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E-Mail Newsletter Marketing Essentials

By Lee Traupel

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If Gutenberg were alive today he would be in publishing heaven! Forget the printing press, the web has fast-forwarded self-publishing in ways that are evolving so rapidly it's becoming difficult to integrate technology and process to leverage the opportunities. Any company, regardless of their size and marketing resources should be publishing an opt-in e-mail newsletter – it's a very low cost way to build community with customers, keep suppliers/partners/other informed and generate new business.

How do you get started? You must decide up front if you have the marketing expertise to develop your "newsletter creative" in-house and how you want to manage the distribution of your newsletters. Many companies turn to agencies/marketing services firms to help them develop the actual newsletter creative and also outsource part of the process to ASP (Application Service Providers), who handle all facets of the list distribution, signup and ongoing management.

Content format can be critical to the effectiveness of your newsletter – we typically don't recommend HTML (text with images/graphics embedded) format unless our client's product or service is very consumer-focused Plain old text is not as glamorous as HTML but it's a lot more effective in most cases – people want information, not fancy eye candy that's appealing to marketing geeks – keep your message, simple, to the point and with customer success stories or references when/where you can to drive credibility.

It's relatively simple to use a Word processor with a mail merge program to integrate the addresses (depending on the volume) with your message and then send out via your ISP. But, doing it in house can be very time consuming – you have to deal with inbound requests for people who want to be added to your list, "unsubscribes" (people who want to be deleted) and integrate your web site into the process, so people can automatically sign up with a back end auto-responder (automatic message) that confirms their sign up.

Most companies utilize an Application Service Provider ("ASP") to outsource the list hosting, signup and unsubscribe management processes and web site integration – typical costs are under \$50. per month based upon your number of subscribers (on average up to 10–30K), frequency of your newsletter mailing (rule of thumb would be 2–4 times per month) and other specialized features, such as bounce back deletions (deleting any e-mails that have a "bad address") and making the HTML code available with a graphic to sign up people directly from your web site. Be forewarned, most list hosting providers tell you up front they reserve the right to delete your account if they catch you spamming thousands of people whose e-mail addresses were not "opted in" (given to you with permission to market to them).

What do you want to look for in an ASP List Hosting Provider? You want great customer service, an online interface that enables you to easily manage the process, the ability to easily to cut and paste your text (newsletter copy), instant distribution of your newsletter and the ability to know at a glance how many subscribers you have on an ongoing basis and the number of new subscribers and unsubscribers.

There are lots of list hosting companies out there – I'd recommend including two on your short list. One of the oldest, most well established companies that has consistently won rave reviews for excellence in customer service is Sling Shot Media, LLC www.listhost.net – they've been hosting since 1998 (ancient in web time) and offer a wide range of consulting services related to all aspects of newsletter marketing. The other company to check out would be Microsoft's bCentral Services www.bcentral.com which offers list hosting as one of its services. I can't give them rave reviews for customer service, as they make you pay extra for anything more than e-mail support which can be a hassle at times. But, their list hosting interface is easy to use, works well most of the time and they are price competitive.

Finally, one of the biggest marketing challenges facing many small to medium sized companies is generating a newsletter subscriber list. I don't have sufficient space in this column to address this challenge – but, it's a classic go/no go situation; the longer you put it off the harder it becomes, so get started, the upside rewards are too significant to delay!

Lee Traupel has 20 plus years of business development and marketing experience – he is the founder of Intellective Communications, Inc.,

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The Significance and Benefits of Email Marketing

By Justin Brown

There is no dismissing the fact that e-mail, also known as electronic mail, is an indispensable medium of marketing on the internet.

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Internet as whole has a wide marketing area because of the fact that it is available high and wide throughout the world. This makes it accessible to almost every country and eventually to the people in those countries. E-mails are very techno-savvy and also very effective and fast. This is the reason that we can now see e-mails developing as an indispensable media of marketing.

Over the years individuals and businesses have started realizing the advantages of e-mail marketing. E-mail marketing carries a lot of advantages along with it. Some of the benefits include:

Speed:

This is the main factor as to why e-mail marketing is considered advantageous over other medias of marketing. E-mail marketing along with it brings the advantage of high speed. E-mail marketing has a very high speed of information transfer. It just takes a second for the person to transfer information from his working place to the internet, where anyone can view it worldwide.

Reach:

Another factor as to why e-mail marketing is considered a good option is because of the fact that it has a better reach to the people worldwide than other medias of marketing. E-mail marketing knows no boundaries and this helps people to continue to conduct their marketing work on a large scale. The higher reach of e-mail marketing attracts more people towards it and thereby assists the whole marketing process.

Inexpensive:

E-mail marketing is comparatively cheaper than that of some other medias of marketing. Individuals and businesses do not have to incur any special or extra cost to market their product or point of view. Being inexpensive, it suits many and thereby a lot of people resort to e-mail marketing for a large part of their online marketing efforts.

Effective:

E-mail marketing is very effective and a very popular form of marketing. The reason being, that they are very techno-savvy, very fast and still pretty cost effective. This whole package makes e-mail marketing very cheap and pretty attractive. This is the reason that e-mail marketing is effective and thus more approachable.

Personalized marketing:

E-mail marketing avails the opportunity to conduct personalized marketing. In this, people can send e-mails only to people whom they think would be interested in the topic of the message.

Thus we see why and how e-mail marketing has turned out to be an indispensable tool in marketing.

For more information and resources targeted towards using an
as a method of email
marketing, visit
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