

## Email marketing – will it overtake traditional marketing?

Email is now established as an indispensable part of many people's lives, both for business and for social purposes. Over the past couple of years a growing number of companies have begun to use it in a variety of ways to communicate with their customers. And many pundits within the marketing community (especially direct marketing) are now forecasting that it could soon overtake traditional methods as the preferred way of targeting customers.

Indeed a recent survey of CIOs by **silicon.com** revealed: "Websites and emails have overtaken printed magazines as the first port of call for news and information, with more IT chiefs keeping abreast of events online (41 per cent) than in the printed press (40 per cent)."

But how exactly is email being used, what are marketer's perceptions of email marketing and how can it's use be optimised?

### Current practice

According to **Marketing** magazine, 60% of mainstream marketers are using online marketing – but only 23.5% claim that it accounted for more than 10% of their budget. However, a full 87% of respondents in the survey said they anticipate using email more in the future. The conclusion: email is cost effective – probably more so than any other tool.

Apart from its low cost (83% finding this attractive), speed of delivery (71%) and ease of delivery (59%) were also cited as reasons to use.

It is not just eCommerce businesses that are using the medium.

More traditional businesses are realising the benefits of it, such as people doing newsletters (53% of the sample), account management and people providing information to customers.

However, to us the most surprising finding was that none of the respondents pointed to the ability of email to drive prospects or customers to a website. This typifies a situation where a practice is in its infancy and the most obvious benefits are missed...

### Best practice

Apart from integrating email with a website, n a t i o n believes that there are other essential attributes of the medium, centred on enhanced **Interactivity and related Responsiveness**.

- Email campaigns can be 10 times more effective at generating a response, on average, than their paper-based equivalents, if linked to a website;
- Research surveys are particularly suited to the medium;
- Rather than "newsletters", n a t i o n believes strongly in the power and effectiveness of "eZines".

n a t i o n has had several years' experience now with putting together eZine programmes for a variety of clients, most notably Compaq (now HP), Thames Water and BT.

What separates success from failure in these programmes are three elements:

1. Quality of content (newsletters tend to be trivial/casual. eZines should offer saliency and relevance);
2. Awareness of key messages by the recipient from within the Preview Pane - within 2 seconds;
3. Optimal opportunities for readers to drill down to deeper information.

The Journey was a programme addressed to enterprise customers of Compaq with the aim of raising awareness of the "how to's" involved in

migrating a business to become more Web-centric. The click-throughs to the associated website rose 7-fold since launch.

EZines are particularly suited to "internal marketing". Not just communicating with relevant staff ("newsletters"), but **motivating and guiding** them as well.

Sales Focus was introduced to raise the profile of Services within Compaq's sales community across Europe

Every time an issue is published, 30K+ hits are registered on the associated website.- from 2,000 recipients.

Feedback is free flowing.

And survey results show that the educative nature of Sales Focus is beginning to bear fruit.

Both these and other programmes being undertaken are demonstrating that, with proper preparation, email can be used positively to inform, educate and build relationships as well as “sell” per se.

### The Future

At present email marketing is in its infancy – even within the eCommerce space. But as its benefits become more widely known and people become more confident in adopting it as a more and more central part of their strategy, it will become commonplace and perhaps less effective. Right now, however, those marketers who embrace it wholeheartedly will see great results without too much effort.

If you would like to hear more about n a t i o n 's experience and techniques, please email David Carrington, n a t i o n 's Director of Media and Marketing, at [davide@nation.uk.com](mailto:davide@nation.uk.com). Or take a trip round our website: [www.nation.uk.com](http://www.nation.uk.com).

Now's the time to overtake your competitors – before they overtake you.