

Most digital enterprises routinely underperform in one very important digital area - email.

What many brands don't realize is that email can be the connective tissue between all marketing and customer experience initiatives. Those who avoid its regular use, however, do so at their own peril.

If enterprises are serious about 'Net success, then now is the time to optimize the email experience. In this month's feature article, let's take a look at the email ecosystem and help prepare your brand for a better response from future campaigns.

Making The Case for Email Today

One of the many reasons that email has become such a virtual workhorse for brands is because it is possible to customize each and every experience and know an incredible amount about the performance of campaigns down to the user level. Not only do we know what type of content is driving action and when the optimal moments are to generate engagement, but we also know how users are accessing the emails that brands send, providing a powerful opportunity to optimize the entire experience (and improve) in the future.

In a report released by VentureBeat last year, 84 percent of marketers said email is important or critically important for loyalty. Similar high percentages show how important it is for sales, retaining customers and lead generation. The result? Fifty percent of marketers anticipated their company's spend on email to increase during 2015 according to the Direct Marketing Association.

If marketers need more convincing that email is a vital marketing channel, Website Magazine has put together a special supplement online (wsm.co/emailstats16), which provides access to numerous data points that highlight the power of email and the investment marketers are making in its optimization.

The potential of email, however, often outweighs the performance. Recent MailChimp research revealed that open rates vary between 17 and 26 percent, with click-through rates ranging anywhere from 1.3 percent for restaurants to 5.36 percent for those in the hobby industry (everyone else fell between that range with the average click through-rates somewhere between 2.5 and 3.5 percent). That all amounts to far less activity with brand messaging than many senders anticipate. Like other promotional channels online (search, social, etc.), of course, email is evolving and it benefits marketers to know how if they want to better optimize its use.

Email Revenue Strong, Data Access Not So Much

Email still generates the highest revenue of all marketing channels according to a recent survey from MessageGears. Discover more about how satisfied companies are with various aspects of their email marketing program and how they are executing campaigns today at wsm.co/messagegears.

The Trend Toward Mobile

The one trend that dominates the headlines when it comes to email (as well as other channels) is, you guessed it, mobile. Over the course of 2015, according to the Litmus State of Email Report for 2016, mobile opens increased by 17 percent and now represent 55 percent of email opens (iPhone leads with 33 percent of mobile opens, with Android at 10 percent). Web-based email opens decreased 13 percent consequently, while desktop decreased by 17 percent.

As any good Web professional will attest, that means concentrating efforts on design and the experience that results. The nuances of mobile email design can be complex. With so many different mobile devices, it becomes essential to follow some best practices to ensure you start out on the right virtual foot.