

Learning from the Past

by Annie Cooley of Swiftpage

In times of recession, the businesses that are surviving, or even thriving during these hard times are the ones that have emphasized trust and relationships in their platforms. Karen J. Barran of [BtoB magazine](#) once wrote an article titled "Looking back: The top 5 mistakes of 2009," and many of its lessons can still be applied today. Instead of looking at the "mistakes" that people have been making, I am going to suggest the "tips" that you can use to ensure your emails are mistake free and not stuck in the past.

Tip #1: Ability to target customers

One of the most significant features of email marketing is its ability to target customers. These results offer feedback that allows you to know exactly how recipients interact with your email. Knowing who opens your emails and what links they follow can be extremely beneficial to your bottom line. Automated marketing is continuing to grow and is taking email marketing a step further. With automated marketing, you are able to automatically create call lists and effectively program emails to be sent that are based upon the way people interact with your emails. You can even generate direct mail lists and partner with a vendor to automatically have postcards sent to the recipients who did not open your email. You no longer serve all customers and prospects with the same content. Through targeting, you tell your customers that you want to meet them where they are.

Tip #2: Infinite avenues for dialogue

With the emergence of social media, we now have the ability to connect and share our business in so many ways. Email marketing still stands as the number one channel used to share information and insights, however, when combined with social media can maximize your communication through additional mediums. People are beginning to look to social media as an information center and conversion rates are being affected by this. If you are not on the social media band wagon, your conversion rates could become negative. Adding true value through your communication via Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, email marketing, and other electronic avenues will win you the trust and relationships you have been seeking.

Tip #3: Successful integrations of various marketing efforts

It is the combination of Tip #1 and Tip #2 that will ultimately make your business successful. Social media allows you to start a dialogue with people who interest you and vice versa. Email marketing and automated marketing allow you to pursue these people after the conversation has begun. Integrating each one of these marketing efforts effectively will gain you new customers and continue to help you retain old ones.

Tip #4: Sophistication of design standards

Flashy colors and exclamation marks do not send the message that you are the hottest product out there. With the increase of emails overflowing inboxes, people have become very selective in what they choose to pay attention to. Good design comes in many different forms and when done correctly it can entice people to read more and even click through. Effective design moves the reader's eyes to exactly where you want them to go, the call to action. Most of us are not professional designers. The good news is that there are companies who want to help you with your email marketing designs. One such company is [Bright Peak](#), a division of Swiftpage. Bright

Peak works with professional designers to provide the design expertise you need to create stunning emails that drive your customers to your call to action.

Tip #5: Refined subject lines

The subject line and pre-header or first sentence of your email is the first step to enticing your reader to continue. Think of it as the headline to your major feature story. Brian Clark, founder of Copyblogger defines a headline as a beneficial and relevant promise to the right people. You are relaying what you will provide to your reader if they choose to read on. Today, people are much more wary of empty promises and it is crucial to rise above and fulfill those promises.

As we continue to change, remember that relationships and trust will set you apart from the rest.