

Going digital with email marketing marketing essay



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Nothing has affected our society over the past two decades more than the continued development of computing technology and the internet. Internet-based tools such as websites, social media, e-commerce, and email touch our everyday lives in some way, both personally and professionally. As a result, the business community has recognized the reach of the internet throughout the world and is aggressively seeking ways to harness the power for greater financial gain more than ever. Despite the rapid enhancements of internet-based business, email remains a consistent element of marketing campaigns and is considered the most mature of the web-based marketing platforms.

The possibilities and effectiveness of email are limitless when reviewing these 2009 email statistics posted by Pingdom. com (<http://royal.pingdom.com>). With over 1.4 billion email users worldwide, firms have the ability to expand and target potential customers globally. The significant factor about this medium is that it continues to grow. Joe Soltis (2007), with Fathom SEO, stated that email has shown a 14.6% growth rate from 2002 to 2007.

Pingdom. com (<http://royal.pingdom.com>) expounds on the growth statistics by saying that the number of email users grew by 100 million from 2008 to 2009. Although email has been around since the earliest days of the internet, it continues to hold value and relevance in the marketplace.

The prospect of growth and market reach is only one advantage of an email marketing program. Transitioning your collateral from the traditional printed piece to an electronic format distributed via email can produce cost savings of 50% or more. One of the most important aspects of an email campaign is your ability to measure the deliverability and response of each individual as <https://assignbuster.com/going-digital-with-email-marketing-marketing-essay/>

well as their actions, also known as conversions, within your media. By analyzing your readers' actions, you have the ability to refine your email approach and provide your reader with more relevant and diverse forms of content in a fast and timely fashion that print cannot replicate. The ease in which email can engage a reader's response only solidifies this creation of a mutually beneficial relationship between the firm and client. What firm would not be thrilled to have a mutually engaging relationship with their client?

Providing timely and relevant content to your readership comes with quite a few challenges. Managing a recipient database with accurate information while attempting to expound on the various demographic traits recorded for each recipient requires technical and marketing expertise. Evaluating responsiveness and website traffic is a continuous process that will challenge the discipline of any firm. Creating a mindset of a willingness to change at a moment's notice can be difficult and affect the morale of your employees. Developing a content tagging, labeling the content type or subject, storage, and retrieval system is crucial to providing personalized, unique content to a reader. Once entering the digital world, a firm must stay apprised of the latest technology and trends, which change frequently. These changes could negatively affect your marketing campaign if you fail to identify and alter your plan accordingly.

Once a decision has been made to implement email marketing into your campaign, the search begins for an Email Service Provider (ESP). A key element in the success of an email marketing campaign is finding an ESP with proper electronic storage file for customer information. A database is used to store customer information ranging from name and address to <https://assignbuster.com/going-digital-with-email-marketing-marketing-essay/>

method of contact preference and special interests. Many ESPs on the market offer similar capabilities. Ranked by Pivotal Velocity as an industry leader in deliverability, iContact offers 250 templates, 500kb image hosting, unlimited email lists, autoresponder and blogging for a minimum \$9.95 per month, while Bronto offers 148 templates, 10mb image hosting, limited email lists and responders and blogging for \$100.00 per month (<http://www.icontact.com>). There are also free database management downloads for those that prefer to maintain the database themselves.

Databases and servers are nearly synonymous in that you will need to confirm that the database program you have chosen is compatible with your server. While Microsoft's SQL Server is the most recognizable, other types of servers such as Oracle, IBM, and Pervasive will perform most of the same functions and to nearly the same capacities (Rzero, 1999-2008). Depending on the type of data you are trying to secure and what operating system you are currently running, you will want to determine which server is the right fit for your business.

In addition to a powerful database, you want flexibility of design from your ESP. Depending upon your internal resources, ESPs offer design modules that provide standardized templates for firms with limited creative resources. Companies with design expertise on staff should have the flexibility to customize their design, within the system, to fit their goal of providing unique and dynamic (changing) content. The system should be able to handle all types of media like audio, video, and animation giving the opportunity to offer value beyond a printed piece. Despite limited resources in the beginning, it is advisable to partner with an ESP poised to handle <https://assignbuster.com/going-digital-with-email-marketing-marketing-essay/>

growth as your firm evolves and adds resources to provide one to one marketing.

Providing unique and relevant content would not be possible without the proper analytic and metric reporting needed to identify specific demographic content. The process of identifying demographics and providing content relevant to that demographic is called segmentation. This concept is the basis of all internet-based marketing due to the extensive trackability available on all users. The latest mobile devices are centered around this ability to segment an audience and provide specific content relative to each segment.

Starting an email campaign begins with acquiring an accurate list of recipients. Most companies already have a database of their current customers, which can serve as a foundation for the event. Understanding that marketing campaigns usually attempt to gain audience share, it is important to add potential subscribers from your prospect lists created from your companies diverse marketing efforts. Begin by verifying the information in your current list is accurate. Companies like Freshaddress will analyze your data and compare it with their and their partner's databases to check for raw matches. They obtain secure permission statements from your customers then re-analyze the data and return the list to you with the most current and reliable information available (<http://biz.freshaddress.com>).

Should a customer list or prospect database not exist, the options of purchasing a list from a list management company or building your own are available. When purchasing a list, be sure to read the fine print. Many list

providers cross-reference or sell their lists to others. If your business involves sensitive customer information and nondisclosure agreements are in place, you may want to consider compiling your own data. Building your own will require creativity and resourcefulness. One option would be to set up a quality opt in website that will capture data from every customer or potential customer that enters the site, offer possible prizes for referring a friend or host a focus group and capture relevant information from the attendees.

Once an accurate database of customers and leads are in place, the segmentation tools provided by the ESP can be utilized. Analyze the demographic information for common denominators leading into a particular category of product or service provided by the firm. Focus your efforts on identifying the groups who would view your content as relevant. This will allow you to build rapport with your customers and prospects, which might inspire them to confirm membership and return to your site. If a customer is a single mother, offer advice, information or coupons that will peak their interest. If the customer is a senior citizen, offer information about retreats, retirement, and vacation homes. Strive to provide information about your business, products, and services that is relevant and interesting to your readership. Your ultimate goal is to engage with your reader in hopes of drawing them back to your site for purchase or use of your service and goods.

As you continue to build and grow your database, website maintenance and regular updates are critical. Customers want to be informed and previously read or outdated information will deter them from returning. Keep your <https://assignbuster.com/going-digital-with-email-marketing-marketing-essay/>

customers engaged by items that can only be accessed through your site such as animation, video, web-only reports or articles, and links. Offering access to these value-added elements in exchange for traits or trends provided by the reader is an excellent way to acquire additional information about the reader. With information acquired over time, the degree of segmentation capability grows making your relationship stronger.

With 247 billion emails sent in 2009 and 81% of those identified as spam, which is unsolicited email, the design and content of your email is crucial as you want to be identified as a requested, relevant message (Publisher's Playbook, 2010). Two specific items that will separate you from the spammers would be to offer a double opt-out option and maintain a proper balance of sending emails and not sending emails. If you overwhelm the recipients with numerous messages, you run risk of being an annoyance and alienating them. The double opt-out option gives the reader the opportunity to acknowledge and confirm their request for your information. This insures that the initial opt-in was intended while also protecting your sender ratings, which trend downward with extensive amounts of opt-outs. In addition, you are legally obligated to offer readers the opportunity to opt-out. If that option is not provided within your email, you could be penalized up to \$16, 000. 00 for non-compliance to the CAN-SPAM Act which regulates commercial email activity in the U. S. Giving two options to unsubscribe protects the firm legally helps insure the efforts are not going to waste (<http://www.ftc.gov>, 2010).

The renderability of emails is a crucial aspect in the design process. With numerous browsers, operating systems, and equipment capabilities, emails <https://assignbuster.com/going-digital-with-email-marketing-marketing-essay/>

produced in HyperText Markup Language, also known as HTML, have the greatest success of being functional across all internet related platforms. HTML also provides extensive flexibility of design by supporting all internet related mediums such as video, animation, or audio. Having the ability to apply HTML code provides you endless opportunities to customize every email effort you produce.

Not unlike any other marketing product, the design and content of the email must grab the reader's attention and encourage their interaction. Make sure you store the content on your company website and let an alluring email provide the link for the recipient. Once the reader is on your website, they have full access to all of your information, which gives you a better opportunity to spark a continued, interactive relationship. Make sure the email provides links to information that can only be obtained via a link to your website. This is your opportunity to offer content in ways that a magazine, newspaper, and even television cannot offer.

There are numerous ways to draw engagement as long as the method offers some form of value to the recipient. However, the value of your email does not have to be centered on the reader relationship. You have the ability to market your communications to others who would benefit from being in touch with the same people. A specific product vendor may be willing to pay you to promote their product video through your email campaign. Maybe that famous industry expert would like to promote their new book by posting a book trailer in your message. Numerous revenue opportunities exist if you review and compare your demographic attributes to your vendor or service providers.

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Analyzing the results of the email campaign, enhances your ability to add value to your customer relationship as well as provide further revenue gaining opportunities. Business has always been about identifying the needs of the public and offering a product or service to fill that need. Email marketing provides firms with the ability to look deeper into the lives and needs of their clients by monitoring their engagement levels. Through your ESP and web site analytics, you can verify, by recipient, if they opened the email, clicked beyond the email, identify where they clicked, determine the content of where they visited which implies their interest in that topic. For example, if you are an auto parts supplier and you just emailed a newsletter link to Joe Smith. Joe opened the email and clicked through to the newsletter hosted on your company website. You can see that Joe was interested in your newsletter article regarding the restoration 1960's model muscle cars. After reading the newsletter article on your website, Joe searched your parts database for a door handle on a 1967 Chevrolet Camaro. Take this opportunity to provide Joe with information relative to restoring cars and more specifically, restoring late 1960's model Chevrolet Camaros that exists in a special muscle car restoration piece on your website. Now that you have identified with Joe Smith, Joe will be more likely to purchase products from you and support your advertisers by returning to the site giving advertisers greater exposure.

Email marketing not only drives revenue through the message itself, but also has the ability to increase traffic on your website. The great thing about email versus a printed product is that emails can prove, statistically, the extent and habits of their readership. Advertisers base their ad dollar

spending decisions on where they will receive the most exposure. Knowing that you cannot only identify the quantity of readers, but the habits of those readers as well, your ability to draw in ad revenue is strong. Through the analytic module on your ESP, an advertiser can receive feedback, by campaign, on the response to their advertisement based on open and click through rates to their website link within their ad.

The statistical information available because of internet trackability is rapidly changing the advertising price model that has been in place for decades. The days of purchasing ad space in a piece for a predetermined amount of money is losing ground. Using the statistical information, software developers have already formed advertising networks. These networks provide ad placement services throughout various relevant web entities on behalf of the advertisers. Their goal is to advertise with sites that will offer the best opportunity to sell their goods or services. The networks use demographic and traffic information of the websites they use. The benefit to the advertiser is that they pay a fee per unique visitor, which allows them to pay for what serves to benefit their business. The model is comparable to what exists today with other media related sites which are based on a per view, hit, or click basis. This same model is also in the process of being replicated for all forms of content beyond advertising.

The internet continues to perpetuate significant change in the business community and our personal lives. Advancements in the mobile service and device arena are just a sign of what to expect in the near future. The combination of technology coupled with the advertising and content networks, our mobile devices are going to become our personal concierge.

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The pending change in internet-based marketing is going to be the advent of consumer generated marketing. This is where the consumer will have the opportunity to select the things that interest them and have those served directly to them. As tracking and segmentation capabilities expand, this content will become more personalized and unique than ever before.

The growth of email use over the past decade indicates that email will remain a powerful means to deliver information. The ease of integration into various systems, networks, and media types helps us realize and understand the sustainability it has shown throughout the last two decades. With the rapid pace of change and advancement technologically, the best way to keep up with the internet world is to come aboard and grow with it.

Otherwise, your firm will run the risk of falling far behind with no hope of catching up. The opportunity to market your business to the specific people and businesses in need of your services has never been better and will only improve with time. The advancement of internet trackability is a marketing specialists dream as they can maximize marketing dollars with optimum results. The tools are available, so why not harness the power and embrace going digital!