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How Apple iOS data privacy updates made email marketing king once more

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Apple's new iOS release has made it harder for companies to advertise on Facebook, harder to acquire reports on the performance of their advertising campaigns and, most important, harder to achieve conversions.

The hands of marketers have been tied both to what the platforms such as Facebook provide them as well as what operating systems and Web browsers allow.

In the last few years, Safari, Firefox and a host of Chrome plugins have made it possible to block third-party cookies and, in the settings of their Google account, users have been enabled to switch off ad personalization.

More browsers are poised to make it difficult for advertisers to run campaigns and track campaign performance.

The main problem is that marketers do not own their own data. Not owning your own data is like rolling a dice.

You might get lucky with how events unfold, but you can also run terribly out of luck.

Owned data is the only solid foundation on which to build a long-term marketing strategy.

Perils of shiny new objects

So, what now? Everyone loves shiny new objects, and let us be honest, marketers love them even a little bit more than others.

This eternal pursuit of the next best thing makes marketers lose sight of proven solutions. Email marketing is one such practice that is worth revisiting in light of the many ways social networks and platforms have changed their functionalities and policies.

Email marketing allows for the exploitation of what is called "first party data," or "1P data." First-party data is information that companies acquire directly from their customers and own themselves. No changes to the strategy or policies of any intermediary party can ever impact the collection and exploitation of first-party data.

Benefits of list-building

Through list-building, companies are given the means to continuously market and grow their company. They can nurture existing and prospective customers, and collect information on who their prospects are and what problems they are trying to solve.

If we assume that a well-managed list comes with a conversation rate of 0.25 percent, and an average order value (AOV) of \$100 for each conversion, then a weekly email blast will produce \$13,000 in annual revenue, or 52 times \$250. Now, grow that list to 10,000 people and do not change anything else and you will end up with \$130,000 in annual revenue.

Still not satisfied? Double the frequency of distribution and you will have \$260,000 in annual revenue. Granted, you will arrive just a bit below \$260,000. Your growth curve will start to flatten at some point, but the point remains valid: the email campaign which comes with zero dollars of ad spend will allow for a return and a level of control with which no social media network can compete.

Changing the locus of control

Email list subscribers can be targeted directly through paid campaigns, without any need for cookies, so that solves the cookie problem.

Also, you can and should run email campaigns within Facebook targeting the people who have left their email addresses through your Facebook lead generation campaign and then also add their email addresses to your own email list, of course.

Once more, there is no need for cookies in this scenario and this approach is also highly accurate for creating lookalike audiences.

The advantages of gaining control over your data are, as far as paid search engine marketing is concerned, identical to those of shifting the locus of control from Facebook to email marketing.

EMAIL MARKETING IS not sexy anymore these days. Your local American Marketing Association chapter probably has no speakers on email marketing scheduled for this year, and email marketing specialists seem not to be the favorite guests of marketing podcast hosts, either.

The thing is, however, that email marketing has worked well in both consumer and business markets in the past and deserves to be an integral part of any marketing strategy that pivots to a new, stronger focus on first-party data.

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