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Can Knowing The Basics of HTML Boost Your Email Advertising Campaign Response?

By Treci Cauthen

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Thousands of Internet marketers are using email as a major part of their advertising campaign. This is not the most effective form of advertisement due to the fact that there are lots of websites that offer online email software that allows promoters to reach thousands to millions of prospects using their safelist programs. Due to overwhelming response from promoters to use their lists we now face the issue of Spamming (emailing in bulk or by single mailing, about a product/service to anyone who has not specifically requested the information directly from you or flooding the Internet with many copies of the same message, in an attempt to force the message on people who would not otherwise choose to receive it).

But no need to fear their is a proper way to reach lots of interested buyers and co-affiliates without becoming black listed as a spammer. You need to deal with companies that will sell you fresh email lists that haven't been sold to hundreds or thousands of people.

Email list websites

<http://www.email-lists.biz/>

<http://www.thetrafficstream.com/?source=k>

Now stands the battle between Text vs HTML email formatting tactics for the fall 2004. Tests have been conducted and Ross-Simons' Internet Marketing Director Anne Driscoll said "We tested HTML when years ago just like everybody else, and it was four-times as effective as text. However now we're testing to see if text can convey an urgency that's not necessarily there in HTML."

Turns out it's "as effective or even more effective than standard HTML" for an urgent reminder that a sale is about to end. "It's less to do with deliverability and more to do with the way a customer interprets a message," notes Anne.1

What's the difference?

When you see colored text, graphics, words that are underlined (besides hyperlinks), bold text, etc., in an email, you are looking at an HTML email message. HTML allows you a variety of ways to format your message text, graphics and color.

A plain text message looks like something written in a basic text editor. Notepad, which comes loaded with your PC's operating system, is a great editor for sending text messages. Most professionals who

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send text messages use Notepad to edit their copy.

"Both formats can work very well in email marketing. A well-written text message without any graphics can perform very well and deliver results. Text messages are easy to create and closely follow the format of a professional sales letter which many marketers are already familiar with. HTML campaigns can capture their audience with a few well-placed visual focus points."

"Well-written copy sells better than weaker copy with fancy graphics. If you're new to online marketing, my suggestion is to start with text. If you really want to use HTML, you need a good designer. Collect some examples of HTML email advertisements you have responded to and model your campaign after them."²

Where to learn the basics of HTML websites:

<http://www.htmlbasix.com/>

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/4204/html.htm>

You also need to have a few sales letters ready to get the ball rolling.

Sample letters

Sample #1

[Date]

[Mr./Mrs./Ms./Dr.] [Customer's Full Name]

[Title]

[Company Name]

[Address] [City], [State] [Zip/Postal Code]

Dear [Mr./Mrs./Ms./Dr.] [Customer's Last Name]:

Don't lose this letter, or you'll lose your free gift!

[Name of Your Store] is having our [Name of the Sale] Sale, and we want you to be there, for outstanding savings on everything in the store.

And a FREE gift everyone will love.

Beginning [First Day of the Sale, Including Month, Day and Year] and Ending [Customer's Last Day of the Sale, Including Month, Day and Year], [Name of Your Store] will have huge discounts, up to [Highest Percentage Customer Can Save During Sale]% on items like these:

[Highest Percentage Customer Can Save During Sale]% off all [First Type of Product On Sale at the Highest Discount]. or [Highest Percentage Customer Can Save During Sale]% off all [Second Type of Product On Sale at the Highest Discount]. or [Highest Percentage Customer Can Save During Sale]% off all [Third Type of Product On Sale at the Highest Discount].

And not only will you save, but if you bring in this letter during the [Name of the Sale] Sale, we'll also give you a [Name of the Free Gift], absolutely free.

Mark your calendar now for the [Name of the Sale] Sale: [First Day of the Sale, Including Month, Day and Year] – [Customer's Last Day of the Sale, Including Month, Day and Year]. Come to the sale early, and don't forget to bring this letter, because our [Name of the Free Gift] supplies are limited.

And there's no telling when we'll run out.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Title]

[Your Company Name]

P.S. Tape this letter to your door—mail it to yourself—put it in the glove compartment of your car—just

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don't lose it or you won't get [Name of the Free Gift] for free.

Sample #2

[Date]

[Mr./Mrs./Ms./Dr.] [Customer's Full Name]

[Title]

[Company Name]

[Address] [City], [State] [Zip/Postal Code]

Dear [Mr./Mrs./Ms./Dr.] [Customer's Last Name]:

NEW! We've just received a shipment of thousands of new [Name of the Product] and we need to get them moving!

So we've knocked off the price about [Percentage Customer Can Save By Ordering the Product from You]%—you can get your [Name of the Product] right now for just \$[Price of Product].

We've never offered [Name of the Product] before, and we don't know exactly how you will respond to them. That's why we're offering them at such a low price.

We'll keep this low price for as long as we can, but if the demand is high, we'll be forced to raise our prices.

Sorry, but those are the laws of supply and demand.

So order yours now, while we're still offering this incredible introductory price—just \$[Price of Product].

Call [Phone Number Customers Call to Place Orders, Preferably a Toll-free or 800 Number] right now, and give our brand new [Name of the Product] a try.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Title]

[Your Company Name]

P.S. Don't forget about our return policy. Return any product to us within [Number of Days the Guarantee Lasts] days, and we'll refund your purchase price.³

Finally you need to decide which method works best for you.

Getting The Big Picture?

reference

1. Anne Holland <http://www.marketingsherpa.com/sample.cfm?contentID=2848>

2. Jason Lexell <http://www.businessemaillists.com/articles/text-vs-html.asp>

3. Sandi Stevens <http://www.bizine.com/salesltr.htm>

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Avoiding the Delete Button – How To Make Your Email Campaign Pay Off

By Diane Hughes

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Have you noticed? It's becoming harder and harder to get a good response out of email campaigns. Why? The more popular an advertising method becomes, the more overused it gets. When that happens, customers develop an "immunity". They are so overwhelmed by the dozens, or even hundreds, of emails that pop into their inboxes that they simply hit the delete button without even giving it a second thought.

So how do we, as Internet marketers, battle their complacency? There are several ways that have been proven to increase customer response.

I'll assume that you already have a customer-focused, sales-oriented Web site; and that your offer is a solid one that shows value.

1. Use Short, Concise Subject Lines – While personalization has been shown to increase response rate, there are several things that have been proven to decrease it. Long subject lines are one. Try to keep yours at 40 characters or under. Why? Many email programs cut off longer subject lines. Also, avoid "hyp-ish" subjects. The more personal you are, the better. Exclamation points, the word "free" and other trigger words such as "boost" and "skyrocket" are a sure ticket to the delete file.

2. K.I.S.S. – Remember this acronym? Keep It Simple Stupid. It applies to emails, too. Don't piddle around. Get your benefits in front of the reader immediately. Likewise, it is important to note that shorter emails have proven to out perform longer ones. It is doubtful that you'll actually sell anyone from your email ad – rather, aim to pique the reader's interest, and get him/her to click to your site.

3. Timing Is Everything – Didn't think that mattered? Oh! It does! The day of the week, and the time of the day all play a significant role in how effective your campaign is. For example: almost everyone is in a rush in the morning hours. This gives a greater chance that they will delete any email they do not absolutely have to read. Take note of your target customer's typical schedule, and send your emails during their "off times".

4. Give A Deadline – One simple instruction to act before a certain date can make or break your success. Don't neglect this vital

element!

5. Consider HTML – These days, most email programs are HTML

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compatible. In fact, over 90% of customers can receive HTML emails. Color – whether in print or on the Web – always increases readability (if done tastefully). Consider having your email converted to HTML to make it stand out in the sea of plain text messages.

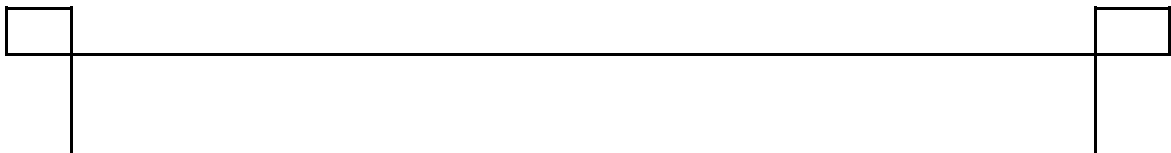
6. Give It A Break – Rather than writing long paragraphs (even a 3 sentence paragraph formatted at 65 characters per line looks long), write in short 1 or 2 sentence blips. This is easier on the eyes of the reader, and doesn't take nearly as long to digest.

The competition for your customer's attention is growing greater by the day. Refining your email campaign can help you avoid the delete button, and reap greater profits.

Diane Hughes is an accomplished internet entrepreneur and editor of the popular ProBizTips Newsletter. Subscribe to her newsletter for more tips, tricks, and secrets of the trade -- plus get HUNDREDS of eBooks, software and tools just for subscribing! <http://viralmarketzone.com/diane>



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