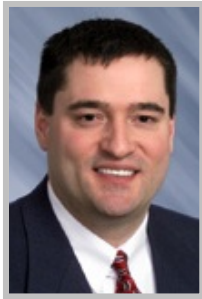


8 Ways to Get Smart(er) About E-Mail Marketing

by [Will Hipwell](#) of [GeoLearning](#)



I hate the word “blast” when it’s used by so-called sales and marketing professionals referring to e-mail marketing.

“We’ll send out an e-mail blast to our database about the event.”

“An e-mail blast will be the quickest and cheapest way to let everyone know about our new product.”

Does your CEO or Sales Manager ask you to do e-mail blasts? Are you the CEO or Sales Manager who requests e-mail blasts? Unfortunately, the e-mail blast is not smart marketing. There’s no strategy...no brand building...little or no measurement or tracking of results. Just blast away! It’s so easy, a caveman can do it.

But smart marketers know it takes much more than blasting an e-mail offer or a self-serving e-newsletter through the ether to maintain interest in your message over time, minimize unsubscribes, build the brand, drive lead generation and increase sales. Here are eight tips to help you (or remind you) to be smart about your e-mail marketing:

No one cares. As marketers, we send e-mail messages because we’ve got—or think we’ve got—something important or interesting to communicate with our audience. And we want some type of response. But too often marketing messages are full of self-serving fluff and hype that don’t take into consideration the needs and wants of the intended audience. The best advice I ever received about marketing was to apply the “Who cares?” test. When developing your strategy, message and offer, ask yourself if your intended audience should care about what you have to say. If the answer isn’t 100% in the affirmative, then you need to go back to the drawing board.

The list matters most. This is an oft forgotten law of direct marketing. Even if you have a poignant message, the world’s greatest creative and a compelling offer, it will all be for naught if you don’t have the right list. Finding and cultivating the right list is where you should spend the most time, money and effort (some experts suggest as much as 60-80%). Corollary: Suggestion #1 + Suggestion #2 = If you’re mailing to the wrong people with the wrong offer, your campaign is going to bomb.

Get to the SUBJECT. Assuming you've found your audience, the next hurdle in getting people to open and read your e-mail message is a compelling subject line. The subject line can make or break your campaign.

Who's it from? The *From:* line of your e-mail marketing messages is a great way to make sure the recipients recognize it and are comfortable with opening your email. People don't like to read mail from strangers. But messages *From:* a name they know and trust are welcome. Work to get recipients to put your *From:* address on their white list/safe list/address book of accepted e-mail.

Call to action. One of the most frequently forgotten rules of marketing is also the most crucial. The call to action lays out exactly what you want the recipients of your message to do. So design the message to make that path clear for the recipient, and easy to follow. Don't distract with too many links or offers. Make the call to action clear, as well as what recipients can expect when they click through.

Drive site traffic. Effective marketers continue e-newsletter copy that is longer than 2 or 3 paragraphs with a link to a Web page. This tactic enables you to provide more detailed information and offers to interested recipients, and helps drive site traffic.

Integrated branding. Make people see instantly that it is your e-mail marketing. This ensures that recipients can make a connection between your emails and the other marketing efforts. The company image and the image created by the e-mail marketing efforts should interact and strengthen each other. For example, an e-mail marketing campaign is nothing without a landing page, so make sure it supports the overall campaign and does not irritate or frustrate the user. Pay attention to the colors, the images, font size, wording and tone of the landing page. In the same way your e-mail message should reflect and build your brand, so should your landing page.

Measurement and testing. Most e-mail delivery services provide valuable reports about delivery and open rates, click-throughs, etc. If you're not regularly and consistently measuring the results of your e-mail marketing efforts, as well as testing the impact of changes and tweaks you make, then you will always be left guessing why a particular campaign failed or succeeded. Without measurement and testing you will never know for sure what works and what doesn't. Smart marketers have a solid idea about what results will look like before the first e-mail is ever sent. For the not-so-smart marketer, each campaign left unmeasured and untested is just another shot in the dark.

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