

Test 1, 2, 3 - Testing for Results

by David Leach of Swiftpage

The most brilliant parts of email and email marketing are the [testing and analytics](#). With email and the Internet, you can literally test the success of everything you send out, or put on the web. With this said, the ability to form a strict and effective testing process is crucial to whether or not you succeed.

You will need to start this process by laying out some guidelines and groundwork to continuously refer to. Creating a plan will help you stay on course and also allow you to pass off the procedures to the necessary players or new employees down the road. Diving into email testing you will want to decide exactly what you want to keep your eye on, so you can put the proper content in place for tracking. Some of the most common and true indicators of success are found in the testing of subject lines, testing of whether or not to use more images or a Plain Text format, and then also the placement and wordsmithing of links and surveys.

Once it has been decided that you will be testing your content religiously, you will want to set up a schedule. What you don't want, is to send your emails out, move forward with your campaign and then come back to the results several weeks or months later when it is time for the next email blast. Instead, give the blast, two or three days for links to be clicked on and the email to be properly interacted with, and then jump into your testing when your mind is fresh on the topic. Report analytics are all too easy to look at and say "Oh, yes, hmmm...sure, that explains it" a few weeks after the fact. Try running a fine comb through those results when the focus and drive is fresh and bring your analytic skills to a much higher level.

Learning from your results over time and uncontrollable change are also key and curiously intriguing. From numerous tests you will be able to tell if your target group is more visually stimulated by flashy images, if they are no-nonsense, get-to-the-point and give me links/product types, if they are easily lured in for a good read with specific subject lines, are more responsive with a call to action, or if they are simply more into a good read stocked full of informative and intriguing content.

If they turn out to like reading more than actually purchasing your stuff, then figure out how to make that work for you. You could link to other intriguing and relative sites, and then those sites you link to, will send people back your way in return, etc. etc. and eventually you have created an information network that you can feed from. The whole point is being able to put a finger on who it is you are communicating with and how you can make their experience more enjoyable. The minute you start to force content on your recipients is the same day your numbers will start to tank. Consumers today are getting much better at only surrounding themselves with exactly what they want and nothing more.

The ability to continuously test email content has made email one of the best utility tools for companies today. With this new testing frontier it is very important that you do not stop testing, just because you hit the nail on the head and became an overnight expert realizing for example the words "Splendid" or "Scrumptious" in the subject line bring astronomical open rates. Opinions and tastes may change within the hour and always being tapped into those changes will bring you the most success and stimulating feedback.