Four Common Digital Marketing Dilemmas and Ways to Solve Them

SILVERPOP

FOUR COMMON DIGITAL MARKETING DILEMMAS
and Ways to Solve Them

As a new year approaches, marketers everywhere are considering what's worked for their respective brands and what hasn't lived up to expectations. In reviewing various analytics, stats and metrics in general, a handful of challenges surface so repeatedly, they've become the proverbial thorns in the side of digital marketers.

Sometimes it takes a new perspective to get a handle on things, which is why Silverpop asked some of its partners for their expert ideas on ways to solve four of the most common dilemmas in the digital marketing marketplace. At the core of each suggestion was the overriding sentiment that today's marketers have an arsenal of technological options at their disposal, but technology can only realize its full potential when coupled with human understanding.

1 Getting more prospects to engage with your brand p.3

2 Stagnant email accounts p.4

3 Sluggish response-to-sales conversion process p.5

4 You're upside down in the content cockpit p.6

TWEET THIS!
Reading Silverpop's "Four Common Digital Dilemmas"

CHALLENGE
#1

Getting more prospects to engage with your brand

SAVVY SOLUTION:
Reach out with your newsletter immediately

Few challenges are as integral to the bottom line as the need to turn a prospect into a client. Nurturing leads and helping them along in the qualification process is still marketing's primary job, but to be personal and relevant, marketers must find clever ways to connect.

Beau Beamon, founder and CEO of **Gravity Point**, maintains there's a way to do just that and encourage more interaction with your brand *and* garner the critical profiling information that's so important in follow-up communications.

The answer is in a marketing tool most companies are already using: the digital newsletter. The trick is in the *how*, which is what the Santa Clara, Calif.-based company that specializes in business process solutions, including lead generation and customer acquisition, emphasizes to its clients.

"Your job as a marketer is to tell people why they should engage with you and show them what it is you can help them do next," says Beamon. "The newsletter is driving what to do next to get them into a nurturing program or to get them to give you more information."

When people show enough interest to sign up for a company's newsletter, they shouldn't have to wait up to 30 days for the next one to launch, Beamon contends, which is why Gravity Point implemented a program that sends those who sign up the most recent edition. Immediately.

"It's really simple, but we're seeing amazing results," Beamon says, explaining that Gravity Point's metrics are showing that up to 45 percent of those who are receiving a newsletter from its clients' companies are immediately engaging with the respective brand.

So why does something as simple as a newsletter work? Beamon believes it's a combination of the immediacy and the right content elements that are encouraging consumers to interact. While there is some flexibility, he recommends that all newsletters include drivers that will motivate readers to visit the website. Once there, the site should offer additional interactions that will result in profiling information.

"I always suggest that the idea behind any newsletter is to inform and further engage," Beamon says.

In essence, this is the welcome campaign before the welcome campaign — the warm-up act — and it provides what Beamon calls a "macro approach" that, ideally, offers enough cultivation to get prospects to the stage where they're invested in knowing more about your brand.

"You want to nurture them and add qualifying attributes to the record so that when a salesperson does call, they have a really good conversation to start with," Beamon says, adding that instant newsletter outreach, which also ushers prospects to a brand's site, contributes to a smart system that marries good old-fashioned marketing with modern advances in automation. "There's no more cold-calling needed once you get that mechanism in place and that machine running."

CHALLENGE #2

Stagnant email accounts

SAVVY SOLUTION:
A targeted reactivation campaign

Once active, some email subscribers seem to fall asleep. Maybe they're taking a hiatus or maybe their interest in your products or services has just waned, but e-marketers owe it to themselves and these subscribers to reach out, says Teya Flick, marketing director at **Whereoware**, a Herndon, Va.-based online strategy, design, development and marketing firm.

"It costs a lot more to acquire a customer than to try to get more out of existing customers," Flick says. "Reactivation campaigns shouldn't be ignored because you've already worked to get that customer's email address and business."

Whereoware's solution for its wholesale e-commerce clients facing this dilemma is the "No Login Campaign," which targets subscribers who were once active but have not logged in for at least six months. Once launched, these inactive accounts receive up to three emails, each highlighting a different benefit of the company's website.

For example, the first might invite the subscriber to reconnect and offer links to the user name and password. The second might be a reminder regarding key resources the website offers active subscribers, and the third might extend the opportunity to update the account, view catalogs or browse new products.

Customizable for clients' needs, the No Login Campaign keeps the tone casual and will automatically kick out a subscriber from the remainder of the series once

he or she logs in to the website, explains Caitlin Kelly, Whereoware's online marketing manager. Kelly has been on the front lines of the campaign that was first developed for one client and now, seven years later, has seen enormous success for 35 clients.

"We try to make it as easy as possible for customers to remember why they should go back to the site, then make it easy for them to log in and re-engage," says Kelly, who has watched these campaigns work successfully multiple times for both levels of engagement: the reactivation itself, and the sales activity on clients' sites.

A snapshot of that success reveals that for one client, 53 percent of targeted subscribers opened one of the three emails and 52 percent clicked through. Once inside, 43 percent of those customers logged in to the website, and 33 percent ended up ordering something.

Both Flick and Kelly explain that the strategy that has worked best for these campaigns is a low-key approach. Sales and promotional incentives are rarely used, in fact.

"It's not a sales push, it's intended to be a campaign to reconnect and get people to interact with the brand again," Flick says. "That's really the focus."

CHALLENGE
#3

Sluggish response-to-sales conversion process

SAVVY SOLUTION:
Implement robust confirmation pages and follow through with triggered email

Sales lead expert Mac McIntosh sees missed opportunity in the way many businesses handle their online marketing. While the digital world has made huge strides in creating new standards for proactive outreach, there is room for improvement, he says.

"The trick to increasing conversions is realizing that every action that was taken or not taken should trigger something different as a next step," says McIntosh, founding partner at **Acquire B2B** and CEO of **Mac McIntosh Inc.**, a marketing and consulting firm.

The reality of that approach for a B2B marketer might play out like this: When the company sends a subscriber an email promoting a white paper and that subscriber downloads it, the confirmation page should then offer additional information that might be of interest at that moment rather than waiting several days for a follow-up email.

"While they're actively looking, they can jump ahead and say, 'Yes, I want to sign up for this Webinar; yes, I want this case study; yes, I want this ROI calculator,'" McIntosh explains, adding that every action or inaction should lead to a triggered and immediate response by the company.

In a conventional campaign, the white paper might be offered one week, with the Webinar cued up for the second and the case study and calculator for the third and fourth weeks, respectively.

"By offering them all on the confirmation page, prospects don't have to wait a month to even know those items exist. They can move forward now," McIntosh says, adding that if some of those things are indicative of purchase decisions, stronger scoring for the sales cycle can translate to more sales that happen faster.

It's the digital equivalent of the tried-but-true advertising line, "But wait, there's more!" Or, as McIntosh puts it, it's the "supersize" analog.

"It's kind of like when you order a burger at a fast-food restaurant and they ask if you'd like fries with that or if you'd like to supersize it while you're at the counter, rather than sending you an email two days later and asking, 'Would you like fries?'" he says.

But the follow-up email is crucial. The restaurant may email a coupon based on your ordering habits but with a more urgent expiration date that's also designed to get you in faster than your normal pattern.

"Their offer to add fries to that while you're at the counter doesn't preclude them from also sending an email later offering other stuff," McIntosh explains. "In fact, it might cause me to move forward quicker."

CHALLENGE #4

You're upside down in the content cockpit

SAVVY SOLUTION:
Back up and create a map

In much the same way "Location! Location! Location!" is the mantra of real estate, "Content! Content! Content!" has become the maxim of digital marketing. From subject lines, blurbs and calls-to-action to video, full-length articles and everything in between, the digital environment mandates all manner of content at every stage of the buying cycle.

In the effort to fill this seemingly never-satisfied maw, marketers often lose sight of the goal, which is to connect with those consumers on the other side and ultimately win them over for a sale.

Enter Peter Hrabinsky, vice president of marketing at the North Vancouver, British Columbia-based **Revenue Automation**, an agency that specializes in B2C marketing automation. Hrabinsky's world revolves around pushing and pulling various levers to ensure his clients are seeing the incremental lift and online conversions they're seeking, and one aspect often bubbles to the surface: the need for a well-defined content outline that clarifies what the measurable goals are, who/what the target audience is and then maps content to the customer's stage in the buying cycle.

"If someone tells you content marketing is easy, they are not being truthful," Hrabinsky says. "This is a process that takes extensive thought, and brands must take the time to sit down with their sales teams and collaborate about what content makes sense for their customers, and when it should come up in the buying cycle."

Hrabinsky is also careful to point out that messaging must sync up with creative elements based on both the target demographic and where it falls in the buying cycle. This might mean more language with fewer graphics, vice versa or a true balance of the two.

"These are minute complexities that make all the difference," he says.

In Hrabinsky's world at Revenue Automation, this often translates to ensuring content is aligned to a faster buying cycle within the B2C realm, with smaller pieces pushed out more frequently. But the need to map out a plan and critically analyze goals from the beginning is the same advice he'd give B2B marketers, where the cycle can be lengthier and content needs to support more long-term nurture strategies.

To that point, Hrabinsky is a vocal advocate of tracking and testing, which is another reason sitting down in the early stages to determine what the goals are is so important, he says.

"If you're not tracking and testing, it's useless and you're just throwing things out there without ever considering what's actually working or where to go from there," he says.

Much of this comes back to the modern marketer's conundrum of striving to connect with real humans in an era so fueled by technology, Hrabinsky says, explaining that across the board, it's smart marketing that should be driving the technology, not the other way around.

"You must measure everything you do so that you have the insight to adjust the content and the creative and the timing of those triggered B2C or B2B marketing events," he says. "This combined with intelligent marketing initiatives developed to increase your number of brand advocates and their engagement level are the keys to a successful B2C marketing automation implementation."

PARTING THOUGHTS

It's a hectic world out there in digital marketing land, for sure, but the good news is marketers have more available to them than ever, largely thanks to technology. And those who employ it with an empathetic approach are destined to see the best results.

In other words, it's important to remember that it's people, not robots, on the other side of the digital wall, and their needs are not so unlike those of us who are implementing the campaigns to convert them into loyal customers.

From jump-starting an idle account to improving engagement and ultimately increasing conversions, solutions that are rooted in human behavior and are the most instinctive will always win out over those that rely solely on technology. Using technology to implement and augment is where the brilliance comes to bear.

Silverpop's digital marketing automation platform was designed to make it simple to build hyper-personalized campaigns, creating individualized experiences for every relationship. Watch our demo to see our product in action, and contact Silverpop to see how we can help you accomplish your marketing goals for 2013.