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Email marketing is a privilege

December 06, 2012 - Front Section

Marketing your business via email is a privilege and must be managed as such. You are allowing email senders the privilege of contacting you by opting in or NOT unsubscribing to their eblasts. We all read emails! That which gets our attention in the subject line makes us open it, so let's begin there.

The Subject Line: Your prospect sees it makes a quick decision to delete, save for later, or open right away. Cause a delete and you're dead in the water. Work hard on subject lines! Put yourself in your audience's shoes and write a short concise message that might make their day or solve a problem.

The List: Unsolicited email is annoying so be mindful of your privilege. I'm not one of those who uses only strict opt-in & verification procedures. I have built my list organically through networking and association memberships. I add people to my list without their written verification because I'm confident they'll appreciate my content. We have some kind of relationship, if even remote, and that is my personal standard for list building.

The Content: Questions: Does your audience have an appetite for your content? Would you eat it up? Is there really something in it for them? Are you trying to inform, promote, sell, educate, enrich, educate or bloviate? Are you building a brand or offering daily-weekly updates? Email can serve these different functions well. Determine the purpose of your email program, learn what your audience wants and deliver those messages to them.

The Frequency: Here are a few easy rules of thumb: Don't do daily (unless you do daily deals). Monthly is minimum. Weekly works! Out of sight, out of mind. (If you are out of sight, you're out of your mind!)

The Time of Day: Generally, I recommend early morning Tuesday - Thursday. Consider the times your customers are most likely to be thinking about your service category or product. If your audience expects your eblasts on a regular time schedule, stay consistent.

The Tools: Anyone with a computer can create attractive, professionally branded email campaigns. A few companies offer free accounts up to a volume limit. Constant Contact starts at \$15/month and goes up. Mailchimp, Emma, iContact, Mill 33 and VerticalResponse are a few other options you can check out. Costs are based on list size, monthly volume of emails sent or a combination of those factors. Mailchimp allows up to 12,000 emails per month sent FREE as long as the total list size doesn't exceed 2,000. That's an amazing value!

The Bottom Line: Email marketing works when you approach it as a privilege. Deliver relevant, value-driven content and a healthy ROI will be a slam dunk!

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