

Inside Edge

Improve your Email Marketing

Now, more than ever before, individuals and organizations perceive the value of email marketing as a low-cost method of reaching out to potential customers. In this edition, we throw light on some best practices to ensure that your email campaigns are targeted, effective and measurable as well. What email marketing techniques and best practices can you adopt to influence positive decision making in your target audience?

Most marketers see Email marketing as the inexpensive alternative to online advertising. It's the common glee they experience in "one click and I can reach millions". The important word here is "reach". Being able to cut through the clutter, pass spam filters, not lie idle and unopened in an inbox, encourage clicks on embedded links and finally, initiate desired action. These are the real test results of email marketing success. In remaining the work horse of Internet marketing, email has lurked into the muddy waters of "batch and blast", where a million people may be sent a single email message that lacks personalization, customization and therefore, effective targeting.

Rather than a broadcast or mass marketing medium that it is often misunderstood and underutilized as, Internet marketing experts are now propagating the use of appropriate technologies to communicate focused email messages to specific audiences. Segmentation and behavioral targeting are the recommended methods in order to yield optimum email results.

According to MarketingSherpa and Marketing Experiments, leading research firms specializing in Internet marketing, the key principles of Email Optimization are: $eme = rv (of + i) - (f + a)$

Wherein

"eme" = email messaging effectiveness index

"rv"= relevance to the consumer

"of"= offer

"I" = incentive to take action

"f"= friction elements of process

"a"= anxiety about entering information

Going by this best practice formula, the 3 primary factors in the effectiveness of an email are:

Relevance – The compatibility of an email offer to a visitor's motivations

Offer – The value you promise in your email capture in exchange for a subscriber

Incentive – An appealing element introduced in your email capture process to achieve a desired action

As a business owner, it is critical for you to understand the attitudes of different consumer groups that form your target audience. All of the above factors influencing email marketing success are dependent on consumer attitudes. These attitudes are also what determine why the same email may be considered spam by some and legitimate by others. As Stefan Tornquist, Research Director, MarketingSherpa says, "Spam is in the eye of the beholder. So is reputation".

The results of a survey by Forrester Research show that only 30% of those aged 18 to 34 think "e-mail offers are a great way to find out about new products or promotions". By contrast, 48% of those 35 to 54 agree with that statement. People comfortable with technology are most likely to welcome and be swayed by commercial e-mails. In their case, 72% often buy things advertised to them through e-mail.

Being relevant to a consumer is hugely a question of timing, as motivations, attitudes, needs and desires, all change. Securing an ongoing relationship by gathering information about an email recipient at various stages can help you remain relevant. The majority of retailers take the "getting to know you process" slowly by requiring only an e-mail address when consumers sign up for a newsletter.

Although one of the oldest tools in email marketing, newsletters, not surprisingly, still work!

As a small business owner how are you leveraging email marketing to grow your business? Contact WSI today to learn more about our affordable email marketing solutions and proven Internet Marketing strategies which will help you effectively communicate and measure the success of your e-business.