

■ SMALL-BUSINESS MARKETING

Email marketing offers high return on investment

Email has been called “The Rodney Dangerfield of social media marketing.” It gets no respect.

Why? Spammers have given email a bad reputation.

Even the popular social media platform LinkedIn was considered a spammer, prompting one subscriber to write, “Unsubscribe from LinkedIn / Delete email account / Sell house, live in woods / Find bottle in river / Has note inside / It’s from LinkedIn.” Shortly thereafter, LinkedIn clamped down on spam sent via its system.

However, email marketing is a proven strategy



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for small businesses:

- For every \$1 spent on email, the average return on investment is \$44.25 — far outpacing the ROI of social media, display and search-engine ads.

- The conversion rate (percentage of website visitors who become paying customers) aver-

ages 7 percent for email. For social media users, it’s 1 percent.

- Most people do not check their social media feeds daily, yet most check their email several times per day.

These facts are so compelling that in a recent survey, marketing managers said they plan to implement more email marketing in 2015 than in 2014, beating social media, display advertising and “pay per click” advertising.

So, if email marketing gets no respect, yet can be highly lucrative, what are successful small-business owners doing to get the most out of their email

marketing? They’re using email to deliver compelling content and using innovative methods to educate consumers and create lasting relationships. As a result, they have discovered a marketing goldmine.

Here are some tips:

- Create an editorial calendar. Know well in advance what you’re going to send out.

- Turn your website into an email capture form. Studies show that almost half of entrepreneurs devote the best part of their homepages to email collection via a “Call To Action” sign-up form, which promises valuable, exclusive content in ex-

change for the visitor’s name and email address.

- Include a great subject line. Sixty-four percent of people say they open emails based on the subject line alone. Personalize the subject line by addressing people by their names. Keep the subject line short and sweet, with no more than 35-45 characters. Offer something for free. Even such tricks as using question marks and personal pronouns (“you” and “your”) have higher open rates.

- Know when to send your email. Consider checking your own database to see when your customers tend to open your emails. If you need

pointers, Constant Contact has a chart detailing the best email open rates by day, time and industry.

- Read up on the CAN-SPAM Act to avoid any trouble or automatic delivery of your emails to recipients’ spam folder. Include an obvious unsubscribe link in every email.

- Most importantly, give recipients high-value, thought-provoking content. Engage readers with content they want, especially deals, business updates or tips about products or services. Also, keep it brief, with no more than five small paragraphs with plenty of links to your website for information.

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