



“Spam-a-Lot” or “Sales-a-Little?” — Tips for Revenue-generating E-mail Marketing

We all know the feeling: you open your e-mail and there is the endless list of “new” messages. How do you sift through what is important and what is not? Were any of the those e-mails spam fillers or sales generators? Which e-mail subject line grabbed your attention and were any worthy of that two second glance?

The preceding daily inbox scenario makes it tough to justify the value of e-mail blasts. With so much incoming text clutter how do you get through to your customer? E-mail can be an effective promotional and communication tool, provided we remember some essential aspects of simple, clean and respectful e-mail marketing.

The subject is the object

Next to the “From” field, the “Subject” line in your inbox determines which e-mails are deleted, ignored or read. For e-mail marketing, if you can’t get to the point in a few short words then hello delete button! The subject line must hook, catch and grab attention. The line is always read, but will it convert to a

click and a e-mail body read? Seconds count; content counts.

To generate conversion clicks solidify two concepts into your brain: VALUE and BENEFITS. The subject line must grab the reader’s attention so your customer says, *“OK, tell me more. There might be a benefit here.”*

All too often promotional e-mail subject lines give you a topic or subject and nothing more. They speak of the what and not the action. They inform but do not transform. They give you a subject but no object.

For example, I recently received the following subject line in an e-mail promotion: “Don’t miss our trunk show - This weekend!” Guess who it was from? A suitcase salesman?; A travel accessories company?; An elephant embalmer? No, my optometrist! I love her office and have used her services for years; however, my first thought was “wow, this is a potential e-mail marketing client. They need some help!”

Which subject lines do you like best?:

- Company x announces a new product!
- Make 30 point margins today with our new widget 1200
- Open this e-mail for 2% immediate MDF credits!

Keep it short...and then shorten it more

Brevity is the spice of our digital life. There is just too much text and clutter to go around. So make it short. Make it short. Is it short? Short! You get the point. In short, if you can't say it in one simple, to-the-point phrase or paragraph then don't bother.

We have all seen those e-mail blasts with paragraphs longer than the library of congress. Endless text, exclamation points, product features, numbers and other meaningless info that draws us to "left-click, delete" choice. Think of the glancing blow and not the endless brush. Use a bullet point and not a howitzer page. If you have a point to make, make it! Period.

If you came up with the killer subject line, then most of the work is already done. Take the message of the subject line and draw from that, but make sure you hit the benefits immediately. In addition, use a simple sentence or phrase and then hit the bullet points. Bullets target your message. Focus the thought and eliminate unnecessary words, ideas or clutter that misses the target (subject line). Eliminate surplus words. Less is more.

Let a picture speak

It's been said that "a picture speaks a thousand words." In results-based e-mail marketing it *does* speak a thousand words. If you have creative graphics that reinforce the brief paragraph in your e-mail then all the better.

Make sure the graphic or picture communicates the story in one glance. For example, if you have a new product with unique features---show it in the picture. Or, if you are offering a special, time-sensitive promotion then use a photo or graphic to capture that event or sentiment. Not only does this reinforce your message but it also solidifies the image into the viewer's brain and thus their memory.

Don't be afraid to use a humorous photo. Just make sure the photo is indeed funny and catches attention. A good laugh is worth a thousand words, so use the right images for the right e-mail and results will follow.

Link for life

Links are a time and text saver. If you have a solid, brief e-mail and you want customers to see additional information, then place a link in the text. Make sure the link is not another message or extended product or service speak, but instead backs up the inherent message already in your brief e-mail.

Be creative with links. Link to an active page for feedback or link to a site where you offer your customer added value and benefits. Don't link just for links sake. Make sure the link is the added bonus to

an already compelling e-mail. One can also mention that the click is not mandatory or necessary but could be of benefit. Once again, get to the point in your brief e-mail subject line and body but offer the link as the added plus or bonus for what you are selling or promoting.

Test run

Send your first draft e-mail to some colleagues and ask them, “what am I saying?” Better yet, print it out and have your kids and spouse take a look. You know you really nailed your point home if someone outside of your industry gets the point. There is simply no substitute for an outside eye taking a look at your message. Remember, if a 10 year old can understand it, then you’re on the right track. This in no way implies your customers are stupid; it forces you to think, “*make it simple and get to the point!*”

Edit and spell check

I can’t tell you how often I see e-mails trying to sell me something that sppeelll things wrong! I am a terrible speller. The process never stuck in my brain, but don’t feel so bad if you’re in the same spelling boat as me. I had a college english professor (a brilliant Ph.D.) who could not spell either. Yes, that sppeelll was intentional.

There is little effort involved in running a spell checker and then reading it out loud for clarity, cadence and grammar. A clear and properly spelled e-mail increases your chance of getting out the message, but a major grammatical error or misspelled word

immediately diverts from your message and points to the error. One misspelled word or grammatical errors can kill a promotion and credibility. Use spell-check and have another set of eyes proof your work.

These are just a few of the tips and tricks to turn your e-mails from spam to sales tools. For more tips and tricks, give me a call at Atkins Marketing Solutions and I will be glad to offer more in-depth methods for effective e-mail marketing.

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