Email marketing: how it evolved and where it stands

Business, Marketing

Astechnologytook over, manual labor took a backstage. Most business operations, business relatedcommunicationand marketing has gone through a transformation in the past 50 years. Communication through email started 42 years back with Ray Tomlinson's first ever email. Using the Web to send messages has since then evolved, and that too for the better. Moneyand time have both been an issue for us when it comes to run a business. The man has since the evolution of barter system, come up with ideas that make business and franchise easy, time and cost-effective.

Email as a marketing platform started way back in 1978. The benefits of online marketing as compared to offline marketing is what market researchers have been studying for years now, and looking at the statistics on email marketing, it seems that this communication platform is soaring higher than one could have thought.

Remember the postal mail days?
If you were born in the 1980s, you will know what it is to wait for a mail to reach a destination and what it is to wait for a reply. It was not before 1991, that the internet took over the human understanding of things. It may seem very absurd now, but the physical mail box made a lot of difference then. TV, newspaper and postal pamphlets were related to advertising and marketing. No one could think the DOS and the language programming system, the computer, could actually make communication so much interesting. Previously promotional flyers would come from local stores and enterprises; email has made global messaging within our reach. Now, email has replaced the costly promotional postcards and catalogs for global brands.

Though we will send and receive products in packages through posts and couriers, but you will agree that email will reduce the communication cost to a greater extent. People in the 1990s, would pay for the postcard printing, and then pay for it to be mailed. This followed by a long period of waiting until the post office delivered the postcard. So any time bound offer would lapse by the time the postcard reached the recipient. So, no way a postal mail could cater to the interest of the marketer looking forward to up-sell or cross-sell any product or service.

Email gained impetus in 1991 with the internet influencing communications for types of purposes. So, whether for message customization, market segmentation, timed frequency or business relevancy, email became one of the most used communication channels. Let us have a look at the history which witnessed the beginning of email:

The year 1991: The Emergence of the Internet
Gary Thuerk, the marketing manager of Digital Equipment Corporation, was the first person to use email as a marketing channel. In 1978, he used Arpanet to send emails to 400 users to promote DEC machines. This had been a major breakthrough in the field of business and marketing, which helped DEC with sales worth $13 mn.

It was in 1991 that the internet took birth and was in its initial stage of making the world realize its worth. The founder of the internet, as many experts would put it, was CERN, the nuclear research organization based in Europe. The company published a paper named as the " New World Wide Web Project". Experts documented that 100% of the bandwidth of the

internet was being used during the latter 1990s. 1996 and 1997 saw the major hikes in the usage of the internet as well as email. We will go into the details of the email, as a medium of communication in the coming paragraphs.

E-mail, the substitute of physical mail in the form of electronic media has been helping mankind in gathering and processing information through real-time communication over the past decade.

The year 1996: Email gets its recognition through Hotmail

Hotmail, known as the Hotmail in 1996 became the first email service across the Web. Sabeer Bhatia and Jack Smith launched it with relevance to HTML. The Internet, since then, got a boon in the form of email service system, which was fast, guaranteed results at low overhead costs and could speed up communications across the globe at an unmatched frequency. Email, at that time, was available to people who befitted specific groups. For instance, professionals would have access to the corporate email address and college students would have access to their college email address. This limited the world of electronic communication to a larger extent, more so, when a particular ISP allowed access to email services on individual computers that were supported by that ISP. Over time, any public computer at a business station or a library could grant allow email service. Very soon, email took the markets by storm and was being used by larger groups. The email was out to the public for anybody with access to Hotmail, who was interested in communicating with someone who used the same email system. In 1997, as history was destined to witness, Hotmail was acquired by Microsoft to be later known as the famous " MSN Hotmail".

The year 1998: Email began to be supervised by the law

As one of the web-based email services, Hotmail became the largest in the world as per comScore data. To ensure every email marketing campaign included an opt-out option, in 1998 the Data Protection Act was updated. The Can Spam Law saw its birth in the US in 2003, which showcased certain regulations permitting the use of commercial emails. Europe too called for the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations in 2003. The next year, the Sender Policy Framework (SPF) was launched to prevent email spam through a sender IP address validation process.

Hotmail, being the most widely used email service system in the world, Yahoo being the second most used email system, Gmail stands in the third position making the future bright for email communication. What we see of the recent reports on email marketing compels us to look into how it all began. The DMA reported in the former part of 2016 that more than 75% of revenue comes from triggered email campaigns that help to increase customer lifecycle.

The year 2011: The Birth of Email Marketing

As a direct b2c or b2b communications, an email showed up in full form in the year 2011 in theApple iPhones. About 75% of iPhone owners used email as the most interesting internet activity on their phones. Approximately, 40% of email campaign recipients were mobile users as reported in 2012. By 2012, it was reported over 40% of marketing emails were opened on a mobile device. So, emails have now become accessible anywhere and by everyone in the world, thanks to technology.

MailChimp, Aweber, campaign Monitor, FreshMail, iContact are few examples

of trending email marketing software that schedule customized email sending to business contacts and customers. This marketing software also tracks the activity of every email sent. Most mid-sized and big-sized companies focus on email marketing as a way to increase revenue, and most of them also use such email marketing solutions for achieving the same. Your email marketing strategy today is credited to the birth of email many years ago, so enjoy it benefits to its complete potential.