



Web 2.0 Email Marketing 5 Steps to Unrivaed Results

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WEB 2.0 EMAIL MARKETING: 5 Steps to Unrivaled Results

Oh, the power of the web. If a company's marketing messages thrill us, we can give them our business. If they become irrelevant or irksome, we may turn off forever. As customers, Web 2.0 has given us control of the online marketing relationship, and we love it. As marketers, however, we're not so sure.

The Internet has become an economic powerhouse, causing dramatic changes in how business is conducted. Companies worldwide are shifting massive amounts of marketing budgets from traditional, broadcast advertising and direct marketing to new online media channels. At the same time – both out of necessity and opportunity – marketers have begun focusing more of their efforts on establishing and nurturing individual lifetime customer relationships rather than placing the greatest emphasis on pulling strangers to the brand.

For some, this shift from marketer-centric to customer-centric messaging poses unique challenges that can sometimes make online marketing seem more like a minefield than a discipline. But the availability of exciting new tools, tactics and strategies for developing highly relevant messages are actually making it easier than ever to create and execute even the most complex campaigns.

How is this possible? The next pages will explore the internet phenomenon known as "Web 2.0" that is reshaping the Internet and helping marketers deliver the types of highly relevant communications recipients demand. The silver pop white paper will also share five techniques for staying competitive and achieving high returns in a Web 2.0 world.

What is Web 2.0?

A lack of any set standards makes the term difficult to pin down. Some say Web 2.0 speak primarily to the inherent nature of the internet as a social medium. Others say it refers to a second phase of architecture and application development for the Web.

The term is used most often to describe the ongoing transition of the Internet from a collection of read-only Web sites to an interactive, interlinked platform emphasizing reciprocity and facilitating sharing and collaboration between users. This new generation of Web-based communities and hosted services encompasses technologies such as blogs, wikis, RSS feeds, podcasts, application program interfaces (APIs) and interactive online services such as eBay and Google maps.

When email marketers attempt to understand the rules for success in a Web 2.0 world, they soon recognise there exists exciting opportunities for those who understand its nature and successfully harness its capabilities. They recognise the value of implementing sophisticated campaigns that incorporate web analytics, dynamic content or survey data, but they often lack the resources and necessary integration between applications to make it happen. While tools for creating one-to-one messaging are available, marketers find most to be complex, difficult or time consuming to use.



In effect, email's success is its greatest hindrance. Even though most messages are broadcast or minimally personalised, email marketing stilling brings a \$57.25 return for every dollar spent according to the Direct Marketing Association. So since even the most basic email campaigns are highly profitable, it becomes easy to relegate sophisticated tactics to the list of "Things to do later".

Key Characteristics of Web 2.0 Applications

- Allow users to control their own data
- Software as a service, not a packaged product
- A rich, interactive and user friendly interface
- Cost-effective scalability
- Architecture of participation

Harnessing of collective intelligence, i.e., ability to hyper-link across web sites, or post customer ratings and reviews

But email marketing programs high in relevance and low in effort are possible. New tools and little-used tactics that draw on Web 2.0 technologies can take your campaigns to new levels of success.

Five Steps to Maximise the Power of Web 2.0 in Email Campaigns

In the past, marketers have been constrained from adopting technology because of its inaccessibility. Technology for marketing initiatives typically first became the domain of the IT department, and therefore an IT project with an IT budget and IT-generated goals. Also, marketers often had to rely on third-party database marketing services for statistical analysis and insight into segmenting and targeting audiences.

Fortunately, robust email marketing solutions that capture the power of WEB 2.0 give marketers the means to create personalised advertising to individuals or groups, as well as the ability to measure response and alter messaging on the fly. This has allowed marketing organisations to become truly accountable. With hard data at their finger tips, marketers can test assumptions, increase efficiencies and make a powerful business case for their initiatives. These new abilities in an era of customer empowerment have spurred a focus on retention, as marketers recognise the business maxim that it is five times more expensive to acquire a new customer than to retain an old one.

Unlocking the value of customer relationships already in place brings the highest return on-investment available to marketers today.

The following 5 steps will help you execute the kinds of highly relevant campaigns that drive customer satisfaction and achieve unrivalled results.

See Your Email Database in a New Light

Web 2.0 is driven by data. TO be successful in the long term, enterprise marketers must – at their core – understand and embrace the value of data. One way is to begin thinking two-dimensionally about your email list.

Rather than focusing strictly on the size and growth of your list, focus also on adding relevant recipient data. Email is the only platform in marketing mix that can tie together your need to understand what customers want with the ability to quickly



respond on their desires. Ask yourself, “What do I want to know about each recipient? How can the necessary data be gathered and incorporated into my list? Once incorporated, how can I act on the data, and how will I analyse my results?” Today’s email marketing solutions can store and automatically act on a wide variety of data points that provide meaning context for promotional messaging.

By thinking of your list as the database for a marketing execution platform, and filling it with actionable data, you’ll be opening up unprecedented avenues of opportunity for relevant messaging now and in the future – and laying the foundation for a powerful, results orientated marketing program. Your email system can become a communications dashboard for ever marketing touch-point.

Populate Your Email Database with Data from Other Marketing Platforms

Integrations’ between email and other enterprise marketing platforms, such as Web analytics, e-commerce or survey tools, allow you to add to the actionable customer information stored in the email database. Simply decide which data housed by these other systems would be beneficial to have in your email program for use in targeting messages. Then, create new fields in your email database that can be populated by this information.

By tapping into your company’s other data storehouses for information to better target email marketing campaigns, you not only provide a richer experience for email recipients, you also enable your company to more efficiently leverage its rich deposits of customer data.

Below is a chart showing just a few ways marketers can orchestrate a flow of actionable information from various marketing platforms into the email database.

Data From Marketing Platform	Populates Email List Field
Web analytics	Page most often visited; date of last visit to customer support page
e-Commerce	Last product purchased; amount purchased to date
Survey	Favourite vacation destination; would you recommend us?

Your email service provider should have well-established partnerships in place to facilitate any necessary technical integration between the email solution and other platforms. Major enterprise email service providers can enable a process for regularly updating your email database with the wealth of customer rich-data available from various other marketing platforms.

3. Talk to Customers Individually

Individualised messages go beyond basic personalisation. Incorporating Web 2.0 technologies allows marketers to deliver completely different messages for each recipient within a single campaign. Email marketers are familiar with this technique – it’s called dynamic content. But not all dynamic content engines are the same. Some can handle only a few elements; others manage thousands or millions. Some dynamic content engines support only one element per message while others accommodate



unlimited elements. And, most importantly, some require highly technical and complex set-up. However, a select few email solutions make it no more difficult to implement dynamic content than it takes to create the message itself.

Because dynamic content allows you to build messages piece by piece based on specific recipient's characteristics, it is one of the best email marketing techniques for improving targeting, controlling frequency and driving relevancy all at the same time. Whether you send your entire list or a subset of your list, dynamic content allows you to send fewer emails and get better responses.

And yet, despite a proven ability to lift response and increase relevance, marketers have shied away from incorporating dynamic content into their mailings because of its complexity and difficulty, opting instead in many cases for simple segmentation techniques (if they segment at all). But marketers because of its working with one of the select number of sophisticated ESPs have found integrated platforms take away most of the pain, leaving all of the gain of the dynamic content. In fact, Jupiter Research found that 44 percent of email marketers using ESP incorporate dynamic content into their email campaigns, compared to just 25 percent who use in-house applications. ESPs like silver pop have streamlined the use of dynamic content with rich user interfaces, making it easy to create and insert rules, preview messages and save, import and export rule sets.

Dynamic content delivers substantial benefits, particularly in a Web 2.0 world where consumers demand higher levels of relevance than ever before. Email campaigns based on dynamic content help companies enhance customer relationships, loyalty and lifetime value.

Dive into Analytics

The online marketing world revolves around data. If you want to understand more specifically how your mailings are performing, you must look beyond opens and clicks. Fortunately, a few sophisticated email marketing platforms now offer reporting and analytics that let marketers easily consolidate massive volumes of raw data into relevant, simple and actionable information. Analysing the results of your email campaigns can help you learn the answer to questions that can boost results. For example:

- How do the open, click and conversions rates of frequent purchasers compare to those of occasional purchasers?
- Are there geographic differences in results?

How do demographics such as gender, income level and age impact someone's likelihood to forward an email or click on a specific link?

As email marketing databases morph into highly efficient, integrated data warehouses, they are increasingly able to quickly analyse literally millions of responses on virtually any dimension, and produce an unprecedented level of insight and detail for marketers. By analysing responses, you can dramatically improve targeting and deliver highly relevant email that generates much higher response rates and returns.

2. Build Brand Along with ROI



As Marketing programs continue to shift to the online medium, traditional branding efforts are taking on new complexities. In addition to generating tangible returns, every email also creates a brand impression, and email's ability to inspire brand recognition and loyalty as well as generate sales will have far-reaching implications for companies and marketing organisations.

To build a strong brand through email marketing, consider these best practices:

- Use your brand name in the email subject and/or "from" line.
- Position your company logo prominently, and make sure that it is always visible within the email preview pane.
- Use imagery and colours that evoke your brand consistently across marketing channels. Email campaigns that look and feel like the company's other online and offline campaigns can enhance recognition and boost the results of multi-channel marketing efforts.

Above all, establish and cultivate trust. Your customer's inbox is cherished only real estate. Always deliver relevant messages, and at an appropriate frequency.

Conclusion

As you develop and cultivate an enterprise marketing strategy for the Web 2.0 world, keep these five key takeaways in mind:

- Within a permission-based relationship, marketers can gather and use attributable data to build unprecedented customer insights.
- Unlike traditional broadcast and direct marketing techniques, email marketers can use this detailed data to create messaging that customers find individually
- By drawing on a rich store of attributable data, email marketers have the ability to actually give customers what they want, and to do so in a way that is transparent and welcomed.
- Data is becoming easier to bring together and act on through techniques such as incorporating Web analytics or survey data into the email database.

The availability of powerful and usable marketing applications finally giving marketers the ability to create complex campaigns quickly and easily, enabling them to realise the promise of one-to-one relationship marketing: high lifetime TOI and strong customer engagement.

In today's era of two way online communications, an email marketing message is an invitation to begin or continue a conversation, and is a vital toll for building lasting and profitable customer relationships. Email and other software-on-demand solutions are making this not only possible, but even easy for marketers. The new software-as-a-service models have freed marketers from the shackles of the IT department and created a new environment in which marketers don't have to be technologists to use technology. Web 2.0 email technology is allowing marketers to create, execute and measure campaigns more quickly, easily and efficiently than ever.