

HOW TO KEEP YOUR EMAIL CUSTOMERS HAPPY!

1) NO WELCOME MESSAGE

If I opt in to your email newsletter, or for notice of special promotional offers, acknowledge that I've done so-- *right away*. Not doing so tells me you either don't really care that I've signed up, or that you don't really have your act together. It is so simple to set up automated emails that tell me "Hey, thanks for signing up, we look forward to sending you great stuff!" You should send something of value immediately-- the last newsletter you sent out or a current "new customer" promotional offer. This is critical.

Recently, I signed up for email specials from an online and offline retailer's site a couple of months ago and have yet to receive a single email from them, let alone a welcome message. At this rate, when I do finally hear from them I'm likely to have forgotten I signed up in the first place, so I'll consider it spam and unsubscribe.

2) IGNORE WHAT I TELL YOU ABOUT ME

If you ask me questions about my preferences, then I expect you to use that information in your subsequent emails to me. Nothing is worse than for me to give a company some personal information only to find out that the extent of personalization in its emails extends no further than a "Dear Chris" introduction.

What's the probability I'm going to tell this company more about me in the future? Don't ask for information you don't intend to use for my benefit!

3) TREAT ME THE SAME AS EVERYONE ELSE IN YOUR EMAIL FILE

Retailers are the worst offenders in this regard. The low cost of sending massive amounts of emails often leads to them blasting away to their list as often as possible. I guess they figure that *one* of the messages with which they are bombarding me will make me click and possibly purchase. *Yet these same companies will often spare no expense trying to develop targeted offers through their direct mail. --Wake up and smell the coffee!*

It's precisely *because* email is relatively inexpensive that companies should make efforts to segment their audiences and develop targeted email messages. Targeted emails don't cost any more to send than blasts. They just require a little more upfront work, but they get better response and reduce recipient burnout. That's good for *your* business.

4) LET EVERYONE IN YOUR ORGANIZATION EMAIL ME

Who owns the customer? This question didn't start with email marketing, but it sure does make sense to be asking as it pertains to your email programs. In the B2B world, many of the companies with which I do business are siloed organizations so that my email address might be contained in different business units' databases. Unless the company has instituted strict email touch governance rules around the frequency of email communications to its customers, I'm likely to receive too many emails (maybe two in one day) from that company.

To make things worse, since these silos don't coordinate their activities, no one has the full picture of my relationship with that company and my total (lifetime) value to it.

5) SEND ME UGLY TRANSACTIONAL MESSAGES

It has been proven that recency is a good indicator of future purchase intent. After all, I'm more likely to buy from you again if I have a good initial purchase experience. In addition, you might have

products or services to offer me in relation to something I've just bought from you. And did you know that, in the world of email, the highest open rates belong to transactional emails?

So why do companies send me plain text order and shipping confirmations that don't try to cross-sell or upsell me something? If I bought a plane ticket, how about a deal on a hotel or car rental? Or if I purchased a cell phone, maybe a car charger offer? Why do I ever have to parse through a plain, unbranded text email? Plain and simple, this is a missed opportunity for further revenue.

KEY TAKEAWAY

So if you are involved in your company's email marketing efforts, now is the time you should be asking yourself, "How many of these things am I doing to my email recipients?" If your answer is "more than one," then you're in a good position to quickly make changes to your tactics that will build your business faster, and better. Good luck!

eMARKETINGWERX is a consultancy that helps clients develop winning email strategies and implement those campaigns to reach their desired CBI's.

Web Site: www.emarketingwerx.com (the web site is new --check it out!)

Email Address: cbarnes@emarketingwerx.com

Best Practices Blog: <http://christopherbarnes.typepad.com/>

Email Training Bootcamp: <http://www.newtonprograms.com/emailwriting.html>