



STRATEGIES

FOR ACHIEVING
EMAIL MARKETING
SUCCESS

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Building an Email Marketing Strategy

The Internet is now the way to get information. In the US, over 209 million people, 69% of the total population, are online. One hundred and forty seven million people use email daily. Major advertising campaigns now include big investments in websites and email campaigns.

Email marketing has grown in popularity because it produces results. While in the late 90's and into 2000, email marketing was new. The accessibility of email now means that marketers must work hard to cut through the clutter. In the past, permission was a "nice to have." Now permission is a "must have." Ultimately, a company must put more thought into email communications – from goals and objectives to long-term vision.

Whether you are new to email marketing or a seasoned professional, a strategy and a roadmap prove critical for email marketing.

This document was created with the intention of saving you time by pointing out the main elements of a good email marketing strategy and letting you customize them to meet the needs of your company. Armed with this information, you should be able to provide management, partners and peers with solid reasons why your organization should include email marketing as a way to reach business objectives or enhance your current running email marketing campaign.

STEP ONE: Define Email Marketing

Email marketing can mean lots of things to lots of people. Email is a very versatile medium that can include customer acquisition (lead or sales), retention, cross-selling, up-selling and more.

STEP TWO: Set Goals

Remember that you need to communicate the purpose of email marketing for your organization. Start with a goal so that others can see how it ties into the overall business strategy.

STEP THREE: Your List

Your contacts form the foundation of your strategy. After all, you're building a strategy around communicating with them. Your goals are tied to their actions. Your lists are the most important piece of the puzzle. Successful email marketing is a result of sending relevant content, so your plan should include learning as much as you can about your contacts.

STEP FOUR: Plan for Content

One of the biggest reasons that many email marketing campaigns aren't successful is that content isn't planned in advance. Setting an editorial calendar, similar to print, is a very good idea.

STEP FIVE: Post-Campaign Support

Are your company's internal departments prepared to provide post-campaign support? Will you be able to handle the traffic, replies, leads or sales that your message may produce?

STEP SIX: Bottom Line

People love numbers. Be prepared to discuss the metrics you will use to determine your success.

STEP 1

Define Email Marketing

Before you begin to create your email marketing strategy, you should define what email marketing means to your organization. If email marketing had existed in 1828 when Noah Webster first published his American Dictionary of the English Language, the definition might have gone something like this:

e•mail mar•ket•ing *n.* The use of email to deliver permission-based communications to build relationships, increase sales and improve customer retention.

Email is a very versatile medium that can include customer acquisition (lead or sales), retention, crossselling, up-selling, and more. Content can be one-size-fits-all or highly customized. Frequency can consist of fixed, frequent intervals or sporadic intervals, with transmissions occurring only when something newsworthy comes along. The Sophistication (and cost) can be very low or very high.

But there's a far more meaningful definition of email marketing that can only be determined by you and your business. Defining the purpose of email marketing for your organization is critical and will be the driving force for all other email activities.

STEP 2

Set Goals

Email can be seen as a tactical and inexpensive way to reach out to prospects and customers to quickly increase sales or drive traffic to the website. It's a valid but very short-sighted view. By building a sound strategy, you will be able to set expectations for long-term success up front and alleviate those frustrations.

So here's the most important question you need to answer:
What is the ultimate goal for your email marketing?

What will email marketing contribute to your existing marketing efforts? How will your marketing efforts tie together? What are the metrics you will use to evaluate the success of your email marketing?

What are the objectives of your campaigns?

Still not sure? Here is an example of a customer that clearly defined their goals and reap the benefits:

BloomsToday.com hoped to invigorate their online sales during non-seasonal months through an email marketing campaign. Their solution: drive sales during non-peak times through email promotional campaigns highlighting lesser-known holidays, such as "Friendship Day" and "Parents' Day."

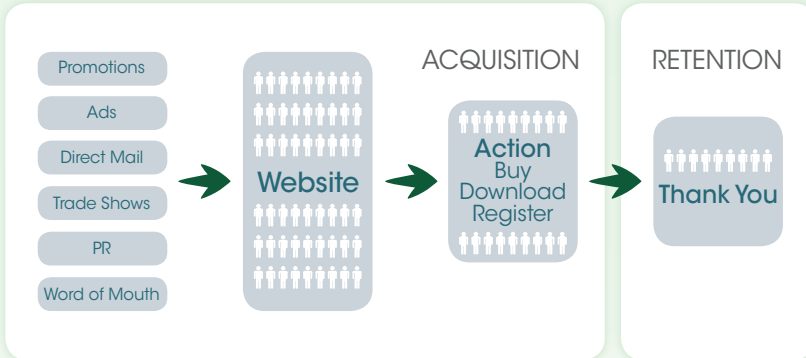
They set the goal of increasing revenue, building their brand, and maintaining healthy lists and wouldn't have succeeded in accomplishing all three if they hadn't set clear goals.

The image shows a screenshot of an email marketing campaign from BloomsToday.com. At the top, it says "a special offer from bloomstoday.com" and lists navigation links: "home | roses | birthday | gift baskets | Summer flowers". Below this, it says "The Best Way to Send Flowers & Gifts!" and provides contact information: "Visit www.bloomstoday.com or call 1-800-379-8280". The main headline is "Celebrate Summer!" followed by "Save 20% Send a vibrant Summer bouquet and save! Surprise someone special today! Click here". A green circular badge on the right says "Use discount code: SUM7 at checkout*". The background features a large bouquet of sunflowers. At the bottom, there are four small images showing different flower arrangements: a bouquet of pink and yellow flowers, a gift basket with a teddy bear, a bouquet of pink and white flowers, and a gift basket with a teddy bear and flowers.

Lead Generation and Sales Cycle Analysis

At the very highest level you will probably be communicating with two groups of people: customers and non-customers. As part of your lead generation process,

the email newsletter can help solidify your relationship with the non-customer or prospect. By outlining your organization's process you can see where opportunities exist.



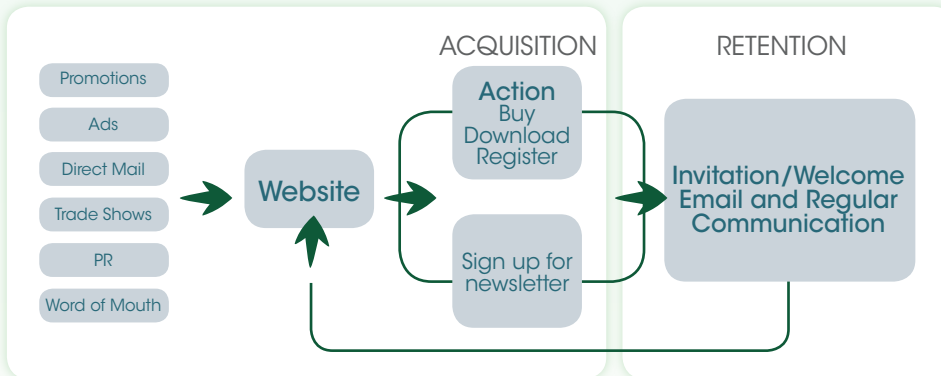
This diagram is a simple illustration of a lead generation process without email marketing. It shows visitors reaching the site and then taking a certain action. Currently the only follow up is a Thank You page that may show a receipt or confirmation.

Let's highlight some of the problems with this process.

- Web-centric - there is no effort towards customer retention. It is a very transactional approach.
- Lost opportunity - there is no collection of information for those that don't act immediately.

What about those conducting research that want to learn more about your offering or your industry?

Next, we'll take a look at a scenario with email marketing integrated into the process.



This diagram mirrors the previous illustration but shows how easily you can use an email newsletter to capture leads that may only be researching at the time of the website visit.

Lead Acquisition

The newsletter sign up form captures prospects that may not be ready to take other actions. By creating a newsletter or other communication for this audience, you can begin to build a relationship with them that can lead to sales or other desired action in the future. Without this regular communication, the contact could easily forget about your organization the minute they exit the website.

Customer Retention

For those that do take a desired action on the website, the process now includes a welcome email that invites them to stay in touch with your company.

Additional benefits of adding email marketing to lead generation and the sales cycle:

- Viral marketing opportunities enable word of mouth marketing
- Regular communication improves customer loyalty
- Reinforcement of brand with continual communication
- Feedback from tracking reports provides info on interest levels
- Ability to communicate with customers/prospects based on past behavior
- Drives traffic to website

STEP 3

Your List

Successful email marketing starts with quality data. Do you know your audience? Take some time to note what exists currently and make a plan to capture additional information over time. The more you know about your readers, the easier it will be to provide valuable, targeted content.

Now think about what information you have and what you'd like to know about new prospects and customers. Typical information below:

- Demographics (marital status, income, Location, etc)
- Interest area (product A or B, specific service, information, etc)
- Amount purchased, donated, etc
- Business info (industry, title, etc)
- Time frame for making a decision
- Budget

The most powerful aspect of email marketing software is that you can segment your contacts and determine the best recipients for the message you would like to convey, and prepare the communication to speak directly to that audience.

Collecting Data at the Right Time

After you have determined your data, the next step is to determine future data collection. In general, requesting a large amount of data initially leads to abandonment. Here are additional touches for data collection, in addition to the initial customer contact.

- Thank You page asks for post-subscription information
- Include survey questions throughout email marketing campaigns
- Prompt subscribers to update their information periodically

Plan for a Growing Email List

An important element of any email marketing strategy includes list growth. Below are ideas for planned tactics to promote each list growth in your email marketing:

- Include "forward to friend" in all outbound emails
- Drive all prospects to website from all advertising
- Have email marketing opt-in box in checkout of e-commerce area of website
- Have customer service ask all callers if they'd like to receive email marketing
- Have support staff ask all callers if they'd like to receive email marketing
- Collect emails at checkout in retail stores (if applicable)
- Collect email addresses at trade shows and other events
- Include link to email marketing sign up form in email signature (all employees, especially support and customer service staff)

If you have no list and are starting from scratch we suggest:

- Appending email addresses to your existing prospect/customer database
- Start collecting email addresses from website

STEP 4

Plan for Content

Now that you know who your target audience is, you now need to determine the type of communications you want to produce, and organize an editorial calendar for each item. This will help you prepare for the future and ensure that each communication contains relevant content.

Content reaches beyond the message. Content also includes offers, formats, and resources. To answer these questions, you need to determine what value or benefit your email has for the recipient? Other important questions to ask are, "If I received this, would I read it or delete it?" "What's in it for the customer?" and "Does this content compel the customer to respond?" If the answer is no to any of these, than don't expect the recipients to act on your message. Always create an offer that provides value.

To determine the best format, decide the best way to reach your goals and objectives. Would a single offer produce the best results, or would a message with multiple offers? What about a newsletter? Keep in mind the goals of your email marketing. Are you creating a format for acquisition, retention, transactional?

The last piece is the message. What do you want to communicate to your audience? How much content will that require? Who will be providing that content? Consider both the marketing and support aspects of your message, and keep your content streamlined.

STEP 5

Post-Campaign Support

What will you do with the results of your campaign? Will you use your response data to determine future email campaigns? Are you and your company prepared to handle traffic, replies, leads or sales that your message may generate?

These are essential questions that are often ignored in the planning process. Perhaps you send a lead acquisition campaign that sends traffic to your website that your server isn't prepared to handle. The customers you are hoping to acquire are unable to access your landing page from the increased traffic. Not the most successful first impression that may discourage the customer from returning. Or, perhaps, you create a backlog of leads that your sales department is unable to respond to. The customer may lose interest if they aren't responded to within a timely manner.



The Bottom Line

As with any critical marketing function, you need to define metrics for success. For each type of publication, you should outline what will represent success. Sharing these metrics will help communicate with all involved how email can truly impact the organization. Here are a few ideas of items to be used as metrics:

Email Marketing Report

- **Open Rate** – The number of messages opened is a general metric to gauge interest
- **Click-Through Rate** – Number of people that clicked through a link within your message. This is a very good metric to measure interest and activity.
- **Conversions by source** – The number of people that took a specific action as a result of your message.
- **Forward Rate** – How many times the message was forwarded to others. This measures viral marketing or “buzz”

Business Metrics

- Leads by source
- Sales metrics
- Website traffic
- Customer retention
- Conversion rate
- Cost

Looking Ahead

Email is organic – things are always growing and changing. What interests a customer one year can change the next year. Customer’s change or discard email addresses. Knowing where your email communications are taking you will only help your marketing strategy.

Don’t forget to put long-term vision on your radar. Does your campaign work as part of a long-term communication plan? Long-term success is only gained by laying the foundation for ongoing campaigns that users will recognize and welcome.

About Bronto



Bronto Software, a leading provider of email marketing for e-commerce drives results for more than 2500 organizations worldwide. With an award-winning Client Services team, Bronto helps retailers achieve their sales goals with relevant, successful email marketing campaigns by taking time to understand their business and craft a strategic plan that delivers results. The powerful email marketing platform features advanced segmentation tools, triggered messaging, transactional email, extensive reporting capabilities, an API for custom integrations, and numerous integrations with other e-commerce applications.

Bronto’s intuitive, enterprise-level software application drives revenue for customers like Gander Mountain, Etsy, Dean & DeLuca, Trek Bikes, and Timex.

Learn more at bronto.com or 888-BRONTO-1.

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