HOW TO HARNESS THE POWER OF EMAIL

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INTRODUCTION

Email might have been around for a long time, but it's still a linchpin in any digital marketing strategy. Many businesses will be emailing customers about the COVID-19 crisis which will lead to fatigue when people see yet another email in their inbox titled 'Coronavirus update'. Much depends on what your brand is and has to offer during the crisis. For instance, mortgage brokers offering advice on mortgage holidays will get more attention than a t-shirt company offering a special 'Covid-19 discount'. The trick is cutting through the noise.

The decade kicked off with over 56% of the global population having internet access, with the vast majority having at least one active email account. The importance of email marketing has never been more important.

EMAIL REMAINS ACCESSIBLE

Even on a small business budget, an eye-catching and bespoke email is within reach. This means almost any business can create email marketing campaigns to compete with much larger organisations. Using a powerful CMS such as HubSpot allows you to quickly build these campaigns using templates and then send out newsletters, check-ins and announcements.

According to Marketing Sherpa, 19% of people unsubscribe from mailing lists when brands are constantly trying to sell them something. It's to your benefit to prioritise blog posts, podcasts, tips, tutorials, videos, infographics, and other valuable content over promotional material.

AUTOMATION AND TECHNOLOGY IS EVOLVING

Email service providers give you access to the very latest automation features to create a human experience. This is done through technology, allowing segmentation, customer journey mapping, post-purchase communication, re-engagement and A/B testing.

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EMAIL BEST PRACTICE

Whether you're new to email marketing campaigns or not, it's always worth brushing up on best practices to get the most out of your audience:

1. Use welcome emails to build strong relationships and deliverability

2. Send emails at the right time to increase your conversion rate

3. Get the frequency right to grow a healthy and engaged list

4. Be authentic, seek feedback and ditch the noreply@ address

5. Craft and test your email subject lines for higher opens

6. Create engaging content to get more click-throughs

7. Test and preview before hitting send

8. Focus on the right metrics

9. Make your emails skimmable to increase your engagement rates

10. Use a professional email marketing tool to avoid the junk folder

HOW TO ENGAGE THE DISENGAGED

It's a fact of life that people lose touch. In fact, if you have an email newsletter, you've probably also got a list of subscribers who have gone dormant.

To get them back, you can reach out to them using effective re-engagement emails. To do this, you have to understand why they stopped connecting with you. Then, you can re-engage them with a personalised approach.

1. Ask unsubscribers why they became disinterested

This can be a simple, short email such as:

New message	_ □ ✕
To Name	
Subject <Subject>	

Hi Mike,

We haven't heard from you for a while. Is everything okay? We want to be sure our content meets your needs. In case you have concerns, we've included a link to a contact form below. You can also contact us 24/7.

Respectfully,

Your Name, Title

Send

HOW TO ENGAGE THE DISENGAGED CONTINUED

2. Address concerns you know exist

Sometimes you'll know why somebody is no longer engaging with you. Maybe it is due to a bad experience with a lender, or some personal issues that meant your communications were left ignored. Addressing these directly will help heal problems and get relationships back up to where they should be.

3. Personalise with more than just a name

Adding a contact's first name to an email is quite straightforward. But what about going a step further and mentioning things you know about their mortgage history to check in with how they're doing?

4. Write interesting and professional content

Sending personalised emails asking contacts to engage isn't always enough. Email content needs to be relevant, informative, well-written and interesting. This is key to maintaining higher engagement rates.

THE POWER OF THE NEWSLETTER

We mentioned interesting content being key to maintaining engagement, and newsletters can be your saving grace.

A newsletter is an email that offers your contacts a list of your most interesting content, news and announcements. It can be helpful for keeping audiences in the know and also in gaining traffic.

There are a few rules of thumb when it comes to building newsletters that work:

1. Balance your newsletter content to be 90% educational and 10% product.

2. Set expectations on your website's subscribe page.

3. Get creative with email subject lines.

4. Pick one primary call-to-action.

5. Keep design and copy minimal.

6. Make sure images have alt text. (This is a text description of the image, particularly useful for recipients who use screen readers.)

7. Make it easy for people to unsubscribe.

8. Test layouts, test content, test subject lines and then test again.

EMAIL GLOSSARY

Email marketing (as with most marketing) is rife with jargon. Here are some of the most important terms you should know if you are running and tracking email campaigns:

Email Service Provider (ESP)

An email service provider is a software service that helps email marketers send out email marketing campaigns to their subscribers.

They allow you to:

- create and build email subscriber lists

- customise email templates

- send emails manually or automatically

- provide reporting and detailed analytics on campaigns

- test

- include options for personalisation and dynamic content

- help with list segmentation… and more!

Top email providers which are free include Gmail, Yahoo, Outlook, AOL, Zoho, Mail.Com, and ProtonMail.

Marketing automation

Email marketing automation is the process of email marketing software sending email campaigns to your customers and prospects based on a set of triggers you've pre-defined.

Triggers can include things like when a subscriber opts in to a specific list, an anniversary date such as a mortgage rate ending and so on.

Here are some of the advantages of email automation:

- It's automatic and doesn't require intervention

- You can nurture leads to make them more receptive

- There's a benefit to your sales team

- Emails can be relevant to the email recipient

- Enables you to increase brand awareness

- Enables better personalisation for prospects

- You are able to carefully plan your email strategy

- It reduces the potential for errors

- It saves you time so you can focus on other tasks

- It reduces costs

- Can boost business revenue

- Enables better targeting and segmentation

- Allows you to keep existing customers interested

- Enables more detailed reporting

- Allows you to understand your customers more
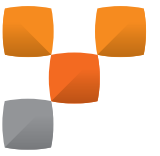
EMAIL GLOSSARY CONTINUED

Multivariate testing

Multivariate testing is a method of testing different variables in an email to find what works best. Different audiences respond better to different images, colours, copy, fonts and offers, so marketers will use this to see which combination is ideal in leading to the end goal.

A multivariate test might involve one test email with a clean and bold hero image and only one call-to-action (CTA). A CTA is any action that you are asking the reader to take. For instance, if you are asking the reader to 'Download now!' or 'Get in touch,'. The other test email may be a more complex design with two CTAs and no hero image. As you can see, there are several variables on the table here. The tester would use these two samples to determine which is more effective at driving click-through rate.

A/B testing, on the other hand, is a tactic for testing only one variable, while multivariate testing involves several variables.

Of course, it's important to note that you shouldn't test too many elements at once, since your results won't tell you anything useful.

Click-through rate (CTR)

Click-through rate is a metric that measures how many people click on an image, hyperlink, button or CTA in an email.

Measuring the CTR is a great way to determine how effective a particular email is.

Click-through rates can vary, but an indication that an email is performing well would be a click-through rate of between 20% and 30%. If your click-through rates are falling below this range, it's a warning that you may need to switch things up a bit and even conduct some tests to determine what would be more enticing to your subscribers.
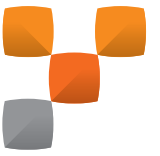
EMAIL GLOSSARY CONTINUED

Personalisation

Personalisation is what defines modern marketing, and email marketing is no exception. It involves customising content based on the subscriber's data. This could include their name, interests, desires, birthdays, and so on.

It's also worth noting that when a subject line includes the subscriber's first name, it can increase open rates by up to 20%.

Remember, however, to have a default user if your data is missing. After all there's nothing worse than sending an email that starts with 'Dear (blank)'.

Hard bounce

A hard bounce is when an email is returned to a sender for permanent reasons. This includes things like delivering to an invalid email address for one of the following reasons:

- Incorrect domain name

- Sending to an email address that isn't real

- Recipient is unknown

It's important to monitor hard bounces and to get rid of invalid email addresses as soon as possible.

Soft bounce

A soft bounce, on the other hand, is an email that failed to deliver because of temporary reasons. These soft bounces will occur when a file is too big or a recipient's inbox is full. Usually, an ESP will try and deliver these soft bounces again.

While email might be among the oldest forms of digital communication, it is nonetheless one of the more important ones. And with automation and technology continuing to evolve, keeping on top of the latest developments is key over the coming decade.

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