

What Happens Once You Send Your Email

4

Before you can launch your first campaign, you need to know what to expect once you hit the Send button. This chapter will help you ensure that you have the right reporting and analytics framework set up and that you have the right amount of money in your email marketing budget. We also introduce the five most common disasters for new email marketers and show how you can avoid them—or at least have Plan B in place.

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Defining the Analytics Framework

The previous chapter focused on determining what you need to consider when selecting an email marketing vendor or service and how to set up your program and staff. All the elements you read about are important to the success of your program. However, you cannot afford to lose sight of how email marketing fits into your organization and the elements of analytics that you will need in order to determine not only the effectiveness of your email marketing efforts, such as open rates and click-through rates, but also the effectiveness of email marketing on your organization's comprehensive efforts.

Case Study: Great Email Marketing Results Add \$0 to the Bottom Line

A small nonprofit organization we have worked with decided to launch an email marketing program to help the organization build membership sales and increase reach. The employees did everything right in terms of finding a technology provider, creating campaign plans, and staffing the team. However, they forgot one thing: they never built a process to assess how closely the email marketing behaviors impacted behaviors of other organizational efforts. For example, did frequent readers become members?

After eight months of having a great email campaign in the market, the organization found that readership of messages was high, but any action requiring involvement with the organization, or monetary commitments, was low. Not sure of how this was possible, this organization hired an analytics firm to help determine what was happening.

The resulting findings concluded that the types of people signing up for the email program were people who were interested in following the organization's efforts, but they were not the level of decision makers who could commit to a monetary investment at this time. In other words, their email program was targeting the wrong people.

Having spent most of the marketing budget and resources on powering this email program, this organization found itself challenged on how to meet its annual goals.

In the end, the organization's email program was split into two groups. "Lurkers" continued to receive weekly emails with news and updates, but a new program was launched that matched the overall organization target audience and membership growth activity. Within six months the organization was back on track, and what the staff learned, they felt, could be "transformational" to anyone getting involved in email marketing.

Start with Your Email Marketing Plan, and Expand It to Include Your Company's Growth Plan

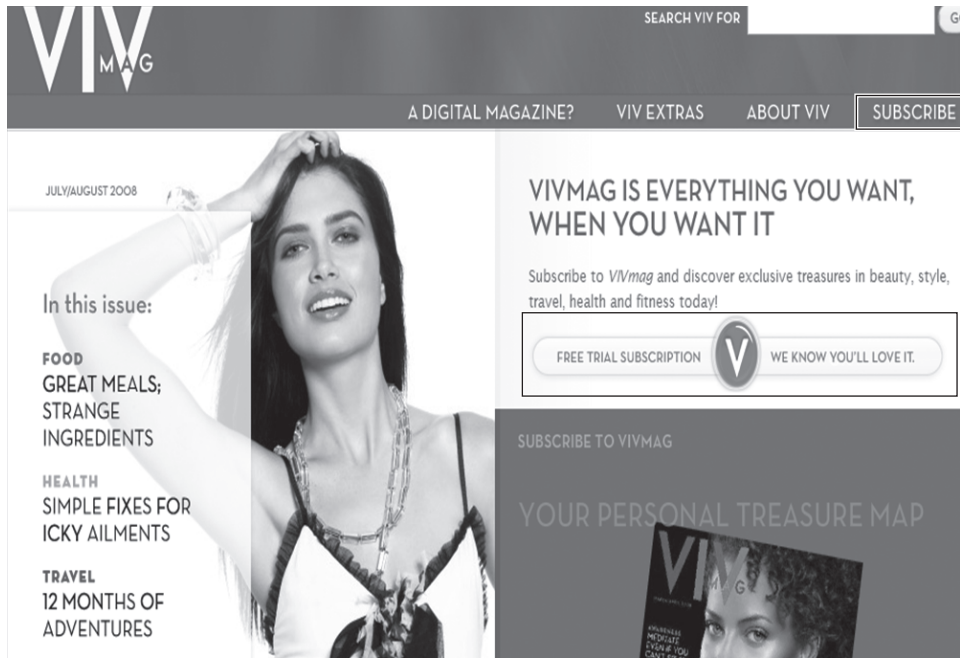
We've talked about the importance of integrating your email marketing plan with other marketing channels in your company's overall growth plan. The following tasks are essential:

- Make a map of entrance and exit points into your email database.
- Determine how you will analyze the impact that email marketing is having on your overall results.

Mapping Entrance and Exit Points

Asking you to make a map may seem kind of silly, but it will help your email efforts tremendously. Email marketing is often misunderstood. Many people seem to believe that email marketing performs best when it is not integrated with other advertising and marketing efforts. In fact, it is also the entry and exit points for almost all marketing channels. It has an impact and is impacted by everything else happening in your offline and online marketing efforts.

The average website has at least seven entrance or exit points where someone can provide an email address, contact a company, or share other contact information. Figure 4.1 shows an example of two such entrance points near the top of VIVmag's home page. Your email marketing database should connect with these fields at some point to ensure that a conversation can be maintained, that you can continue to communicate with the reader via email, and that the reader can continue to respond via clicking. Ask for the visitor's email address on every page of your website!



SOURCE: VIVMAG

Figure 4.1 Sample entrance points from media to email

The Analytics Plan

Once you have a map (either mentally or visually) drawn that includes your entrance and exit points to start an email marketing dialogue, you will see that it broadens the impact of your email marketing efforts pretty significantly. Figure 4.2 shows an example.

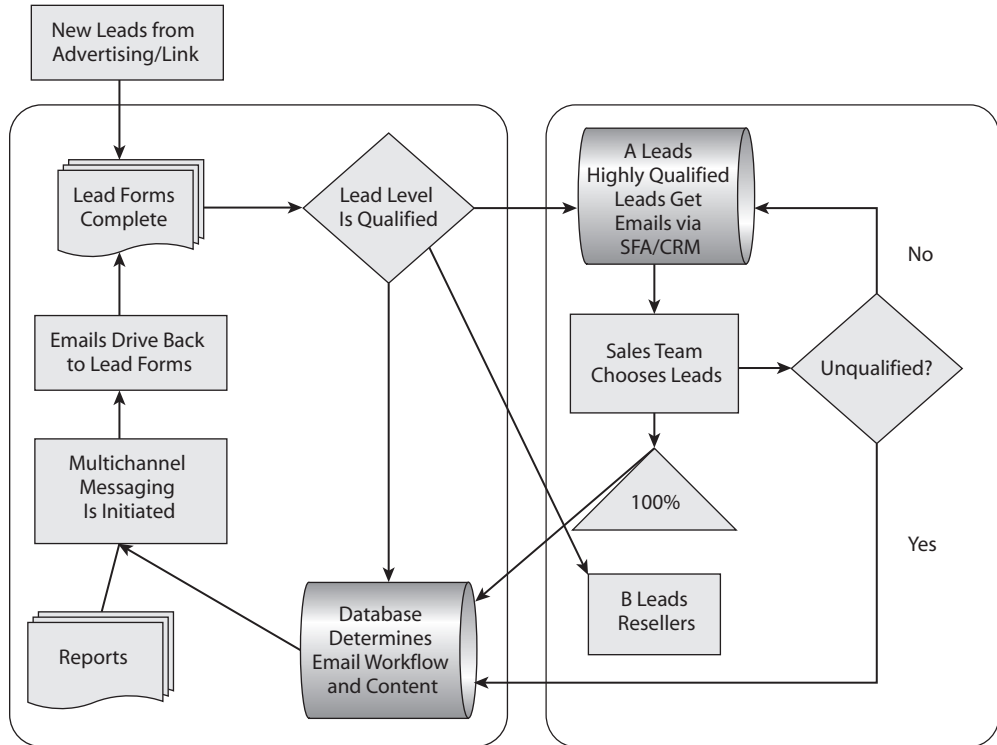


Figure 4.2 Sample email marketing road map

Suddenly, it is no longer enough to determine whether your current email efforts are effectively set up; you must also ask whether you have the right email marketing programs in place at all. The answer to this question lies in the results of a good analytics program that runs behind your email marketing database and establishes a broader line of impact.

What Your Analytics Program Should Tell You

A good analytics program for email marketing efforts does not have to be expensive. It just needs to provide five critical elements of functionality:

Dashboard An analytics dashboard like the Google Analytics example shown in Figure 4.3 lets you view campaign results based on a number of elements that are critical to your business. Most analytics packages allow you to customize a dashboard so that you can determine what top-line elements appear up front, and that you don't need to search, cut and paste reports together.

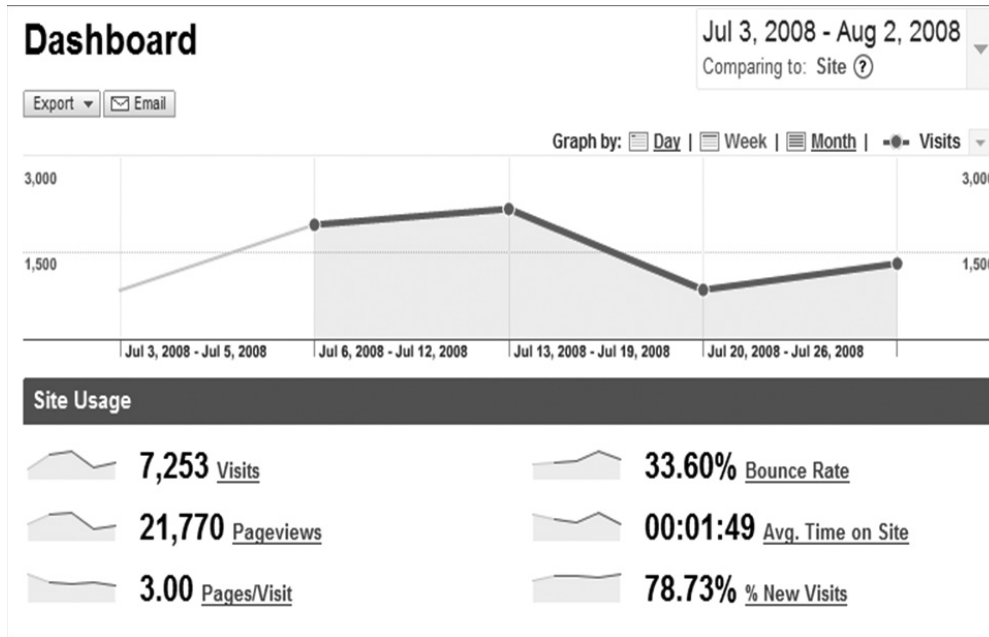


Figure 4.3 Google Analytics Dashboard

Funnel Regardless of which business you are in, you will rely on a significant number of visitors to your website turning into leads, which ultimately turn into customers, who then buy more, or more frequently, from your company. A good analytics program will provide this funnel overview to you, showing what percentage of visitors progress to each stage.

Geographic Targeting Understanding where the visitors who come to your website originate (both location and time zone) is a critically important element for you to understand from an analytics perspective. Many times your product or service offering will be more appealing if you can advertise it during a time when your prospect or consumer is considering your services, such as advertising cereal around times when people will be hungry. In the United States, for example, those times will be different on the East Coast than on the West Coast. Another example is general appeal; for instance, people in the southern United States might be more responsive to different words in copy than those in the western United States.

Website Activity Your analytics program will tell you what the site traffic looks like, specifically, how many pages people see on your site, what type of paths they go through when visiting your site (how many pages before they leave), and what pages they enter and exit on.

Visits to Purchase / Search Engine Marketing (SEM) Analytics programs now commonly tell you not only how people use your site but also what keywords they used to get there and what types of words they type in your internal search box to navigate (this is known

as *SEM* or sometimes as *organic search*). This is one of the most impactful reports you can utilize as part of your email efforts moving forward.

These critical elements help you ensure your email marketing program is on target to drive needed business results for your company. Understanding who is coming to your site will enable you to target the timing and delivery of your messages. Knowing what words people type or click to get to your site will enable you to update your copy with relevant phrases that will drive more clicks. Furthermore, seeing exactly how and where people navigate through your site will ensure you can get those much needed conversions or email campaigns that can educate or nurture people to move down your sales funnel faster, or for higher dollar amounts, than previously.

Choosing an Analytics Program

For many people just getting involved with email, deciding which analytics program to choose can start to get complex and expensive quickly. This often leads to questions of, “Do I need an analytics program at all?” and, “Why do I need to know about it *before* I start my email marketing?”

As the authors of this book, we answer the first question with a resounding “Yes!” You need an analytics program *before* your email marketing efforts begin. These programs will help you determine how effective your current efforts are and increase effectiveness for all email-related efforts, from opt-in list rental targeting to landing page effectiveness and dialogue efforts. And beginning with analytics doesn’t have to be difficult or expensive. In fact, Google Analytics, illustrated earlier, can be a great starting tool for free.

Case Study: BuildDirect Increased Sales 50 Percent Using Google Analytics (Source: Google Business)

BuildDirect is a global online merchant wholesaler and specialty retailer of building products. Founded in 1999, and based in Vancouver, B.C., Canada, the company does business in 40 countries on 6 continents with a portfolio of products in flooring, roofing, siding, decking, and countertops. Orders consist of container quantities shipped to ocean ports or inland terminals, as well as pallet quantities shipped to any postal code or ZIP code address in North America. In 2004, *Profit* magazine ranked BuildDirect as the second fastest growing company in Canada.

BuildDirect is an entirely virtual organization, which allows for lower overhead. The company credits much of its success to savvy use of online marketing and advertising.

Challenge

Although the company was growing rapidly, management was eager to improve the efficiency of its online spending—especially with a marketing budget that approached \$1 million per quarter in the first years of operation.

Case Study: BuildDirect Increased Sales 50 Percent Using Google Analytics (Source: Google Business) (Continued)

BuildDirect had a marketing mix that consisted of a combination of search engine advertising, email newsletters, and online website customer sign-ups. The challenge was to improve performance through better tracking of which tactics worked and which didn't.

In 2004, BuildDirect turned to Google Analytics to replace an existing analytics package. In a matter of months, Dan Brodie, the director of operations, said he could see the email marketing channel was not converting as well as he would have liked. And the company wasn't getting sufficient value for its spending on third-tier search engines for traffic that converted poorly.

Results

"Web analytics are essential for any online company, and they have been key to dramatically improving our operation," says Brodie. Using Google Analytics, he was able to see which ads were working and how effective newsletters and site design were in driving sales. "Our online sales volume has increased 50 percent—all without anyone picking up the phone. This is a tribute to BuildDirect's continual site design and market testing, as well as the actionable information Google Analytics provides."

He adds, "With Google Analytics, we learned that many of our search engines were not delivering sufficiently targeted traffic. Higher visitor volume is great, but we needed to focus on conversions—traffic that leads to sales."

Better Results from Search Advertising

BuildDirect focused advertising spending on the top search engines and immediately saw conversions increase by 37 percent, even while reducing its overall search marketing budget by 33 percent. The company has since increased its search ad spending on high-converting sources, and it continues to maintain very strong conversion rates.

More Effective Email Advertising Campaigns

In addition to improving search advertising, BuildDirect was able to judge the effectiveness of email campaigns designed to drive traffic to its site. Even though the company had purchased email lists of "confirmed-interest" home renovation prospects and sent 600,000 to 800,000 emails at a time, the ROI was still low because of a low conversion rate. After using Google Analytics for campaign monitoring and tracking, BuildDirect doubled its email marketing conversion rate. "Once we began using Google Analytics cross-segment performance analytic tools to identify our customer demographics, we were able to design specific creative tailored to our buyers," says Brodie.

Continues

Case Study: BuildDirect Increased Sales 50 Percent Using Google Analytics (Source: Google Business) (Continued)

Improved Customer Engagement

By using Google Analytics Marketing Optimization reports, BuildDirect found that sample purchases were a powerful way to drive more sales. “Home buyers who purchase a sample have a 60 percent likelihood of returning to the site within the next 30 days and placing a full order,” says Brodie. In addition to tailoring the message to each customer segment, BuildDirect uses Google Analytics’ A/B testing capabilities to perfect its marketing approach. “We test different versions of creative on each newsletter and track results using Google Analytics, so we know the open rates, click-through rates, and conversions for everything we try.”

Streamlined Site Design

Finally, BuildDirect was able to optimize its website design based on Google Analytics report data. “Using the Google Analytics Site Overlay and the Defined Funnel Report, we found we were losing almost half of our customers on the three-stage process between cart and payment confirmation,” Brodie says. “We reduced this process to one step. By simplifying to a single page, we increased sample orders by 100 percent and expect that to contribute to a significant revenue increase within a few months.” BuildDirect will continue to test and monitor online marketing programs with web analytics.

“Before Google Analytics, we basically guessed how we should be spending marketing dollars. We now know how much campaigns pay off and how well they work,” Brodie says. “Google Analytics has had a huge positive impact on our business.”

We discussed performance indicators in the previous chapter, but it’s so important it bears mentioning again. Once you have your analytics program set up, you are truly ready to launch your email marketing efforts. You will have a holistic view of who has an opportunity to see your email opt-in efforts and how qualified they really are, the best types of engagement programs and phrases to use to kick start your efforts, and how well your conversion tactics are at getting someone to buy or convert.

Congratulations on setting up a great and well-thought-out program; you are ready to hit Send and start seeing results.

What to Do If Something Goes Wrong

Yikes! Did you *really* send your first campaign while you were only on Chapter 4 of this book? We hope not. Why? Because we have not had a chance to share with you the most important elements of an email campaign: what to do when something goes wrong.

A newbie to email might think they can actually be an effective email marketer without anything ever going wrong. That is not the case. Ask anyone who has sent out an email campaign about what can go wrong, and you will get a tremendous list of items that can and do go wrong.

Things that can go wrong with your email vary from small errors to large errors that can even result in legal issues. In fact, you shouldn't worry about *when* you will make the error. Instead, you should feel confident that you will be able to handle it when it happens to you.

We took a look at all the stories people sent to us over the years about “email oopses” that have occurred and wanted to share the following Email Experience Council blog posting from Chad White and the resulting comments with you.

From the Arsenal of Oopses (Source: Email Experience Council)

In one Email Experience Council newsletter, Jeannief confessed that she's no deployment expert: “I am notorious for sending emails with typos, links that don't work, image hosting paths that work only on my PC, messing up segments, and more.” She shared her favorite oopsy and said that the mistakes that she's made have all taught her phenomenal lessons. And then she asked whether anyone had a “disastrous email story” to share—and many brave souls stepped forward to share their lesson learned.

My two cents on this is that mistakes in emails are difficult to avoid because of the complexity of the medium and volume involved. All you can do is try your best and learn from your mistakes—and the mistakes of others.

Without further delay, here are the “oops” moments our subscribers shared with us.

—Chad White, Editor at Large

* * *

“You are definitely not the only one! I have an arsenal of “oops,” but I'll share my favorite of all time. I was adding the physical mailing address and associated contact details to the bottom of an email for a B2B campaign. The phone number I needed to add was spelled out, and because I was translating the letters to numbers by looking at my phone and using my keyboard—forgetting that the layout of the numbers are different—I inadvertently transposed two numbers. The correct number would have pointed someone to a help desk for product support; the incorrect number pointed to a phone sex line. There were only a few reports of people actually calling that number. I believe one was a CEO.

“Naturally, I learned from this and physically dial all of the phone numbers on anything I ever send out! (And I learned that phone sex lines are not limited to 900 numbers!)”

—Amy Gabriel

So, What Do You Do When It Happens to You?

As you can see, mistakes of all shapes and sizes happen with anyone’s email marketing campaigns. The key here is to know what to do when it happens to you. As with most things that go wrong, the first rule of thumb is, Don’t panic. Errors happen. Instead, be ready to assess the situation to determine the impact and your next steps. To help prepare you for the steps to take when an email marketing error occurs, we will walk you through a mistake that really happened.

(This is a true story—the names have been changed to protect the innocent).

The Background

An email campaign had been in place for a number of years. It was a fairly simple campaign: a personalized email (first and last name) was sent to a prospect within seven days of asking for more product information and providing their personal contact information, including mailing address.

The Mistake

Someone new to the program (on the service-provider side) sorted the file before loading it into the system by one of the columns. Inadvertently, they left the first and last name columns out of the sorting. This caused the email names to be mismatched with the names. When a recipient opened the email with the subject line of “Your personal follow-up,” they saw someone else’s name.

The Call from the Client

The client received a call to customer service questioning this email. The client immediately called the service provider to find out the scope of the issue.

The Response

The response from the provider (and our recommendations for you) consisted of the following steps:

- 1. Ask for details and a copy of the email to be sent to you.** Many times, the origin of the issue requires needing the header information to track down or solve the problem. This information is not available if the email is forwarded to you. Figure 4.4 shows what header information looks like.
- 2. Determine the impact of your error from your email reports.** In the case of this example, the email sent to the recipient showed that it was a legitimate email, sent by the email provider’s system. All technical aspects checked out; only the names were off. A quick check in the email database uncovered the error of the column formatting. The next step was to check the reports to see how many people had opened the email so far. It was 40 percent. Normally, a 40 percent open rate would be seen as great news for this client. In this case, it meant that 40 percent of the list has been exposed to inaccurate data that could potentially make them lose faith in this client.



SOURCE: YAHOO! EMAIL

Figure 4.4 Full header information

3. **Make a recommendation for response.** Email marketing errors that are not followed up with a response to those affected tend to do more damage than those who just come out with a statement. A reply of silence can often generate blog backlash. In this case, though, understanding that 40 percent were affected was key, because it enabled the service provider to recommend *not* sending a blanket email but sending one only to the people who had opened their email to date. The recommended response to the client was an email with a subject line that referenced the last email they received, without causing more panic.
4. **Monitor the results of your email response rates, as well as your analytics.** Of those people who received and opened the email with the inaccurate information, only 25 percent of them opened the follow-up email. Interestingly, though, a quarter of those people ended up buying the company product. Compared to the typical response to these programs, this program actually ended up performing on par with the standard campaigns. Crisis averted for this instance!

Although this story had a happy ending, there are some important take-aways from this section of the chapter. Not only do you need to take a realistic and methodical approach to handling email mishaps, but you need to have your “ducks in a row” before you send your campaign so you are well prepared to solve the challenges you are dealt. A good email strategy, strong analytics, and a solid budget will often reap rewards far beyond the implementation of a few emails.

Revisiting Your Budget

Now that you have a handle on the core elements needed to get your program up and running, have selected an email service provider or technology, have organized your

analytics efforts, and know what to do when something goes wrong, you are ready to send, right? Not so fast. Before you execute your program, you should really stop and revisit your email budget one more time. Do you *really* have enough money?

So, at this part in the book, now is a good time for you to get your budget checklist out and make sure you have accounted for all that you will need to spend.



Write This Down: Regardless of how much money you have in your email marketing budget, many marketers do not think they have enough money to enhance their programs, attract new email marketing subscribers and battle loss through attrition from the previous year. Many people are looking for more funds to replace email names and attrition.

In the previous chapter, we discussed the average costs to send email and recommended building your budget needs from an assessment of the list size and the staff necessary to execute the programs you desire. Those are important numbers, but they may not include some more of the tactical spending you might have missed inside your budget—items that could create challenges for you down the road. This checklist should help ensure you have everything covered:

List Replacement Fees Forrester finds that 30 percent of email addresses will “go bad” every year because of bounces, people changing addresses, people starting new jobs, and unsubscribes. Ensure you devote enough of your budget to replacing 50 percent of your list (to account for blocked new subscribers and nonresponsive emails).

Design No matter who you are, or how many resources you have, outsourced design fees are going to raise their heads at some time within the year. A mandatory cost from a list rental company for design edits, a “crunch time” project in which the design can’t be managed in-house, a special fee for design from a partner program—these elements can all come into play. Although this isn’t a big budget line, it should be accounted for.

Testing Frequently, the second-largest missed item on the budgeting line is testing. You don’t realize how much you need it until you launch an email campaign that just doesn’t work. Although internal testing is great, make sure you have \$5,000 to \$10,000 set aside for landing page optimization, heatmapping, or list rental source testing to validate some theories.

Data Support Regardless of the email service provider or analytics engine you have, you will need to bring in “the big guns” quarterly or at least two times per year to help identify trends in data movement. Although your in-house team can probably manage it well, you could end up with a project sitting on the books for four to five months waiting to be given high priority. In the meantime, your email campaign could suffer. Plan to save a few thousand dollars a month to enable data support.

Mad Money There isn’t really an appropriate name for this category, but our moms said it best: “Stuff some money under your mattress for when you need it.” Every year, a new,

hot technology related to email comes out that your company or provider doesn't yet support or believe in. (In 2008, it is social networking email campaigns, discussed in Chapter 8.) But you still want to test it. It is always a good idea to have a few thousand dollars stuffed away for a rainy-day test to ensure you are still thinking sensibly.

To ensure you have your budget set up to support growth, focusing on growing learnings and fueling incremental success are key. Kudos to you if you took your highlighter out on this chapter. Although the recommendations many seem small, they will pay out big time down the road.

The Email Marketing Database and Future Multichannel Efforts

A good bit of this chapter has focused on what you need to do to ensure that your email marketing efforts are successful and that you look like a rock star within your company. From analytics support to disaster recovery to budgeting for the unexpected, the focus has been on supporting direct-email marketing efforts. That said, your email is the backbone of every other marketing channel. At some point in time, people will encounter an email from your company, even if they have never sent you one. This phenomenon is not new to marketing yet is often treated like it is. It is called *multichannel marketing*. And with email, multichannel marketing is something you should consider at the same time you are putting your analytics and budget in place. How do you ensure that your initial email marketing database setup will enable you to create multichannel efforts down the road?

Although there are many different theories of how visitors become customers for any company and different graphical representations of those ideas, we are especially drawn to one graphic. Shown in Figure 4.5, it is called the *four phases of consumer activity*.



SOURCE: EMAIL EXPERIENCE COUNCIL

Figure 4.5 The four phases of consumer activity

Regardless of whether your company is large or small, regardless of whether your focus is B2B or B2C, and regardless of what industry you represent, your customer will go through the four phases of consumer activity in determining whether they should be associated with your company. The interesting thing about each of these phases is that email plays a critical and unique role depending on what other media vehicles are in market. This multichannel messaging impact can completely change the effect of your email marketing program.

To ensure you are achieving the biggest impact with your email marketing efforts, you need to ensure email is being used appropriately at each phase of the

buying cycle. In many cases, this could mean that email is the secondary influencer or even plays a tertiary role to other media. The specific role that email marketing plays doesn't matter. What does matter is that it plays that role in a way that increases ROI and customer satisfaction.

Phase 1: Awareness

When a potential or current customer is becoming aware of a product or service you offer, the truth is, it's most likely not happening through email. One of two elements will pique a person's awareness of your ability to service their needs:

- They woke up with an issue they needed to solve (for example, the car will not start).
- A friend told them about something they *had* to get or look into because it would change their life (for example, a George Foreman grill).

In each of these two scenarios, your prospect will go online and search for information about this product or service or potentially even go to a store where it is offered. The key media at this stage in a consumer's life is probably not email. This email isn't a direct response element. Instead, email marketing efforts here work to aid other forms of media, such as online, TV, and print, to help bring the product or service to the top of a prospect's mind. They help build the brand of the product you are offering.

Phase 2: Engagement

When someone is ready to "try but not buy" your product or service, they want to engage with the brand. Testing to make sure a company is "right for them" is critical to getting someone to make a purchase. This phase of the life cycle is one of the areas where email marketing can take the lead, but not by being delivered to the inbox. Instead, the multichannel role of email is to support the website or customer service group's efforts and therefore simply sit there and ask for the permission to continue a dialogue. Here, the role of email is to entice someone to opt in to future messages. It's very valuable to a company, because it opens the door to direct and results-driven messaging. The critical role of email at this stage is to accept the data and respond with a welcome email that will get people excited. Keep it simple and engaging, and offer something of value. People who read this email will want to learn more about the different types of flowers you sell for the next special occasion, for example.

Phase 3: Consideration

Although the first two phases are really supporting roles for outbound email marketing efforts, the third phase is where email starts to take more of a frontline role. When someone is considering a purchase, nothing is better than a well-timed email to help seal the deal. In fact, Forrester reports that once someone buys something via an email

marketing purchase, they are likely to spend 138 percent more with your company than those who decided to buy through other channels.

Email marketing at this stage drives sales. A recent Ipsos study found that consumers are more likely to make purchases based on email offers from businesses they know and trust and have purchased from before. This is critical in the consideration phase. Getting your message in front of a potential customer needs to coincide with the time when they are considering a purchase in your product set. Since there is not a perfect predictor of this timing, continuous, valuable messaging makes email the messaging channel of choice.

Phase 4: The Buy

Woo-hoo! A purchase was made! Email marketing has to kick things into high gear now to make sure the excitement from the purchase is being used to drive a positive experience. Sometimes known as *transactional messages*, this type of email message reinforces the value of the purchase the customer just made and makes them feel good about it. But remember, email marketing doesn't act alone at this point in the customer's buying cycle. The multichannel reach through sales associates and word of mouth plays a heavy role too!

The truth is, without our customers, we'd be nothing. And email at this point in a customer's life cycle is critical. Asking for feedback with surveys and polls and making it simple to share one's love of a product or service with friends make these messages an invaluable source of future sales and lifetime value.

Making the Most of Your Email in a Multichannel Environment

Emails that you send at different points in a customer's life cycle either have an impact or are impacted by all the media the customer sees. The more media vehicles in place, the higher the response potentially is.

Figure 4.6 is a graph from the Email Experience Council that does a great job of illustrating how to ensure that your emails are surrounded by the strongest forms of media.

What This Means When You Are Setting Up Your Initial Email Database

Now that you are an expert in the theory of multichannel email marketing (and more will be discussed in the next chapter), you need to apply that theory to the email marketing database you have.

More often than not, just like missed opportunities with budgets, many times the best email marketers limit themselves through missed opportunities with database integration. Ensuring your email marketing database can support multichannel marketing signals (for example, updating a record to show that someone called customer service six times) doesn't have to be costly or time-consuming. It just needs to be done up-front.

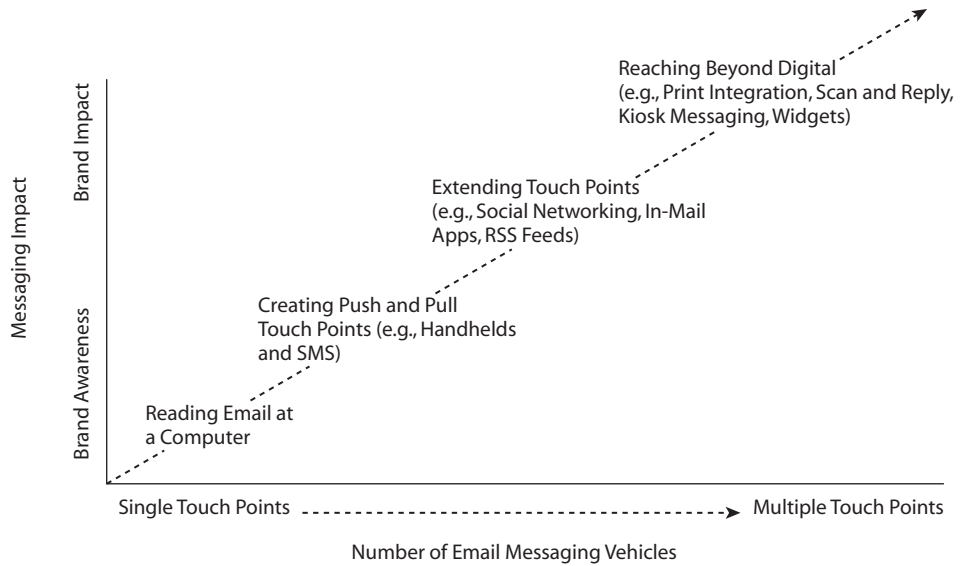


Figure 4.6 Email marketing in a multichannel environment

Overnight Shipping Company's Email Program

As an illustration of the impact of multichannel efforts and email at its best, we'll share this story with you.

When you go to the Overnight shipping company website and want to place an order, a series of multichannel efforts kicks off that are very sophisticated.

These include the following (not in this order):

- A real-time query to the database to see whether you are a returning customer
- A check to see whether the email address or IP you are entering from is a larger or target customer (if so, you get a special offer)
- A special offer for the type of credit card you are planning on using (based on another real-time lookup and partnership with credit card companies)
- An email sent to your account, which will determine how potentially responsive you will be in the future
- An email to a sales rep if you end up representing a large or key prospect account
- Retargeting banners on and off the site based on your actual purchase or non-purchase
- And more

Believe it or not, all these multichannel effort happen in real time and require very little human intervention. This is the result of a well-thought-out strategy and a very strong and nimble set of databases that speak to each other.

Your email marketing efforts can be just as powerful and just as impactful with a little preplanning.

As authors who have “done it the hard way” many times, we can say that making sure your email marketing database can support additional and customized field headers is key. You should also ensure that your email marketing database and/or service provider has a solid FTP service as well as the ability to support APIs. In many cases, large companies cannot afford to have all their customer data live outside of their firewalls and must use secure APIs to transmit multichannel data back and forth in real time to generate the next step in email efforts.

Asking these questions now will save you precious time and money in the future.

The Top Five Ways You Can Mess Things Up If You Are Not Really Careful

The majority of this chapter looked at the benefits of dotting the i’s and crossing the t’s before launching your email marketing efforts. You will find that these suggestions, although seemingly a bit excessive, will ensure your program delivers peak performance from the start.

With that said, as you move into the tactical elements of creating your actual email strategy, content plan, and messaging plan, here is a quick recap of the top five ways you can turn all your hard work into disaster if you are not careful:

- **Undercutting your budget.** You can have the best email results around but lack the ability to grow without the right budget in place. Worse yet, you could run into real problems with your email campaign (deliverability issues or data concerns) and have no way to address them without a budget to support the work.

Write This Down: The authors’ budgeting rule of thumb is to make your email budget and then add 30 percent on to it for the “unknowns.”



- **Forgetting to design your email database.** Although many email service providers or technology suppliers will tell you their database is “standard” and “adequate,” don’t believe them. Also, turn a deaf ear when your technology team tells you they have the data needs all covered. Make sure your database supports all entrance and exit points for customers to share information with you. Make sure it is simple to share this data with all the other databases your company leverages.

Write This Down: Your email marketing database should enable you to define the primary key, support APIs, and automated FTPs without additional fees and, most important, should allow the simple importing and exporting of custom-designed queries to support your business.



- **Not planning for disasters.** Everyone makes mistakes. At some point in time, we promise you, an email marketing program you are responsible for will go wrong. Keep a level head about yourself when this occurs. It could be the downfall of your program, or it could be a chance to show your customers you are human too and win their loyalty and trust at a higher level than you have ever expected before.



Write This Down: The best open rates on email campaigns actually happen in campaigns that are mistakes. Empty subject line fields or fields that say, “This is a test,” typically garner open rates of more than 75 percent.

- **Not realizing that email is only *one* element of your multichannel marketing campaign.** Email marketing is great but is not the only channel influencing your customer. TV ads, print ads, online ads, your website, your search, and word of mouth also play key roles. Respect the role that email plays given the various other elements your marketing team has launched. Build a strategy that supports the holistic approach, or run the risk of being seen as the “oddball out.”



Write This Down: Seventy-two percent of the time, email marketing templates and landing pages fail to be redesigned when new large branding campaigns launch, creating a disconnected communication. (Source: Email Experience Council)

- **Expecting your email marketing efforts to work from day one.** Email marketing is difficult. Now that you have a handle on all the high-level and strategic thoughts you need to consider, in the next chapter you will dive into the tactical elements required for creating success. Do not take the availability of email addresses and low cost of deployment technology for granted. As you have read, email drives significant revenue for those who get it right. Similarly, it can tarnish a brand beyond repair for those you get it wrong. Approach email with caution and attention to detail. Follow this book, and you will be pleased with your results.

Test Your Knowledge

Understanding what can and may happen once you send your email is important. Make sure you are ready to click the Send button by asking yourself these questions. A score of 5 out of 5 will ensure you are on your way to email marketing success.

- Why is it important to have an analytics program set up that goes beyond your email marketing service provider’s reports? Name a free and simple program anyone can use.

- Does your email budget have a role in the companys growth plan?
- Provide two different recommendations for when something with your campaign goes wrong.
- Define the four phases of a multichannel campaign where email plays a role.
- Name the top five ways you can “mess up” your campaign if you are not careful.