Digital Marketing

strategy & tactics

Instructor Lecture Guide

CHAPTER 4

Email Marketing

1 or 2 sessions

Chapter Outline

- Email effectiveness
- Email strategies and execution
- How email works
  - Who to send to: List Building
  - What to send: content considerations
  - How to send: design considerations
  - When to send: strategy considerations
- Measuring success
- Integrating email with other channels

Key Objectives

- Understand the foundational effectiveness of email as a customer communications channel, and the role of email as a customer identity mechanism.
- Know the value of email from a marketing perspective; as a permission-based way to reach customers.
- Understand the importance of an email list as a marketing asset.
- Learn best practices for building an email list, and the difference between opt-in, opt- out, and the tradeoff in volume versus interest when signing up for a list.
- Recognize the importance of the "subject line" and "from line"—the envelope—in email deployment.
- Become familiar with copy writing techniques for effective emails.
- Review the timing and content strategies of ongoing email communications.
- Differentiate between email deployment strategies, including trigger-based emails, calendar-based emails, and cadence based campaigns.
- Understand the role and function of an "ESP"; and why using an email service provider (ESP) is advantageous.
- Learn metrics for tracking email success, including deliverability, open rate, click through rate, and how to determine email ROI.

Teaching Notes

- **Slides 1–4:** Email is so much a part of the fabric of our lives it's sometimes overlooked but it's a critical digital technology—not just for advertising but for customer relationship management and engagement. It's critical for receipts, shipping notifications, and other forms of customer communications. Key points for marketing: it's foundational to digital marketing, highly effective in terms of ROI, and is the fundamental identifier for almost everything: accounts, targeting, retargeting, and more. Your email is like your online identification card—you even need it to sign up for new social media and apps!
- **Slide 5:** Despite everything, including the switch to mobile platforms, email remains a dominant and important method of communication particularly for business. Even millennial generations and younger list email as a key activity and communication channel.
- **Slide 6:** For small businesses, it's easy, inexpensive and accessible, so it remains a big part of their marketing.
- **Slide 7:** Email marketing is not just the emails we send—it's advertisement inside emails, which can take the form of banner ads, or full blown sponsored emails from other parties. But the major use case we'll examine is customer communication in many forms.
- **Slide 8:** Email is still a major activity—we even check it in the bathroom! It's the first thing people do in the morning and the last thing at night. (I often use an informal 'raise your hands' poll to illustrate that everyone has their phone and checks their email constantly—good to engage the class in the discussion of the role of email.
- **Slide 9:** Email is often overlooked despite its importance and effectiveness when measured by revenue. However, most email dollars are spent on tools, not ads directly—measuring email's importance by revenue is like measuring the value of a house by the cost of the tools and lumber used to build it.
- **Slide 10:** Email strategies are built around multiple parts: who to send to, what to send them (both the *wrapper* or *envelope* and the contents inside), how to send, and how to track.
- **Slides 11–12:** These slides are a place to review the sheer volume of sending emails commercially, and how important it is to send using an ESP—a specialist in volume—who can provide efficiency tracking and compliance with the law.
- **Slides 13–14:** Building a list—renting addresses, buying addresses, and building compared. For rent, emphasize the advertising like fleeting relationship with the customer—someone sending an email on a marketer's behalf. No ownership of the email address so no chance to follow-up. Bought email addresses are almost always unwillingly or unknowingly shared for other reasons, and succeed only because of volume—most are annoyed to receive email (which will be perceived as spam) and will not likely convert to a sale or long term customer. Exceptions like industry organizations in B2B can however be effective when done properly with notifications and permission.
- **Slide 15:** Spam—unsolicited bulk email. Meaning no pre-existing commercial or legal relationship sent with substantially the same message. (Personalization and customization does NOT change this.) Illegal and can result in a big fine but rarely are the bad actors caught—plus different countries have different laws.

- **Slide 16:** For customers, Spam is simply email they don't want. They may have changed their minds or forgotten, or the emails come too often—all not legal definitions but bad for marketers and makes the job harder. (There is a box in the book that goes into detail about regulatory oversight of Spam.)
- **Slide 17:** Great time for a short discussion—consider what you would do if you were in charge of email marketing for a spammy topic like Viagra! (Mortgages, anything common- how do you cut through the noise? Sadly sometimes you can't)
- **Slide 18:** Note on the mechanics of spam—it's often sent by networks of computers infected by viruses –one of the business models of the bad guys is to send emails for spammers.
- **Slides 19–20:** Email lists are best built organically—this takes time but has the best business outcomes. The harder to get on the list, the more engaged the audience who does get on will be—but at the price of growth. For business, it's a tradeoff between the size of the list and the performance. The spectrum of difficulty is: opt-out (uncheck the box); opt in (check the box affirmatively) and double opt in (check AND confirm).
- **Slides 21–22:** Design emails first to be opened—the subject line and sender need to be clear but compelling. Best practice is "name from business" style of sender, with clear value in the subject line. Mystery does not help—people need to know what they are getting.
- **Slides 23–26:** Design emails for scanning in the preview pane and above the fold. Many people won't open but only scan the preview, so make sure the messaging is effective for this! The increase of mobile opens makes this harder as there is no clear 'fold" (a term from newspapers, of what could be seen in the pile; above the fold has to be compelling enough to open and see the rest). ESP's provide tested templates that make this easier to design.
- **Slide 27:** Email marketers' first task when planning an email strategy is to decide what the goal is: do you want to *educate* or *activate* for another sale. This informs everything from the message itself to the deployment strategy.
- **Slides 28–30:** Emails can be deployed in different ways, from one by one triggers (receipts or reminders) to calendar based things like holidays, to relative things like where the customer is in their journey. All can be tested and optimized.
- **Slide 31:** Trigger based example—shopping cart rescue. So many people leave items they are interested in this has a proven high ROI.
- **Slide 32:** Cadence based example –deploying a series of messages according to a personalized set of criteria. For example, emails can be sent to inform about features of a product that a customer has not yet tried.
- **Slide 33:** Perhaps my best email example of life cycle cadence—a literal life cycle. With two pieces of information that are different for everyone, the same sequence of weekly and more messaging about "what to expect when you're expecting" are launched. The two pieces of info are email address and due date; the client, a baby formula company.

- **Slide 34:** Discussion here not just about key metrics but about how hard it is to track them. Is a preview pane an *open* or is it just someone scrolling? Note that emails are tracked by pixels embedded in the email, so it doesn't work with images off by default as most are. Very challenging but tracking is important regardless!
- **Slide 35:** Note the use of email as the identity for social and mobile—email should be thought of as one method of customer communication, but perhaps the most universal—and it's searchable.
- **Slide 36:** Email addresses are not just for direct marketing but can be used with display platforms for audience targeting!

Class Exercises

- Email marketing versus Spam—where is the line? Discuss the legal definition and consumer opinion. What would you do if you had to market in a 'spammy' product area (like Viagra, or mortgages)
- Discuss email as an identity mechanism online. Why do social networks and e-commerce sites use email for this and what do they send you? Is this good? What are the downsides?

Tools and Resources

- "More on Spam," *Business Insider*: *http://www.businessinsider.com/the-companies-who-send-the-most-emailspam-2016-2*.
- HubSpot's "104 Email Marketing Myths, Experiments and Inspiration" at *https://offers.hubspot.com/email-marketing-myths-experiments-inspiration?hsCtaTracking=479b0e82-5f3a-4247-92c6-cd005ff8fb0c%7C1f677a8c-f4dc-4eb1-8f39-627e8a45e087*.
- Other sources of email statistics to understand how users receive and engage with email: *https://www.hubspot.com/marketing-statistics*, *http://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2017/06/29/email-marketing-statistics*.
- MailChimp Email Templates: *https://kb.mailchimp.com/templates/layouts-and-themes/create-a-templatewith-the-template-builder*.
- HubSpot Trigger Words: *https://blog.hubspot.com/sales/crazy-persuasive-words-thatll-immediately-motivateyour-prospects-to-take-action-infographic*.
- MailChimp Email Benchmarks and Factbooks: *https://mailchimp.com/resources/research/email-marketingbenchmarks/?_ga=2.38332707.1201754590.1506346160-1673647173.1499819357*.