

# The Key to Email Marketing Health? A Balanced Content Diet



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Like our dietary needs, consumers crave a variety of products and promotions unique to their specific tastes and interests. However, for many retailers, this simply means reinforcing what consumers have already purchased rather than informing them of what else they might like.

Ultimately, this underexposes brands' product catalogs and the potential to sell new and different products.

What marketers "feed" their customers via campaigns is akin to a diet – and the goal is to create a balanced one. By tailoring a variety of product offerings suited to different types of customers and further segmenting their email strategy, marketers can begin to deliver more engaging content that lifts not only engagement rates, but long-term customer loyalty and revenue.

While that's easier said than done, by using the steps below, marketers can begin to achieve this and start serving consumers what they actually want.

## **Select the Right Themes**

Theme selection, or choosing which part of the product catalog to promote in an email, is the first step in serving up a balanced content diet. Here's how it works: rather than pushing a particular SKU, take coffee for instance, themes support similar products, such as sugar packets, cream and K-cups. This enables product discovery at the theme level – products that customers might like in your catalog, but haven't purchased yet. Using customer data to pick themes that will serve otherwise underserved populations not only exposes more of the brand's catalog, but enables them to make future offers that align with the customer's evolving tastes. Once this is mapped out, it's time to assign the audience that is most relevant for each theme and see what's resonating with them the most.

## **Test Sends**

This is where test sends come in, or testing an email on a small group of customers – and adjusting the campaign accordingly based on their engagement rates. This gives marketers a bird's eye view of what's working, what's not, and ensures that emails are reaching the right people at the right time with content most relevant to them. Through test sends, a luxury retailer found that, on average, certain product categories only appeal to 10 percent of recipients, moderately appeal to 10 percent and mildly turn off 80 percent of email recipients. By continually testing, measuring, and fine-tuning, marketers can make sure evolving consumer tastes are met.

## **Cadence Control**

It's been drilled into marketers' minds that Tuesdays are the optimal day for sending customer emails. To take it one step further, Tuesday at 10 a.m. is said to be best. While this could prove to be true in some cases, according to Propellor CRM, the success of an email marketing campaign depends on the intended audience. For example, after sending and analyzing

the data from test emails, a brand could determine that a specific audience, females ages 40-50 for instance, might be opening the most emails on a Saturday morning. While it will require some data analysis, adjustments and patience, timing emails to reach each customer at the most opportune moment will increase engagement and ultimately lift sales.

## **Reuse & Recycle**

The relatively low cost of sending emails, even at scale, makes the email channel a powerful revenue driver – when used correctly. However, many retailers invest large amounts of time and resources in developing a single email representing one product category only to see a 17 percent open rate, then never resend it again, according to Smart Insights. If an email gets a large number of click-throughs from customers who opened it, a more efficient solution is simply to resend the email to the rest of your audience a few days later. Like other assets in your business, email is a tool that should be utilized again and again, whether that means deliberately reusing it, adapting it or both.

## **Archive Content**

For marketers looking to maximize the lifespan of every email, improve engagement rates and generate revenue from every existing piece of content, it's essential to keep an updated archive of past email campaigns. Include tags, start dates and launch dates, as data can then be mined from this information to test, analyze and retarget content. In doing so, marketers can determine the ideal products and categories to send to each customer, as well as the perfect time to send it.

By implementing these best practices into the overall email marketing strategy, marketers can begin to create a more balanced email content diet that aligns with consumers' constantly changing tastes and moods.

**About the Author:** James Glover is President and CEO of Coherent Path, where he helps retailers transform their email programs into modern data-driven channels focused on revenue. Prior to Coherent Path, James was VP of Sales at Desktone where he was responsible for accelerating customer adoption and revenue growth from zero to over 100 customers to whom he sold through world class partners like Dell and Time Warner Cable. Before that, James held executive positions at Memento (acquired by Fidelity Information Services) and Watchfire (acquired by IBM). He earned a Bachelor of Commerce degree from the University of Toronto.