



SPECIAL ISSUE | \$15

2009

E-MAIL MARKETER INSIGHT GUIDE

Strategy
Best practices
Expert advice
Case studies
Vendor lists

Analytics
Deliverability
Integration
Multimedia
List management



EMAIL ONLY TAKES A B2B MARKETER PART OF THE WAY.

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Even the most seasoned marketers could use a little refresh every once in a while. Have you found the results from your e-mail marketing campaigns have hit a plateau? Have response rates waned, sales declined or there is a general lack of engagement from your audience? Put your e-mail marketing practices under a microscope to see if there are areas that can be improved. Attend this Webcast as Wendy Lowe, Director of Product Marketing for Campaigner, discusses taking a step back from the minutia of your e-mail marketing campaigns and taking a hard look at the basics: subject lines, from name, design, copy, testing and more.

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Maturation leads to saturation

Cost-efficiency pushes e-mail to the fore, but inbox glut means messages must stand out

BY MARY E. MORRISON

THERE'S GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS ABOUT E-MAIL MARKETING THIS YEAR. The good news? There's a renewed focus on e-mail because of the struggling economy. The bad? There's a renewed focus on e-mail because of the struggling economy. ¶ Marketers increasingly are relying on e-mail marketing as a cost-efficient way to connect directly with their customers and prospects, and, as a result, their efforts have become more sophisticated. At the same time, however, those companies are contributing to the ever-growing problem of e-mail saturation. With more e-mails competing for attention, marketers have to work harder than ever to prevent their messages from being thoughtlessly deleted—or worse, prompting an opt-out.

"Inbox overload is probably the biggest problem marketers face," said Pilar Bower, optimization and e-mail strategist for Red Door Interactive, an online marketing and Web development agency. "People come in every morning and have 20 e-mails that they signed up for."

Plus the ubiquitous demand to do more with less in a challenging economy has left many marketing departments strained and unable to give their e-mail programs proper care and feeding. "A fundamental challenge to all e-mail marketers is that there are usually very small teams that are managing e-mail programs on an in-house basis," said Simms Jenkins, CEO of e-mail marketing services provider BrightWave Marketing and EmailStatCenter.com. "There's always that next campaign around the corner, so there's very little time to do planning and testing. There's not enough bodies to do that, or their technology platform doesn't support it or they don't have a partner that's able to help them."

However, e-mail remains the marketing channel of choice for many companies. According to Forrester Research's "U.S. Email Marketing Forecast, 2009 to 2014," published in June, 66% of 286 U.S. e-mail marketers surveyed in the JupiterResearch/ClickZ E-Mail Marketing Executive Survey agreed that e-mail is the most cost-effective marketing tool at their company. Marketers said they enjoy an ROI that is two to three times higher with e-mail than with any other form of direct marketing, according to the Forrester report.

Not surprising, e-mail spending is forecast to grow at a 10.8% compound annual growth rate from 2009 to 2014, the report found.

To remain competitive as the amount of e-mail increases, marketers pay close attention to their strategy. "E-mail is still effective, but you've got to work harder at it to get results," said Heather Blank, director of strategic services for e-mail marketing provider Responsys Inc. "To win that open, you have to get highly, highly relevant. That's the only thing that's differentiating you in the inbox. And so to get relevant, you have to work harder with segmentation, and triggered messages and dynamic content; and all those are still working very well and producing very good results."

THE BIG PICTURE

In mapping out an e-mail marketing strategy, marketers should first take a step back and identify their goals, BrightWave's Jenkins said. Many companies still don't have a clearly defined vision of what their e-mail program should be, he said. As a result, their campaigns end up as a knee-jerk reaction to what's happening in any given week, rather than a piece of an overall program with a strategic objective—for instance, creating awareness, generating leads, demonstrating thought leadership or forging long-term relationships, he said.

Jenkins said he creates a scorecard to allow clients to identify how much their e-mail database is worth in terms of how many subscribers they have and how much revenue

those subscribers represent. "Defining where you are and what kind of program you have helps to set that initial vision," he said.

It may seem simple, said Janet Rubio, chief insights officer at Engauge, a branding, digital and direct marketing agency, but marketers have to determine if their database has enough e-mail addresses to justify significant development time and investment. "If you have a database of a million names and you've got only 2,000 e-mail addresses on it,

your e-mail strategy is going to be different than if you have a million names and 900,000 e-mails on it," she said. "You have to ask yourself if you can really do anything with those 2,000 names. If the answer is no, then your e-mail strategy is to get more names."

Marketers must also consider the message they'd like to convey to their audience, Rubio said. "In some cases, it may be that your story is so complex—you're selling a million-dollar software package to a large corporation—that to tell that story in e-mail would take you so many contacts before you could get the whole story told that people would have tuned you out or opted out before you could ever get there," she said. "You have to think about the purpose of it before you define the strategy and make sure you align with the realities of what e-mail can do for you. You can never lose sight of the fact that it takes the blink of an eye for them to opt out."

International corporate law firm Reed Smith, which works with online marketing agency Concep Global, takes great pains to ensure that it's sending relevant e-mail to its clients, said Victoria Gregory, CRM systems manager at Reed Smith. The firm asks clients what information they want to receive via e-mail and manages those requests with its CRM system, she said.

"For every alert e-mail that we send out, there are other law firms doing the same thing," she said. "It's important to really figure out what the strategic objective is in sending out the alert—what you want to achieve by doing that—and then

segment what you're sending out. Don't just send it to everyone you know, but send it out to the people who are going to benefit from it and read it."

Blank said Responsys conducts a strategy workshop with clients to help them prioritize their objectives, weighing how difficult a goal will be to achieve against its potential return on investment. The exercise helps the marketer to identify three "quick wins"—objectives that will be the easiest to do with the highest ROI—that it should start with, she said. "That's a really useful discussion because all the objectives that clients think are the sexy ones they want to do never come out as being high-ROI," she said. "It helps crystallize for them what really is important."

DETERMINING WHAT'S WORKING

Once an e-mail strategy is in place, having the right data available to manage that plan is critical, Rubio said. "Making sure you can measure the results to keep making those continuous improvements is the tricky part," she said. "Just knowing opens and clicks probably isn't enough if you've got a really robust e-mail program. You have to be able to get underneath it to continue to grow it."

Marketers are beginning to focus more on how their e-mail programs are affecting business wins and the bottom line, Jenkins said. In general, though, marketers don't do enough with their e-mail metrics, he said. "Metrics should be, to a certain extent, the foundation for planning and strategy so marketers can use that as a

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The challenge of 'mobile triage'

NO ONE CAN say an e-mail marketer's job is boring. After all, with so many businesspeople accessing their e-mail on mobile devices these days, the inbox is literally a moving target.

"Mobile triage is a real challenge for marketers," said Simms Jenkins, CEO of BrightWave Marketing and EmailStatCenter.com. "For many people, the first time they see an e-mail is going to be on a BlackBerry or an iPhone, probably in a meeting, which means you're going to get about four seconds of their attention before they decide if they'll delete it or read it later back at their desk."

Jenkins offered these tips to increase your chances of reaching your mobile recipients:

- Devote time and careful consideration to both subject lines and "from" lines—the two most important things that determine whether somebody is going to open and read your message or delete it. "We've seen and heard from a lot of people that the subject line is written in at the last minute," he said.

- Use your brand in the "from" line, rather than the name of a person that recipients likely won't recognize. "A significant percentage of e-mails that

we see are from John Smith, director of PR, or marketing or sales," he said. "Unless you're Bill Gates or Steve Jobs, people aren't going to know anyone on your corporate team. It should almost always be the brand because that's what they signed up for."

- Make your point—the payoff—very high in the e-mail. "A lot of b-to-b e-mails are done in traditional direct marketing form—four paragraphs getting to the payoff and then the fifth graf is 'Click here for a special offer,'" he said. "People in the mobile world aren't going to get that far."

- Use e-mail to get recipients' attention and then move them somewhere else. "Too many people try to do everything from get your attention to close the deal in their e-mails," he said. "E-mail for the most part should be about driving you to the Web site, the phone, a sales rep or an offline location where you're going to find out more information and where the conversion will take place."

- Provide a link so the recipient can read a Web version of your message. That way, if the e-mail doesn't render properly on their mobile device, they can open it in their Web browser. —M.E.M.

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Weighing in on e-mail's evolution

Our expert panel discusses the evolving nature of e-mail marketing, its integration with other channels, pitfalls and future best practices

BY CHRISTOPHER HOSFORD

TO TAKE THE PULSE OF E-MAIL marketing, *BtoB* Senior Reporter Christopher Hosford contacted key e-mail service provider executives as well as analysts who follow the industry to solicit their views on cutting-edge e-mail marketing trends, the changing needs of marketers using this channel and its integration with other digital and offline marketing media. Participating in the virtual roundtable were Sara Ezrin, senior strategy consultant, Experian Cheetah Mail; Naylor Gray, director-global marketing, Frost & Sullivan; Bill Nussey, CEO, Silverpop; and Adam Sarnier, research director, Gartner Inc.

BtoB: How would you describe the health of e-mail marketing today?

Bill Nussey: There's been a lot of talk about the death of e-mail because of its ubiquity and overuse. It all seemed to portend e-mail's obsolescence. But it's like the famous Mark Twain quote, "The rumors of my death have been greatly exaggerated."

The end of e-mail is highly unlikely, but things are moving toward a multichannel world rapidly. The reason is that people listen across multiple channels, and some people are more open to one channel versus another. E-mail as a component of multichannel marketing will thrive for years to come for b-to-b marketers.

Sara Ezrin: We've seen tremendous increases in volume year over year across all verticals. And among b-to-b marketers, our volume is up 23% in the latest quarter compared with the same period last year. This indicates that marketers are relying more and more on e-mail as the direct-marketing vehicle of choice.

Adam Sarnier: That may be true, but in one sense, e-mail has not matured. When budgets are tight, marketers get what they believe to be cheap and effective e-mail blasts out the door. But the problem is, e-mail is getting less than a 2% response rate and declining because there's often little relevancy to the messages, with content that's much more about the company than what the customer is asking for.

BtoB: Is e-mail, therefore, a popular but still unsophisticated marketing channel?

Naylor Gray: I would say the level of sophistication is changing. There are more tracking capabilities now,

where e-mails can be sent from different sources, such as sales, marketing or channel partners. And today, they all can be closely tracked via marketing automation. In a way, the economic downturn is helping fuel this shift to automation as companies cut back on people.

Similarly, we're seeing a wholesale movement to demand-generation marketing, that integrates a lot of different things that may demand attention, such as webinars, white papers and other enticements to get people online, to register and to come out of the woodwork to identify themselves. From that standpoint, e-mail is common currency and very relevant.

BtoB: As e-mail marketing becomes more tightly entwined with marketing automation tools, it sounds like its level of sophistication is rising as well.

Nussey: Yes, as data increasingly is being used to drive campaigns. So it's not just about sending out a newsletter anymore but also by adding a note saying, "We noticed you haven't used this feature of our product before, so here's an offer to try it and, if you like it, we can add it to your contract."

Because the complexity of b-to-b products exceeds b-to-c, the opportunities for cross- and up-selling is great.

Gray: Tracking tools are definitely helping. In the past, marketers would track only if the e-mail was opened or forwarded, or maybe [if] a click-through took place. But that data would just exist in a silo and be associated only with that campaign.

Today it's possible to have all your different e-mails recorded against a customer profile. Now the

marketer can see, for example, that various people in his company—for example, sales, marketing and the channel partners I mentioned earlier—sent a person a variety of e-mail messages. That marketer can see that



three of six e-mails were opened, and that certain, particular ones were forwarded to other people. Now he's able to build a profile of this prospect, based on what Eloqua founder and Chief Technology Officer Steve Woods has called the prospect's "digital body language." The prospect is signaling digital indicators of interest.

There are also passive signs of disinterest, such as e-mails never opened, deleted without being opened, not responded to and so forth. These things also can tell us something. Marketers need to listen not only to the opens and forwards, but also to the deafening silence of the nonresponders.

BtoB: How do you see e-mail be-

ing integrated into other marketing channels?

Sarnier: The danger is when e-mail stands alone in isolation and just gets shot out with no connection to other channels, with no context about someone who was just on your Web site, or with no bearing on his recent conversation with your call center. Without these connections, marketers can have no understanding of who will respond to which offer and why. It becomes a fishing expedition, which is exactly like spam except it's permission-based.

Nussey: The payoff of integrating is that, for b-to-b marketing e-mail is much more effective than for b-to-c. Unlike b-to-c marketing, where each function is highly siloed, most b-to-b marketing programs have all silos feeding sales. Everyone is trying to maximize this and make it easier to measure success.

And because b-to-b marketing has sales involved so tightly, you can typically move a prospect from the anonymous stage of identity to the attributable stage much earlier, and translate that cookie into a person. Then, when that prospect does click-through from an e-mail to your Web site, you can attribute his behavior to his profile. For the future, you'll see a groundswell of multichannel-enabled e-mail that has no

cial networks and to use social networks to enhance viral marketing, to get an e-mail offer in front of non-subscribers through six degrees of separation. We're definitely seeing an increase in this form of viral marketing. So far, it's not that easy to track how far downstream your message goes, but there are services out there that do that.

Nussey: I would say social marketing complements e-mail, and is far more important in the earlier stages of the b-to-b sales funnel. But once a customer is in a buying or post-buying process the marketer will want to use e-mail as a nurturing tool.

There are indications that e-mail being forwarded in a social sense has an impact on b-to-b marketing, but it's different than b-to-c. The viral nature of forwarding, particularly inside a company, is more about sending an interesting e-mail to your colleagues, rather than to an inter-buyer community.

Gray: There's legitimate hype around social media, but the overhyped part is focusing only on the big brands, like Facebook, MySpace and Twitter. The next step is when marketers realize that they can have something that looks like these brands on their own Web sites. They can first use these commercial options to see how social marketing works, but I believe we'll see the real demand in the future for private-label social applications. And e-mail will be the common currency to make this happen.

BtoB: E-mail seems enormously versatile. How else can marketers employ it effectively?

Ezrin: E-mail service providers, for years, have deployed transactional e-mails; but I haven't seen b-to-b marketers taking advantage of this so much. For example, a transactional e-mail might also push subscription renewals, or suggest replenishment items or provide news about recalls. There are lots of different types of service messages that b-to-b companies can make that are not particularly being used via the e-mail channel today.

Also marketers really need to move away from relying on e-mail as a traditional direct-marketing tool and to focus on integrating e-mail with behavioral marketing. This would enable the marketer to start using such behavioral data as click-through patterns, Web browsing habits, abandonment data and past-purchase information to dynamically serve up e-mail messages with the right offer or image based on these behaviors. To date this is used most often by e-commerce marketers, but it could be a great opportunity for b-to-b marketers if it got more adoption.

Sarnier: I agree that event-triggered

Roundtable, page 8



precedent today.

BtoB: Everyone is talking about how e-mail can feed social media, as a form of viral marketing. How do you see this developing?

Ezrin: E-mail is a main way to get the word out in other channels. For example, e-mail to mobile devices is driving traffic to Twitter. And e-mail service providers increasingly are adding links to post e-mail messages to Facebook. We do need more data on how the younger generation is using search for information on these social networks, but it's important also to have a corporate-owned presence on social media to start building relationships.

We view e-mail as a way to advertise what companies are doing on so-



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Online market research leads to community-building

Internet surveys combined with traditional research methods are becoming the norm

BY MICHAEL FITZGERALD

ANSWER THIS QUESTION: Do you use online research to better understand your customers or your markets?

If you answered no, you are in ranks that are thinning. According to Inside Research, 43% of survey research last year was conducted online.

While most quantitative research now done online is consumer-focused, b-to-b companies "are going the same way," said Brad M. Bortner, an analyst at Forrester Research. Bortner estimated that the online research market has reached the hundreds of millions of dollars, and between 20% to 30% of that belongs to b-to-b companies.

Online research has lagged at b-to-b organizations in part because these companies have much smaller audiences—read "potential survey takers"—than their b-to-c brethren; and there have been concerns that business decisions based on small samples won't yield useful results.

But online surveys (by far the most popular form of online market research), as well as search and site an-

alytics, are taking hold at b-to-b companies. And they are being joined by a burgeoning use of online communities to conduct qualitative research.

Matthew Harrison, director of business development and finance at B2B International, said about 15% of the company's overall research happens online. He added that online research is almost always a complement to traditional research methods, and that quantitative online research is limited by the availability of qualified contact lists. However, when those lists are available, it is indeed a fast way to gather data, he added.

Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. began using online surveys about a decade ago, when customers started asking to take customer satisfaction surveys online, said Neil E. Marcus, director of marketing research at MetLife's Institutional Business division. He said MetLife now uses online surveys for product development, communications, to test ads and for its employee benefits trends study, a crucial piece of research, he added.

The bottom line is that online sur-

veys work out well for both MetLife and its customers. "We give them what they want and we get our costs down and, also, produce and report much more quickly," Marcus said.

MetLife also combines online tools with phone calls to do product development, sending information on potential financial services products, which tend to be complex, then walking through the documents on the phone. "They give us good answers we wouldn't have gotten if we did the whole thing online," Marcus said.

Qualitative online tools are now emerging, including what Forrester's Bortner called "market research online communities" (MROCs). MROCs can take the form of online panels—which are offered by companies such as e-Rewards Inc. and LinkedIn—or fully fledged online communities.

These should be powerful tools for b-to-b marketers, said Ralph Oliva, executive director of the Institute for the Study of Business Markets at Pennsylvania State University's Smeal College of Business. "In a virtual community, [a b-to-b company] can have a census, almost a whole marketplace in one place," Oliva said.

One early adopter of online com-

munities for b-to-b research is Xerox Corp. In March, the company rolled out its first such community, Dreaming in Color, in conjunction with the AIIM/On-Demand conference.

George Gibson, program manager-advanced inkjet platforms at Xerox, said the company created the community so both attendees and those who could not attend the show could share their thoughts on Xerox products. To encourage participation, the company offered a chance to win a Xerox 990 printer to people who sign up and use the community.

Gibson said Xerox tested the concept with an advisory council of customers and found that it promoted better customer dialogue than did traditional research methods. "This is the marketing equivalent of the Vulcan mind-meld," he said. Xerox will run the community for a week after the show has closed, then shut it down. Gibson said it's too early to know how well it worked, but Xerox will use the tool again.

There are downsides to online research. Tools such as SurveyMonkey.com are now so familiar and easy to use that many marketers now bypass company researchers to gather

data—which can lead to poorly structured surveys that yield poor data, or worse, create survey exhaustion on the part of customers.

Online research also does not allow for the kind of open-ended probing that telephone research does, said MetLife's Marcus. He added that, for surveys, response rates tend to fall into the 40% range, as opposed to 60% for the telephone.

Online research that offers incentives like Xerox's printer also attracts "professional respondents," which can skew results. Methods to counter this problem include using trap questions to flush out these particular people or computer-based fingerprinting technologies from such companies as Peanut Labs and MarketTools Inc..

Doing b-to-b research online does mean "you have to be very careful," said Forrester's Bortner. But it has big pluses as a medium, especially around cost-savings and the speed of data-gathering. Lastly, the potential to use online communities to build deep relationships with customers gives b-to-b marketers another reason to take a look online.

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Roundtable

Continued from page 6

e-mail marketing is underutilized. To use triggered e-mail effectively entails looking at what you sell, what's going on in the customer's buying cycle and life and, based on that, coming up with credible, relevant e-mail messages.

Lead management is all about event-based processes. Say if a prospect watched an online video, or downloads a white paper or goes to a trade show, he might get e-mail about a webinar coming up. After lead scoring, these various events can produce a qualified lead. E-mail really isn't about sending out things, it's about the lead-management process.

Too often e-mail is just this tone-deaf, one-way communication, and it turns people off. With the interaction with the customer in context with the e-mail, you can shift from a fishing expedition to a continuing dialogue.

BtoB: Mobile devices in the form of smart phones are becoming ubiquitous. How do you see e-mail marketing exploiting these devices?

Nussey: There's too much hype, in my opinion, about texting. There are segments of b-to-b communications where it works. But if you were to ask people whether they'd prefer

to get product information via e-mail or a mobile device, the vast majority would choose e-mail. SMS texting is interruptive, hard to read and there are no graphics. Mobile in this sense has a role to play, but mainly as an alerting mechanism.

But people are reading e-mail on smart phones, and I would argue that it's not a different channel at all. There are some rendering challenges, and really long messages could be a turn-off on an iPhone. But in general, the process, fidelity and content—all the things you've learned as a marketer—are the same on smart phones.

I would argue that this is why e-mail will continue to thrive. Buyers of smart phones aren't saying they want to use a lot of SMS texting. They're saying, "Make my mobile experience identical to my desktop experience."

BtoB: How can marketers address deliverability?

Ezrin: Deliverability is a big topic, but it really begins in the acquisition process. I find that most companies don't optimize the automatic "thank you" e-mail that's sent out for registering to begin with. These thank-yous can drive recipients to other aspects of a Web site, manage expectations about the content they'll see there and start building the value proposition about the e-mail pro-

gram itself. If you manage the relationship like this, the customer is more likely to stay on your list. And if he does leave, it's more likely he'll opt out and not hit junk to leave.

Gray: I agree that deliverability is always a problem and probably will be a bigger problem in the future. It's very possible to have a legitimate business relationship between two companies and have strict e-mail security—and still have your legitimate e-mail campaign filtered out. It's a constant challenge because e-mail is an imperfect way to communicate. The perfect way is person to person.

Data hygiene is important in this context, as marketing eliminates the nonresponders from the list. But marketers also should consider what they're saying in their e-mails. Is nobody listening? Maybe the messages are bad, or communicated in the wrong way or had no content. This is another thing that's come out of the post-meltdown, this whole need for content. It's too easy to fall back on repeating the same thing over and over again.

Sarner: I'd add that marketers should avoid renting e-mail lists. These lists could be worthwhile, but the problem here—even with permission-based e-mail lists—is you don't know how the recipients were originally opted in. If they inadver-

tently were opted in because they failed to uncheck a box on the registration page, for example, that will just make them angry. Internal lists are much more qualified.

The fact is, e-mail marketing is more of a relationship tool than a prospecting tool. And because of that, there should always be a user preference page where the recipient can go to tell the company what e-mails they like and don't like. Amazon does a good job with this. Very few people complain about getting stuff they asked for.

BtoB: In what other ways can e-mail's potential as a marketing tool be most effective?

Gray: E-mail is definitely less effective today than it used to be because everyone uses it and it's highly competitive. By the same token, white papers and webinars aren't unique anymore either. Today, people have to differentiate themselves, by making it clear they understand who the e-mail recipient is, that his time is respected and that he won't be bombarded with things he doesn't want.

One thing we'll see a big rise in is people engaging in activity outside the stream of information. Getting to the digital world is essential, because that's where the technology is to enable you to do all the profiling and other things to qualify people.

E-mail can play a huge part here by, for example, getting people to come to a live event. Then you can give them collateral—and maybe offer them a white paper they have to register for. Likewise, with direct mail there is no magic counter that shows when somebody opened the envelope. But you can engage them with other tactics, such as follow-up e-mails, to drive them into an electronic environment, where Web sites and landing pages become important.

Ezrin: One area I'm promoting in particular because of its ease of use is integrating e-mail with Web tools. For example, recommendation engines use an algorithm on Web sites to show a visitor a next logical product he should consider or articles he might be interested in reading based on previous behavior. Now we are leveraging that technology to pop up content within e-mail as well.

Recommendation engines can be integrated in particular within transactional e-mail. In the past, cross- or up-selling within transactional e-mail tended to be more static, where you'd have to replace an image or call to action manually. But with recommendation engines you can automatically populate cross- or up-sell opportunities, depending on the situation. This could be a huge opportunity for e-mail marketers. □



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What not to do with your e-mail during the recession

BY JUDITH NEMES

E-MAIL MARKETERS are bombarded with advice about what they should be doing to navigate the tough waters of these difficult economic times, but few are given pearls of wisdom of what *not* to

do in the current climate.

"Don't do business as usual," said Craig Kerr bluntly. He's VP-marketing for iPost, a Novato, Calif.-based e-mail solutions consulting company. "The traditional outlook is that e-mail is a cheap way to do

business, and marketing managers only think about the next tactic they should take. In this market, they need to think like a businessperson and look at the bigger picture."

By focusing on a company's

overall e-mail strategy instead of devising the next cool campaign, marketing managers should be able to demonstrate to upper management that they are focusing on return on investment, which is essential in today's environment,

Kerr said.

He provided some tips on what not to do right now:

■ **Don't do the simple math and don't blast e-mails indiscriminately.** Don't focus on how big your e-mail list is right now—that's not the most important metric, Kerr said. Instead, "think in terms of what moves the business needle the most" and present those metrics to senior managers so they can see the value of your team's efforts, he advised.

In addition, be more judicious in the e-mails you send out to those on your list, Kerr said. Don't send e-mails to everyone with the same message because you have different levels of interest among the roster. "It's important to know the level of engagement subscribers have with your brand and send them e-mails accordingly," he said. This is not the time to turn off subscribers who could be potential customers down the road, he noted.

■ **Don't cut back on e-mail to lower costs.** E-mail is still the most cost-effective way to build loyalty and move customers through the sales process, Kerr said. Reducing e-mail can negatively affect a company's bottom line compared with trimming other expenditures, he said.

■ **Don't ignore e-mail's impact on other sales areas.** Marketers need to stress to senior management that e-mail is a "superhighway" that moves customers to and through various channels of a company, Kerr said. "Marketers have to demonstrate the impact they have on other sales channels and how they drive the customer's buying process," he explained. For example, they can look at how Web site traffic changes after an e-mail blast goes out or number of purchases made soon after an incentive is offered via e-mail.

■ **Don't treat your "hand-raisers" as business-as-usual.** There will be fewer people who step up to do business with your company in the current climate, but they will have carefully considered their purchases and are ready to move on them, Kerr said. Identify them through their e-mail behavior, and target them with promotions that give incentives for quick conversion. "It's harder to do business right now, so if you have someone who seems to be engaged with you, jump on it right away," he said. "Everyone is fighting for that potential customer."

Originally published April 21, 2009



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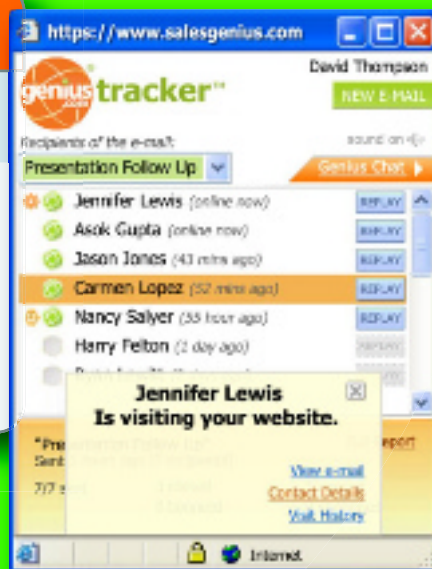
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Saturation

Continued from page 4

baseline to guide them," he said.

B-to-b marketers have lagged their consumer counterparts in using metrics but are finally waking up to the possibilities, Rubio said. "They realize they can do a lot there and it's really affordable," she said.

Tracking metrics also enables

marketers to test their campaigns—a practice that can significantly improve results. "Testing provides so much value, whether it's just figuring out the best subject line, or the best offer or the best way to structure secondary messaging and links," Jenkins said. "That's what is ultimately going to help you craft the message that gets the most conversions."

Marketers can also use metrics to "remarket," or send follow-up cam-

paigns to recipients who responded to an initial e-mail campaign.

SWEETEN THE OFFER

"Doing those follow-up campaigns, whether it's sweetening the offer or providing another incentive to move these people further down the sales cycle, is a key part of any e-mail marketing strategy, particularly in the b-to-b world," Jenkins said. "But it's something that's not done by most b-

to-b marketers. It's not overly complicated from a technology or manpower standpoint."

Finally, metrics will ultimately help e-mail marketers prove their programs' value to senior management, Jenkins said. Instead of sharing only opens and clicks, marketers should explain e-mail marketing's success in high-level business terms. "Speak their language. Develop a business plan and a presen-

tation that captures the value of the e-mail program," Jenkins said. "If I was an e-mail marketer for a brand, for the security of my job alone, I'd have a presentation in my back pocket ready to go that outlines everything that this e-mail program has done. Senior management might not know about things like the increase in site traffic or the amount of leads driven to offline channels." □

Pass it on

IT'S ONE of the trickier challenges of b-to-b marketing: Business purchases often involve multiple people within the same organization. A marketer might have an e-mail address for one contact but lack data on others, making it difficult to effectively reach all the necessary influencers and decision-makers.

Savvy marketers are working around this obstacle with viral marketing, said Janet Rubio, chief insights officer at Engauge, a branding, digital and direct marketing agency. Video works particularly well in viral efforts, she said, whether it's embedded in the e-mail itself or posted on a Web site to which the e-mail links. "Video is bringing life to e-mail in new kinds of ways," she said.

For client Best Buy, which has an external sales force for the small-business market, Engauge created a virtual showroom for products such as digital signage and server technology. The showroom features video on various topics and includes extensive information about products.

After a sales call, salespeople send follow-up e-mails thanking prospects for their time and directing them to the virtual showroom. Recipients can view video and forward the e-mail to colleagues who might be interested. "We have a tracking mechanism so we can see who's looking at [the video] and what's happening, and then we trigger e-mails from the sales guys saying, 'Thanks for looking at it. We'll follow up with you in a few days,'" Rubio said.

Video e-mails aren't right for every marketer or every campaign, however. "There needs to be a strategic reason for it to be done," Rubio said. "If you're trying to sell a \$10 widget, it might be overkill. But if you're selling a \$1 million piece of technology and it's part of a longer sales process, the person receiving it will appreciate the time and energy you've invested and that you're talking to them one on one."

Also, marketers need to consider the technical piece of the equation carefully, Rubio said. "You have to make sure you don't bury somebody with a file that is this enormous thing that doesn't work and doesn't run," she said.

—M.E.M.



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BY KAREN J. BANNAN

DESPERATE TIMES MAY CALL FOR DESPERATE MEASURES. At least that's what marketers may be thinking right about now. There's a measure of truth to that statement, said Julie Katz, an analyst with Forrester Research, especially for e-mail marketers. "Marketers have stagnated in e-mail marketing because what they are doing has worked," she said. "They've gotten some pretty good results so they see no need to do anything. But that's a problem because in 2009, we've got recipients who are ignoring e-mail. While there's nothing dramatically new out there, it's time to adopt some practices that vendors have been offering for a while—things that feel new and connect e-mail to the rest of the world."

Here are five tips you can use today to improve your e-mail marketing:

1) Look at purchased lists, but proceed with caution. This is a controversial step as many ESPs explicitly forbid the use of rented lists. In fact, eschewing rented lists is often stated as an e-mail best practice. However, there are some rented lists that can and do work well. "My advice would be to ignore list collectors [such as Equifax, Experian and LexisNexis] and instead utilize specialty lists where there is a captive audience [such as New York Times newsletters]," said Joey Wilson, director of marketing strategy at interactive agency Sapient Corp. Look for lists from trade publications, associations, training companies and trade shows, all of which have engaged, interested readers, said Kevin Mabley, senior VP-

strategic services at Epsilon.

2) Build your own list using search.

Brian Kline, marketing coordinator with instrument manufacturer Thwing-Albert Instrument Co., revamped his marketing strategy in 2007, moving away from print and trade shows and toward search engine and e-mail marketing. At the time, his internal list contained about 2,000 addresses. Today that list tops the 9,000 address mark, a milestone he attributes to having ThomasNet help him optimize and redesign his Web site. Once the optimization was done, more people came into the site, and Kline made sure there was a very visible, very easy-to-use e-mail signup form when they did.

"We started keeping track of how leads came in as of June 2007 and,

comparing June 2007 to December 2007 to the same period of time in 2008, customers who came from search increased 60%," said Kline. That traffic invariably signed up for more information via e-mail from the company, and today its newsletters are both popular and well-read, he said. "Our January newsletter went to 6,500 people. Of those, 25% opened; and of that 25%, 24% clicked through. And between 10 and 15 people came to the site and requested more information. I always see a spike in our Web activity after the newsletter goes out."

3) Re-examine segmentation.

While you are probably segmenting your list by industry, there are other ways to slice and dice a list that can boost relevance. "It's not just about

business segmentation," agreed Robert Schwartz, senior partner and executive director of Ogilvy New York's Digital Dialogue practice. He suggested starting by separating your list into active and inactive addresses, then remarketing to those inactive in a bid to re-engage them since it's much less expensive to hold on to a current customer or prospect than to find a new one. Once you've done that, you can split your lists by company size, company, revenue generated and overall engagement. "You're not going to send the same offer to your best customers as you're sending to someone who only made a single purchase. Your most engaged customers probably won't need the same level of discount to get them to make a purchase as someone who has never purchased before."

When remarketing to quiet leads, look at when they originally contacted you, how they contacted you and

dent of Coastal Financial Advisors. His company helps businesses with financial, investment and tax services. This past fall, O'Brien started using his e-mail communications to explain what the current financial climate could mean for his prospects and customers. "I've tried to send out more information about the downturn and answer any questions that my customers might have," he said. Almost any vertical market can do the same by responding to industry and world news with information about how it relates to your product or service—and how that can help your customers.

5) Explore co-marketing options.

Co-marketing can be a good compromise for those who are looking for a rented list but don't feel comfortable buying one on their own, said Sean Muzzy, senior partner-media director at digital agency Neo@Ogilvy. Your own partners and customers are a good bet, he said. "It's great when

Purchased lists dos and don'ts

WHILE MOST AGENCIES and e-mail service providers caution against using rented lists, you may end up using one anyway. If you do, here are some tips from Yvonne Tocquigny, senior partner and CEO of interactive agency Tocquigny, and Denise Hopkins, VP-product development and marketing at Experian Marketing Services.

■ **Do make sure landing pages are aligned to your list's interests.** If you're buying a list of IT managers, your landing page should focus on their specific needs.

■ **Don't mention the fact that it's a rented list.** You might be tempted to welcome potential new clients by announcing where you got the list from. "Don't," said Tocquigny, "it can be a turn-off."

■ **Do test.** Even though you're renting the list, make sure you segment it and test it against your own list or other rented lists.

■ **Don't sacrifice quantity for quality.** Often, the best lists are the smallest as they focus on a narrow topic.

■ **Do ask about best practices.** How is the list provider gathering its addresses? Which sites do they use to build their own lists? How often are they cleaning lists? Have they done a good job with permissions and vetting frequency? "Make sure they have good embedded processes," Hopkins said.—K.J.B.

how you responded. It's possible your original response didn't give them what they needed.

4) Use current events to add color to and improve relevance of e-mail communications. Dennis O'Brien is presi-

you can weave your content in with their content and show how the combination of companies can help the user," he said.

Originally published Feb. 2, 2009

How Aptera got big results with e-mail revamp

BY KAREN J. BANNAN

SOFTWARE AND SERVICES company Aptera Inc. provides software and database development as well as Web development to its more than 180 customers. The 6-year-old company has always used e-mail marketing as part of its lead-generation process. However, until about 18 months ago, those e-mails, which went out to two separate lists, were sporadic.

The company's main e-mail database, with more than 2,600 subscribers, received e-mail two or three times each year, while its Scorecard database, with more than 15,000 subscribers, received e-mail every three or four months. Results were, as could be expected, said Brooke Francesi, the company's design team leader, "really bad." Click rates were especially dismal, she said. "Before, we'd send out more than 16,000 e-mails and maybe get only 100 opens," Francesi said.

It was clear Aptera needed to overhaul its program so, at the be-

ginning of 2008, the company switched ESPs, moving to ExactTarget, and redesigned its e-mail marketing from top to bottom.

The company implemented several changes. First, it put a schedule in place. Scorecard e-mails would go out once a month, while the main database would be touched quarterly. The Scorecard list morphed into an informational vehicle, with stories and links about project management and the management process. "We wanted to give people information related to our project management software," Francesi said. "We wanted them to know we understood the industry."

Aptera also started including offers with a strong call-to-action in e-mails sent to the Scorecard database—a 20% discount, for example, if the prospect made a purchase or signed a contract by the end of the month.

The other list became a straight marketing vehicle that contained information about Aptera as a company, she said, and fea-

tured newsy snippets such as profiles of new Aptera employees. Both newsletters also include "fun articles," Francesi said. "Since it was straight news about Aptera, we didn't want to inundate people; so we also included information that would help readers." This included free training or articles related to Aptera's business.

From a design perspective, Aptera started concentrating on creating "beautiful" e-mails.

The company also included a direct link to sales reps in the body of every e-mail, so people could always ask questions or provide feedback on anything they saw.

The results have been "huge," Francesi said. An Aptera newsletter that went out in December with a 20%-off offer resulted in a 600% increased open rate. In addition, the quarterly issues have enhanced Web traffic by "30 to 40%," she said.

"We're not sending out a whole lot of e-mails, but since we're providing them with content that is valuable and doesn't feel the same as information they can find elsewhere, we're gaining our readers' attention," she said.

Originally published July 23, 2009

Look for list partners that fit with your audience

Question: How can we leverage our business partnerships to help build our e-mail lists?

Answer: Building lists through partnerships can be a very successful list growth tactic. It is imperative, however, to carefully evaluate a partner before exploring opportunities for e-mail acquisition efforts. Too many e-mail marketers learn this the hard way, choosing partners that don't fit their audiences and vice versa.

There are two common approaches for leveraging partnerships to grow your e-mail list: third-party partner mailings and co-registration. But I wouldn't run at either opportunity blindly. Growing your list organically will always produce the most qualified audience.

Third-party mailings are leveraged typically as dedicated e-mail sends to the subscriber base of a qualified partner that features some content of interest to the demographic of the partner. You would usually include an opt-in message allowing the recipient to subscribe directly to your e-mail list to continue receiving valuable information from your brand. It is important to note that your ability to communicate with a partner's list in this way will be dictated by their privacy policy and their partner messaging restrictions.

ASK THE EXPERT

Some partners may charge for such access or require the same level of access to your subscriber base.

Co-registration allows for you to include an opt-in to your e-mail program when a person is subscribing to the partner's. While the opt-in is explicit, the actual act of subscribing may be quickly forgotten depending on whether the box is pre-checked or not. Another challenge is that since the subscription did not come from your site, there may be some delay in getting the data to you—which could

prevent you from sending a timely welcome message directly from your brand. Co-registration can be a very successful acquisition method if partners are carefully chosen, but remain mindful of the data challenges that may be associated with this method of acquisition.

Leveraging partners can be a safe way to add new addresses to your promotional e-mail programs. Just choose the right partner with the right audience, build the right strategy first and then let it take its course.

Originally published Sept. 3, 2009

Question: What are the best practices around

adding business contacts to your e-mail list that you have acquired from trade shows or other normal business activity?

Answer: Trade shows, networking events and casual interactions with business prospects are great ways to grow your e-mail program. However, you shouldn't haphazardly add people you meet at these various functions to your e-mail list. To best ensure that you are "onboarding" recipients who actually want to receive e-mail communications, try one of these two approaches.

First there is the opt-out approach. This is the approach that most marketers take today. E-mail addresses from newly collected business cards are simply added to the e-mail list. The mindset here is that you have talked with the individual so you have some sort of "pre-existing business relationship," which is perceived as an expressed interest in receiving e-mail. That is not always an accurate assumption.

The other option is to proceed with an opt-in approach: You only add subscribers to your e-mail program that have actually asked to receive it. Your goal should be quality not just quantity. Your first communication following the trade show or event should be an actual invitation to join your e-mail program.

Regardless of your choice, here are a few

things to note:

■ **Be proactive.** At the point you or your sales team collect the card or contact detail, tell the individual to expect an e-mail.

■ **Be timely.** Don't wait more than a week following the event to reach out.

■ **Be transparent.** Remind the recipient of the encounter or where you met.

■ **Be detailed.** Include information regarding the frequency and types of message(s) they will receive.

■ **Be obvious.** Include the welcome message in the actual e-mail communication they will be receiving. This gives the recipient a specific example of the type of messaging they can expect. If that isn't possible, include a link to the message sample.

■ **Be flexible.** Not everyone is going to want to receive your e-mail. Allow easy access to unsubscribe links—or, in the case of opt-in requests; be clear that no further action is required to not receive e-mail.

Kara Trivunovic is senior director of strategic services at StrongMail Systems (www.strong-mail.com), a provider of e-mail marketing solutions.

Originally published April 9, 2009

LIST MANAGERS AT A GLANCE

Company	Location	URL	Phone	Key executive	Key lists	CPM e-mail lists
Advanstar Marketing Resource Network	North Olmsted, Ohio	http://marketing.advanstar.info	(800) 225-4569	Joe Loggia, president-CEO, Advanstar Communications	Advanstar Masterfile (includes pharmaceutical, science, automotive aftermarket, power sports, health care, dental, veterinary and licensing)	\$400-\$475
ALC	Princeton, N.J.	www.alc.com	(609) 580-2800	Donn Rappaport, chairman-CEO	Accutrend, BtoB, Dow Jones, Forbes, Kiplinger Washington Editors, MarketForce, Progressive Business Publications, U.S. News & World Report	\$195-\$350
AllMedia Inc.	Plano, Texas	www.allmediainc.com	(469) 467-9100	Laura McClendon, president	AMA Business Product Buyers, Packaging World, Florida Trend, Automation World, HMG Solutions Physicians Database	\$400-\$500
Bethesda List Center	Bethesda, Md.	www.bethesda-list.com	(301) 986-1455	David S. James, president	Doctors by Specialty U.S. and Worldwide, Business Executives and Professionals Worldwide, Electrical Contractor, Carroll's Government Executives, Light & Medium Truck, Security Director	\$85-\$500
Direct Media	Greenwich, Conn.	www.directmedia.com	(203) 532-1000	Michael D. Mayhew, exec VP-business list management	Staples, Society for Human Resource Management, Lorman Education Services, National Seminars, SkillPath Seminars	\$200-\$400
Direct Partner Solutions	Alpharetta, Ga.	www.directpartnersolutions.com	(678) 762-9869	Deborah Simone-Holmes, CEO	Small Business Digest, My Business Chronicle, Small Business Executives from ISI Masterfile, Benefits & Compensation Solutions Magazine, Georgia Trend, Business First	\$150+
DM2-DecisionMaker	Oak Brook, Ill.	www.dm2decisionmaker.com	(800) 323-4958	Steve Rourke, VP-general manager	DecisionMaker IT Marketplace, DecisionMaker Manufacturing Marketplace, DecisionMaker Engineering Marketplace, Martindale Hubbell Law Directory, Professional Builder	\$360-510
Dunhill International List Co.	Boca Raton, Fla.	www.dunhills.com	(561) 998-7800	Robert Dunhill, president	Occupations, Executives, Professionals, Vacationers, Investors, Contributors, Consumers with Ailments, Mail Order Buyers, Corporate Gift Buyers, Manufacturers	\$125-\$500



List Management

LIST MANAGERS AT A GLANCE

Company	Location	URL	Phone	Key executive	Key lists	CPM e-mail lists
Dunn Data Co.	Brewster, N.Y.	www.dunndataco.com	(845) 278-1200	Jonathan Pogact, director, B2B marketing	Premier Executive Database, Contacts in American Business, Public Utilities Fortnightly, U.S. Government Data, Gevalia B2B Masterfile, MDx Blue-Physicians by Specialty	\$150-\$400
ePostDirect	Pearl River, N.Y.	www.epostdirect.com	(800) 409-4443	Chris Longo, VP-e-mail list management	Nielsen Business Media, Tech Briefs Media, SourceMedia, Oracle Publishing, BNP Media	\$250-\$450
Harte-Hanks Market Intelligence	San Diego	www.hartehanksmi.com	(858) 450-1667	Tino Kokkinos, managing director	Information technology decision-makers, computer hardware & software prospects, data center movers, IT services prospects, IP telephony & communications prospects	\$160/M
IDG List Services	Framingham, Mass.	www.idglist.com	(508) 370-0827	Andrew Sambrook, general manager	CIO, CMO, Computerworld, CSO, InfoWorld, IT World Canada, LinuxWorld Conference & Expo	\$300-\$375
Lake Group Media	Rye, N.Y.	www.lakegroupmedia.com	(914) 925-2400	Ryan Lake, CEO	The Economist, American Institute of CPAs, Harvard Business Review, American City Business Journals, Black Enterprise	\$150-\$300
Lewis Direct	Superior, Colo.	www.lewis-direct.com	(303) 494-0730	Mark Lewis, president	Marcus Evans Conferences, Langevin Learning, CornerStone Leadership Institute, Emerge Leadership, Oriel, Paton Press	\$250
L.I.S.T. Inc.	Armonk, N.Y.	www.li-s-t.com	(914) 765-0700	Glenn Freedman, president-CEO	Business Integration Journal, Enterprise Open Source Journal, zJournal, Customer Interaction Solutions Magazine, Internet Telephony Magazine	\$200-\$400
List Services Corp.	Bethel, Conn.	www.listservices.com	(203) 743-2600	Rob Kenny, VP-list management	Harris InfoSource U.S. Manufacturers, Harris InfoSource National Business Database, Harris InfoSource National Services Database, Business DirectBase from LSC, Lankmark Business File	\$250
MCH Inc.	Sweet Springs, Mo.	www.mailings.com	(800) 776-6373	Peter Long, CEO	Business-to-institution databases and lists, including government officials, hospital administrators, physicians, educators and church pastors	\$200-\$325
MeritDirect	White Plains, N.Y.	www.meritdirect.com	(914) 368-1000	Rob Sanchez, president-list management and interactive services	United Business Media, BusinessWeek, 1105 Media, CFO, Advanstar Communications	\$225-\$400
MetaResponse Group	Deerfield Beach, Fla.	www.metaresponse.com	(954) 360-0644	Jerry Whiteway, president	Thomas Publishing, ThomasNet.com, Industrial Equipment News, Inbound Logistics, Hoover's	\$325
NOBLEVentures.com	Palm Coast, Fla.	www.nobleventures.com	(800) 299-8280	David Hirko, list services manager	American Business Masterfile, Australian Business Masterfile, Banker Lease Leads, Brazilian Businesses, Business Bankruptcy	\$90-\$400
PlattForm Advertising	New York	www.plattformad.com	(212) 684-4800	Jim Scova, VP-business development	BtoB, GlobalSpec, M2Media360, Northstar Travel Media, American Chemical Society, Automotive News, Ashworth University, Farm Journal, The Education Center	\$150-\$450
Postmaster Direct	Chicago	www.postmasterdirect.com	(312) 224-5000	Larry Karipides, online media sales & operations	CNET Networks, OSTG, TechRepublic, TechTracker, Dice.com, Entrepreneur.com, MSNBC, Webshots	\$100-\$350
Rickard List Marketing	Melville, N.Y.	www.rickardlist.com	(631) 249-8710	Lisa Hamilton, director, list management	Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development, Education Week, edweek.org, gantthead.com, New York Enterprise Report	\$300-\$400
Specialists Marketing Services B2B Group	Hauppauge, N.Y.	www.specialistsms.com	(631) 787-3007	Peter Candito, exec VP-B2B group	Ad:tech, ITEC, Internet & Technology Marketplace database, LexisNexis Business Data at Business & Home Address, Tiger Direct	\$150-\$400
Statlistics	Danbury, Conn.	www.statlistics.com	(203) 778-8700	John Papalia, president-CEO	PennWell, Hanley Wood, Advantage Business Media, American Media, Barron's	\$185-\$480
V12 Group	Red Bank, N.J.	www.v12group.com	(732) 842-1001	Jeff Berke, exec VP-sales and marketing	Business Professionals and Executives Masterfile	\$195
Walter Karl Inc.	Pearl River, N.Y.	www.walterkarl.com	(877) 955-4787	Rob FitzGerald, president	Penton Media, Ziff Davis Enterprise, Amsterdam Printing, G. Neil, Office Depot	\$225-\$400
Worldata	Boca Raton, Fla.	www.worldata.com	(800) 331-8102	Jay Schwedelson, corporate VP	Ziff Davis Media, Access Intelligence, LRP Publications, Eli Research, Zoominfo	\$200-\$500
World Innovators	Roxbury, Conn.	www.worldinnovators.com	(860) 210-8088	Greg Pesce, director-business development	Design Cost Data Magazine, Canadian IT/HR/Sales & Mktg Decision Makers, Reportero Industrial Mexicano, Control Engineering Europe, New Electronics U.K.	\$250+



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Digging deeper into e-mail data

Marketers looking to maximize their e-mail campaign effectiveness need to push beyond simple metrics

BY KAREN J. BANNAN

MARKETERS TALK A LOT about return on investment, but when it comes to e-mail marketing, many don't fully understand the very thing that can help them determine it: metrics. Often, they either stick to simple metrics—such as opens and unique clicks—or they don't use them at all. ¶ “E-mail marketers need to not only measure e-mail engagement via metrics such as click-through rate but also use that measure as a segmentation attribute to divide subscribers into two buckets: those that are engaged and those that are not,” said David Daniels, VP-principal analyst at Forrester Research. “This will allow marketers to drive more meaningful and relevant conversations with their subscribers.”

Basic e-mail metrics are important but don't measure the complete impact of e-mail on the business, said Loren McDonald, VP-industry relations at Silverpop, a provider of e-mail marketing services. “The fact is, if you make decisions based on e-mail metrics alone, they can be wrong. You could have a lower open rate but more conversions because you engaged with fewer people but those people who did click through were more engaged.”

But once marketers start understanding what e-mail metrics can do and how to couple them with other company or industry data, the results can help shape a company's di-

rection. Everything from research and development to sales to customer service can change for the better, experts said.

FINDING THE NEXT BIG THING

One of the most powerful ways a company can use e-mail metrics is to identify its best customers; another is to uncover potential new-product needs.

“One of the key metrics that our client Sony [Corp. of America] uses e-mail metrics for is value per registrant,” said Nicholas Einstein, director of strategic and analytic services at Datran Media, a digital marketing technology company. “We see a lot

of companies doing this—leveraging e-mail data to make informed business decisions because it's data that can be generated quickly and reacted to quickly.”

Companies can, based on click-throughs, see when interest in a particular product is fading and merge that information with sales data to provide a better picture of future development. If sales are down but people are still clicking through, they may be waiting for the next version or choosing a competitor's offering instead.

E-mail can also be a tool to mitigate supply chain risk, said Yun-Hui Chong, VP-strategic services for Ex-

perian CheetahMail, an e-mail service provider. “Companies can offer discounts via e-mail for early product reservations and then use those conversions to project out product sales,” she said. “The idea being that it can also show which products are going to be slow sellers.”

And then there's the art of the upsell, said Dan Forootan, CEO of e-mail marketing solutions provider StreamSend. Click stream data can reveal when salespeople should follow up with a particular customer, he said. “If a client is clicking on five articles about a product they don't own, the interest is definitely there for some reason,” he said.

Still, none of these decisions should be made on the face value of e-mail analytics, he said. “You have to be tracking analytics on the Web, too,” he said.

AVOID GENERALIZATIONS

Marketers also should be careful about making sweeping generalizations, such as lumping all customers and prospects into the same category. You may have only a small cross section of your prospect list subscribed to your e-mail newsletter, and those who do subscribe may be more or less savvy than the average customer or prospect. This means that if you base decisions only on the metrics that you have in front of you, you may be missing broader trends.

Those executives who aren't comfortable letting e-mail metrics shape their R&D or sales efforts may be willing to use them in the customer service realm. Marketers can track what people are clicking on as well as what types of in-bound e-mails they are seeing to help shape online FAQs as well as help direct customer service scripts, said Ben Rothfeld, global director for marketing strategy at marketing services

company Acxiom.

For example, if you combine e-mail metrics—such as which terms or subjects are most commonly clicked on in a newsletter—with Web analytics, you can create a flow chart of other issues or questions a customer may have.

Marketers can then use that information to help reduce the number of calls coming in, McDonald said.

“We have one client that found it was getting a significant number of calls into the call center about really basic stuff,” he said. “The marketing team used e-mail to educate those customers by creating an FAQ and using e-mail reminders. That marketing executive's CEO loves him because he is saving the company a lot of money. An e-mail is 1/65 of the cost of a telephone call.”

But none of this is possible, said Ivan Chalif, director of e-mail product marketing for Alterian, a provider of integrated marketing software, unless you've defined what you want to measure. E-mail metrics are the start, but there's much more out there, especially with platforms that let you bridge e-mail, Web and database data, he said.

“If the marketing team is keen on driving and measuring the most revenue from their e-mail campaigns, tracking opens and clicks is not going to mean much to them when they have to validate their efforts,” he said. “You have to have access to metrics that confirm or refute the effectiveness of your program. If it's revenue that's important, it's revenue you have to measure. Imagine going to your VP of marketing's office and she asks how much revenue a campaign generated and all you have are clicks and opens data. That's not going to be a fun conversation.”

Originally published July 20, 2009

Five ways to make sure your e-mail isn't flagged as spam

BY PHIL FERNANDEZ

Question: How do I prevent my e-mails from being labeled as spam?

Answer: B-to-b marketers struggling for growth in today's economy know they need to get maximum results for their e-mail marketing efforts, but too many do not understand the critical role deliverability plays in the process of turning prospects into revenue-driving customers. All the creativity and planning that goes into a lead nurturing campaign is meaningless if your e-mails don't reach their intended inboxes. Every undelivered e-mail is a lost lead, and the

money you spent to acquire that lead is wasted.

ISPs today use your “reputation” to determine which e-mails get delivered. Gone are the days when your e-mails were filtered on content and keywords alone. According to Return Path (a Marketo partner), more than 80% of delivery problems today are caused by the sender's e-mail reputation.

There isn't just one magic bullet for managing your reputation and getting to the inbox. The technology used by your e-mail service provider certainly matters, since managing delivery rate and processing bounces properly can

make a big impact. But there are also quite a few factors that you can—and should—pay attention to. Here are five best practices:

1) Maintain a clean list by handling bounces properly and scrubbing your list regularly. Scrubbing includes removing duplicates, suppressing distribution accounts (e.g., info@; or sales@) and removing inactive addresses with no opens or clicks in the last 12 months.

2) Ensure your prospects will remember giving permission to e-mail them. E-mail recipients complain about e-mails they don't recognize. A confirmed opt-in

process can be helpful because it makes recipients less likely to forget that they asked to receive your messages. This also means being very careful about how you contact leads you purchase or e-mail addresses you append to existing data.

3) Use a form of e-mail authentication, such as DomainKeys (DomainKeys Identified Mail), SPF (Sender Policy Framework) or Sender-ID. These help to authenticate your messages with ISPs, letting them know your e-mails come from you and are not phishing or spoofing attempts, which in turn can improve deliverability.

4) Avoid spam complaints by using reasonable mailing frequency and ensuring relevant e-mails. Using customer behaviors to trigger e-mails, as opposed to sending batch blasts, can dramatically improve relevancy.

5) Make sure your e-mails look right in multiple e-mail clients; a poorly rendered e-mail is more likely to trigger a complaint.

Phil Fernandez is the CEO of Marketo (www.marketo.com), a provider of b-to-b marketing automation software.

Originally published Nov. 10, 2008

How measurement tools can help you market through tough times

BY KAREN J. BANNAN

CUTTING COSTS AND wringing additional revenue out of existing products is always a good idea, but never more so than now. Yet most e-mail marketers don't know that they can contribute to this strategy by gathering—and acting upon—the right e-mail marketing metrics. “Marketers can improve e-mail marketing with the adoption of different e-mail metrics for use in targeting and integrating that data with Web analytics,” said David Daniels, VP-research director, JupiterResearch. “But that kind of sophistication isn't there for most.”

Only 40% of marketers use click data to segment their lists, Daniels said, while only 25% use recency of purchase to segment data. Even fewer marketers pay attention to things such as customer profitability (18%) and Web site click-stream (9%) to segment lists and improve sales.

This is a big mistake, said Dave Lewis, CMO of e-mail technology provider Message Systems. “We've talked about metrics and e-mail marketing for years, talked about having to pay attention to them and standardize them; but today especially you need to use them to demonstrate marketing's value to the company in real dollars-and-cents terms,” he said.

IT COMES DOWN TO RELEVANCY

Dave Fowler, VP-delivery and privacy for Alterian, a provider of integrated marketing software, said it all comes down to relevancy. “Analytics help you market better,” he said. “Even looking at the basic points of connection can change a [prospect] into an engaged client.”

Marketers can do this by going beyond simple open and click-through rates, although these metrics—while less valuable today—are still useful. Simple e-mail metrics, which are available from almost all e-mail service

providers and professional e-mail marketing software packages, can help you segment your audience more effectively and keep lists clean.

“You should ‘trend’ this data,” said Jordan Ayan, founder and CEO of e-mail marketing services provider SubscriberMail. “Set a baseline of these metrics, and then look at them over campaigns. Did unsubscribes or blocks go up? Go back to the specific marketing piece and see what may have caused this and how you can fix it.”

When you have a baseline, you can test

“As the economy tightens, you may be asked to do things that go against e-mail best practices. You can use metrics to show how those strategies will harm your overall campaign.”

Jordan Ayan, CEO, SubscriberMail

small changes and see how they impact results, he said. Just as important, you can use the metrics to show nonmarketing executives why some e-mail marketing tactics won't work. “As the economy tightens, you may be asked to do things that go against e-mail best practices, ‘Let's go out and rent lists’ or ‘Let's go out and e-mail more frequently.’ You can use metrics to show how those strategies will harm your overall campaign,” he said.

BEYOND THE BASICS

You can make an even greater impact by merging e-mail metrics and Web analytics, said Bill Nussey, CEO of e-mail marketing software and solutions provider Silverpop, but there are several challenges you'll need to overcome first.

For one, e-mail marketing metrics and Web

analytics are typically owned by different departments; e-mail metrics tend to be drawn from the ESP's Web interface and overseen by the marketing department, while Web analytics often belong to the IT department and are generated by a different program as needed. There's also the fact that, with Web analytics especially, there's so much data available it's often difficult to figure out which metrics matter.

One of the easiest ways to begin merging e-mail metrics and Web analytics is to create trig-

gered e-mails based on Web site activities. For instance, you can send triggered messages based on products and pages that registered users who have also signed up for e-mails have viewed, said Akin Arian, director of product marketing and strategy for marketing software provider Unica Corp. You can also use this type of Web analytics to create special high-value segments within your list, he said.

“You can go to an analytics report and see how long someone stays on your site and how many pages they view,” he said. “Someone who goes only to one Web page probably isn't a good prospect. But someone who goes to many pages probably is and should receive different messages than you'd send to your entire list.”

ANALYTICS HELP SALES

Using such analytics can also help with cross- and upselling, Nussey said. “If someone bought this and you know they bought that, too, then you can upsell other customers based on those data,” he said.

Web analytics can also help you determine which stories or offers you place in your e-newsletter. For example, more popular Web pages and topics will also likely generate interest as newsletter content, Arian said.

Ayan suggested using Web analytics to compare site activities for those who come to your site from e-mail versus those who come from a paid search term or an organic search result. Doing so can help you improve all three marketing methods, he said.

As marketers are asked to do more with less, such improvements will be key. “Analytics isn't sexy; it's not the newest thing,” said John Squire, chief strategy officer at Coremetrics, a provider of digital marketing optimization solutions. “But it's something that you can do cheaply and repeatedly. As the economy fails, we'll certainly see more people doing that—doing tackling and blocking to drive business.”

Originally published Nov. 10, 2008

Behavior tracking can boost your ROI

BY LISA CRAMER

Question: How can behavior tracking help increase e-mail marketing ROI?

Answer: How do you measure e-mail marketing ROI? By the number of opens, number of clicks or number of hits on your Web site?

Real ROI is more than that, and there are a few other metrics you should track that denote success or a lack of it. E-mail marketing ROI should be measured by the number of qualified leads or the conversion rate of leads generated to deals sold. How much revenue was generated by that e-mail campaign? In order to get to the point where e-mail

marketing generates more than clicks—and generates leads that

convert to opportunities and sales—one must differentiate clicks from interest and, further, instill a nurturing process.

Does one click on an e-mail denote interest? Some argue yes, but that's an old way of thinking. Using behavior tracking along with scoring and nurturing, e-mail clicks can simply indicate a response to an e-mail, a curiosity. Behavior tracking coupled with lead scoring can give you some insight into the potential interest behind an inquiry. You can see what pages a person went to, what they downloaded and how much time they spent with you. You can also see if they've interacted with your company before in some way (online or off).

With behavior tracking, e-mail marketing ROI does not become a matter of opens and clicks but truly an indicator of interest. If that lead has progressed through important pages of the Web site and downloaded multiple items, it could represent an interested prospect. Behavior tracking on leads isn't just a one-time occurrence; the true measure of ROI for that marketing campaign isn't based on the initial behavior of the lead but on interactions over time.

Lisa Cramer is president of LeadLife (www.leadlife.com), a provider of marketing automation solutions.

Originally published Nov. 10, 2008

U.S. E-MAIL MARKETING CAMPAIGN METRICS

	Delivery	Open rate	Click-through rate
Q3 2006	93.5%	23.9%	7.3%
Q4 2006	93.9	22.5	6.5
Q1 2007	93.7	22.1	7.2
Q2 2007	95.1	20.7	6.2
Q3 2007	94.3	20.7	6.5
Q4 2007	97.2	19.8	6.1
Q1 2008	93.4	19.9	6.4
Q2 2008	94.9	19.8	4.7
Q3 2008	93.6	19.8	5.9

Source: Epsilon, "Epsilon Q3 2008 E-Mail Trends and Benchmark," January 2009

WEB ANALYTICS VENDORS AT A GLANCE

Company	URL	Phone	Products	Description
Bridgeline Software	www.bridgelinesw.com	(781) 376-5555	iAPPS Analytics	Web application management solution that features data-level integration; iAPPS Analytics' integration with the full iAPPS Product Suite offers users "analytics-driven" content delivery over standalone Web analytics tools
Clicky Web Analytics	http://getclicky.com	(503) 908-0059	Clicky Web Analytics, Twitter brand monitoring	Real-time Web analytics, views of data on Web site traffic, links to the sources sending traffic to adjust sites or content
Coremetrics	www.coremetrics.com	(866) 493-2673	Coremetrics Analytics, Explore, Impression Attribution, Intelligent Offer, LIVEmail, Search, AdTarget	Marketing optimization, merchandising, content analysis, ad hoc reporting, mobile analytics, impression attribution, targeted e-mail, search marketing, integration platform, benchmarking
Google	www.google.com	(650) 253-0000	Google Analytics	Free analytics product with segmentation, motion charts, custom reports and dashboards, AdWords integration, internal site search, benchmarking, trend and date slider, funnel visualization, e-commerce tracking, site overlay, geo-targeting
Lyris Inc.	www.lyris.com	(800) 768-2929	Lyris HQ, Lyris HQ Agency Edition, Lyris ListManager	Web analytics, e-mail marketing, e-mail deliverability tools, content creation, Web content management, search marketing, social media marketing, mobile marketing
Metronome Labs	www.metronomelabs.com	(412) 408-3167	Metronome Capture, Examine, Explain	Data management with built-in reports detailing real-time hits, page views, visits and visitors, Web site troubleshooting, query building, HTTP transactions
Omniure Inc.	www.omniure.com	(877) 722-7000	DataWarehouse, Discover, Genesis, Insight, OnPremise, Online Marketing Suite, SearchCenter, SiteCatalyst, SiteSearch, Test&Target	Online business optimization software, with real-time online analytics, path analysis, customized tracking via traditional online channels and social networking sites, commerce reporting, site design and optimization, virtual focus groups
Pardot	www.pardot.com	(404) 492-6845	Prospect Insight Marketing Automation	Marketing automation platform featuring lead nurturing, scoring, activity tracking, landing page management, e-mail marketing
Parker Software	www.parker-software.com	(800) 680-7712	WhosOn	Tracks how visitors use a Web site; allows visitors to communicate with business via Web page, live chat and click-to-call-back; live analytic reports
SageMetrics Corp.	www.sagemetrics.com	(818) 505-6409	SageAMP, SageAnalyst 10.0	Data aggregation, tracking, targeting, site process and path analysis, customer profiling, reporting, data acquisition and processing infrastructure
SAP Labs	www.sap.com	(650) 849-4000	SAP Enterprise SOA, NetWeaver, Ecosystem	Strategy planning, initiative management, scorecards, dashboards, reports, modeling, integration capabilities
SAS	www.sas.com	(919) 677-8000	SAS Web analytics, business analytics, data and text mining, marketing automation, marketing optimization	Monitors key performance indicators for factors that influence business metrics to refine marketing and service strategies
Unica Corp.	www.unica.com	(781) 839-8000	Unica Campaign, Unica eMessage, Unica Interact, Unica NetInsight	Self-service capabilities built on an open data model to analyze Web site visitor behavior. Role-based flexibility designed to enable business users to streamline exploratory ad hoc analysis and custom reporting
VisiStat	www.visistat.com	(408) 725-9377	VisiStat, LeadCaster, AdCam, PageAlarm	Real-time lead generation built on top of a Web analytics engine. Web site uptime monitor, online campaign conversion tracking
Webtrends Inc.	www.webtrends.com	(877) 932-8736	Webtrends Ad Director, Analytics 9, Marketing Warehouse, Score, Social Measurement, Visitor Intelligence	Manages, optimizes and expands paid-search advertising; measures online presence from static site content, customer behavior; visitor potential value, engagement; social measurement and participation
Yahoo Web Analytics	http://web.analytics.yahoo.com/	(408) 349-3300	Yahoo! Web Analytics	Web site analytics tool for medium-to-large enterprises provides near real-time reporting on where customers come from, who they are, what actions they take and how much value each visit, channel and keyword is worth; advanced data graphing capabilities

Glue Dots follows metrics to ensure postevent e-mails stick

BY KAREN J. BANNAN

GLUE DOTS International is a small company with a big reach. Its pressure-sensitive glue products are sold to industrial manufacturers as well as large craft stores across the country. The company sells through a network of distributor representatives who work with customers and create orders. To help those distributors identify new leads, Glue Dots attends seven to nine trade shows throughout the year. It also passes on leads generated by its Web site.

But Jenny Stagliano, Glue Dots International's marketing communications manager, said there was a problem with this practice: The company had no way of making sure distribu-

tors followed up on the leads. In fact, it wasn't uncommon after a trade show to get complaints from prospects who never received more information.

"We'd sometimes get calls from prospects saying that they didn't hear from the distributors," she said. "We needed a way to give prospects more information, and to make sure they were able to buy from us right away."

Stagliano solved this problem by creating special e-mail messaging that goes out post-trade show to an average of 180 leads. (The postshow messages go out in addition to the company's existing, monthly e-newsletter, which it sends to current customers via e-mail service provider Vertical Response.)

The messaging is designed to let

prospects know which distributors will be following up with them, and to extend special pricing and offers originally available at the trade show.

"We want people to feel serviced as soon as they make an initial contact with the company," she said. "We also wanted to let distributors know that if they don't follow up in a timely fashion, those leads will be passed to another distributor."

Stagliano's challenge was to create a newsletter that would have a high open rate and convert prospects into customers, which is why she did careful testing and metrics tracking before deciding on copy and design, she said.

For example, Stagliano wanted to see if moving the show special offer from the bottom of the e-mail to the

top would have an impact. It did, she said: E-mails with this information at the bottom had a 50% open rate, a 1% unsubscribe rate, 12% click-through, and 4% conversion rate. E-mails that lead with the show special had a 54% open rate, a 1% unsubscribe rate, 14% click-through rate and conversion rate of 7%, she said.

Today, every postshow e-mail that goes out leads with that show special message to help boost sales and conversions.

"Metrics are definitely important," she said. "They really help us target our sales efforts and keep pace with the best practices that are performed by larger companies."

Originally published Nov. 10, 2008

Case Study

HOW GLUE DOTS USED METRICS TO IMPROVE ITS E-MAIL MARKETING

Objective: Glue Dots International uses trade shows as lead generators, passing the leads it gets directly to its distributor representatives. However, reps don't always follow up with prospects.

Strategy: The company created an e-newsletter to send to prospects, and tested two versions. Using metrics Glue Dots was able to see which one was more effective.

Results: Glue Dots now sends a post-trade show newsletter with the show special highlighted at the top of the message, which results in better sales.

Canadian spam act adds bite

Stricter than the U.S. legislation, new law would address phishing, spyware and text messaging

BY KAREN J. BANNAN

THE CANADIAN HOUSE OF COMMONS in April introduced a bill to create the Electronic Commerce Protection Act (ECPA)—Canada's version of the U.S. CAN-SPAM legislation, with some significant differences. The bill seeks not only to cut down on spam but also addresses phishing, spyware and unsolicited text messages. It also lays out penalties for spamming, allowing businesses and consumers to take civil action of up to \$1 million (Canadian) against individuals and \$10 million against companies or groups that violate ECPA.

But what exactly does this mean for marketers that send e-mail to Canada? Matthew Vernhout, director of delivery and ISP relations at e-mail marketing company ThinData Inc., explained the most significant highlights of the bill.

1) In or out. One of the main differ-

ences between CAN-SPAM and the Canadian bill is consent. CAN-SPAM focuses on opting out; marketers can send e-mail to anyone as long as they have not opted out and their e-mail address was not harvested. The Canadian legislation will require marketers to have explicit or implied

consent, said Vernhout, who recently discussed the bill before the Canadian government's Standing Committee. "In Canada for 10 years we've had our privacy law that advocates consent-based communications," he said. Companies can e-mail people when there is a business relationship

or nonbusiness relationship. So, for example, marketers will be able to e-mail a customer who purchased something from them even if they didn't officially opt in, but only for a period of 18 months. This is why he suggested companies start adding fields to their databases today that will log when names are added to a list—the specific date—as well as what kind of relationship a marketer actually has with those contacts.

2) Update in time. Today, CAN-SPAM requires companies to remove someone who has opted out within 10 business days. The Canadian regulation will require opt-outs to be handled within 10 *calendar* days. "This might be an issue for companies that use 'multiple affiliates,'" Vernhout said. Making sure all opt-outs happen in what could be as little as a single business week may take some getting used to.

3) Show your face. CAN-SPAM requires U.S. marketers to provide a "from" address, a postal address and a Web-based opt-out. Under the Canadian rules, marketers will need to disclose the identity of the person sending the e-mail—and if it's being sent on behalf of a company, both companies involved must disclose their information, including company name and contact information, including a physical address. An opt-out link is not re-

quired, although unsubscribe procedures must be listed in messaging.

4) Share and share alike. The Canadian government is promising to "share information and evidence with their counterparts in other countries who enforce similar laws internationally," according to a press release. This means the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), the Competition Bureau and the Office of the Privacy Commissioner would be able to share evidence with, for example, the U.S. Federal Communications Commission to ensure people in Canada who are spamming those in the U.S. could still be prosecuted.

5) A central spam center. Under the legislation, the Canadian government will also create a "Spam Reporting Centre," which would act as a clearinghouse for all spam reports. The unit would disseminate evidence of spamming to "governing bodies." "I don't think it's any different than what the FTC is doing [in the U.S.]. It's building a history so they can look back and say, 'Are we seeing a trend,' and from there compiling the evidence against people so, when they go to court, they can bring a big document and slam it down," Vernhout said.

Originally published July 2, 2009

3 reasons to resist the temptation to send more e-mails

BY JUDITH NEMES

IT'S A TEMPTING IDEA during tough economic times: Turn up the volume of e-mails you send to customers and prospects in hopes of boosting revenue. But when it comes to sending out marketing e-mails, sometimes less is more, said Aaron Smith, principal and co-founder of Smith-Harmon, a Seattle-based e-mail marketing, strategy and creative services provider.

"E-mail is such a low-cost channel to send that people have the impression they can keep pulling that lever," he said. "There's a saturation level in the inbox that is unprecedented

right now, and you are far more likely to oversaturate your customer base, upset them and turn them off."

If senior management implores you to start cranking out more e-mails, there are some strong arguments you can make about why that could be a bad idea, Smith said. He offers the following counterpoints:

■ Lower lifetime value. Subscribers are more likely to tune you out or drop off your list if you send them too many e-mails, Smith said. The average value of an e-mail address is \$118, he said, and if subscribers are bombarded with

messages and ignore them, the return on investment diminishes. "You'll have a higher list churn, and you'll have to work harder to bring new people onto your list," he said.

■ Higher spam complaints. The more mail you send, the more likely you are to attract the attention of ISPs and people who report you as spam, Smith said. "People are marking you as spam even if they've already signed up as a subscriber," he said. "It's a trend that's really picking up steam now." If you're just sending more e-mails without crafting worthwhile messages, you will experience higher spam complaints, he said.

■ Brand damage. B-to-b marketers rely on e-mail for lead generation and can't afford to anger subscribers with too many messages. "It's possible that you can upset someone so much with your e-mails that they'll punish you in other channels," said Smith, who added he's talked to people who say they got so much e-mail from a company they stopped doing business with it. "Brand damage is the antithesis of what you want as a marketer," he said. "It's another hurdle you have to overcome to close a deal."

Originally published June 18, 2009



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ControlScan's 3-step e-mail program boosts engagement

BY KAREN J. BANNAN

ATTLANTA-BASED ControlScan Inc. provides security services to customers of merchant and acquiring banks. Specifically, the company helps small retailers—often mom-and-pop stores or online merchants—achieve the Pay-

ment Card Industry (PCI) Security Standards Council's PCI Data Security Standard (DSS). The standard was designed to help eliminate credit card fraud and reduce data and customer information breaches.

It's a difficult process, said Heather Foster, VP-marketing at ControlScan,

because even though the banks mandate that their customers become compliant, it's usually not at the top of their to-do lists.

"None of the merchants has any desire to become compliant," she said. "You have businesses that every month are fighting to stay ahead.

They don't want to allocate the time and technical resources to do this. As a security provider, we've got an obstacle to overcome before we even get started."

And it's not just ControlScan. Industrywide, compliance figures range from 1% to 9%, Foster said.

Six to eight months ago, the company launched a new e-mail marketing engagement program using Silverpop's Engage e-mail marketing tools to help boost security and credit card protection compliance rates for its customers' customers. In the past ControlScan sent out a single e-mail to all its lists explaining compliance—why it is important and how to sign on to its service. That didn't work, Foster said, because it didn't take into account where in the process a user actually was.

"What we did before was your standard mass blast to our customers' merchants," she said. "It wasn't building on relevance of what state they were in in the process. If you think about it, with 20 partners and each partner having thousands of merchants, there really is no way to help people become engaged by sending a single mass blast."

So Foster introduced a three-step engagement e-mail program, with all e-mails going out within the first 60 days of a customer's starting to work with ControlScan. At the same time ControlScan also sends a direct mail piece and includes a link to a custom microsite that explains the program. It also includes a custom 800-number for merchants that prefer to speak directly with a customer service representative.

Every merchant gets the same first e-mail. "It's an introduction: 'ABC bank has partnered with ControlScan to help you become compliant.' If people get involved right away and become compliant, they drop out of the e-mail campaign," Foster said.

If they don't, they are remarketed to based on the actions they have taken. Merchants that haven't logged on to the ControlScan site get a stronger, more urgent call to action.

The results of this approach have been impressive. One of the first bank customers to work with ControlScan's new e-mail marketing program saw open rates and click-through rates double. Even more important, its customers achieved a 22% compliance level. Other ControlScan customers are seeing similar compliance rates.

Going forward, ControlScan is about to start remarketing to these groups to ask those who have complied to do so again for the coming year and to remarket to those who ignored the requests.

"We don't expect that we will ever hit 100% compliance, but our partners are finally seeing higher levels of compliance, which is really their ultimate goal," Foster said.

Originally published May 21, 2009

MARKETING CHAMPION:

Connie G.

Connie

COMPANY:

National Restaurant Chain

EMAIL ACHIEVEMENT:

Early last year, Connie's marketing budget had been substantially cut. The traditional marketing campaigns she relied on to generate leads, brand awareness and drive sales weren't getting any cheaper. She knew she needed to find new ways to meet and greet new prospects — circulate, so to speak. You know — work the room!

Embracing the "social media" rave party, Connie drove integrated emarketing campaigns to Facebook and Twitter. Not only did she see a 14% spike in business, she witnessed how her happy customers responded to promotions by becoming fans and posting about their great experience at restaurants and local events. She's even started a Drink of the Month recipe club to generate even more brand Karma.

This restaurant chain now has even more fans... and so does Connie.

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The mandate to integrate

Online marketers should strive to make sure their efforts fit into an overall multichannel strategy

BY KAREN J. BANNAN

LAST FALL, WHEN DATA Inc., an IT solutions provider, introduced a new global project management tool, the company marketed the product using a combination of a webinar, direct mail, social networking, telemarketing and e-mail marketing. The company designed the webinar to explain what the new tool does and publicized it using direct mail, telemarketing and e-mail marketing. If an e-mail came back undeliverable, DATA used LinkedIn to reconnect with the contact.

DATA hasn't always integrated its marketing efforts so thoroughly, but when George Nikanorov, the company's head of marketing, took over his current position, he began preaching integrated marketing strategies and developed a strategy to match. Nikanorov was pleased with the outcome: The webinar was attended by about 3% of the 600 people who were marketed to, he said.

"Overall, it was a success," Nikanorov said. "At the end of the day, even if they didn't come to the webinar, we were constantly in front of them," he said.

Experts agree. "If you don't integrate e-mail with other channels, you're going to lose customers and lose money," said Julie Katz, an analyst with Forrester Research.

Here are eight tips to help you get started managing your own integrated e-mail marketing program:

■ **Start at the beginning.** A campaign will work better if you plan from the beginning to make it multichannel. When you decide on an integrated strategy after the initial planning work has been done, you lose out on economies of scale, said Scott Million, VP-business development for LeapFrog Interactive. "Depending on how many different [venues are used], you're looking at 10% savings if you've got two pieces of creative. If you're going to have three—say a banner, e-mail and a microsite—you're looking at a 20% savings."

■ **Bring all involved parties together.** Your media planner or advertising agency may not see e-mail as a key advertising channel. It's up to you to let them know that it is—and that leaving it out of the overall planning cycle is their first and biggest mistake, said Loren T. McDonald, VP-industry relations at Silverpop, a provider of e-mail marketing solutions.

■ **Use common logos and messaging across the board, including off-line efforts.** The call to action should also carry through from one medium to the next, so if you offer something in your e-mail newsletter, make sure that exact offer is visible when people get to your landing page, white paper or microsite, said Ian Wolfman, partner and senior VP

of digital agency imc2.

■ **Use company-specific words and phrases.** It's important not only to use industry terminology but also company-specific terminology in search, on your Web site and in display ads. Yet many marketers ignore this when writing e-mail copy. They don't apply their strategy to their newsletters, said Joel Book, director

of e-marketing education for Exact-Target, a provider of e-mail marketing software. "[Using] SEO—and specifically organic search—to attract potential e-mail subscribers to your Web site is one of the most cost-effective things b-to-b marketers can do to build their subscriber databases and expand the reach of their e-mail communications," he said.

■ **Use your site's search function to help target messaging.** If someone logs on and searches for a specific product, you're missing out if you don't use that information to target messaging, Katz said. If you're not already doing similar triggering based on integration with your CRM system, you should be, Katz said.

■ **Use e-mail to nurture paid search prospects.** If you click through on most paid search ads, you'll find plenty of product information, but what you may not find is an opt-in option, McDonald said. "The average paid search conversion rate is 2% to 4%. If you're spending \$100,000 on Google AdWords, the value of e-mail becomes, 'What do we do with the other 96 or 98 people?' It doesn't take away from the main conversion goal, but an e-mail opt-in can become a very strong secondary call to action," he said. If you get them to opt in, your ROI goes up when—several months or even several years out—a few more of those people convert to purchasers, he said.

■ **Make integrated buys, but save for last-minute deals as well.** If you're renting or sponsoring an e-mail list, you can boost your effectiveness by buying display ads on the company's or network's Web sites, LeapFrog Interactive's Million said. "If users have seen your display ads, they are more likely to recognize your company and click through in the e-mail," he said. "It helps with brand awareness."

You may also save money since many publishers and networks offer bundled discounts when making such a purchase, he said.

■ **Use mobile marketing to capture e-mail addresses.** Texting has overtaken calling on mobile phones according to Nielsen Mobile, a service of Nielsen Co. With so many people texting, it's a good idea to use offline media such as billboards, print and television to encourage prospects to text their opt-in to your e-mail marketing program, said Jeannine Mullen, the founder of the E-mail Experience Council.

"I'm a huge fan of asking for e-mail addresses wherever you can—at the trade show, on your last PowerPoint slide," she said. "When someone gives you their address, they are saying, 'I want to do business with you.'"

Originally published Jan. 19, 2009

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Memorable keyword, integration grab leads for Vico

BY KAREN J. BANNAN

VICO SOFTWARE, which markets its products as virtual construction software, sells "5-D" modeling software to commercial general contractors. The software goes beyond 3-D modeling by allowing contractors to click on a building element and pull up detailed informa-

tion such as lead times for materials, number of people required to complete the task and the hourly rate it will cost to build. Until this past fall, Vico Software was having a tough time competing for search placement.

"Everything we wrote was seeded with the words 'virtual construction,'" said Holly Allison, VP-marketing for

Boulder, Colo.-based Vico Software. "That was great, but only 500 people search for the term each month. We couldn't touch the term that everyone searches for—BIM, or building information management or model. The industry giant owns that keyword, and there's no way we are going to be able to steal that away."

The trick, she said, would be to create a new keyword that would gain market attention and create leverage in the search world. Allison started using the term "5D BIM" in all of Vico's marketing collateral, including its e-mail newsletter, which is posted on the company's Web site once it's sent out. The company also

started using the term in its webinars, e-mail sponsorship advertising and search campaigns.

"Anything that could be picked up [by a search engine], crawled or scanned got the term added to it," she said.

For example, the company does a weekly webinar for contractors called "Fridays With Vico." The company sponsors an e-mail newsletter distributed by Associated General Contractors of America and plays up the term and the webinar in that venue. It also promotes the webinar in its own e-mail marketing messages. All the images, lo-

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Operations, U.S. Ad
Sales, MTV Networks



Joe McCarthy
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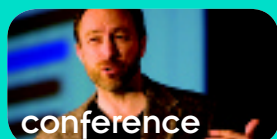
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• AMERICAN EXPRESS •
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• CBS • CITIBANK • CNBC •
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Case Study

HOW VICO INTEGRATED ITS ONLINE MARKETING

Objective: Vico Software has a small marketing department and needed a way to maximize its efforts while minimizing costs.

Strategy: The company designed and implemented an integrated marketing plan so it could reuse copy and art elements as well as build brand awareness and continuity in its marketing efforts.

Results: The company succeeded in creating a new keyword associated with its products. Today, more than 25% of all leads in the pipeline come from in-bound calls or e-mails.

gos and wording are the same, with each tailored to the specific channel.

"It's much more economical for us to take the same graphic element and reuse it rather than build new elements for each thing we do. And as the copywriter, it's so much easier to write an invitation to a webinar and whittle [it] down for online ads or the newsletter or Web site than have to start from scratch every time," she said.

The strategy has helped Vico gain attention for its new keyword, so much so that today 25% of all new leads come from e-mails and in-bound callers, many of whom are asking or writing specifically about 5D BIM. In the second half of 2008, Web site traffic grew by 62% and newsletter open rates increased to 19.1%, with 12.4% of those who opened clicking through on a desired action.

"We recently attended an industry conference, and we were walking to lunch when someone introduced themselves to us. When we said who we were, they said, 'Oh, you're the 'Fridays With Vico' people.' It's wonderful to know that this type of branding and integration puts a personality to the brand that we never could have afforded if we were trying to buy it," Allison said.

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Combining e-mail with social media

Links to social networking sites offer opportunities for customer conversations to begin with a click

BY KAREN J. BANNAN

SOcial marketing via e-mail, in one form or another, has been around for a while. Beginning about seven years ago, it was called viral marketing, and recipients were asked to forward e-mails to their friends and colleagues. However, it has faced challenges in the b-to-b world. ¶ “The reason is, it really didn’t start a conversation,” said Ryan Deutsch, senior director-market strategy with StrongMail Systems. “It was very one-sided.”

E-mail combined with today’s social networking offerings such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter, however, is a whole different story, he said.

“We’re seeing the idea of sharing to social really taking off. By clicking a link, people are sharing content in a place where it can start a dialogue or a series of replies. Businesses are now reaching and engaging influencers that they never would have touched in the past.”

Interested in taking your own e-mail marketing program to the social realm? Here are seven tips from Deutsch to help you get the most of your efforts.

1) Use your ESP’s social marketing capabilities. Today, most major ESPs (such as StrongMail and Silverpop) and e-mail software providers are making it easy to send your e-mails directly to your Facebook page, for example.

2) Create your own social network.

IBM Corp. has nearly 45 community sites that are available from the IBM.com home page. Site visitors can discuss IBM products and industry topics. These discussions create good fodder for e-newsletters, and they are also good seeding grounds for specific articles from new e-mail newsletters, both of which can create new opt-in sign-ups, Deutsch said. “These go beyond peer reviews or product rankings because they are spontaneous and fresh,” he added. “You can

take this content and add a section to your e-newsletter devoted entirely to hot topics within the social environments you’ve created. We’ve found for our clients that these are some of the hottest and most clicked-on links in their newsletters.”

3) Add opt-in links to all marketing collateral. If, for example, you post a new video on your Facebook page, make sure that video contains a link at the end so viewers can opt in. Once it’s shared across a virtual network you’ll be reaching hundreds if not thousands of prospective new customers. Give them a way to ask for more information.

4) Use your status to publicize your e-mail newsletter. Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter all give users the option to publish information—in effect tease an announcement—as soon or as late as you want to, said Deutsche. “Once you know what you’re writing, you can start talking about it on your social networking sites. Publish a status update the day before you send your newsletter out to remind people it’s coming, and get them excited about it,” he said. “You can even send them to the corporate Web site ahead of time so they can sign up if they aren’t already on your list.”

5) Change your layout. If you’re sending people from a social media site to your Web site or asking them to download a white paper or view a video, opt-in links must be extremely

visible. “You can’t bury the link at the bottom anymore,” Deutsch said. “If someone cares enough to check something out, you need to give them a very obvious way to stay engaged.”

6) Use the search functions. You are already (hopefully) following your company and product names via Google e-mail alerts. You can do the same on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn to gain market knowledge and good ammunition for e-mail marketing. “Twitter search, for example, allows you to follow everything that’s mentioned about your company,” Deutsch said. Now you’re hearing things you would never have access to. You can then, for example, take the good and the bad that’s being said and respond to that in your e-mail marketing. For example, “Here’s a tweet we heard about a complaint, and here’s how we’re going to fix it.”

7) Be a joiner. You can get more people interested in what you’re saying by becoming a trusted source. By joining LinkedIn groups, and responding to questions, and joining Facebook groups and getting involved in discussions, you set your company up as a resource and an expert. “It’s almost as if these groups are another complementary channel to your e-mail marketing,” Deutsch said.

Originally published April 2, 2009

Technical difficulties don’t erase video’s viability

Question: How do I incorporate video into e-mail?

Answer: Incorporating video into e-mail offers a unique opportunity for marketers to connect more strongly with their audience. But using video in an e-mail campaign has to be done correctly. The wrong kind of video will frustrate recipients, whereas the right one will create a powerful brand experience.

First and foremost, it’s important for marketers to be realistic. Most e-mail clients, including Outlook 2007 and the majority of Web-based providers, disable the scripting mechanisms that enable video to be played. This means few recipients will be able to view a video directly from an e-mail.

Several companies are introducing new programs and technologies that will ensure not only your e-mails are delivered and rendered properly but that the video will actually play within them as well. As more ISPs get onboard with supporting video in e-mail, the more opportunities marketers will have to explore this new channel to influence their customers.

Until then, marketers should use a

click-to-view link—whether in the form of a graphic simulating a video player or a prominent call-out—in the e-mail that directs the viewer to an external landing page that plays the video.

The best video content also includes tangible calls to action, such as “learn more” or “get 10% off now.” And since video is viral in nature, smart marketers are also adding a “forward to a friend” button in their e-mail campaigns, because it’s always more impactful to receive a video from a friend rather than a company.

Always remember: If viewers cannot decide whether or not to view the video, pause it or control the volume, they’ll likely be annoyed or frustrated. Also, if the content is not relevant and engaging, a marketer risks doing more harm than good to its brand. Before jumping too fast, marketers must make sure it makes business sense to test the waters with video and understand the potential risks.

Julian Scott is executive creative director at e-mail marketing provider Responsys (www.responsys.com).

Originally published June 25, 2009

Question: Is e-mail marketing becoming less important with the rise of Web 2.0 communications?

Answer: Absolutely, positively not. Now, please keep in mind that I am an e-mail marketer and not a purveyor of social networks, but I feel it is safe to say that as people flock to social networks—blogs, wikis and other Web-based communities—they rely heavily on the e-mail channel to keep them connected to other like-minded members. In fact, as businesspeople and consumers interact with greater frequency via multifaceted Web 2.0 channels, they’re going to expect all their other legacy communications to follow suit.

E-mail plays an increasingly important role in making Web 2.0 successful. Because customers aren’t always logged into their online communities, they rely on e-mail to keep them informed of relevant updates, such as new content and messages from other members. This e-mail notification process not only keeps users engaged in their communities, it’s also helping to drive the site visits and page views that make the Web 2.0 business model so successful.

Companies that leverage Web 2.0 technology understand that the supporting e-mail communications are an opportunity to further engage their members. User-generated content is an excellent example. As members of communities create content within a social network, why not insert that highly relevant content into e-mail campaigns or alerts? Companies need to focus on proving this type of superior relevancy—i.e., e-mails that people can’t live without.

No matter where you are in taking advantage of Web 2.0 tools, keep in mind that to be successful you’ll need to customize, deliver, track and optimize both your marketing and transactional e-mail. You’ll need tight integration with backend systems to enable continuous, member-generated e-mail communications; powerful personalization capabilities to keep users engaged; and the pricing model and scalability to accommodate rapid user growth.

Ryan Deutsch is director of strategic services at StrongMail Systems (www.strongmail.com), a provider of e-mail marketing solutions.

Originally published Jan. 13, 2009

Optimize e-mail for mobile devices

BY JUDITH NEMES

ARE THE E-MAILS you send to customers and prospects viewable on a mobile device? It's a question that has become critical to marketers as more businesspeople rely on smartphones when out of the office.

"E-mail recipients probably aren't going to buy something from another company on their BlackBerry or iPhone, but they certainly might flag something or take action on it later back at the office," said Janine Popick, CEO of VerticalResponse Inc., a San Francisco-based e-mail marketing service provider.

Many smart phones aren't user-friendly when it comes to reading large chunks of text or viewing big images, so marketers must tweak their messages to appeal to b-to-b subscribers scanning their e-mail initially from a mobile device, she said. Popick suggested the following tips to maximize the punch of e-mails—whether they're read at the desk or on-the-go.

■ **Survey your subscribers first.** Try to determine what percentage of e-mail recipients is reading your messages initially from their smart-

phones, Popick said. One way to do that is to add another question during the opt-in survey. If a high percentage of registrants affirms they are using their iPhones often to read your e-mails, you might consider rethinking your overall campaign to make it more amenable to handheld devices, she said.

■ **Keep subject lines compelling and concise.** Because some recipients may see only a subject line—and not any of the text of the e-mail—on their phone, marketers need to craft a great phrase there to grab the attention of all recipients, Popick said. "It should be short, sweet and to the point," she noted. Also, she said, avoid using the "from" label in your subject line to save space.

■ **Place critical information at the top of the e-mail.** Because some mobile phones do show a few lines of text right away, try to convey the most important pieces of information in the first lines of the text, Popick said. Besides, she said, "people hate scrolling on their phones, so you want to avoid that by making your message as concise as possible.

■ **Include a text version with an**

HTML and "call" link, too. Many older mobile devices can't show HTML versions of an e-mail, so it's a good idea to include a text version of your message as well, Popick said. The default setting on the phone will recognize which version to show its user.

In addition, many smartphone users don't like to download the rest of e-mail messages when prompted. For that reason, marketers should keep their messages very short and include a "call" link to connect recipients directly to the company if recipients want more information right away, Popick said.

■ **Consider using your logo.** Popick is a fan of placing logos near the top of an e-mail for branding reasons, even though some mobile devices don't render images as well as others. "Mission and branding is really big for b-to-b marketers," she said. Placing your logo in the e-mail probably won't hurt you—even if the image doesn't render properly, she said. "Just make sure your image isn't everything you're showing at the top."

Originally published Aug. 13, 2009

How RSS can complement e-mail marketing

BY KAREN J. BANNAN

A FEW YEARS ago, RSS (really simple syndication) was being touted as a replacement for e-mail. The technology, the theory went, would let marketers create frequent Web content updates that would then be "pulled" from a subscribed user's RSS reader. Marketers could have people subscribe to RSS news feeds like they did e-mail lists but not have to worry about bounces or deliverability issues. Clearly, though, that didn't happen—and never will.

Instead, RSS has emerged as a strong complementary tool for e-mail marketers, especially as more and more Web content is repurposed in e-mail newsletters. Want to offer an RSS feed to your own subscriber list? Here are four tips courtesy of Derek Harding, CEO of Omnicom Group's Innovyx, an e-mail marketing solutions provider, to help you get started:

1) RSS works only if you are using it for frequently updated content. When someone signs up for an RSS feed, they do so to get immediate access to new information. If you're updating the feed only once a month or filling it with repurposed newsletter content, you're going to lose them. In fact, some RSS feeds have defaults set so that content that's more than seven days old won't show up in the reader at all. "Consider the urgency of your information," Harding said. Some good uses of RSS: Updating the media about new products or company information; sending out recent blog posts; or giving readers daily progress reports of a project or highly anticipated release.

2) Track and target your RSS feed. One of the early problems with RSS, Harding said, was that there was no way to tell if someone read what you were pushing out or who your subscribers actually were. Today, however, there are RSS tools such as SimpleFeed that help marketers track usage—when people read their feeds and what they are reading—and couple those data with demographic data. This allows marketers to create targeted feeds, much like they segment their e-mail marketing lists.

3) Promote RSS using e-mail and promote e-mail using RSS. Some marketers are reticent about using their e-mail newsletter to promote their RSS feed, thinking that a reader will choose one medium over the other. While this may happen, Harding said, it shouldn't matter. What's important is to enable prospects and customers to connect with you in the way they want to. "People get caught up measuring success by the size of their e-mail marketing lists; but they should be thinking about how well they are getting their message out," he said. "If someone switches to an RSS feed, they might be getting your message in a more timely manner and reading it more closely and more frequently."

4) It's OK to double-dip sometimes. With more companies using blogs, which are common RSS targets, as newsletter fodder, you might be nervous that someone who subscribes to your blog's RSS feed might be turned off by seeing the same content repurposed in your e-mail newsletter. You can still use blog content in the newsletter, Harding said. The trick is how you do it. Avoid using a blog post as your first item, and think about writing original commentary to go with that post. "Maybe the reference here is, 'Here's what you would have seen if you were on our RSS feed,'" he said.

Originally published Sept. 3, 2009

"If someone switches to an RSS feed, they might be getting your message in a more timely manner and reading it more closely."

Derek Harding,
CEO, Innovyx

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