

MARKETING

Why now is a good time to grow an email database

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Email marketing firm Alchemy Worx has seen increases in client's online sales across sectors since lockdowns began. Image courtesy of Alchemy Worx

By DIANNA DILWORTH

As affluent consumers are stuck at home during the coronavirus lockdown, many are spending more time online and are doing more online shopping than usual.

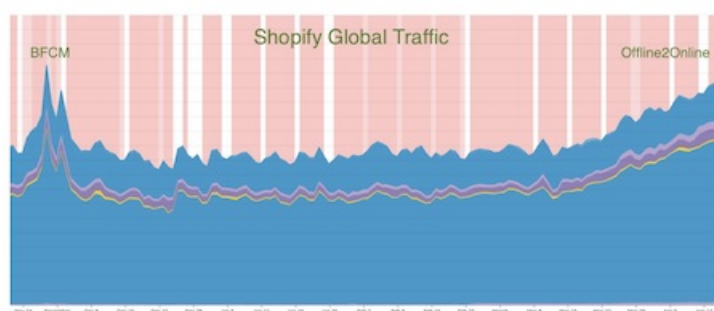
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With luxury marketers looking for ways to remain relevant when stores are closed and consumers housebound, email marketing offers a direct channel to both connect and sell products.

"Regardless of when now' is, now' is always a good time to be growing your database," said Kath Pay, founder/CEO of **Holistic Email Marketing**, London.

"As it happens though, now is a prime time to do so as across the world, those with spare cash to afford luxury items are most likely stuck at home with spare time to be browsing for these little pieces of luxury to make their life feel better," she said.

Holistic Email Marketing is an email marketing consultancy based in the United Kingdom whose clients include Mr. Porter and Kate Spade New York, among others.



Shopify has seen global ecommerce traffic reach Black Friday/Cyber Monday levels during the lockdowns. Image credit: Shopify

Growing a database

Global online traffic is currently at Black Friday/Cyber Monday levels, according to Shopify, making having a strong email list as important as ever.

"The good news for digital marketers is the current lockdown is driving millions of consumers online, many of them for the first time," said Dela Quist, founder/CEO of **Alchemy Worx** and Touchstone Intelligent Marketing, London.

"We are seeing a very similar picture with our clients," he said. "Revenues are up across the board. We view this as a once in a lifetime opportunity to help our clients significantly grow their email database."

Some luxury brands have had to cut their marketing budgets during the current state of affairs, making building an

email database even more important than ever. Email offers an inexpensive way for brands to reach customers and help boost sales as stores remain closed indefinitely.

And while many luxury brands rely on social media to highlight their products and rich imagery, email is a push channel that has proven to be a more effective tool for driving sales.

In fact, consumers that buy products through email spend 138 percent more than customers that do not receive a company's email offers, according to research from [McKinsey & Company](#).

As such, brands and retailers alike should be prominently featuring email collection points across their Web site to help increase their database and opportunities to connect with customers via email. These email capture points should be highly visible at the top of the company's homepage.

"This involves auditing your current online journey and filling in the gaps," Ms. Pay said. "Have you got an easy-to-find newsletter capture form that is above the fold' on every page of your Web site?"

"Luxury brands are very sensitive to the brand aesthetics and therefore tend to relegate the ugly' subscribe form to the footer," she said. "However, this means that you could end up paying for your visitor to come back again and again. And subscribe forms don't have to be ugly."

"Due to the price point of a luxury item, they're generally a considered purchase meaning that they don't buy the item the first time they see it. Hence, you capture the address on their first visit with a simple, low barrier-to-conversion newsletter subscribe form."

Companies should not be afraid to be proactive with email capture.

Brands should be identifying missed touch points to capture email addresses. If a customer spends a long time looking at an item, for instance, or adds items to a cart without purchasing, there is an opportunity to add a pop-up to collect an email address.

"The best way to take advantage of the upturn in ecommerce is to be more aggressive about sign-ups, getting people to opt-in to your database," Mr. Quist said. "Most brands are okay at getting permission to send email marketing to people who actually buy stuff, but not so good at getting people who leave without buying to sign up."

Supporting the fight against COVID-19 #GivenchyFamilyTo g...



APART BUT TOGETHER

Givenchy's "Apart but Together" email. Image credit: Givenchy

Case for pushing product in emails

While many luxury brands are turning to branding messages over transactional sales messaging during the crisis to ensure that they are being sensitive to the times, they could be missing out on much-needed revenues at a time when sales are key to survival.

"There is a danger that consumers might see branding messages as being insincere particularly if that is not something you usually do," Mr. Quist said. "I doubt a single person wrote in and requested more branding messages. The data I am looking at doesn't seem to imply there is the need to do so."

Still, many luxury brands are stepping up their messaging to show how they are using their resources to help out during the crisis.

LVMH and Kering have used email to promote how they are using perfume factories to make hand sanitizer.

Givenchy sent an email this week promoting the message "Apart but together," letting customers know how the brand has reopened its ateliers to help manufacture hospital gowns to be donated to the French health authorities for as long as necessary.

"Perhaps we are doing it to make ourselves feel better about the fact that what we sell might be considered frivolous or inappropriate in a crisis," Mr. Quist said. "But the main focus of every marketer in 2020 should be to do everything in their power to keep the company they work for alive.

"It seems to me that we are so wrapped up in the disease itself and, not unreasonably, the pain it is causing in the form of illness and loss of life, we are forgetting the looming existential threat in the form of business bankruptcies, job losses and the devastation this will cause to whole communities and the economy," he said.

"The idea that we should tiptoe around the reality of what we do, which is use the email channel to sell products and services, is to run the risk of harming the organization we work for. Every sale we fail to make has the potential to put your colleague's jobs, or indeed the entire company, at risk."

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