

The three step approach to successful Email Marketing

1: The list

For most companies it is virtually impossible to go out and buy an email mailing list that gets to exactly the people you want to reach. Most email lists that are on sale tend to be “generic” in nature – by which I mean the email goes to a general address within an organisation. Such email addresses generally start sales@ or info@.

Some lists that are on sale do have a person’s name at the start – but where these lists are widely traded it is generally not long before that person becomes wise to the fact and either changes his/her email address or sets up an automatic programme to get rid of all the emails that come in.

For this reason the first job is to build your own email address list focussed on exactly the right people you want to reach.

Because most companies approach email marketing in a hurry or because they expect email to be an immediate low cost solution, they stop at this point and go back to other forms of advertising.

The fact that many firms baulk at this point is a great benefit, because it means that very few firms are doing successful email marketing – and this is why most people get very little email of interest sent to their private business email address. Although it looks as if email is a crowded market, it isn’t.

But setting up the list can be done – and it doesn’t have to take very long. Indeed, once you have just a few up-to-date email addresses to add to your email list you can start doing your email marketing. You don’t need to have a full list to make this operation a success.

There are three ways of building the email list.

- 1.1 You probably already have something of an email list, because you’ll have the email addresses of some of your customers. The first job is to take this list and put it onto a database. You might feel that quite a few of these email addresses are wrong – but that doesn’t matter. It doesn’t cost any more to send out 1000 emails than it costs to send out 100, and if addresses are wrong, work can be done to correct them in the coming weeks.
- 1.2 The second approach is to offer people whose postal address you have, a free report on some issue of interest. This shouldn’t be an advert, but rather some inside information that people to whom you sell might find of interest. Call me if you would like to discuss exactly what that report might be or if you would like to see some examples (although in a sense this little piece is itself a report of this nature.) Interested companies or individuals email in and ask for the free report which you send back by email – and in so doing you collect their email address.

- 1.3 The third option is to call people and ask them for their email address. This is easy and with the right approach on the phone works well, but it is more expensive. It is best to leave this until last, and just use it to fill in the gaps on your mailing list.

2. Transmitting the emails

Generally it is not a good idea to try to send out bulk emails using an ordinary commercial program or an ordinary broadband connection.

2.1 The connection

Some Broadband connections will cut out if the operator perceives a lot of email going through the line. It is worth checking the terms and conditions of your supply if you are thinking of doing it yourself.

2.2 The program

You need a program that is equipped for mass mailing – even if your list is only 100 addresses long, not only for ease of operation, but so that you can track those emails that don't get delivered. You need a program that can recognise why an email is not delivered and then take appropriate action.

2.3 The opt-out

Good practice on B2B lists demands that you have an easy opt-out for recipients. What you don't want is to have to remove people manually from your list.

2.4 The legalities

Sending out emails in this way to business addresses is perfectly legal within the EU Directive on emailing. It only becomes a problem if you are using home email addresses and we can advise on this.

3. Writing the email

3.1 Making it interesting

Simply telling potential customers that you have a new product or a discount is usually not enough to keep up their interest. It can work with fans of a rock star who are eternally anxious to know when a new CD comes out or what live appearances are in the offing. But for most of us selling regular products we need to do something much more exciting, and this is probably the hardest thing to do in email marketing. We use a variety of tools from stories to amusing reports. If you would like to see examples of our work in these different approaches, please do get in touch.

3.2 Doing it weekly

You can email people weekly without any problem, providing you are giving them something which they like and find interesting. The moment you just start telling them things that are exciting to you, but of no interest to them, you are lost. Thus the opening of your new website might be of great interest to you, but means nothing to the average customer. What customers are interested in is what each product can do for them.

4. The costs

Prices vary depending on the exact details so these prices are very approximate. Please call to discuss further...

- 4.1 Writing a report on a topic where we are briefed by yourselves and able to clarify issues as we go: £300
- 4.2 Adding your data to a mailing list: depends on formats but please see <http://www.emails.gs/ownlists.html> for full details
- 4.3 Telephone research, including adding the resultant email to the list: £2 per call.
- 4.4 Sending out your emails for you, using our system but with the emails appearing to come from yourselves – again please see full details on <http://www.emails.gs/ownlists.html>
- 4.5 Writing a one-off item to be sent out on an email: £300

Overall you will see that there are some set up costs, but the price of email quickly drops so that it is eventually way below the cost of direct mail.

5. Velocity

If you are thinking of going into email marketing seriously, then the most cost-effective approach involves using our Velocity programme. Through this virtually all of the factors above except for telephone research can be included in a monthly account for £495 per month.

Of course, details vary from case to case, but generally we will do three major activities for you each month for this fee, which might include writing a report, emailing all your clients, writing a sales email to send to these people...

There is more on Velocity at www.velocity.ac and of course if you would like to know more please call 01536 399 000 and ask to speak to one of the Velocity team.

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