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Big Data, Big Deal
Transform Your Email Marketing By Leveraging Big Data

BY THE EDITORS OF CHIEF MARKETER

Big Data is more than the trendy marketing term du jour. It's something all marketers must understand how to harness if they want to succeed in today's marketplace.

Every company is faced with a tsunami of data coming in every day, but it means nothing if it isn't relevant to the marketer's—and the target consumers'—needs. Figuring out how to swim in that sea is the difference between merely surviving and thriving.

Plain and simple, the true value of data is as an action generator an organization uses to get consumers to do something. Forrester defines Big Data "as techniques and technologies that make handling data at extreme scale affordable." Yes, this can be a challenge. And it can be potentially resource intensive. You may have to change the way you are doing things today. You may have to work across multiple departments and educate within your organization.

But this doesn't have to be a burden. And when you apply Big Data to email, it can be a very powerful tool.

IMPROVING THE INBOX

While marketers are faced daily with a rush of data, consumers are coping with a rush of email. Think about it. How many of us personally manage our inboxes by simply hitting the delete button? Or sign up for marketing emails in multiple different boxes that we rarely look at? Do we

really think our customers handle their inboxes differently?

Within two months of opt-in, the average open rate can fall 20 to 25%, despite the fact that consumer are opening messages on more devices than ever. And if recipients aren't responding to your messages, those communications are at risk of being routed directly to the spam folder by ISPs. Leveraging data can help marketers build trust with their subscribers, who need to believe that when they see a message from your company, it will be something that will bring value to their lives.

GAINING RELEVANCE

Today, buyers have so many touchpoints with you before they buy. It's important to leverage these channels—your website, mobile landing pages, social media, affiliates/shopping engines and even direct mail—to encourage email opt-ins. Any pages where you are collecting data need to be front and center, so you can get prospects into the marketing process as soon as possible.

There are several types of data points to consider:

- Simple Data – data that already exists and is accessible
  – Email Activity/Opt in
  – Demographic
  – Webinar or event participation

- Proactive Data– data you are collecting with your systems
  – Web forms
  – Preference centers
  – Purchase Data

- Complex/Implicit Data – data you are collecting unknowingly or as a result of other actions
  – External systems (i.e. tracking codes)
  – Internal Back End Systems (POS, Inventory, CRM, Ecommerce)

All of this data can be used to make your email communications be more relevant to your audience, regardless of whether you target B2C or B2B audiences. This can range from subject line personalization, individualized content, targeted product offers and even personalized send times for messages.

For example, a welcome series keyed to the email opt-in date is an example of utilizing simple data. Using birthdate (either the recipient's or a family member's) to create birthday themed offers is a good way to use proactive data, while things like abandoned cart or reorder offers are ways implicit data can be effective.

THE BENEFITS OF AUTOMATION

Email automation can help an organization thrive. Automation you to build out campaign tracks to keep customers engaged at the right time based on specific actions they've taken in response to your marketing. You create logic tracks based on their behaviors, predictors and responders to how they'll act further down funnel.

The benefits of automation are many. It can increase productivity and efficiency within the organization, while delivering context through behavior scoring. And, it lets

marketers leverage data by both individuals and microsegments.

The traditional marketing campaign process is to query the database, create a target list and send the same message to everyone or a selected segment. In this case the set up, list creation and actual send is all manual—and done over and over again on a monthly, weekly or even daily basis. With automation, messages can be set up to automatically listen and react to prospect and customer behavior.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Through advanced personalization and automation you can create numerous one-to-one direct messages with everyone in your database and you do that through multiple channels, all working together using a single platform.

Leveraging data is a competitive imperative if you want to truly market to your customer and increase their engagement, brand loyalty and conversion. Start the process with the data that is most easily accessible and then build the process as resources/time permits with the help of your vendors and partners.

Utilize your marketing data across all channels to maximize your resources, and turn your Big Data into Big Results.