variables.

HAVE SUPPORT SYSTEMS AND LONG-TERM PLANS IN PLACE BEFORE SENDING THE E-MAIL

Can your site handle the traffic that day? Is the registration page functioning? What is the process the leads will encounter to maximize conversion rates?

Advice: Think like a boy scout and be prepared.

MAKE TIME AND LEAVE TIME

Many marketers who use e-mail marketing attempt to create a mind-blowing campaign out of last minute planning. I estimate that 50 percent of all campaigns I've worked on have endured 11th hour changes that has caused delays (copy, expired offer, new target added, etc.)

Advice: At minimum, leave six weeks to be sure you create a solid e-mail campaign that complements your complete marketing strategy and allows time for unexpected delays.

USE AN EXPERIENCED LIST BROKER

A broker is worth its weight and will supply you a thorough selection of lists, its experience with the lists, ensure you are CAN-SPAM compliant, run your creative through anti-spam filters and provide accurate reporting on opens and clicks (in some cases, conversions where after the click tracking is possible).

Advice: Ask fellow marketers for their recommendation.

HAVE ONE CLEAR CALL TO ACTION

Many marketers try to fit in many objectives to an e-mail.

Advice: Focus on one call to action per message and no more than five links.

USE E-MAIL FOR GOOD

This is a terrific tactic that can be cost effective if done correctly. Be careful about over mailing as it not only hurts your brand but it also hurts the medium.

Those are the biggies from my experience in e-mail marketing over the last seven years. We'll see if it takes another seven to see me again in these pages.

Sarah Barber is vice president of acquisition solutions at infoUSA Inc.'s Yesmail, Portland, OR. Reach her at sarahb@yesmail.com.

Pro and Con: Outside Lists for E-Mail Acquisition

Beware Rented Lists

By **Tricia Robinson**

You wouldn't cross the street without looking both ways, so why throw your company into oncoming traffic with rented e-mail lists? Rented lists never will be as effective as your house list, and they can lead to deliverability issues and brand damage.

The best list is one you create yourself. It takes time, but it pays off big in the long run. Here are a few tips:

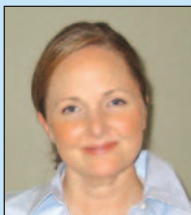
Make them want to join. People like things that are easy, free and beneficial to them. Entice potential subscribers by offering a free report or stating clearly how they would benefit by joining this subscription. Ensure the sign-up process is smooth and easy. Test it often and keep it simple.

Make the opt-in visible. The first step is to ensure an opt-in to your company's online newsletter or other online communication is in a highly visible place on your Web site, such as your home page.

If you are introducing an online newsletter or updating an old one, create a pop-up that invites visitors on your site to subscribe. Consider adding an encouragement to opt-in on every page of your site. Remember, the more obvious the permission request, the more valuable the name and address will be.

Make content informational. Inboxes are inundated with e-mails. Ensure your subscribers look forward to receiving your messages.

Tricia Robinson is senior vice president of marketing at Premiere Global Services, Atlanta. E-mail tricia.robinson@premiereglobal.com.



Tricia Robinson

Providing informational or industry-relevant content like tips and tricks will encourage subscribers to remain interested and might also lead a subscriber to share the message with others. And this leads to the next step.

Promote viral forwards. Promoting a reader's ability to forward the original message to a colleague can spur acquisition and drive response rates. Display the forward-to-a-friend option in a prominent area. Once the message is forwarded, give the new recipient the ability to subscribe.

Use lists from different divisions. The best lists always come from your customers. Just make sure to ask permission. In-house lists are also a good bet because your recipients

already are interested in your product and know your company.

Partner with other businesses. Partnering with an affiliate lets e-mail users opt-in to your e-mail communications while subscribing to their other favorite industry sites. This includes industry publications to which you could submit an article. Remember to include a link in your article for potential subscribers.

If you haven't gotten the message yet: Do not use e-mail name harvesters. There may be an initial payoff, but the long-term damage is expensive. Send e-mail to people who have given you permission or those with whom your company has a pre-existing business relationship. ■

Prospect Wisely

By **Jay Schwedelson**

E-mail is a tremendous prospecting channel if navigated properly. A marketer must focus on list selection, continuation usage, cost and selectable elements.

When choosing lists to rent, focus on how a list was built. Did these individuals subscribe to a publication or online newsletter, purchase a product, or were they compiled from an array of sources? Is the inherent quality of the list source in line with the offer that you are promoting?

For example, if you sell new office equipment and want to reach small business professionals, are you using a publication file similar to Inc.

or Entrepreneur magazines or are you using a sweepstakes-generated file? Obviously, a subscriber is more likely to be a buyer than is an individual who has entered a sweepstakes.

The other critical element regarding list selection pertains to permission. It is essential that the recipients of your message are aware of how and why they are hearing from you. Never use an e-mail list that does not fully disclose the list source in an easily viewable area of the message.

A simple technique that can drastically improve your prospect e-mail response rates is to analyze continuation usage of a list. If you are considering a certain e-mail

list, ask the manager of that file for other marketers that have used it and whether they continued on the file after the initial test.

You can take this one step further and see whether any of the continuation e-mail marketers are competitive. This lets you leverage the marketing dollars of your competitors and aids in your list selection.

Cost is another factor that makes e-mail an attractive prospecting medium. CPMs have dropped drastically in the past 12 months.

Negotiations on the rate card are common, especially if you are a brand marketer with roll-out potential.

Be wary of any file that allows cost-per-acquisition price structures in the e-mail environment. These files tend to be overused and have a high complaint rate.

Another way to drive return on investment with e-mail prospecting is to use the selectable elements of a file. Most e-mail files have matured to the point that you can make selections similar to direct mail efforts. These selections allow for more granular marketing.

Remember, almost all prospect e-mail rental files are sent out with an additional 5 percent to 7 percent to help ensure deliverability. This does not solve all the issues related to filtering, but it does allow for a greater sense of comfort that you are getting what you paid for. ■



Jay Schwedelson

Jay Schwedelson is corporate vice president at Worldata, Boca Raton, FL. Reach him at jay@worldata.com.



Top Tips for the Holiday Season

By David Baker

As we approach the holiday season, how many of you are trying to figure out how on earth to handle this year's workload and hit the growth figures the executive team has handed down?

Rather than give you tactical instructions for improving your e-mail programs, which you'll get from many respected e-mail marketers in this guide, I wanted to give you a few strategies you might not traditionally adopt during the holiday season, and some results you can expect if you do.

These are my top tips.

Benchmark correctly. So many companies see trends but rarely have the time to look in-depth at last year's numbers, aside from opens, click throughs and sales. Is that all that really matters? Not necessarily.

You should compare and categorize by type of promotion – free shipping, percent off or sale messaging – as well specific dates. This will allow you to really anticipate response and set good goals for each upcoming campaign. Marketing is about results and predictability, and this is the only way to get ahead of the curve.

Know your statistics. Do you really know which statistics tell you whether your creative is on target? There are a few statistics that can give you really valuable information. One is "Click to Open" – the number of people that clicked through from an opened e-mail. In essence, they viewed it in HTML and felt it compelling enough to click on.

Call it timing, relevance or creative, this metric is truly the only way you can test your creative. How can you test if they never see the full creative? Two more to consider: number of clicks per user, and click-through rates by Internet service provider.

High responder versus low responder. Not high value versus low value. Many companies don't have the bandwidth, but a simple split by more frequent

viewers and clickers is an easy way to get aggressive with your offers, tone and type of e-mail.

I typically segment by those that have clicked on a message in the last 30 days versus those that have not, and treat them differently. This obviously depends on your frequency, but you might try mixing it up.

ISPs are different. Try segmenting Hotmail from Yahoo and AOL and insert a different treatment that is more optimized to the preview panes of MSN/Hotmail and you'll be amazed the results. I find it much harder to get a measured impression in AOL, but the click-to-open rate is dramatically higher than Hotmail and Yahoo.

Change your timing. Try mixing up send times by e-mail ISP. AOL in the morning, Hotmail at night.

You'll hear a lot about statistics and relevance – they are important and if you don't have time for the little things, the day will only get longer and harder in crunch time.



David Baker

David Baker is vice president of e-mail and analytical solutions at Agency.com, San Francisco. Reach him at dbaker@agency.com.

What Next? Try Frustration

By Cliff Seltzer

The kids are back at school, football season has kicked off and industry conferences seem to be taking place on a weekly basis. So it's about time for a bold prediction for next year as it relates to the world of e-mail marketing. What should we watch out for in 2007? **Sender frustration.**

The 2006 year seemed to be the year e-mailers really started paying attention to industry leaders who had been preaching about authentication requirements, the importance reputation and the possibility of paying for guaranteed inbox delivery.

Kudos to the MAAWG (Messaging

Anti-Abuse Working Group), ESPC (Email Sender and Provider Coalition), EEC (Email Experience Council) and the many industry media outlets for increasing such awareness.

Unfortunately, abiding by the many industry best practices with the assistance of one or more specialized service providers to assure e-mail delivery could begin to truly frustrate direct marketers who believed e-mail was supposed to be a quick, inexpensive, reliable and simple direct channel.

We are all aware that the complexities and higher costs mailers must now put up with are the by-product of those abusing this powerful technology. This is generally accepted and, up until now, was outweighed by the overarching benefits one receives from e-mail as delivery tool.

Mailers though may begin (or continue) to voice their concerns that not enough is being done to fight the phishers and scammers. That even though the costs to send e-mail have increased and the speed by which they are delivered has decreased, due to required throttling and authentication, the bad guys are still succeeding.

Unless those companies that are viewed as benefiting from the increased costs of e-mail show material signs of winning the battle against the phishers and scammers, unnecessary comparisons to the much more expensive and reliable offline postal mailing practices could start to bubble up.

Given the power of e-mail as a delivery tool, mailers may put up with a more expensive e-mail solution. They may also happily accept outsourcing more of the mailing responsibility to an e-mail service provider that can manage and control all of the changing dynamics and delivery challenges.

But unless standards for all senders and receivers begin to evolve and material progress is made fighting those abusing the e-mail infrastructure, a growing sense of frustration from the mailing community may begin to set in.

Whether such sender frustration becomes a problem in 2007 or not, one thing is for sure: 2007 will be a very important year towards the continued evolution of the e-mail marketing industry.

Cliff Seltzer is CEO of Puresend, a New York e-mail software and services firm. Reach him at cseltzer@puresend.com.



Cliff Seltzer



Recap: The Dos and Don'ts of E-Mail Marketing

By Larry Bailin

Seventy-eight percent of online shoppers have made a purchase as the result of clicking on an e-mail link, so it's no wonder that 54 percent of small businesses surveyed rated e-mail as the top online promotion driving new and existing customers to their Web sites.

Some of you are either skeptical or hesitant about using e-mail as a marketing vehicle. Many of you may think e-mail marketing is intrusive, annoying, daunting and confusing.

I have three words for you: Get over it. Internet users daily send an estimated 60 billion e-mails. With this number continually growing, if you don't start to embrace this great marketing tool, your business may not live to regret it.



Larry Bailin

I'm going to help you understand some of the basics of e-mail marketing so you can begin to realize that it is not something to be afraid of. It is something you can do to help grow your business today, tomorrow, a month from now, a year...well, you get the picture.

Don't try to e-mail the masses using the e-mail program on your computer. E-mail programs such as Outlook, Outlook Express, Eudora and others were not designed for mass e-mailing.

Sure, they can send a message to multiple people, but if you are trying to market using e-mail, these programs just don't have the tools and the horsepower necessary to get the job done right.

First, there are no tracking capabilities with desktop e-mail programs and if you can't measure it, you can't manage it.

Second, most service providers allow only 50 e-mails to be sent at one time. Third, sending mass e-mail using these programs does not meet CAN-SPAM law requirements and is just plain unprofessional.

Most mass e-mails sent this way will not even reach their destination due to

strict and unforgiving spam filters in use today. Spam has become such a problem that even e-mail that you want sometimes gets caught in the filter; your unprofessional attempt has no chance.

Finally, most people sending mass e-mail using these programs don't do it correctly. They put all the e-mail addresses in the "To:" field, which lets every recipient see everyone else's e-mail address.

Even worse, you run the risk of unscrupulous types adding these people to their lists, which leads me to my second "don't."

Don't add people to your list that didn't ask to be on your list. There is a term called "Opt-in." Opt-in is the act of someone asking to be on your e-mail list.

They "opted" to be included when you send e-mail which means they find what you have to say worth receiving and they have given you something very valuable in return for this information, their "permission" to market to them. So try not to blow it. This leads me to my final "don't."

Don't be annoying. You should not abuse the privilege of someone's opt-in status. The average Internet user gets close to a hundred e-mails a day. If they joined your list, try and respect their time and permission.

Send e-mail when you have something worth sending and don't abuse the right, otherwise it will be taken away. All right, on to the "dos."

Do segment your list. When you use a good e-mail marketing program, you can segment your list to send the most relevant information to the people that can use it most. Doing this will increase the overall results of any e-mail campaign instantly.

Motorcycle maker Harley-Davidson is a Single Throw client, and we handle their e-mail marketing. They segment their list in a few different ways.

For example, "Do you own a Harley-Davidson motorcycle or not? If you do, what model is it?" Now that the company knows what model motorcycle you have, it can e-mail you when it has information related to your bike, such as specials on parts, service or gear.

If you don't ride, you may not receive e-mails about upcoming group rides. The point is, by filtering who gets what information, you ensure that people only see what is relevant to their needs, and that's how you build a good, targeted, valuable list that people look forward to and even

anticipate receiving.

Do use a catchy subject line. However, you cannot be deceptive and the information contained within the e-mail must be relevant.

Do have a plan for e-mailing. This just may be the most important aspect regarding e-mail marketing. You would not build a birdhouse without a plan, so why market your company without one?

Research has indicated that Mondays and Fridays are bad days to send out marketing material as people are either starting or ending their weeks. Mornings are bad for e-mail as most people are bombarded with e-mail first thing in the morning and, adversely, end-of-the-day e-mails get little attention, as people are tired.

So, after testing multiple timeslots on Tuesdays and Thursdays, we determined that the largest percentage of people opened and read our e-mails at 1 p.m. on a Wednesday.

Now, if we did not have a plan and a professional e-mail marketing program, we would not be able to determine how to make our e-mail marketing as effective and efficient as it could be.

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of constructing proper e-mails. You are sending communication from your company to another. The end result of sending a poorly constructed or difficult to load and open communication will send the wrong message about your company.

Each e-mail you send leaves an impression about your company on the person reading it. Should your e-mail be riddled with typos, marked as "junk" or "spam," use ridiculous colors and fonts, take too long to load or just plain poor, how do you think that reflects on you and your company?

There are many aspects to successful e-mail marketing programs, far too many to discuss in this article. So, I'll wrap up by saying if you don't use e-mail for marketing or do it poorly, the next e-mail you get just may be from your local sign shop letting you know that your "Out of Business" sign is ready to be picked up.

Larry Bailin is CEO of Single Throw Inc., an Internet marketing consultancy in Wall, NJ. He is author of "Mommy Where do Customers Come From?" Reach him at bailinl@singlethrow.com



**Make your
email campaign
a shoe-in.**

Knowing what she likes, means knowing what to send.

Permission email is a powerful channel that connects your customers with the right products. That's the promise of permission email. But not every email service provider can help you deliver highly targeted, relevant emails that hit the inbox when it counts.

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High Performance Email Marketing

EmailLabs

The Buyer



She is smart. She is savvy. She knows what she wants, how to get it, and she's just a click away. She also has options. Lots of them, both online and offline. So **be relevant**. To her.

Keep her engaged. Make her feel like everything you do is just for her. View every email and web page as an opportunity to build a relationship with her. **Be relevant** and she will be one of your most loyal and profitable customers.

When Fortune 1000 enterprises want to build data-driven, relevant relationships with their customers online, they partner with CheetahMail. Using our email marketing, web analytics and database marketing solutions, over 350 world-class organizations rely on CheetahMail for the best online marketing programs, platform and services to build increased relevance, loyalty and value.

Contact CheetahMail and learn how we can help you build relevance.

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Be Relevant™
29 Broadway | New York, NY 10006
TEL: 800.396.5709 | info@cheetahmail.com