

COLUMNS

3 email tips for luxury retail

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According to **Statista**, roughly 269 billion emails were sent and received each day in 2017, and this figure is expected to increase to almost 320 billion daily emails in 2021.

On top of that, **80 percent** of retail professionals indicated that email marketing is their greatest driver factor for customer retention. Social media was identified by just 44 percent of those same professionals.

It is clear that email marketing is a key tactic for customer communications, but retailers need to make sure that their strategies stay up-to-date and effective in reaching their target audience.

Coherent Path and RSR Research sought to analyze the email marketing strategies from 138 top retailers, focusing on well-known brands across a variety of industries. We developed some best-practice tips that retail marketers can follow when developing email marketing strategies with an eye on three key areas, including email frequency, catalog exposure and email content.

Email frequency

As retail marketers know, the average number of emails sent per day is a highly contentious and often debated number, as they must balance the need to engage with their audience and drive sales against abusing their list and unintentionally driving valuable customers away.

The main strategy that retailers need to keep in mind is that a luxury retailer is not competing against just other luxury retailers for a consumer's attention within their inbox they are competing against all other retailers sending emails.

If too many are sent, the retailer stands out as a spammer. If too few are sent, however, the retailer risks their message getting lost in the noise.

Based on the findings of the report, the balance between being hyper-aggressive and meek when it comes to email campaigns leaves retailers to an average of just slightly less than one email per day.

But even more important than the number of emails sent, retailers must make sure that the one per day they do send really counts.

Catalog exposure

Another important element in evaluating the health of an email program is to consider how much of a retailer's catalog is being exposed.

For unknown subscribers, in which a retailer has no interactivity or indicators of interest from the subject, the ability to turn a subscriber into a shopper depends on a brand's ability to find a topic or category that interests the consumer.

Retailers who feature only a small subset of categories across all of their emails risk never having the chance to figure out what attracts a consumer.

For example, a retailer selling women's clothing that only features sweaters in email campaigns will never entice the consumer looking for jeans.

Regularly offering access to categories within email campaigns is an easy way to attract the attention of a shopper and to expose more of a retailer's product catalog.

Across the retailers evaluated, it would take a median of 2.6 years to ensure full catalog exposure to an unknown subscriber.

This is because, on average, the retailers only included categories in 25 percent of their emails, and the vast majority included categories in less than 50 percent of their emails.

Email content

The strategy behind email content should include everything from email length, subject line content and whether it is optimized for mobile devices.

When it comes to length, it is important for retailers to strike the right balance: too long and consumers may never see the messages toward the bottom, too short and they may have missed an opportunity to better leverage email content to appeal to shoppers.

From our experience, at a fixed resolution and scroll length, we identified two full screen lengths to be optimal to cover the crux of email content.

Beyond the length, the subject line is another integral part of a successful email.

While there are few things worse a retailer can do with an email than click-bait a consumer, they need to make sure the percent of emails whose subject line matches content remains high since it is a clear indicator on whether an email campaign was a cohesive effort.

Additionally, retailers need to be wary of too much promotion within the headline.

Discounts are one thing, but when they are your only thing, that becomes a problem.

Too many retailers have fallen into the downward spiral of training their customers to simply wait for prices to fall without enticing them with new content or categories.

Finally, the report found that across the retailers surveyed, only an average of 24.4 percent of emails were mobile optimized, and 83 retailers sent no mobile-optimized emails at all. While mobile is a relatively new delivery method, consumer behavior would suggest that mobile-optimized email should be a base expectation for any retailer's strategy.

AS NEW TRENDS emerge and technologies evolve, it is important that retailers make sure not to let their email marketing strategies go stale, following the same pattern with the same content.

By keeping an eye on trends and research, retailers can keep their email strategies current and effective in catching a consumer's eye as they scroll through their inbox.

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