



Your Website Coach



Email Marketing May Be Your Next Step – 3/11/08

Lately I've been getting questions on email marketing campaigns. In particular, business owners want to know 1) if email marketing is an effective way to go and 2) how to set up email marketing in their email client (i.e. Outlook, Eudora, Apple Mail). To answer these questions in detail would take several pages so I'll summarize a few ideas.

Given that the internet has become one of the top venues for business visibility, it stands to reason that marketing by email is an accepted practice and can be effective if it's done right. Like standard advertising in other media, you need to: know your audience; set your product/service apart from competitors; engage the audience with good visuals and be clear in your objective. In addition to those steps, an email marketing campaign also needs to consider: the email "subject line"; giving recipients control by offering Opt-out capabilities; the browsers/email clients recipients are using to view the email;. The "subject line" is basically your hook, and it needs to be a good one. We are all in the practice of scanning the subject lines of our incoming email and deleting the unknown or irrelevant ones on the spot. Is it possible we've deleted some really useful service or product promo during our lightning quick eyeball scans? Sure, but our inboxes are always brimming so we are forced to be very judicious in deciding what stays. If that subject line doesn't scream "YOU REALLY REALLY WANT TO READ THIS", it's a goner.

Now those emails that have grabbed our attention usually have a tracking device so the sender knows who is opening the email, what links are being clicked, etc. In many cases, our curiosity will pop us on recurring mailings as well as other similar mailing lists. We all appreciate the ability to Opt-out of a mailing list. Your email marketing campaign must be considerate and offer an exit to your recipients.

We don't know what email clients or browsers people are using, thus what looks great in Eudora may not in Outlook. This means you must use a fairly generic method for constructing your email advertisement. Outlook, Eudora and other email clients are not fairly generic. Even if you are pretty good at slinging HTML, it is quite difficult to pull together an aesthetically pleasing email ad that plays well in all environments. Further, since your email client was not intended for email marketing, your well-thought out campaign will probably end up in the recipient's server's SPAM box – it won't make it to the recipient at all. This is one of those things that's best managed by an Email Marketing Service Provider.

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