

How to market with e-mail

Marketing with email is not the same as marketing via the post service, for example with Royal Mail. People treat the email they receive differently to the way they would treat the post that lands on their doormat. Whilst people have become accustomed to receiving spam for the latest Viagra or male ‘enhancement’ offer, they have at the same time become more ruthless in sifting through the unwanted mail. Therefore careful campaign planning is vital!

Consumer behaviour has presented a unique set of challenges to marketing communications professionals:

1. How do you get people to open your mail?
2. How do you get people to read your mail?
3. How do you get people to respond to your mail?
4. How do you make money from email marketing?

In order to answer these questions, it is important to understand which email marketing practices bring a negative consumer reaction.

1. Spamming

Spam, by definition, is sending out a marketing message to an enormous list of perhaps millions of addresses. As no prior relationship has been established, it’s simply a case of hope for the best!

Gradually, Spam is being outlawed as a criminal offence. Already in some American states, Spammers are paying heavy fines for clogging up servers and bandwidth around the globe.

Spam is extremely proficient at obliterating any credibility your company might have and is therefore not recommended under any circumstance.

2. Send boring offers to people who *are* interested in your product or service.

If your offer is dull, the email format visually unattractive and the copy tediously written then the chances are that you will not have a successful email marketing campaign.

Let’s move onto the more successful email marketing tactics.

1. Special offers, discounts and sales incentives to existing clients or enquirers.

Once you have double-opted in to receive further communications, recognition of the email makes you more likely to open it. Added to which, if the offer has effectively targeted you then you are also more likely to act on it.

2. Build an online community with a really informative newsletter

This is not an excuse for a company sales pitch! What we mean by newsletter is something that will help the recipient, whether it's related to their job or their personal life.

For example, a company that makes email-marketing software will traditionally target sales and marketing professionals. What sort of information do they need? They need information on how to increase sales. The answer is to publish a monthly newsletter teaching them how to use email to generate leads and win business.

3. Reminder services

Do you need to remind people about their annual check up? Is a maintenance contract due for renewal? Email provides the perfect vehicle for a reminder.

Pre-set reminders can be set up on your email database, a simple system to implement and far cheaper than posting or phoning the customers.

4. Order and billing information

Order from any online company and you will get all of your order and billing info via email. Is this something you can cope with at your company?

5. Integrating with your CRM database

Integrate your email campaigns with your customer database and you have an incredibly powerful 'database marketing' operation.

You will be able to customise every single email to the recipient and dramatically lift response rates as a consequence.

In summary

Email marketing is an incredibly valuable addition to the marketing mix. For some firms, it is the dominant channel in the mix. Some companies are so reliant on it that they would go out of business without it.

It is important that you use the tried and tested principals of email marketing (get permission first!) and understand what it is you are trying to achieve with it before hitting the send button.

It is also important that you choose a robust platform to handle your email marketing as well as one that can be used by a novice, so that you don't have to depend on 'experts' to get your campaign out.

For more information about how your business can benefit from effective email marketing, please get in touch:

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