

COLUMNS

## 3 ways for retailers to improve their email marketing campaigns

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With a **4,400 percent ROI** – that is \$44 for every \$1 spent – it is no surprise that many retailers view email marketing as a central part of their marketing strategy. But how many retailers are actually getting it right, creating engaging, relevant campaigns that resonate with their customers?

To find the answers, we conducted a **study that evaluated 100 top retailers**, acquiring every email sent to subscribers who have never purchased a product from July to December 2017. We also bought from each retailer and collected every email sent – as first-time buyers – for the first 45 days after the purchase, from November to December 2017.

The resulting report found that a majority of top retailers are failing to use their data to personalize emails to customers who have made a purchase, instead, sending them the same emails as non-purchasers.

While many retailers are using email marketing to build a loyal customer base, this new study proves that retailers are missing an opportunity to leverage valuable customer data to engage their email subscribers.

Here are three key areas that retailers need to focus on to make sure they are winning share of voice in consumers' inboxes.

### Email personalization

Every customer is unique. Each one has different purchasing behavior, interests and preferred methods of communication, and retailers need to make sure to factor this into their marketing strategies.

In fact, according to a report from **Segment**, 49 percent of customers bought items they did not intend to buy due to a personalized recommendation from the brand with whom they were doing business. More importantly, 44 percent of consumers say they will likely return after a personalized shopping experience.

When it comes to email, retailers need to make sure personalization is part of the equation.

However, our study found that retailers are essentially treating their new customers the same as their email subscribers who have not made a purchase.

Some retailers did not even send any emails outside of the order confirmation and shipping notifications, such as Costco, Tory Burch, The Container Store and Menards.

Retailers need to make a conscious effort to serve individualized content to each customer or prospective customer based on their unique tastes and preferences to make their email marketing strategies as effective as possible.

#### Email frequency

There are always myths circulating about the optimal day or time to send customer emails – such as a Tuesday afternoon when someone is sitting in their office, or maybe a Sunday morning when they are having their morning coffee and catching up on email.

The truth is, there is no right number in terms of frequency and timing of email sends.

While there is no hard-and-fast rule on the best email frequency, it is vital that retailers find a cadence that is in close proximity to other retailers.

Brands that send a lot more emails than their peers run the risk of annoying subscribers, while sending less may bury a brand amongst the competition.

Our study shows that the majority of retailers surveyed are sending multiple emails a day. In fact, more than a third of the time they are sending more than one email a day –bombarding their customers and increasing their chances of being deleted.

#### Email optimization

To successfully turn the non-purchasing subscriber into a purchaser, retailers need to optimize their email content, from matching the subject line to the main content, not relying too heavily on discounts and delivering a positive mobile experience.

Our study found that retailers are paying more attention to personalized subject lines, rather than resorting to basic subject lines like “New Arrivals” or “Just for You.”

But, unfortunately, more than half of all emails still have subject lines that do not match the content of the email.

The study also found that discount or promotional language was found in 39 percent of all emails, and 63 percent of emails are not being properly optimized for the channel seeing the biggest usage gains in digital commerce – mobile.

IT IS CLEAR that a lot of retailers are missing the mark when it comes to creating email campaigns that are true customer engagement engines.

The good news is, any retailer optimizing its purchaser experience, email frequency and email content will be far ahead of its competitors.

Retailers need to make sure to re-evaluate their email marketing strategies in today’s competitive landscape to capture the most consumer attention and retain a loyal customer base.

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