Sharpen Your Business Emails For Best Results

I was visiting with some small business CEOs this week at a networking event. In this informal exchange, a few of them came to the conclusion that email marketing “doesn’t work anymore”. Here are some thoughts about how to improve your results with email marketing.

Email marketing can be an important and relevant digital marketing channel, but is often only successful if your messages are sent to the right people and you are compliant with applicable laws. Most people receive dozens of emails every day and if you use a one-size-fits-all approach, chances are your message will get lost.

My first suggestion is to “target” your emails. Targeting your email via list segmentation can be an essential part of an effective email campaign. Depending on the information in your database, you can target your email according to your business’ key metrics including sales cycle stage, browsing/purchase history, product group, age, gender, location, interests, customer value, etc.

Targeted emails allow you to create specific messages for specific people. You can reward your existing customers with a coupon or promote an accessory or upgrade to a particular product they may own. When you segment emails, you send your recipients relevant messages that can help you communicate the right message to the right audience.

Targeted email marketing is best used by businesses that want to nurture their current customer base, communicate information, and generate sales. Email marketing is not recommended for acquisition. My experience is that renting email lists is expensive and typically does not have a good response rate.

My next suggestion is to have a “clear call to action” for Your Email. A call to action (CTA) tells your email readers what to do next. By getting your readers to focus on the next step, you can encourage them to take action. The most effective CTAs are often clear and persuasive, value-driven, and stand out.

Simply put, a good CTA can help increase your click through rates, so they should be created using best practices. Common, but not optimal, CTAs such as “Submit” or “Click Here” do not grab the attention of the reader. Remember, emails are typically read very quickly, so any CTA should be direct, strong, and to the point. They should be able to be seen and understood at a glance.
If you have a secondary call to action, be sure it doesn’t compete with your primary CTA. You can prioritize your CTAs either by using different fonts or colors, or through different positioning on the page. But with CTAs, less can sometimes be more. Too many CTAs can be distracting and cause your readers to be confused. This may lessen the impact of your primary CTA and can result in lower conversion rates.

Every email should have at least one CTA. They are used for motivating the reader and, where possible, indicating value. CTAs can complement the copy, strengthen the message, and promote action.

My last suggestion is to “test” for the best results. Testing of your emails can help you improve conversion rates. You can test different subject lines, call to actions, design layouts, body text, personalization, offers, send time of day, and more.

For accurate results be sure that you are using a random list split and test only one variable at a time. If open rates are underwhelming, you may want to test your subject lines first. If you are getting good open rates, but less than stellar conversions, consider testing your CTA. Evaluate your results carefully to determine the best combination of elements.

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