

Some email campaigns that just click

Creating the right kind of email message can be the difference between opt-outs and buy-ins. The Whirlpool campaign underlines this truism.

In 2013, Thomas Mender of home appliances manufacturer Whirlpool was in a flat spin. His company's e-mail campaign, even though professionals drew it up, was not working. Instead of raking in higher click through rates to its website, the opt-outs were mounting.

A trip to the 2013 MarketingSherpa E-mail Summit helped Mender to implement steps that ended up turning things around for Whirlpool. After testing some new methods, the company's e-mail campaign was back on track. One thing it decided to do was to reduce the amount of calls-to-action (CTA - those requests prompting readers to take action, such as clicking on a link) per e-mail. Once they slashed it from four to one, they saw a 42% increase in click through traffic to the Whirlpool website, making theirs one of the most successful e-mail marketing campaigns of 2013.



Louise Robinson

Great lead generators

E-mail campaigns, if done correctly, are still among the most successful lead generation methods, says Louise Robinson, MD of CG Consulting, a Cape Town-based strategic marketing consultancy specialising in lead generation and database creation. "Chief Marketer recently conducted its annual B2B (business to business) Lead Generation Survey and found that e-mail remains the most popular lead generation channel, with 87% of survey participants saying that they plan to use it this year. It is also among the most highly rated as a source for qualified leads, with 48% of respondents selecting it, placing it second behind referrals, which yielded 50% of the vote."

Another reason why it was so crucial for Mender to turnaround Whirlpool's e-mail strategy, is because 44% of e-mail recipients made at least one purchase last year based on a promotional e-mail.

One way of turning things around - other than attending summits as Mender did - is by looking at other successful e-mail campaigns. "There are many examples out there of companies who have e-mail campaigns down pat and have turned them into lucrative marketing and lead generation channels," continues Robinson. "Go through your own inbox and see which of the e-mail letters you have signed up for you actually read, and why you don't just skip over or trash it. Why do you like some and why do others irritate you?"

Top examples

Some examples of companies who are doing the e-mail thing right includes BuzzFeed, which touts itself as the world's first "true social news organisation." It provides lists, news, long-form features and videos on a variety of topics. This past year, venture capital firm Andreessen Horowitz invested \$50m into the viral news site. According to Outbrain.com, much of the wild success can be attributed to its carefully crafted e-mail campaign with its catchy headlines, which are designed to draw subscribers in and attract traffic back to the website.

Apart from BuzzFeed's e-mails' subject lines, it also cleverly calls its e-mail a weekly newsletter, which serves "to make them sound more informative than sales centred," Outbrain says. Another winning strategy BuzzFeed has is that it allows its subscribers to select from over more than 16 topics that they want to receive weekly e-mails about, and then, when they opt-in, it clearly states how many times a week they will receive e-mails about that particular topic - mostly just once or twice per week.

"If all else fails, you can always outsource your lead generation needs, including e-mail campaign creation, to

consultancies that specialise in it. We are POPI (Protection of Personal Information Act) compliant and only offer business-related data. We don't spam your customers, rather providing a targeted approach that ensures results," Robinson concludes.

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