the
insight
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Email Marketing

Some thoughts on how you can build better performing campaigns

According to a DMA (Direct Marketing Association) survey, the majority of marketers are planning to do more email marketing this year. If you're spending more on email campaigns, you need to make sure they're translating into sales enquiries, which is the whole point, right? Give yourself the best chance possible of building successful campaigns by reading a few top tips for email marketing:

The Top Tips

1. Create relevant content
Ideally, you should segment your subscriber list into groups according to what people have bought from you, which seminars they've attended, what they've clicked on in the past, which online forms they've submitted, what industry they're in, or according to whatever else you know about them. If they're in the financial industy there's no point in emailing them about a new product you've launched for the education market. Think about the emails your're sending. Are they relevant to every single subscriber?

2. What's in it for the subscriber?
Take a look at what you're saying in your emails? Are you saying "find this out," "get a special discount", "learn something that will help you in your job", or are you saying "we sell widgets, buy them from us."? So many emails are just sales blasts, but the DMA's research shows that 55%

of respondents rated "money off" as the email content they preferred above all. But don't despair if you can't give special offers. 28% of respondents said that news was their preferred content. Consider also free downloads, how-to guides, top tips (like this) - anything that is of value to your subscribers and which will deepen the relationship with them.

3. Test deliverability
Check that your email marketing package, or agency, if you use one, can see which email addresses are bouncing. If you're sending out 2,000 emails and only 50 are being delivered, you might have a problem with your subscriber list. How old is it? Have you checked its validity recently?

Once you've created your email, check it against the various spam filters to make sure it's not triggering any of the alerts because of wording you're using, eg "FREE".

Set yourself up with accounts at Hotmail, Googlemail, Yahoo mail etc and test send your email to each of these accounts and see if they get through. If they get through, do they go to the inbox or to the junk or spam folder? Some email marketing packages have a feature that does this for you, so check if you're about to buy an email package. And there are several free spam checkers out there, where you paste in your HTML and a report comes back giving you a spam score, as well as suggestions for improvement.

TOP TIPS for
Email Marketing

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4. Handle images intelligently

How are you dealing with images in your email? If you're using a lot of images you should use a professional image editing package like Photoshop to manipulate them. Always resize an image before you put it into your email program. If you've got a 10MB image and you use your email package to resize it to the right dimensions, the image will still be 10MB and will take too long to load. You should be doing all your image editing in Photoshop, and import images into your email at the smallest size optimised for the web.

5. Implement lead nurturing

50% of leads are qualified, but are not yet ready to buy (according to Gleanster Research). What do you do with all these leads? This is where lead nurturing comes in. Set up automatic processes via your email marketing software or get your email agency to do it for you. The processes will start communication with these early-stage leads as soon as a trigger is set. Send different types of content, or surveys, and see how they respond. This will help you work out what direction to steer them in. Maybe you run a hotel business and someone visited your website and downloaded a recipe for beef wellington. You could send them an email pointing out some other beef recipes you have, or to promote the fact that your Sunday lunch menu always has roast beef. Or you could send them a voucher giving them 20% off all beef dishes. You get the idea.

6. Key Messages

Can subscribers read your key messages even if they've got images turned off in their email client? If you're using images with text in them, make sure you repeat the key text in a normal cell as straight text. That way, everyone can read the main points even if the images aren't displaying. Test this by turning off your own email images and send yourself a test email to see what it looks like.

The good news

The DMA/fast.MAP Email Tracking Study this year revealed that consumer approval ratings of email marketing has surged over the last 12 months and that consumers are signing up to receive emails in greater numbers. Make sure you benefit from this by adopting some of these top tips. You can find out plenty of other helpful information at the DMA website.

Need some help?

A successful email marketing program needs continuous effort. If you don't have the time to do it yourself, we can help. Contact us to discuss what you need.
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