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COMING NEXT MONTH

The April *Publish* plan is to take a look into ACP's new "On Demand Training Center" that offers interactive sales training that is accessible 24/7. As always, we will also cover the people, information and issues that are influencing the community publishing industry.

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2022

MARCH 1, 2022 – AUGUST 31, 2022

USPS Promotion –

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By incentivizing the use of these technologies through discounts, the Postal Service is helping to increase the value of direct mail and ensuring its continued place in the modern communications and marketing landscape.

For more information, go to:

<https://postalpro.usps.com/promotions/2022-emerging-tech?>

MARCH 4, 2022

Midwest Free Community Papers (MFCP)

Spring Conference at the Gateway Hotel and Conference Center in Ames, Iowa. Go to mfcp.org for program updates or contact Lee Borkowski at 888-899-6327, email: director@mfcp.org for more information.

MARCH 18-19, 2022

Mid-Atlantic Community Papers Association (MACPA)

Annual Conference – “Let’s Strike Gold with MACPA” will be held at the Comfort Suites in Carlisle, PA. Go to macpa.net for updates or contact Alyse Mitten at 800-450-7227, email: info@macpa.net for more information.

MARCH 31, 2022

Association of Community Publishers (ACP)

Bob Wright Memorial Scholarship application deadline.

MARCH 31 – APRIL 1, 2022 (No fooling)

Association of Community Publishers (ACP)

Leadership Summit will be held in Nashville, TN. This unique format will be limited seating and focus on 10 topic driven sessions designed to inform and spark open discussions. Register now at <https://communitypublishers.com/in-person>. For more information, contact Cassey Recore, email: cassey@communitypublishers.com or call 877-203-2327.

SEPTEMBER 1, 2022 – DECEMBER 31, 2022

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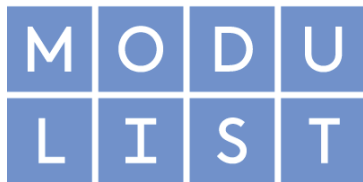
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- Applicant must be a high school graduating senior or current college student.
- Applicant must be attending a 4 year college, vocational trade school or community college.
- Application must be received by March 31, 2022

DOWNLOAD APPLICATION AT:

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OOPS WE DID IT AGAIN



JOHN DRAPER
ACP PRESIDENT

We've put together another opportunity to improve your bottom line.

Unlike the popular Britney Spears hit from 2000, we're not playing games with your heart and moving toward separation. Rather, we're in the game of bringing people together. This has been a chorus for our trade association and the song continues this spring with our Leadership Summit set for March 31-April 1.

In keeping with my song lyric theme, what better place to gather than Nashville, Tennessee? Here I could possibly quote some country music song about breaking up or coming together, but let's face it, there are simply too many from which to choose.

Your publication's success our top priority. To drive us towards that end, we have put together a series of discussion-centered presentations and sessions. Each session is topic driven, led by industry professionals, and provides for free flow of conversation so we each can learn from one another; a strong blend of what makes ACP events so valuable – learning and networking.

By design, the Leadership Summit is formatted for a limited audience. We limit the number of attendees to assure the discussions are robust and focused. In addition, we invite a few of our associate members to participate. They bring with them services that might help your business. In addition, they get to converse with us about what our needs and wants are. This helps them develop new or newly-engineered services to better our industry.

ACP realizes that a solitary event cannot meet the needs of our members. If our priority is your publication's success, we must have additional means with which to make that happen.

Every-other week, on Thursdays at 4:00 eastern, we host our "Publisher's Live Discussion." Take an hour and join other publishers from across the nation as we discuss current topics of concern and success. Invitations to the Zoom event are sent out days ahead. If you have additional questions or want to be sure you're in the email notification list, contact the ACP office.

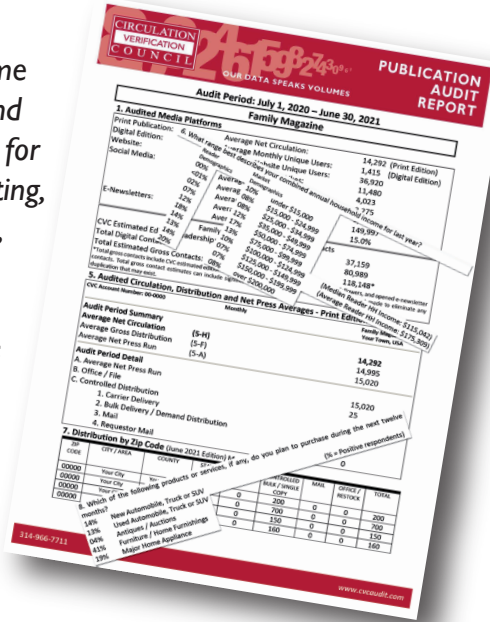
Another area of training we are focused on is improvements to our online training library. Over the past few months our board members, staff, and TLI team have been updating content and developing new means of access and distribution. This is quite a process and is nearing a roll-out. I'm confident our offerings will be unique, robust, and valuable. Keep your eyes on your inbox or in *Publish* for details.

This fall our plan is to put together a virtual conference of sorts. This is a ways off and our immediate attention is on the short-term. We are always open to input on topics or planning, so please reach out if you're so moved and let us know your thoughts.

As we continue to write our song of bringing people together, a fall event is the next (certainly not last) stanza. We invite you to be characters in our production. I promise we won't break up with you. ■

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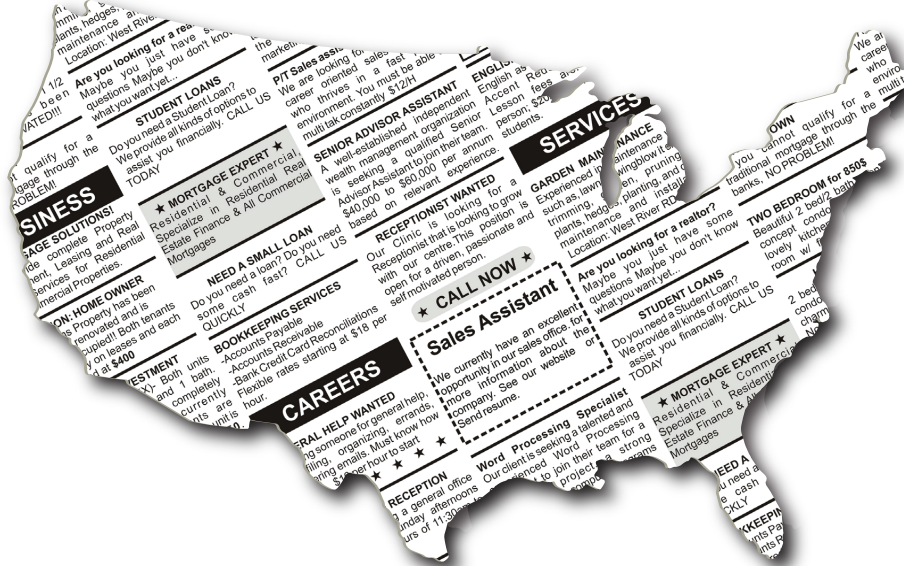
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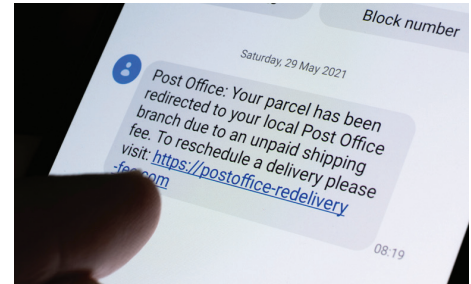
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BY DOUGLAS FRY

GATHER DATA

98% compared to 20% for email. 90% of the time a text is read within 3 minutes of receiving the message. Customers who receive texts have a 40% higher conversion rate compared to those who don't.



The main focus of this issue of Publish is Email Marketing. In keeping with the theme of this monthly article let's look at One Thing we can do to improve that facet of our businesses. So, what is the one thing we can do to improve communication with our customers and readers? The answer is pretty simple: gather all the information you can about a customer or reader.

When you gain a new customer I'm sure you get vital information like their company name, phone, physical and mailing address. I'm pretty sure you obtain their email address as well. That way you can email tear-sheets, proofs, bills, and invoices. That's a great start.

But do you also gather their cell phone number so that you can text them? If you do you are way ahead of your competition. Once that information is obtained what do you do with it? If the cell phone number just sits there in your customer database then you are missing a great opportunity to communicate at lightning speed.

We are going to concentrate on texting. You already use emails via your CRM or other front end system. Since 76% of smartphone users (so that means everyone) keep their devices handy 93% of the time they are awake you'll see that texting is the most immediate and effective way of communicating with your prospects, clients, readers, and employees. Let's look at seven (7) easy ways to use texting at your publication.

1. SALES AND MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

Texting can be a powerful, cost-effective promotional tool. Here's why: a text message has an open rate of

2. DISCOUNTED RATES OR SPECIAL SECTIONS

For some businesses the redemption rate for SMS (Short Message Service) specials can be 10 times higher than the mailed or emailed offers. Put a QR code in your publications that offers a discount on a classified or display ad. The customer simply scans it on their mobile device, clicks "send," and BAM you have a new potential client along with their mobile number.

3. ORDERS AND ORDER CONFIRMATIONS

How awesome would it be if your customers simply texted you to re-run ad ad? Even more frequently used is the order confirmation. You get those when you order pizza. Why not send them to your customers when they buy an ad? After you have received an order from a client, send an automatic confirmation text – this will improve customer satisfaction.

4. APPOINTMENT REMINDERS

One of the biggest problems for sales reps is when the customer isn't where they say they will be at the appointed time. Automated text reminders are proven to reduce missed appointments by 40%. These types of reminders should contain the date and time of the appointment along with the location and your phone number.

5. ALERTS AND NOTIFICATIONS

Do you have an upcoming event, special, or other event? Texting this information is a great way to engage with your customers. Just remember to keep texts short and to the point, only include important details.

6. STAFF COMMUNICATION

You should communicate with your staff, especially those remote workers, through SMS (text). You can notify them in case of emergencies or when the front page they have been trying to sell is sold. Whenever something special happens your remote people will feel more part of the company when they are included via text. This method also streamlines efforts. How about sharing seasonal greetings or birthday wishes? The added bonus is that by keeping everyone engaged and part of the progress of the publication you will improve employee retention.

7. SHORT SURVEYS

Texting is the fastest and easiest way of finding out what your customers think about your publication. Email survey response rates are low – less than 25%. So, implementing some micro surveys will get you better responses. It's pretty simple to create a poll on Survey Monkey or similar service, make it live, and send a short text to your audience with details on how to vote. This could even be done for those "Best of the Community" contests. Here's an example: "Vote for your favorite dentist. Text Fowler, Goodman, or Draper to 940-123-5678."

Last of all, you might not have a system in place to make these things happen. At the upcoming Leadership Summit on March 31 and April 1 in Nashville, Tennessee I'm going to be presenting "5 Things You Can Do With Filemaker." One of those examples is Communic8 a texting and email management system that can take the work out of keeping in touch with everyone. See you then. ■



IN MEMORIAM...

On February 9, 2022, the publishing industry lost one of its iconic sales trainers with the passing of Bob Berting.

Many of you will be familiar with his monthly sales advice column that runs here in Publish Magazine or have been fortunate to be one of the over 15,000 people who have experienced Bob's industry training over the last 42 years.

Or maybe you have read one of the Bob's four books written specifically for Advertising Sales professionals of all experience levels. Bob Berting will be greatly missed across the entire industry and his impact on the industry's sales teams will live on for many years to come.

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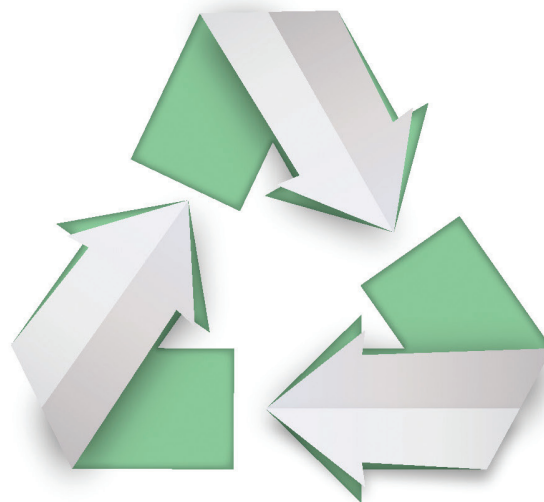
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BY LOREN COLBURN

In preparation for this issue, I started researching the history and growth of email over the last 50 years. Although growth was slow in the 70's and early 80's as the technology and communication protocols were developed, the introduction of the Commodore 64 computer in 1982 provided an affordable alternative for home computing. The C64 would sell about 20 million computers in the 80's and provide the opportunity for email and instant messaging to become accessible to the general public. I happen to be one of those C64 owners and eventually graduated to a Commodore 128.

With home computer access came the introduction of America Online, also known as AOL. By 1993, AOL began mailing compact discs to homes in an effort to promote dial-up online access utilizing their service. AOL was able to build to 1 million members by 1995 and 5 million members by 1996. They went on to buy out CompuServe and internet browser Netscape in the late 90's to control a significant portion of home internet access and facilitate the transformation of "electronic mail" into email. Carol Toomey and I are two people who still use those AOL email accounts to this day.

Fast forward 25 years or so and we see an explosion in the use of email as the primary communication for individuals, businesses and organizations worldwide. In a world with 2.6 billion people 20 years old or older, there are 4.6 billion email accounts and 2.7 billion email users! Those email accounts and users generate an incredible 246.5 billion emails a day! That volume generates for the typical person working in an office position to be an average of 122 emails per day received and 40 business emails sent.

That number prompted me to wonder if my personal volume was anywhere close to the average, so I took an inventory as of 3:57 PM on the day I wrote this column. At that point in my day, emails received amounted to 138 (104 to my inbox and 34 to junk). That number would put me slightly above the average but I have to admit, that is not good news. The sent mail was a different story with just 7 emails sent, but with further analysis – there were multiple recipients on each email and the number slid up to 28. That made me feel like I was alarmingly below average until I realized I had sent out an ACP eblast today also which generated an additional 697 emails sent. That 725 generated emails erased any inferiority feelings about any below average scores!

The question becomes, in a world of significant email volume, how do we get our emails to remain recognizable and interesting enough to open within the growing stream of incoming emails? According to Mail Chimp, the average open rate for all emails on campaigns that were sent to at least 1000 subscribers is 21.33%. For marketing and advertising emails, the open rate drops to 17.38%. For media and publishing emails, the open rate went up to 22.15%. Response rates (clicks) also vary by type with the average click through being 2.62%, marketing and advertising 2.04% and media and publishing a whopping 4.62%.

There is no shortage of information available advising emailers on the do's and don'ts of email success theories. Here are the 4 that seem to make everyone's list and have impacted our email blasts for ACP and Publish Magazine.

1. The subject line is critical to open rates – it needs to be relevant and interesting to the target audience.

Test and track different approaches to see what types of subjects generate the most opens and responses.

2. Frequency Matters – too many or too few can have a dramatic impact, but there is no definitive answer to correct frequency. The one filter that is critical for determining frequency is to make sure every email contains new content, information, offers or resources. The line between informative/helpful and annoying is one you don't want to cross.

3. Segment your list – Your subscribers are all different, any way you can segment that list allows you to send only pertinent information to your audience. The days of one-size-fits-all campaigns are long gone. Depending on the email's content, the segment may need to be geographic, business type, occupation, demographic or any other relevant grouping. ACP's list is segmented by publishers, sales staff, vendors, graphics, etc. to make sure we maximize the relevance of the emails to each subscriber.

4. Monitor results – All the major email marketing software providers offer reporting to help analyze results and optimize future sends. Take the time to track the statistics and determine what works best and adjust accordingly.

The true value to what you can accomplish with your email campaigns still comes down to your list. Having the right number and composition of subscribers will ultimately determine success. If the perfect email message goes to too few people or the wrong people, the results will not meet their full potential. Hopefully you will find some solid resources in this issue to establish and implement an email marketing strategy that will help promote your publications and convince all those media buyers that "if it's FREE, buy it!" ■

NASHVILLE LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

ACP & SAPA - JOINT EVENT

MODU
LIST

ACP Leadership Summit - Platinum Sponsors



March 31 - April 1

Embassy Suites by Hilton - Nashville Airport

Program Schedule:

Thursday, March 31, 2022

- 3:30 – 4:25 How to manage remote workers effectively
- 4:30 – 5:25 Idea Exchange - Revenue & cost saving ideas to implement now
- 6:00 – 7:30 Welcome Reception

Friday, April 1, 2022

- 7:00 – 8:00 Breakfast
- 8:00 – 8:55 How to prepare your publication for sale
- 9:00 – 9:55 Why you should use a CRM program now
- 10:00 – 10:30 Coffee Break
- 10:30 – 11:25 Pros and cons of outsourcing
- 11:30 – 12:30 How to implement an employee handbook
- 12:30 – 1:30 Lunch
- 1:30 – 2:25 5 things every sales manager should measure
- 2:30 – 3:25 4 ways everyone can use FileMaker Pro to be more efficient
- 3:30 – 4:00 Coffee Break
- 4:00 – 4:55 Introducing ACP's new online sales training program
- 5:00 – 5:55 Open mic for anything you don't see above



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ARE YOU FEELING NUTTY?

BY SHANE GOODMAN

Sometimes you feel like a nut.
Sometimes you don't.

That slogan was part of a tandem national advertising campaign for Almond Joy and Mounds candy bars in the 1970s. Peter Paul Almond Joy's got nuts. Peter Paul Mounds don't. If you were watching any TV a few decades ago, you are likely singing along by now. If not, well, you missed out.

So what do candy bars have to do with the free paper industry? Aside from both being really sweet, the analogy represents the choices that publishers have had in attending national conferences and trade shows in years past.

I had the unique experience of chairing conferences for both prior national free paper associations: the Association of Free Community Papers (AFCP) and Independent Free Papers of America (IFPA). I was also pleased to serve as the city host last summer in Des Moines, Iowa, for the Association of Community Publishers' (ACP) first conference as a unified organization. And now, I am honored to serve on a wonderful committee of industry leaders to help lead ACP's first Leadership Summit.

The AFCP conferences were large events, often in resort cities with lots of fanfare — along with some incredible training and networking. They were nutty, in a great way.



The IFPA conferences were smaller in size, attendance and fanfare but were cozy, informative and beneficial. They were not so nutty, but still great.

Some publishers preferred the AFCP conferences. Others opted for the IFPA ones. Sometimes you feel like a nut. Sometimes you don't.

The upcoming 2022 ACP Leadership Summit in Nashville, Tennessee, on March 31 and April 1 is a bit of both. It's a Snickers, you might say. Packed with peanuts and really satisfying.

This event is being made possible in part from the support of ASK-CRM and Modulist, which are serving as Platinum Sponsors for the Leadership Summit and helping to make this cost effective for all of us.

Speaking of cost effective, you can't beat the \$199 registration fee for ACP network participants and SAPA members. (All others have a \$299 fee.) This covers the Thursday reception, the Friday breakfast, the Friday lunch and breaks, and, most importantly, participation in all 10 training sessions.

We will be staying at the Embassy Suites by Hilton near the Nashville airport for a discounted \$165/night room rate. If you really want to get nutty, you can get out and enjoy the nightlife, shopping and restaurants in Music City. Jolene and I are staying a few extra days to do just that.

OK, Nashville will be a great city to visit, but what about the training? Well, you are in for 10 jam-packed sessions including:

1. How to manage remote workers effectively. The pandemic forced most all of us to look at this option, but it also came with some struggles. Learn how to better manage remote workers with practical ideas you can take home and implement now.

2. Revenue/cost savings idea exchange. Sure, we all want to grow our revenues, as that can solve most workplace problems. But in this day and age, we also need to focus on minimizing expenses. You will hear ideas from both sides of the fence.

3. How to prepare your publication for sale. If you are an owner/operator and nearing the end of your career, you should not miss this session. If you are seeking to acquire other operations and are not sure what your first steps should be, you should be sure to catch this session, too.

4. Why you should use a CRM program now. Like many of you, I wondered if having a CRM system would work in my company. I spent



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months exploring options and tried several before I landed on one that worked for us. You don't have to go through all that. Instead join in on this session and hear what others are doing with CRM systems.

5. Outsourcing pros and cons. Be honest. You have thought about it. Should you outsource your design or news departments? How much can you save? Is it really worth it? Find out the answers in this session.

6. How to implement an employee handbook. If you don't have an employee handbook, you will learn how to easily create one. If you are like me and have one that hasn't been reviewed in years, then this session will help steer you in the right direction.

7. 5 things every manager should measure. We all have our important measurables that we use to keep track of our success or failures. Learn what other publishers are tracking and holding their employees accountable for and how you can do the same.

8. 4 ways you can use Filemaker Pro for efficiency. If you are not using Filemaker Pro, you should be. The efficiencies that this program can create for you and your publications will astound you. This one will be worth the registration fee alone.

9. Introducing ACP's New Online Sales Training Program. The ACP board of directors recently decided to make a substantial investment in training for the association members, and you will be some of the first to learn about these opportunities in this session.

10. "Open Mic" for anything you don't see above. Yes, sometimes you attend a conference with hopes of finding the answer to a specific question. If the topic isn't listed above, then be sure to bring it up in this opportunity with other publishers.

Now back to the candy bars. Almond Joy's got real milk chocolate, coconut and munchy nuts, too. Mounds has got deep dark chocolate and chewy coconut, ooh.

So whether you feel like being a nut or not, the 2022 ACP Leadership Summit has something for you. Just know that there is limited seating for this event with a maximum of 50 participants, so you better register quickly. Look for full details at www.communitypublishers.com.

And then go nuts. ■

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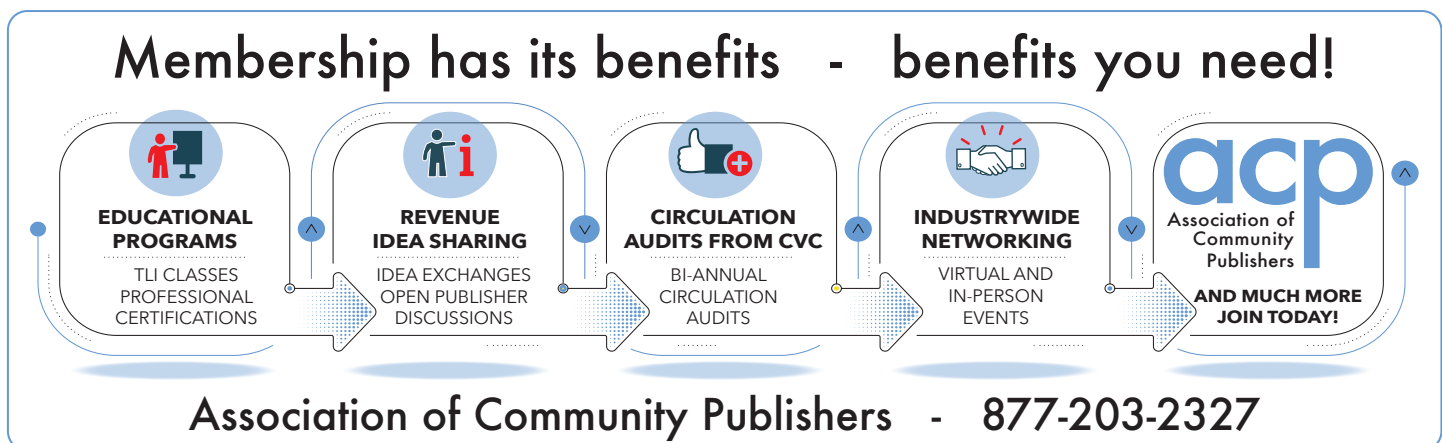
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BY JAY BAER

5 RULES FOR SAFELY USING THE AWESOME POWER OF EMAIL MARKETING

Jay Baer is the founder of Convince & Convert, a Hall of Fame keynote speaker (*spoke at the September 2014 IFPA Conference in Orlando, Florida*) and emcee, host of the award-winning Social Pros podcast, and the author of six books including *Talk Triggers: The Complete Guide to Creating Customers with Word of Mouth*.

Email marketing rocks. Originally maligned as invasive and offensive, email is now the leading interactive marketing technique. Why has it become so popular? Why will billions of promotional email messages be sent out this month? Three reasons:

- The precipitous drop-off in effectiveness of banner ads forced interactive marketers to try more email campaigns.
- Managed correctly, email marketing works. The business press (and to some degree the mainstream media) have reported email successes, driving awareness and popularity of the tactic among marketers.
- Consumers now accept email marketing as part of their online experience. They may not like it, and may often receive ridiculous, unsolicited “spam” offers for Bulgarian pornography or some such thing, but enough email offers provide real value that most consumers have abandoned the “all email marketing is evil” philosophy.

Unfortunately, however, these may be the halcyon days of email marketing. A pinnacle we may never reach again because as the number

of companies doing email marketing increases, so does the number of companies doing BAD email marketing. And bad email marketing will fan the smoldering embers of consumer email discontent, creating a brush fire that will threaten to destroy the whole industry for marketers smart and not-so-smart alike.

So, this article is as much for my benefit as it is yours. Professional interactive marketing firms don’t want companies blithely hitting “send” and firing out thousands upon thousands of poorly executed email messages. It’s bad for business. Yours and mine.

Seriously, email marketing is a powerful tool. If you’re not ready to do it right, you probably should hold off. A misbegotten email blast can infuriate your customers and prospects in seconds.

Here then, are the five rules for safely using the awesome power of email marketing. Please wear approved safety goggles at all times...

1. THINK RETENTION, NOT JUST ACQUISITION

On average, email promotions are three to five times more effective when they are sent to your existing customers, rather than prospects? Why? Your current customers already know you and your products. They have already committed to you psychologically and financially. In most cases, the best use of email marketing is to increase loyalty and repeat purchases from your current customers.

2. BE REALISTIC

Regardless of what you’ve read or heard, email marketing is not likely to transform your business. Be realis-

tic about your expectations for your email efforts. If you are sending an email of value (coupon, special offer, etc.) to a loyal group of current customers, 5-10% of the recipients might click through the email to your Web site. If you are sending a promotional message to a purchased list of theoretically receptive consumers (based on demographics, etc.), you should expect results in the 1-3% range.

Email marketing is good. Sometimes very good. But it’s not magic beans.

3. THINK FREQUENCY

One of the keys to successful email marketing is developing a relationship with a customer or prospective customer over the course of several messages. Before you send out an email offer to thousands of people, create a multiple message campaign strategy that uses this first email as a beginning – not an end. Consider what you’ll send to people who respond to your first message. What, if anything, will you send to people who don’t respond? What will comprise your next promotion?

4. TEST WHATEVER YOU CAN

The speed and digital nature of email makes it extremely easy to test and optimize for success. If you’re not testing your email approach before blasting it out to a large list, you’re fighting with one hand tied behind your back. Here are just some of the aspects of a campaign that can be tested.

- Recipient Demographics
- Offer
- Subject Line
- From Line

INDUSTRY FEATURE

- Body Copy
- Day of Week Delivered
- Hour of Day Delivered

Make sure to track results of each test cell independently (using separate URLs, usually). If you determine via your test that a particular Subject line works better than others, it's a snap to change it. Try that with your next direct mail piece or TV ad.

5. MEASURE CONVERSION, NOT JUST CLICKS

Most companies measure their email efforts (and other interactive marketing) based on response rates. These numbers are often called click through rates because they represent the percentage of recipients who "clicked through" the email promotion to get to the company's Web site. The trouble is, using click through as the sole measure of success is like determining the viability of your store based on how many people

“ Originally maligned as invasive and offensive, email is now the leading interactive marketing technique.

look at your window display. Click through measures your ability to lead a horse to water, but making it drink is where you make money. In addition to click through, always measure conversion (the number or percentage of people who actually bought something, entered your contest, etc.). You may be surprised that your lists or test parameters that generate high click through don't necessarily provide equally high conversion – and vice versa.

History repeats itself. Email should continue to be an effective tactic for at least another 18-24 months. After that, the amount of email promotions – whether good or bad – will probably become too numerous, trig-

gering a consumer backlash. At that point, response rates will fall dramatically (just like with banner ads), and we'll be right back here writing a column on the five rules for effective cell phone advertising or instant messenger promotions or telepathic marketing. After all, something's always the next big things. ■

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Original Article Link – <https://www.convinceandconvert.com/email/5-rules-for-safely-using-the-awesome-power-of-email-marketing/>



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THE SMALL BUSINESS OWNER'S GUIDE TO EMAIL MARKETING SUCCESS: INTRODUCTION

BY JESSICA LUNK

Director of Growth Marketing – Benchmark Email

Here's a tough reality for small business owners like you: You absolutely must sell your products or services to stay in business. And to experience maximum sales success, you need to support your efforts with effective marketing. In this six-part series, we will talk about one of the most powerful tools available to help small business owners like you enjoy more marketing success – email.

Email marketing offers a multitude of advantages. It can help you drive traffic to your website. It can help you build a powerful, well-regarded brand. It can help you make those all-important repeat sales and develop lasting, profitable customer relationships. Do it right, and you can experience a huge boost to your marketing and lead generation results.

But do it wrong and not only will it hurt your marketing efforts, it could very well impact your results and damage your reputation.

This series will help you do it the right way. Starting Monday, we will take a look at five recommended stages of the email marketing process:

- Introductory Email¹ (New Leads)
- Lead Nurturing Email² (Prospects)
- Upsell Email³ (New Customers)
- Referral Email⁴ (Current Customers)
- Win-Back Email⁵ (Former Customers)

We will talk about the specifics of and suggestions for email messages at each stage in the customer journey. We'll also include a written example of how each email might look.

Today, let's set the stage by talking about general practices that can help you ensure email marketing success:



MAKE YOUR COPYWRITING COUNT

Remember that you are trying to persuade your readers to take action, even if you are not yet trying to sell them your product. So harness the power of persuasive copywriting. “Sell” them on taking the actions you want them to take, including opening your email, clicking through to your landing page, downloading your content and so on.

If your email is going to be effective, it has to get opened. Without a powerful subject line, it probably won't be opened and read. So what constitutes a powerful subject line? Not “July Newsletter.” It's more like “Proven, Easy-To-Use Strategies To Help You Market More Effectively.” Notice that this subject line generates curiosity and mentions a benefit. It also contains that all-important word: “You.”

Keep in mind that you are writing for people, and people love to be paid attention to, and they love to hear their own names, so personalize your emails. Say “Dear Bob,” not “Recipient.” Address them directly. Use the word “you” frequently. Write to an audience of one, not to a crowd.

Make your email easy to digest by writing at a basic level. You aren't writing a college thesis; your readers won't be impressed by complex, high-level language. They also won't be impressed by long sentences and huge blocks of text. So make your emails concise and straightforward with brief paragraphs and quick transitions. Make your message as long as you need to, but as short as you can, and if necessary, continue your sale on a landing page after they click through.

INDUSTRY HOW TO

KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE PRIZE

Speaking of selling, although email marketing can give your sales efforts a huge boost, you don't want to use your emails to sell your products. Rather, you want to "sell the click." You want to persuade your reader to click through⁶ to your landing page and do the bulk of your selling there. So by all means, have the CTA link in your email go to a landing page, not your homepage.

And unless it's for a newsletter, where you have a variety of content snippets that link to articles on your blog or elsewhere, use your email for only one purpose. For example, if your goal is to drive prospects to your landing page where they can access your latest case study, make sure that is the one and only CTA within your email body. Asking your recipient to do more than one thing causes decision fatigue – seriously diluting your email's persuasive power.

DON'T BE A PEST

So how often should you send your message⁷? There are a lot of varying opinions on best time of day, frequency of sending, and so forth. You need to find a cadence that works for your business and customers (and continue to track and optimize your success). See what frequency and sending schedule works best for you. And when you find it, follow it.

DON'T BE VAIN

In modern marketing, it's easy to get caught up with large numbers and "vanity metrics" that may look great but have little or no bearing on your actual marketing and sales success. With email marketing, that vanity metric is most often the size of your subscriber list.

It's nice to have a lot of subscribers, but it's much, much better to have a smaller list that actively engages with you – that opens your emails and clicks through, and buys your stuff, than a big list that ignores you or hurts your deliverability⁸.

When you're testing and attempting to optimize your email marketing results, not everyone on your list is going to like what you are doing. My advice? Don't worry about it. Don't fear a few unsubscribes. You may even want to take a welcoming attitude toward them. An unsubscribe could very well mean you're doing something right – whittling down your list to your target audience.

ORGANIC > PAID

But your subscriber list does matter. It can be a huge asset, even if it's not all that big. You want a list of interested readers who chose to receive your emails. So grow your list "organically⁹," don't focus on sending cold emails to purchased lists of people who might be (but probably won't be) interested in your product. It's a sure way to spur unsubscribes and spam complaints that can prevent your emails from arriving in the inboxes of people who actually matter.

To help build your list, put email opt-in forms multiple places on your site and even in your social media profiles. Use powerful but brief copywriting to sell potential subscribers on the value they'll get from opting in to your list.

Here's a critical email marketing best practice you must follow: Send out your emails through a specialized software program specifically designed for email marketing. DO NOT use a program like Outlook to send out your messages. A key reason is that you must make it easy for subscribers to unsubscribe (it's the law). Also, using a traditional email client program such as Outlook will make email marketing management and optimization pretty much impossible (even if you have dozens of folders and spreadsheets).

Be on the lookout for our next article in this series. We'll be talking about using your introductory emails to make a great first impression on your new subscribers and to build momentum and set the stage for profitable customer relationships. ■

Now, on to:

- **Part 1: The Introductory Email:**
<https://www.benchmarkone.com/blog/small-business-owners-guide-email-marketing-success-part-1/>
- **Part 2: The Lead Nurturing Email**
<https://www.benchmarkone.com/blog/small-business-owners-guide-email-marketing-success-part-2/>
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- **Part 4: The Referral Email**
<https://www.benchmarkone.com/blog/small-business-owners-guide-email-marketing-success-part-4/>
- **Part 5: The Winback Email**
<https://www.benchmarkone.com/blog/the-small-business-owners-guide-to-email-marketing-success-part-5/>

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Original article: <https://www.benchmarkone.com/blog/intro-small-business-owners-guide-email-marketing/>

¹ <https://www.benchmarkone.com/blog/small-business-owners-guide-email-marketing-success-part-1/>

² <https://www.benchmarkone.com/blog/small-business-owners-guide-email-marketing-success-part-2/>

³ <https://www.benchmarkone.com/blog/the-small-business-owners-guide-to-email-marketing-success-part-3/>

⁴ <https://www.benchmarkone.com/blog/small-business-owners-guide-email-marketing-success-part-4/>

⁵ <https://www.benchmarkone.com/blog/the-small-business-owners-guide-to-email-marketing-success-part-5/>

⁶ <https://www.benchmarkone.com/blog/nurture-leads/>

⁷ <https://www.benchmarkone.com/blog/are-you-sending-emails-too-often/>

⁸ <https://www.benchmarkone.com/blog/email-deliverability-101/>

⁹ <https://www.benchmarkone.com/blog/4-ways-grow-email-list/>

HOW TO PUT TOGETHER AN EFFECTIVE EMAIL SUBJECT LINE (AND EXAMPLES)

BY THE BENCHMARK TEAM AT BENCHMARKEMAIL.COM

First impressions matter, and yes, love at first sight does exist. Your subject line serves as the initial interaction customers have with your email – yet for a lot of marketers and copywriters, it's still only an afterthought. While we agree that the email itself is the star of the show, that doesn't matter if people don't make it past the subject line.

Make no mistake; your subject line is the most important element in your email campaigns¹. But you don't have to take our word for it.

- 35% of people open emails based on the subject line alone.²
- 69% of people will report an email as spam based on its subject line.³

Harsh reality – your perfectly curated, carefully designed, and strategically written email is worth nothing if it ends up in a spam folder⁴.

To make things easier, we've taken our favorite subject line tips and listed them below. They've worked for us, and they'll work for you too:

1. KEEP IT SHORT

Reminder, a majority of people are now reading emails on a mobile screen. So make the experience easy for them by keeping the subject short and to the point. Yes, you can absolutely be creative – but avoid being complex, or you'll drive people away.

If half of your subject line gets cut off, you risk creating the wrong impression and distorting the meaning. We recommend keeping within 50 characters, though you actually have about 75 characters to play around with (and you thought Twitter was hard).

2. PERSONALIZE

Personalizing⁵ isn't only about including the names of your recipi-

ents. Get creative with your subject lines using other tactics – like re-targeting data to pique a prospects' interest. Segment your email list⁶ to create subject lines that have specific information which will strike a chord with your subscribers. Send birthday emails and special offers, or use geographical tags to make your emails relevant on an individual level.

- *Example: Today's your birthday. And here's a treat from us.*

3. INSERT A POPULAR BRAND FOR MEGA-TARGETING

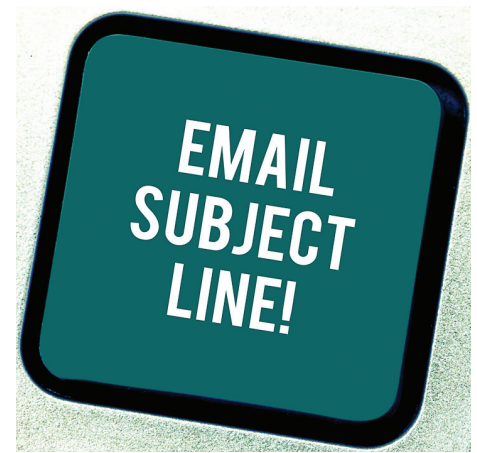
Make no mistake, brand names in subject lines work. The best part? You can create ultra-targeted email campaigns based on what your recipients bought in the past. For instance, if you're having a sale on shoes and you have three different brands on sale, you can segment your email list⁷ based on which customers have bought what. If one part of your list has purchased Kenneth Cole shoes in the past, your subject line for this group should feature the words "Kenneth Cole." This gives your customer the opportunity to stick with the brand they like best.

- *Example: These Kenneth Cole loafers have your name on them.*

4. USE EMOJIS

More and more people are using emojis to express themselves. Keep in mind not all subject lines will be fit for emoji use. If your message can be paired with emojis, your audience might be able to relate better to your email, resulting in more opens.

Avoid replacing words with emojis. Instead, use them to compliment your text in case your chosen character doesn't display in your recipient's inbox.



5. DON'T BE SPAMMY

There are two hurdles your subject line needs to cross – spam filters and busy customers who don't want to receive marketing emails. Coming across as pushy, loud, or overbearing can easily put people off and can even make them mark you as spam.

But there are also other ways of falling into the spammer category. Promising something in your subject line that you don't deliver in your email, for example. Or, having a subject line that's completely unrelated to your email. Broken links, using spam trigger words⁸, outrageous offers, spam-like design, and bad UX/UI are some other red flags to watch out for and avoid.

6. USE CUSTOMER FAVES TO SATISFY CURIOSITY

Most human beings are at least curious about what other people are buying. If a product has a huge audience and gets tons of good marks from customers, most likely, your recipient will be more inclined to buy it. For this reason, we believe that a "customer favorite" product featured in a subject line is an easy sell.

- *Example: They've sold out three times, but they're back.*

INDUSTRY HOW TO

7. TEST

The Midas touch of email marketing. A/B testing⁹ your subject lines will give you real-world insight into whether or not your emails are working. Send out only two versions at a time so you can compare – and don't forget to record your learnings for future campaigns.

- **Test 1:** You don't want to miss this sale.
- **Test 2:** All our t-shirts are 50% off.

8. ASK A QUESTION

Asking a question is a subject line technique that works well because it gives the customer something to think about. Your question should be something on almost every customer's mind. Even if you answer the question in your subject line, recipients will be inclined to open your email to learn more.

- **Example:** *Need a cool backpack for Fall? We've got 'em.*

9. MAKE IT A LIST

A list is an easy way to offer something of value, sell a product or service, and not seem too obvious about it. A list gives a customer a subconscious message that your email is organized in a way that makes it an easy read. They'll be more compelled to open your email if they know ahead of time that they'll not be facing a wall of text. Add products or services to this list, and you'll not only get them interested in opening your email, but you can showcase various products at the same time. Here are some good examples:

- **Example:** *10 products to take with you on vacation.*

There are so many more types of subject lines that you can explore with your campaigns. Collect data over time to see how best you can use this prime real estate to stand out in your customers' inboxes – and minds. ■

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Original Article Link:

¹ <https://www.benchmarkemail.com/blog/manage-email-campaigns/>

² <https://blog.hubspot.com/sales/subject-line-stats-open-rates-slideshare?toc-variant-a=>

³ <https://optinmonster.com/email-subject-line-statistics/>

⁴ <https://www.benchmarkemail.com/blog/emails-going-spam-folder/>

⁵ <https://www.benchmarkemail.com/blog/personalization/>

⁶ <https://www.benchmarkemail.com/blog/email-marketing-segmentation-4-ways-to-divide-your-list/>

⁷ <https://www.benchmarkemail.com/blog/how-to-create-an-email-list/>

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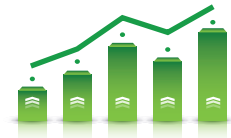


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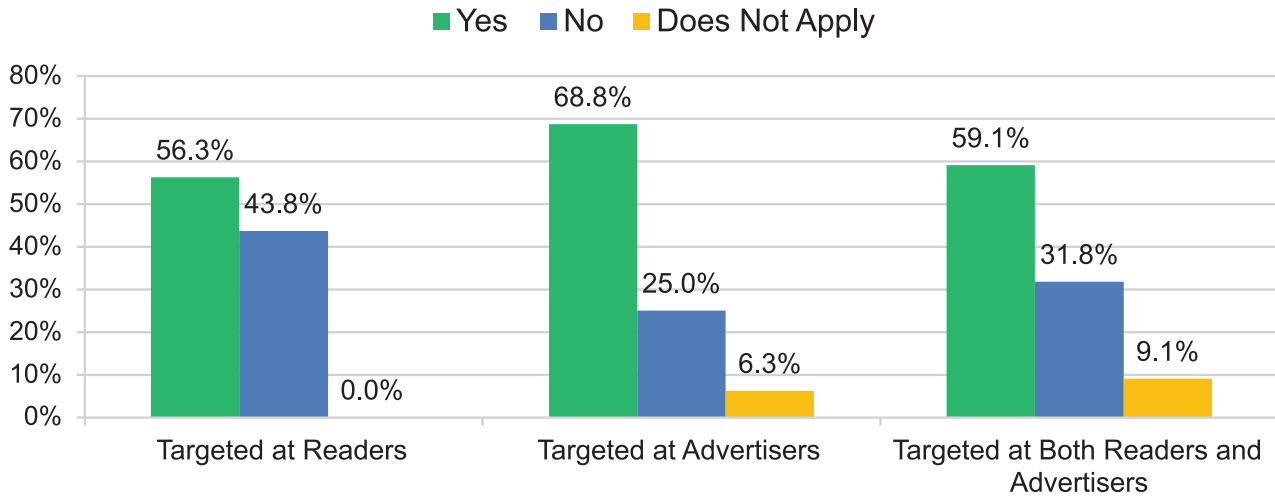
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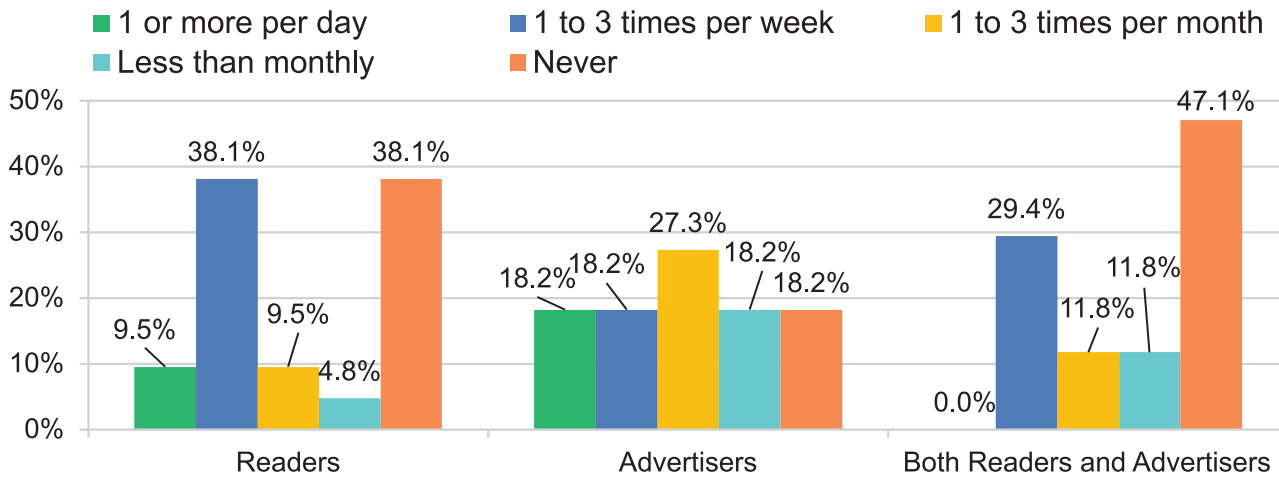
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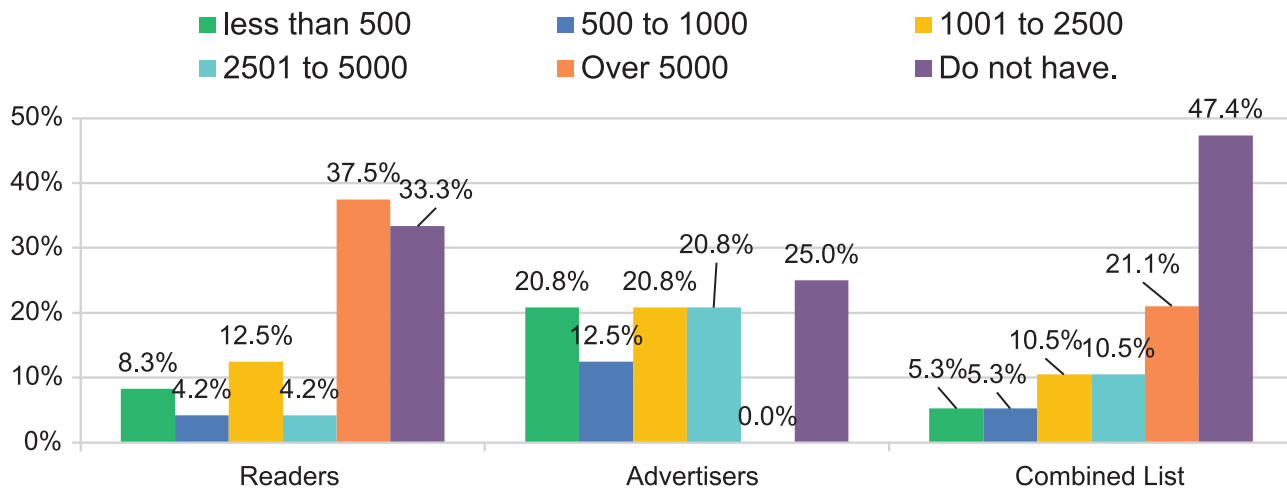
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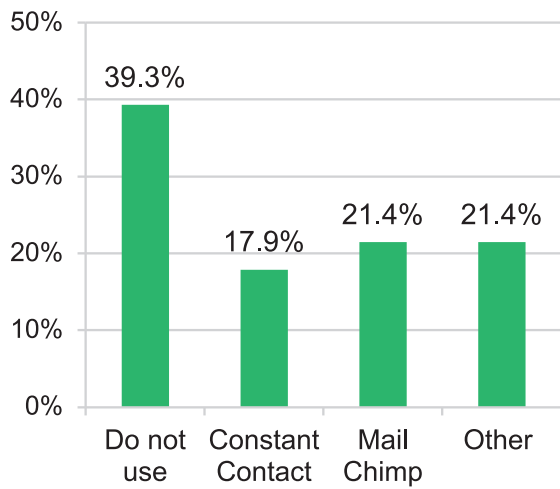
How often do you email the following groups?



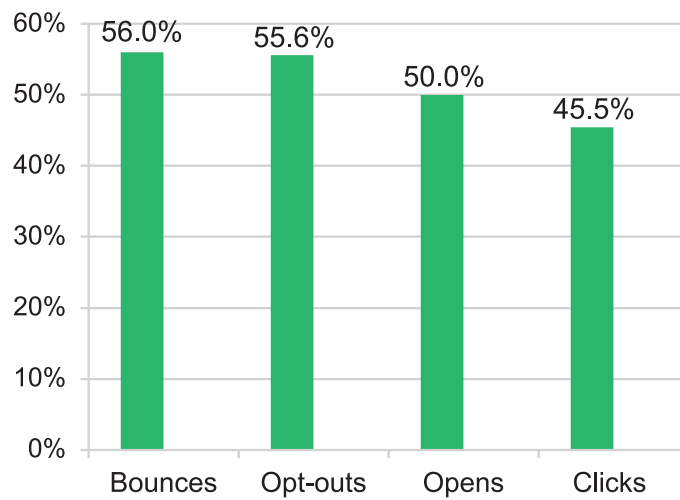
How large is your total mailing list?



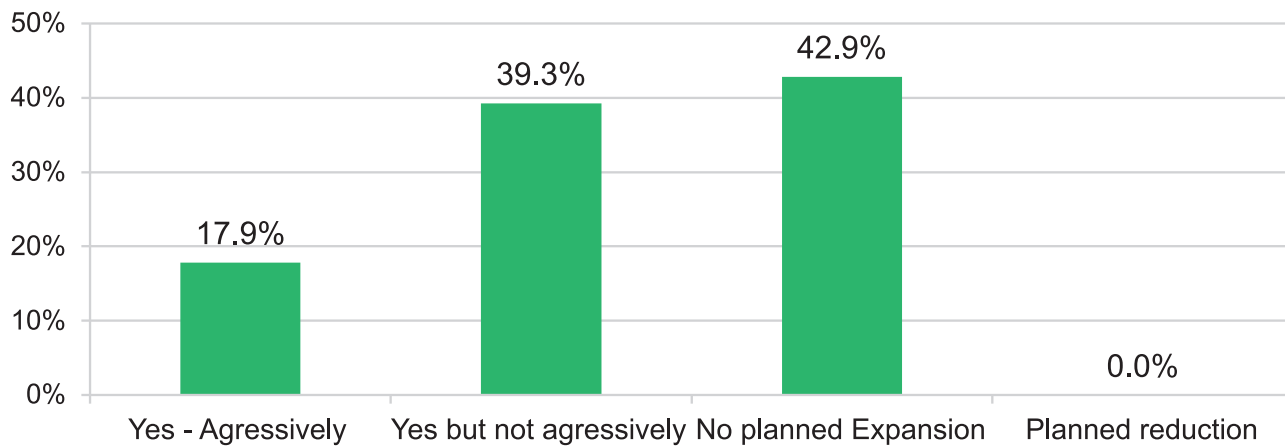
Do you use an email marketing service provider?



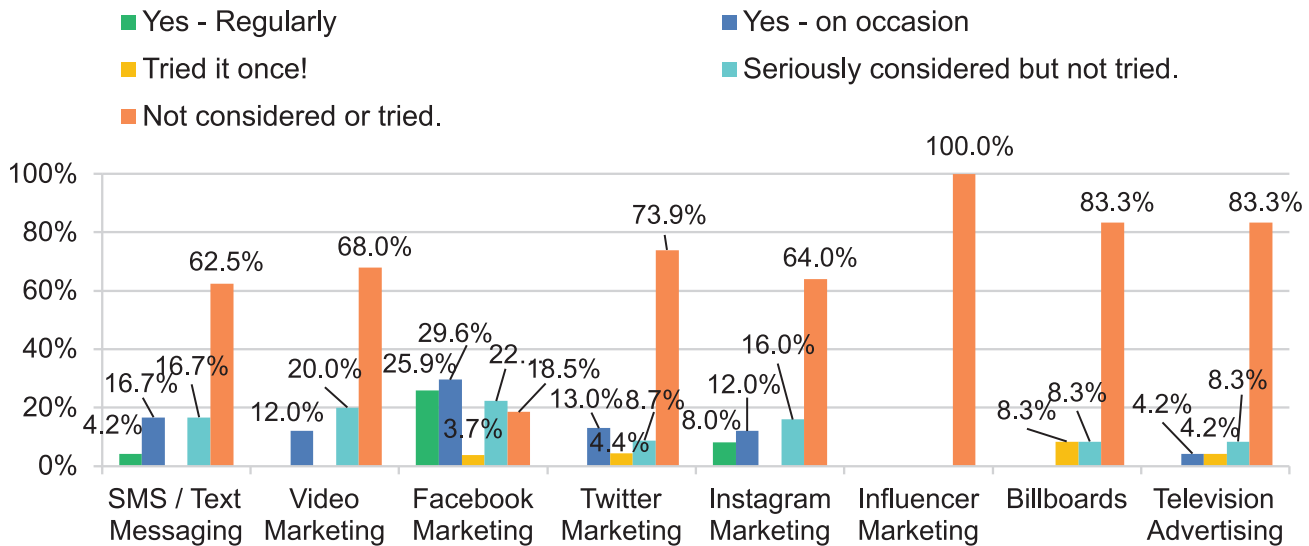
Do you track any of the following metrics?



Do you intend to expand your email marketing in the next 12 months?



Have you used any of the following marketing channels in the last 6 months?



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DIFFERENT CLASS
CURRICULUMS PRESENTED

OUR JOB IS TO CONNECT

BY JIM BUSCH

“Nobody cares about you, your brand, or your company. You’re irrelevant... until proven otherwise.

—Steve Woodruff

I’m not going to sugarcoat this—advertisers don’t give a damn about our papers, our websites, or anything else we sell. They care even less about your quota or your paycheck. To them, we are a necessary evil. Here’s another way to look at it; recently I bought a new “Smart TV.” I’m not so sure why I needed a “Smart TV” when the programming is so “dumb,” but it does have a nice picture. It was delivered to my house in a humongous cardboard box. I ripped open the box and started unpacking the TV; before long my couch was littered with big oddly shaped chunks of white Styrofoam, polyethylene bags of assorted sizes, sheets of flexible plastic foam, and reams of paper telling me how to install the TV in twelve different languages. The polite name for all of these materials is: “garbage.” I didn’t want any of this crap, but I was glad it had done its job. What I did want was to get my shiny new TV to my living room in one piece. To our advertisers, we are that unwanted pile of Styrofoam and cardboard. We are the packaging that delivers customers to their businesses in one piece with their wallets intact. For most of my career, I was a print guy; I loved selling ROP ads and inserts. I was comfortable selling print and I knew that it produced results. Even though I was an old dog, I quickly embraced the new tricks of online and email marketing. They required learning some new techniques and a new vocabulary but, I quickly realized that at its core, electronic ads served the same function as print ads. They were simply an alternative way to grab a consumer’s attention and tell them why they should do business with our advertisers. At one time Kodak controlled 70% of the photography market—a decade later they were bankrupt. The leaders of Kodak thought their business was selling film. They were wrong—their job was to help their customers capture memories. As long as we remember that our job is to connect, by any means at our disposal, local businesses with the people that need their goods or services, we will always have a viable, and profitable, business. Like Steve Woodruff said above, that’s all our customers really care about! ■

MOTIVATIONAL TIPS FOR ADVERTISING SALESPEOPLE



BY BOB BERTING,
BERTING
COMMUNICATIONS

These must seem like the roughest of times for advertising salespeople. But now is the time for them to rebound and reinvent themselves. They need to be positive and remind their customers that their publication is reaching all their market and that when this emergency time is over, the public will remember the advertisers who faithfully sent messages of a positive image during a crisis.

Here are tips that will help salespeople connect with prospective advertisers:

“LET ME TELL YOU WHO READS MY NEWSPAPER”

The salesperson may be selling ad space but the advertiser is buying readership. The readers of the publication are the people advertisers want to reach.

“MY NEWSPAPER CAN BOOST YOUR SALES”

Advertisers want and expect data on what they can expect of their ad dollars, but few newspapers have the research to prove they can deliver. Get the research going and get testimonials from happy advertisers.

“I CAN SELL AGAINST MY MEDIA COMPETITION”

Media was a silo business. Each silo had its slice of media dollars. Digital came along and blew all the silos down. Now everyone competes for every scrap of business and that’s why you need to know all of your competitors strengths and weaknesses. Put yourself in the position of the advertiser facing many media choices. How do they choose? How do you help him or her choose?

“I KNOW WHAT’S IN MY PAPER BECAUSE I READ EVERY PAGE OF IT”

The worst thing a salesperson can do is to flub a simple question about their paper. Assume your prospect has read your paper for years. You need to read your paper every day and be able to discuss what’s in it.

Media has many curves of changes.

What is true one day may not be true the next/ You must know all the changes and closely follow other newspapers but all media—radio, TV, billboards, direct mail, Social media and of course all things digital. ■

“The worst thing a salesperson can do is to flub a simple question about their paper. Assume your prospect has read your paper for years. You need to read your paper every day and be able to discuss what’s in it.”

Bob is the author of 4 e-books for the newspaper industry, available on www.bobberting.com. Bob is a professional speaker, advertising sales trainer, publisher marketing consultant and columnist in many national and regional newspaper trade association publications. He can be reached at bob@bobberting.com or 317-849-5408.

THE POWER OF REPETITION. THE POWER OF REPETITION. THE POWER OF...



BY JOHN FOUST
RALEIGH, NC

Catherine climbed the ranks from sales person to sales manager at her paper. “Although I’ve been in the business for a long time,” she told me, “there’s always a new way to look at advertising.”

She mentioned a recent trip to a fast food restaurant. “I was between meetings in a nearby town and needed a quick lunch. So I dropped by McDonalds. It had been over a year since my last trip to a McDonalds, and I was trying to choose between two of their trademark products, a Big Mac and a Quarter Pounder. I was planning to ask the cashier about the ingredients in the Big Mac, then all of a sudden I remembered their famous television jingle from my childhood. ‘Two all-beef patties, special sauce, lettuce, cheese, pickles, onions on a sesame seed bun.’ I hadn’t thought about that in years, but it was in my memory bank. I did an online search later and was proud that had I remembered every ingredient in the proper order.”

That McDonalds campaign ran for about a year and a half in the mid-Seventies. And 40 years later, Catherine still remembered. That’s the power of repetition.

Would she have remembered the jingle if it had run only one time? Not a chance.

Did you learn the multiplication tables by going through them one time? What about the alphabet? Can you hear a new song one time and sing along the next time you hear it on the radio?

Catherine’s experience reinforced her belief in the importance of repetition in advertising. “I remember one advertiser – an apartment developer – who wanted to run a splashy grand opening

ad. But he didn’t want to run anything at all after that. He figured the grand opening would create so much buzz in the market that he wouldn’t need to advertise any more for a long time. In the short run, it would have been nice for my paper to have that full-page, full color ad, but we knew it would have been a waste of his budget. We worked hard to talk him into turning that full-page budget into a mini-campaign that stretched over several weeks. We felt if we could demonstrate the value of repeating his message – with measurable results – then we could talk about extending the campaign. Our strategy worked, and he became a consistent advertiser.”

Catherine explained that her team tells advertisers about two key principles of advertising: reach and frequency. How many people will they reach? And how frequently will they reach them? Yes, a business can run one ad one time and reach all the readers in her paper’s distribution base. But without frequency, there’s little chance for success.

“Most of the time, it’s a simple concept for advertisers to understand,” she said. “Once they realize that repetition is a solid strategy, they are willing to hear how to make it work. Everybody wins. They get better results and we increase our ad count.” ■

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John Foust has conducted training programs for thousands of newspaper advertising professionals. Many ad departments are using his training videos to save time and get quick results from in-house training. E-mail for information: john@johnfoust.com

Graphic Hooks

By Ellen Hanrahan

hanrahan.ln@att.net ©2022

Here's the problem... in the "old days" (that's prior to the Adobe Creative Suite), I would look forward to the new functions in the program upgrades. Now, however, it can be a bit much! We used to have a little time to get used to new placements, features and effects, but the ease of Adobe getting these changes to us means, at least to me, that there are still many features that I have still not explored (however, I will address that another time). In the meantime, let's compare some small space ads.

Design with a purpose — support the message and enhance content and your advertising message will be effective. Using a simple design does not mean boring. The reader's eye should move in a logical sequence. Three points to consider:

Have a Definite Focus —use text or graphics to emphasize your message.

Unify the Design —the relationship of graphics and text should combine to create a clear and concise message, and...

Avoid Congestion —don't overcrowd the ad, but make sure there's enough space for all the information to fit!

The Importance of Effective Art

The purpose of the ad below is to alert readers interested in gardening or flowers to an event, and an effective way is to add flowers to enhance this content. It still is a simple design, but a lot more eye-catching. Color helps, but if you use black and white, I would suggest using a simpler illustration because this may appear "muddy," in print. Both the art and text have a focus and

the artwork helps to unify the design.

I also revamped the wording by included the destination in the introduction because it's not that important and doesn't need to be on a line by itself (the people will be on a bus!).

I left-aligned the text so it actually reads more as a "chunk." Otherwise the eye goes back and forth —kinda like watching a tennis match.

The text in the original ad changes size and typefaces too many times—very distracting! Even if the font is in the same family, use type contrast judiciously and thoughtfully.

The border in the first ad does not help unify the information and the shape is distracting (and too thin) as well.

Join the
Hartford Flower and Garden Club
on a day tour to
HORNBAKER GARDENS
Princeton, Illinois
Saturday, June 9, 2018
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(formerly GrandDad's Bakery)
CALL BOB 262-555-5555

The above two ads are much simpler and do not really have a lot of text, which can sometimes be more difficult to design—but a little pre-planning can make a world of difference!

Beware of Double Rules

This ad is geared to a more specific reader, but the use of two rule lines does not help with the focus or help to unify the design.

Yes, it does take up a lot of space but it certainly does not support the content (this is where the design vs. decorate challenge comes in).

The "revised" ad offers a lot more unity

and focus. Again, I reworked the words slightly by putting the address directly under downtown Hartford. The previous business is just a qualifier to the location.

To make the ad more striking I went to my Library of Bursts, put "For Lease" in the burst, made the background black, added a white box for the text and took advantage of where one of my "flower petals" came in to create a directional arrow to the text (strong contrast with black and white).

The use of grey works with this ad to create focus, visual interest, and organize the advertising. This ad would also work with

color (just keep the contrast strong).

I used the typeface Myriad Pro because I had a lot of options with regular, semibold, extended, etc. and it's my go-to typeface.

Both of the redone ads did not require a lot of time to make the changes. Look at the info and take a little time to plan the ad before you start and you won't end up with just words in a box.

A SLIGHT APOLOGY: I've a very strong print background and working on newsprint has distorted my views of "dot gain" on newsprint... so this is and will probably be a challenge for me to overcome.

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