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Half-Baked E-Mail

By **Harry Hoover**

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If you are serious about adding e-mail to your marketing mix, you should take e-mail seriously enough to develop a plan for it. Too many organizations launch a half-baked e-mail program and then are disappointed when it doesn't live up to expectations.

The plan does not have to be as long as War And Peace, but it must include a few key elements so that you can develop a focused, targeted, measurable program that gets results. At a minimum, here are the elements that I recommend:

- Objectives
- Audience Definition
- Key Messages
- Format
- Tactics
- Timeline
- Budget
- Measurement

Half-Baked E-Mail

First, determine what is it that you want the e-mail program to achieve from marketing and communications perspectives. Is this a newsletter designed for relationship management purposes, or is it a sales-oriented vehicle? Are you trying to build awareness, generate leads, increase web traffic, encourage loyalty, or close sales?

Next, you need to define audiences. Who are you trying to reach? What do you know about them from demographic and psychographic perspectives? Are you addressing multiple audiences? If so, do you need to segment your audiences and develop e-mails with different messages? How will each audience profit from our communications.

Now, what is it you want to say to each audience? What's the nature of the content? Will this include just editorial information or will it also contain some sales-oriented material?

Closely tied to messages is your format. Are you producing a newsletter with a lot of editorial material, or does it contain just brief snippets of information? Is it an announcement list, a discussion list, or just commercial messages? Think about your audiences as you develop the most appropriate format.

Your tactics section lays out tasks and who is responsible for them. What technology do you need? Do you have in-house e-mail capabilities or should you use an application such as nTarget (www.ntarget.com)? How will you build and manage your list? How will you acquire new subscribers? Who will create content, design and distribute the e-mail?

After you answer those questions, it's time to turn to your timeline. Develop a schedule for having your technology in place, building your list, creating content, designing and distributing the e-mail. Determine if this will be a one-time mailing, or if it will recur on a weekly or monthly basis.

Your budget may help you answer many of the questions above. Small budgets may mean you complete a lot of the work in-house.

Finally, it's time to establish criteria for measuring the program. An awareness program may call for some baseline research so you'll know how you are doing. A relationship management program may measure customer retention. Increased click-through from your e-mail to your website is also a measurable element. Sales-oriented programs might measure total sales from e-mail, or incremental sales increases with individual customers.

No matter what your objective in using e-mail, spend a little time cooking up a plan so your results won't be half-baked.

Harry Hoover is managing principal of Hoover ink PR, www.hoover-ink.com. He has 25 years of experience in crafting and delivering bottom line messages that ensure success for serious businesses like Duke Energy, InterCerve, Levolor, North Carolina Tourism, VELUX and Verbatim.

Food Is A Need, But Good Cooked Food Is A Want!

By Victor Nunn

The other day, I went to the famous restaurant that had opened recently in my locality. I sat opposite to the couple who were in their mid 40's. The waiter came & I placed my order. As is the human nature, after placing my order, I started peeking at other tables around me. Just then, my eyes caught this waiter, who had in his hand a large serving dish filled with small & medium sized dishes. There was something in the fragrance & fumes that were coming out that my eyes got fixed onto it. As the waiter came nearer, I realized that the dishes landed one by one on the table directly opposite to me.

Without even waiting for a second, the couple started to gorge at the food as if they had never eaten before. I thought "how indecent", but then the fragrance was so tempting that I had to peek onto their table & to my surprise I saw that all the preparations were without any exception, baked. Such was my state of amazement that I ordered one item from the list of baked preparations for myself. To my delight, after the first spoon that went into my mouth, there was no stopping it. I was also gorging at the dish just as the couple opposite to me was doing. Thus started my quest to find out more about what we call as baked food.

In non-technical terms, baking is a technique to cook food in an oven or microwave. However, there is much to this definition. The modus operandi of cooking baked food is to apply dry heat evenly throughout the vessel containing the mixture of uncooked food. The important aspect here is that for properly baking the food you need to apply the heat from all sides including the bottom, this is the primary reason that oven is provided with two heating elements; One at the bottom & the other at the top or sides to give all round heating.

Whenever baking or bakery comes to your mind, it flashes to breads, cakes, pies, desserts, tarts & the list is endless until your mouth starts watering & you order any one of the above. The physics in dry heating is that when you dry heat, you are actually changing the structure of starch that is present in the food in such a manner that it presents itself as the brown cover that the food shows. What happens in the baking process is that the moisture present in the uncooked food is sealed inside thus providing that aroma & taste to your buds.

The most common baked preparation is bread, Variations in type of ovens, the ingredients, and recipes used in baking of a bread results in the wide variety of breads produced around the world. It is the nature of people & environment that decides the type of food that is cooked or liked but the most common baked food items that are made all over the world include baked vegetables & cakes.

So next time, you want to try something different at a restaurant or you get into the mood of cooking at home, try Baked food.

Vuctor Nunn writes about

<http://www.cookwarecoupons.com/Categories/Cookbooks/Bread.html>

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