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2010 Report on Email Best Practices

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Once again—for the fourth consecutive year—this is an attempt to distill key findings from the MarketingSherpa 2010 Email Marketing Benchmark Report. Here are the implications I see as noteworthy or significant:

- **Email is still favored by marketers.** While overall marketing budgets were cut dramatically in 2009, about half of email budgets remained the same and 37% of marketers were planning to spend more on email in 2009. However, email still represents a small slice—just 5%—of the average online marketing budget. Yet, “in this age of cost consciousness and demand to justify ROI, email marketing continues to prove its value as a highly cost-effective” medium.

How effective? More than three times as many marketers say that email effectiveness is increasing compared to those who say it is decreasing.

- **Email is still favored by consumers.** When asked which methods they use to share something from the web with family and friends, 78% said that they email the link. Only 22% would share through social media.
- **Social media marketing is gaining traction.** The only other area to see an increase in budget is social media. It represents 4% of the average marketing budget—a small amount but nearly as much as email. And Sherpa says that spending on social media will soon eclipse email spend, despite the latter’s proven track record for results.
- **Marketers appreciate social media’s impact on email.** Here is how they responded with “I agree” to questions about social media:

Extends reach of email to new markets	81%
Increases brand reputation and awareness	78%
Increases email ROI	53%
Accelerates growth of email lists	47%
Generates more qualified leads	31%

Scholl note: see my recent report on Email & Social Networks for best practices that maximize likelihood of success.



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- **The two biggest challenges for 2010.** Although it is expected to decline slightly in importance (82% to 76%), delivering highly relevant email content is still by far the biggest challenge. However, “competition with social media for recipients’ time and attention” is expected to grow from 23% to 71% in importance.

Relevance is still generally considered the single most important factor in driving email effectiveness. However, establishing relevance requires significantly more effort (and resources) than typical emails. One challenge is to evaluate whether the results are worth the effort.

It’s “clear that marketers consider content relevancy to be a top element in terms of effectiveness and importance. Yet, many email marketers don’t use all the best practices that have been proven to improve the relevancy of email content and, in turn, campaign effectiveness.”

Scholl note: successful marketing almost invariably requires more thought, focus and effort, but that investment typically pays off, particularly over the long haul.

- **Email and social media synergy.** While marketers worry about the possibility that more and more consumers will prefer social media (and mobile) over email, many look for synergy between the two types of media. “Email works in tandem with other tactics to increase engagement, deliver relevant content and build contact databases.” MarketingSherpa sees “a pattern of aggregation and adoption rather than replacement.”

In other words, email is alive and well and could benefit from synergy with other emerging media.

- **Email marketing objectives.** Here is what marketers consider very important:

Retaining existing customers	88%
Generating new sales leads	78%
Increasing web traffic	56%
Building brand and educating market	56%
Driving offline sales	56%
Driving online sales	51%

- **Other objectives.** Percents refer to those who consider these objectives important.

	2009	Next 12 months
Delivering highly relevant content	82%	76%
Integrating databases and email systems	56%	61%
Measuring and proving ROI	57%	65%
Email deliverability	57%	52%
Legit email being perceived as spam	48%	54%
Getting people to opt in to email lists	52%	62%
Competition with social media for Recipients’ time and attention	23%	71%



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Two other items:	Importance will increase	Importance will decrease
Getting budget and attention email deserves	43%	53%
Young people abandoning email as primary channel	41%	52%

- **How consumers think about email.** They're still receptive to companies they like. But they don't want too much email from your company.

I like receiving email from companies I've registered with even if I don't always read it; it's good to know that the email is there when I'm ready.	84%
I often remember email I've received while making an online purchase.	57%
My impression of companies I've purchased from is improved when I receive email from them.	57%
It would be OK for companies I know and trust to send more email.	29%

- **Email still most popular online activity.** While instant messaging, social networking and blogging have gained ground, email is still the leader.

Activity	Gen Y	Gen X	Younger Boomers	Older Boomers	Silent Gen	G.I. Gen	All
	18-32	33-44	45-54	55-63	64-72	73+	
Use email	94%	93%	90%	91%	79%	79%	91%
Use search engines	90%	93%	90%	89%	85%	70%	89%
Research products	84%	84%	82%	79%	73%	60%	81%
Get news	74%	76%	70%	69%	56%	37%	70%
Travel reservations	65%	70%	69%	66%	69%	65%	68%
Research jobs	51%	59%	57%	48%	33%	9%	51%
Rate person/product	37%	35%	29%	30%	25%	16%	32%
Download videos	38%	31%	21%	16%	13%	13%	27%
Participate in online auction	26%	31%	27%	26%	16%	6%	26%
Download podcasts	25%	21%	19%	12%	10%	10%	19%



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II. KEY FINDINGS

- **Attitude is important.** Fully 65% of organizations believe that they need to invest to stay relevant and on top of the email medium. Only 30% feel that they shouldn't invest more.
- **Traditional marketing still trumps on budget.** Online marketing gets only 10% of total marketing budget. Email gets only 5% of online marketing budget. "To put online budgets in perspective, only last year did U.S. spending on digital media outpace outdoor advertising. Still the dramatic migration to online media coupled with a recession-driven effort to cut costs has meant more attention and money flowing to online media." Search marketing (PPC and SEO) gets the most—45%. "Display & other tactics" get 44%.
- **But budget trend favors email and social media.** Traditional still gets the most money, but less and less.

Activity	Increase in budget	Decrease in budget
Email to house lists	48%	-14%
Social networks blogs	48%	-20%
Paid search	27%	- 33%
Telemarketing	18%	- 22%
Online display ads	16%	- 43%
Mobile marketing	13%	- 20%
Direct mail	12%	- 52%
Event marketing	8%	- 57%
Radio/TV ads	6%	- 83%
Email to rented lists	6%	- 43%
Print advertising	4%	- 60%

The bottom line: "More marketers are banking on email to get them through the recession than other marketing tactics."



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- **Resources.** For medium-size organizations (100-1000 employees), 35% have 2-3 full-time people and 31% just one full-time employee focused on email marketing. And most email marketers play multiple roles:

Activity	Manages	Performs
Email marketing	73%	27%
Website creation/upkeep	51%	24%
Online marketing analytics	49%	28%
Social media marketing	47%	24%
Search marketing (SEO/SEM)	46%	20%
Offline marketing or PR	42%	19%
Online display advertising	39%	16%

- **Email is increasing in effectiveness.** Some 60% of b2c marketers say that email effectiveness is increasing a little (34%) or a lot (26%). Another 20% say that it hasn't changed noticeably. Only 16% say that it is decreasing a little and a mere 4% say that it is decreasing a lot.
- **Effectiveness and effort.** 64% of marketers say that relevant content has the highest level of effectiveness and 48% say that it requires a high level of effort. The numbers are 53% and 17% respectively for house list email campaigns and 28% and 18% for event-triggered auto responder emails.
- **Attempts to achieve relevancy.** Here is what marketers are doing and planning.

Activity	Did in past year	Plan to in next year	No plans
Automatic emails based on triggers	63%	25%	12%
Segmented campaigns by sales cycle	54%	27%	19%
Segmented campaigns by user behavior	42%	40%	18%
Allowed recipients to specify email preferences	32%	39%	29%
Dynamically delivered personalized content based on user behaviors	20%	45%	35%

“Too many organizations of all sizes are guilty of the same offense—not using the majority of best practices available to improve the relevancy of content delivered and optimize email effectiveness.”



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- **How does relevance lift conversions?** Sherpa says that the key is offer-specific relevance, which can be intensified with urgency: “the perception of an opportunity or risk related to the passage of time.” Urgency can already be present or it can be instilled. Main points:
 1. Optimize offer and close process. “For website-based conversion-to-sale, this means first optimizing your Landing Pages.”
 2. Customers must find exactly what they’re looking for on Landing Page—“what motivated them to click through from the email.”
 3. As you test for optimization, “continue to maintain continuity of message through every step of the conversion process,” from subject line to confirmation page. Ensure “that all elements of the page or message body (copy, layout, colors, shapes, etc.) are congruent—that is, that they are consistent with one another and that each element either states or supports the offer’s value proposition.”
- **Put your customers in charge.** Sherpa recommends a “preference center that enables a recipient to self-manage the type and frequency of email they want to receive and behavioral tracking tools that identify” actions they take “or content they actually use.” So there are two steps involved: collecting and using information. Yet only about a third of marketers “collect and use recipient preferences and behavioral information to optimize” relevancy.
- **What information is collected and used?** The answers vary by company size.

	Large (>1000 emp)	Medium (100-1000)	Small (<100)
Behavioral preferences (items purchased, pages viewed, etc.)	50%	22%	33%
Content preferences (topics, news vs. sales info, etc.)	45%	29%	33%
Format preferences: HTML/text	35%	44%	34%
Delivery preferences: frequency, day of week, etc.	17%	11%	16%

- **Segmentation & customization.** Marketers are improving campaign results. They have plenty of data in their CRM and email systems to create campaigns and newsletters that resonate. The key is to identify segments and customize according to preferences. Here are recommended tactics:



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- **Put company representative's name and photo on newsletter.** One company saw a 63% increase in total clicks.
- **Customize messages based on buying behavior.**
- **Try a simple, personal, text only approach** that makes a special request—such as completing a survey—from a VP or the CEO.
- **Use dynamic content based on user preferences or location.** When you provide customized versions of your newsletter that appeal to each subscriber's interests, they'll be more willing to receive your messages and spend more time with the content. Dynamically generated newsletters highlight most relevant information based on categories or segments in CRM system. One company sent hundreds of versions of their newsletter based on subscriber preferences.
- **Design an email preference center that allows subscribers to identify their interest areas.** A welcome email—e.g., to new customers—is a good opportunity to introduce a preference center. “Subscriber engagement typically is highest in the earliest” stages of the relationship.
- **By integrating CRM and email messaging platform, you can match content types to subscriber segments in the database.** With content tagged to database segment, you can automatically generate emails that match content to subscriber' stated preferences.
- **Don't just use clicks to measure performance.** Look at total time spent by readers on content.

■ **Personalizing triggered emails and enhancing engagement.** Developing triggered email campaigns based on subscribers' stated preferences for relevant, up-to-date information “can create must-open and must-click communications.” Here are the six steps:

1. Select actions to drive triggered email campaign.
2. Promote saved search/listing options on site.
3. Collect email preferences during alert opt-in process.
4. Generate new email messages when information is updated.
5. Send updates in batches according to visitor preferences.
6. Monitor email and site engagement metrics.



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- **Email preferred mode of communication.** Consumers prefer email over virtually every other mode of communication.

Medium	Email has replaced	Would like to replace
Bills/statements	40%	8%
Promotional mail	38%	13%
Telemarketing	34%	28%
Retail discount offers	32%	14%
In-person sales calls	32%	23%

- **Time spent with each email category.** More than one fourth is spent with companies' emails.

Friends/family	43%
Permission email	26%
Work email	19%
Other	12%

- **Consumers like some emails more than others.**

Transaction confirmations	64%
Account summaries	55%
News alerts	20%
Newsletters	18%
Promotional offers	18%

- **Consumers receptive to promotional offers in transactional emails.**

Generally open to receiving	67%
Not open to receiving	25%
Don't care	8%

- **Subject lines that compel consumers to open permission emails.**

Discount offer	59%
Free product offer	57%
Contains familiar brand name	50%
Contains recent purchase info	36%
Free shipping offer	36%
Limited time offer	34%
Breaking information/news	34%
New product announcement	29%
Contains my name	16%



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■ Top 10 actions after opening permission emails.

Click on website	69%
Enter sweepstakes/promotion	67%
Purchase offline at retail store	48%
Purchase online	46%
Watch video clip	46%
Forward email	39%
Listen to audio clip	39%
Sign up for more information	38%
Click on advertised link in newsletter	34%

■ Average response rates for emails to house list.

Open	23%
Click through	10%
Convert	5%

■ Average response rates for email newsletters to house list.

Open	24%
Click through	11%
Convert	4%

■ Using dynamic content and testing to optimize newsletter performance.

Just as with regular emails, personalizing email newsletters to match individual subscribers' interests creates more relevance and higher levels of engagement. A leading mobile communications company revamped its customer email newsletter with dynamic features. They had also evolved the newsletter from promotional to a customer loyalty tool. The new newsletter, "combined with regular testing," doubled CTRs of other campaigns and generated more sales without being promotional.

The four strategies they used:

1. **Create a template for newsletter content with table of contents above the fold,** customer handset and account details, news item, monthly tip, customer perk such as free offer from them or a partner and interactive features such as polls, sweeps, online chats and Q&A.
2. **Use dynamic content to personalize newsletters.** Most personalization data came from customers' existing information; the rest was obtained with an opt-in form.



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- 3. **Incorporate video content.** Videos matched the theme of the monthly newsletter. Videos also conveyed corporate messages. At year end, the CEO discussed important milestones achieved during the year. Videos were promoted with image of speaker in mock video screen, but they weren't streamed through email; they included a link that took viewer to landing page where they could view video.
- 4. **Employ testing to optimize layout and usability.** "Testing was an essential component of the team's redesign process, and continues with each month's newsletter. Tests included (a) eye-tracking to determine best layout and make layout decisions; (b) monthly subject line test; and (c) monthly test of dynamic content features.

The results:

Click through rates typically twice as high as typical promotional emails

Dynamic content major contributor to results

Clicks evenly distributed –attributable to table of contents and decisions based on eye-tracking tests

Newsletter is outperforming promotional email campaigns, despite the fact that it is now a customer loyalty tool

■ Testing to improve campaign effectiveness.

	Test regularly	Haven't but plan to	No plan to test
Subject lines	48%	36%	16%
Offers/call to action	47%	35%	18%
Send time/day of week	42%	33%	25%
Creative copy/layouts	41%	39%	21%
Landing pages	36%	40%	25%
From lines	17%	38%	45%

■ Testing to create best layout improves email performance.

"Mixing educational content with product promotions to boost sales is common. But where you place the content...can make a difference." A "pet supply company increased email revenue by 15% and lifted conversions and clickthroughs."



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The three steps they took:

1. **Test vertical design locations.** They tested two offers each week that were similar but had notable exceptions. In the first week the A/B split was: half the list received an email containing an ad for a flea and tick product with \$14.99 savings. Clickers were taken to an article. The other half of the list got the same offer with a different design: article at top, offer below. In both versions, the element at top was more than double the size of the element below.
2. **Rinse and repeat.** They wanted to validate results so they repeated the strategy with different offers.
3. **Make landing pages function for education and sales.** The team drove sales from consumers clicking on the article. Articles were limited to a few hundred words. Image at top of landing page was hotlinked to products page so reader could make immediate purchase.

Results:

Version with article at top outperformed product-driven version by 7% for click throughs and 6% for conversions

Articles resulted in many multi-item purchases with 15% more sales than product-driven emails

- **Improving auto responders.** An aeronautical university used data from a new auto responder series to learn more about prospects' behavior and preferences. Using lead nurturing techniques, they cut average time to submit an application by 76.4%. They wanted answers to three key questions:
 1. How long do prospects remain engaged with communications?
 2. How long does it take prospect to begin application process?
 3. How long does it take to complete application process once started?

Here are the steps they followed:

1. **Create a communication plan** to stimulate two actions: submit request for information and complete online application. The series for those who submitted a request for information were spread over two years. Prospects received emails until the end of the series or until they submitted an online application. Prospects who started but didn't finish application received six emails over three months.
2. **Mix email content for lead nurturing.** To keep prospects engaged over long time frames, emails combined calls to action with broader branding messaging. Some emails had no call to action. The initial email response to a request for information was highly personalized with calls to action and links to online app, link to local campus requested by prospect and financial aid information if prospect expressed need.



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3. **Run program and analyze data.** The team ran the program to gather data and to examine these metrics: volume, delivery rates, open rates, unsubscribe rates and bounce rates. They learned that (a) chance of conversion declines after two months; and (b) open rates decline significantly at one-month and two-months marks.
4. **Adjust communication plan based on data.** Specifically, because prospects begin to disengage after 30 days, they needed to (a) front load communication plan to get more conversions; and (b) use additional channels. They:
 - added an email at the three-week mark
 - added telephone calls and postcards
 - front-loaded schedule for prospects in the application process with emails on day three and 10 and removal of 90-day email
 - employed other best practices including university name in From line
 - included additional relevant content in first message responding to those who requested more information such as link to video about the school and link to online brochure describing program of interest to prospect

Results:

Reduced from 127 to 30 days time for prospect to submit application after requesting information

Reduced application start-to-finish time from 14.1 days to 3.5 days

Gathered valuable data: “Understanding when users begin to disengage from email communications and establishing baselines for metrics...will help the team continue testing and improving their email programs.”

- **How to increase opt-ins.** Percentages are for those who are “much more likely” to implement and those who are “somewhat more likely.”
 1. Guarantee not to share email address with other companies: 43%/23%
 2. Special pricing for email subscribers: 32%/29%
 3. Ability to customize how frequently you receive emails: 27%/30%
 4. Ability to customize information you receive: 25%/32%
 5. First look at new products/services: 22%/28%



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Other tactics:

- Start opt-in process with field rather than link alone
- Optimize forms
- Keep subject lines to fewer than 50 characters
- Examine stock language; for example, if company name is in From line, you probably don't need it in subject line
- Include action words (especially in beginning of SL)
- Design for the Red 'X': blocked images are a bigger problem now; "by cleverly using ALT tags, your emails can say a great deal, even when images are blocked."

- **Raising opens & clicks via personalization and segmentation.** Obviously, the more you know about your customers, the more segmented and effective your email campaigns are likely to be. Begin with what you know and then gather additional information through preference centers.
- **Design to the preview pane.** A slight majority of consumers now use preview panes. Marketers "can address the visual needs" of roughly "76% of consumers with uniform designs changes":
 - Avoid large image headers
 - Ensure that key messages appear in first inch or two of email
- **More links = more clicks.** Emails with more links get higher open and click rates.
- **Reduce actions.** Landing pages should be focused on a single action. Click rates drop precipitously as additional action(s) are added.
- **Transactional email.** Numbers indicate preferred method of delivery for each type of communication:

	2008 average	Youth	Affluent
Shipping notices	73%	84%	93%
Receipts and transaction confirmations	62%	73%	81%
Customer service questions/answers	49%	58%	62%
Coupons for retailers (not food)	40%	47%	58%
Mortgage/banking notices	34%	42%	43%
Monthly utilities statements	34%	44%	47%

"Look for opportunities, but keep in mind that transactional emails get opened because people trust that the information ...is relevant." if the email is a receipt, you can market complementary accessories. If an itinerary, include "site specific messaging." Standard offers often don't play well in transactional emails.



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- **If you include ads** in your e-newsletters, rotate ads as much as possible; change the position of ads; and change their look and feel.
- **Increase reach through social sharing.** Marketers respond to specific questions:

	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
Extends reach of email to new markets	81%	3%	16%
Increase brand reputation and awareness	78%	3%	19%
Increase ROI of email programs	53%	7%	40%
Accelerates growth of email lists	47%	10%	43%
Generates more qualified leads	31%	13%	57%

The key to success is not to be perceived as selling something, but rather educating and informing.

- **Building bigger and better lists.** Marketers report that their lists are growing slowly (56%), quickly (1%), are neutral (30%). So 87% are flat or growing.
 - A technology education site multiplied their subscriber list 20-fold by targeting a specific demographic through established blogs and a contest. They defined their target audience; determined prizes and rules of contest; set up landing page, auto emails and tracking page; targeted and emailed bloggers; and promoted the contest in other media including social. Blogs drove 71.5% of registrations.
- **Information collected for segmentation and personalization.**

	Collected/used	Collected/not used	Not collected
Basic info (first/last name)	87%	12%	1%
Extended info (address, phone, etc.)	57%	29%	14%
Business contact info	54%	21%	25%
Source of lead	47%	27%	25%
Demographic data	28%	19%	52%

“Delivering highly relevant content to specific market segments in a personalized way requires more than an email address. It requires a database designed to accommodate multiple fields of segmentation and data capture points, such as landing pages, with information entry fields corresponding to the database. The more information collected, the greater the ability to segment and personalize email with relevant content.”



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■ **How to improve acquisition and retention.** An online dating service had an all too common problem. They never knew how much email customers received on a given day. Messages came from two, uncoordinated platforms: one for promotional emails and the other for automated emails triggered by activity on their site. They knew that coordinating the two would facilitate delivery of more relevant, personalized messages while also managing volume of email per recipient. Their goal: attract and retain customers and enhance satisfaction with email communications. They:

- Installed a new email marketing platform to manage both types of emails
- Focused on creating emails that focused on user status
- Delivered a personalized mix of service-oriented and promotional emails
- Developed a campaign combining an automated welcome series, “triggered emails with room for promotional offers and a personalized newsletter”—based on preferences—to convert or retain paying customers

Results:

Automated welcome series	Before	After
Open rates	35%	45%
Click through rates	2%	20%

Triggered alert emails	Average
Open rates	40%
Click through rates	12%

Email deliverability improved from 80% to 90%
Conversion improved by 10%

■ **Opt-in tactics for consumer products.**

	Very effective	Somewhat effective	Not very effective
Special offers only for email recipients	59%	38%	1%
Collecting customer info on registration to segment email	36%	52%	12%
Email with product status changes	31%	59%	8%
Shopping cart abandonment follow-up	30%	30%	39%
Adding offers to transactional emails	24%	62%	14%
Reminders for birthdays, occasions, etc.	17%	48%	35%



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- **Emailed coupons used in online stores.** Percentages show whether consumers remember receiving and using these coupons over a year.

No	41%
Yes	39%
Saved but never used	10%
Don't know/recall	10%

“Emailed coupon use is strong. Almost 50% had some interaction, with 80% of those actually using the coupon. Even for those” who “saved but never used, there was clearly a powerful branding experience.”

- **Emailed coupons used in offline stores.**

No	48%
Yes	31%
Saved but never used	9%
Don't know/recall	12%

When asked about non-food coupons, close to half of consumers said they prefer email as the medium. “This is especially true of affluent households, which are significantly more likely to prefer email.” And “even emailed coupon redemption in brick-and-mortar stores is fairly common.”

- **Top reasons consumers unsubscribe from email lists.**

Irrelevant content	67%
Too frequent	64%
Think address was shared/sold	50%
Don't recall signing up	48%
Privacy concerns	32%

- **Email solutions/providers for sending email campaigns to house list.**

Advanced web-based	36%
Full service, outsourced ESP	30%
Basic web-based	21%
Common, e.g., Outlook	10%
Deliverability service	8%



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- **Email campaign metrics tracked.** The more reliable measure, the click through rate, has finally surpassed the open rate.

Click through rate	89%
Open rate	87%
Delivery rate	80%
Average number of clicks on each link in email	52%
Conversion rate of those who click from email	43%
Response variations by list segment	28%
Clickstream data for those who click from email	25%
Response variations by major ISP	14%

- **A b2b experience that may be valuable for b2c.** A good e-newsletter should not only have value for recipients, but should also provide the marketer opportunities “to include relevant links that engage reader’s with a company’s products and services.” A business mentoring organization revamped its newsletter to provide more links for “special download offers, contextual links within articles, and permanent links to top services.”

Their four-part strategy:

1. Cluster hotlinks to related content above the fold
2. Provide links to bonus downloads
3. Create permanent links to key services
4. Use keyword research to identify newsletter subjects

Result: a 1,200% increase in click through rate

- **Auto responder produces 10-fold boost in ecommerce revenue per email.** “A cosmetics company used an auto responder program to send an incentive email” to people who visited the site but didn’t buy—encouraging them to come back and buy.

Their four-part strategy:

1. Track website visits from email subscribers
2. Determine eligibility for a re-engagement email
3. Send re-engagement email with special offer
4. Monitor metrics

Results:

- Nearly 10 times the revenue of a standard promotional campaign
- Open rates averaged 48% compared to 15-20% for standard campaign
- Click through rates: 20% compared to 15%
- Revenues per email: \$200-\$400 per thousand messages compared to \$30-\$40



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■ How financial metrics are being tracked.

Email click-to-purchase conversion rate	45%
Revenue per email	36%
Customer lifetime value of email recipients	22%

“Financial metrics are becoming increasingly important to justify the value of email marketing programs, but not enough marketers follow the money trail” from “email campaigns and the revenue they produce.”

- **Present and future of social sharing.** Only about 30% of marketers feel that social sharing is effective in lead generation. “But when you combine the targeting of email with the reach of social media, a whole new world of lead generation opportunities presents itself.”

Roughly half of marketers now view social media as just another “tool in the toolbox,” and not as important as email. However, looking forward, “90% of consumer marketers” and almost as many b2b marketers “predict that social media will become a standard tactic in the foreseeable future.”

- **Email and social sharing.** A national restaurant chain “made their promotional email campaign more interactive and built stronger” customer relationships. Instead of blasting promotions and coupons, they “combined standard product promotions and contests with broader, brand-related content. They also increased the ways subscribers could interact with those messages by adding social sharing features, store locator buttons, and online calendar reminders for events.”

Tactics included:

- Providing multiple engagement points in each email, e.g., primary offer such as a contest or promotion related to a specific menu item and smaller boxes for additional messages; links to menus and nutritional information; forward to a friend link; and brand-related content
- Promoting social sharing—inspired by customer-created fan club on Facebook with 25,000 members. “They established a partnership with the creator and began promoting the club through their email messages.”
- Using surveys to get qualitative feedback with questions about email frequency and subject matter preferences and customer behavior after receiving email. Some interesting findings:
 1. Only 1% said they received emails too often.
 2. Roughly one third said they weren’t getting enough email.
 3. Nearly half said they forward and share emails.

Results:

15% click through

75% said email inspired a store visit

Facebook fans grew from 25,000 to 1 million in less than a year



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- **Integrating email and social media.** Again, please see my separate report on this topic. Here is current status:

Have formulated strategy and implemented integration	27%
Have formulated strategy and researching tools for integration	21%
Will do it but don't know where to start	18%
Haven't done it, but it sounds intriguing	15%
No, don't see the value	4%

- **Integrating social media into the marketing mix.** Nearly 80% of marketers already integrate social media into their mix of online or offline tactics. Doing so with online tactics is far easier, of course. “Integration can initiate the movement of prospects through the pipeline from initial social media engagement to lead capture and qualification to sales conversion. When asked whether they've implemented integration, marketers said:

Yes, with online and offline tactics	31%
Yes, with online tactics only	47%
Yes, with offline tactics only	1%
No	20%

- **Does social media fit with other marketing tactics?** Nearly 90% of marketers say that social media was either “very complementary” or “somewhat complementary” with their house email campaigns. Other results:

	Very complementary	Somewhat complementary
Viral marketing	69%	28%
Search optimization	58%	36%
Content marketing	57%	40%
Virtual events	60%	36%
In-person events	37%	50%
Paid search	31%	52%
Channel marketing	31%	56%
Affiliate marketing	30%	57%
Direct mail	18%	47%
Print	13%	48%
Radio/TV	12%	46%

- **Social sharing and list growth.** Between 2008 and 2009, 32% more marketers planned to use social sharing as a list growth tactic—far higher than any other (site registrations with incentive grew by only 14%).



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■ **Where do consumers get information about your brand, products and company?**

Social media websites	70%
Company websites	68%
Online news	57%
Review sites	49%
Wikis	44%

Organizations that don't extend the reach of their email campaigns with social sharing "are missing an important opportunity to nurture brands and influence consumer attitudes and opinions."

■ **Social media site visitors spread the word.** Information is shared more through social media sites than from company and news sites combined.

Social media websites	45%
Company or news sites	36%
Others	23%

■ **Why social media needs email.** Email is "the dominant channel for permission-based messaging." Direct mail is also very acceptable.

Email	95%
Direct mail	85%
Phone	37%
Text messaging	7%
Instant messaging	5%
Via social network	4%
Via RSS feed	2%

■ **Email is preferred channel for receiving marketing messages.** It ranks dramatically higher than social networks for all of the following:

- Confirmation (thank you) for transaction you initiated
- Financial alerts from your financial institution
- Promotional messages from a company with which you've granted permission
- Regular account status updates
- Polls, surveys and questionnaires related to a company you know
- Promotional messages from a company with which you regularly conduct business



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- **Use of social and mobile technologies.** Percentages are for consumers who use the technology multiple times each day.

Email	47%
Laptop with mobile web capability	27%
Facebook	17%
MySpace	11%
Smartphone	11%
Twitter	6%
LinkedIn	4%