

Altman Dedicated Direct

STRATEGY... TACTICS... RESULTS

Publication: **List and Data Strategies eNewsletter**

Issue Month: **January 2008**

Title: ***Automated email Tactics: Convert Prospects to Customers***

Using email to convert prospects to customers is an ideal job for triggered email. Consider a new prospect signing up for your e-list. Your goal – convert this new prospect to a purchasing customer. You have the ideal opportunity to use their communication channel of preference (email) to move them from prospect to customer.

It's true that a certain percentage of those who sign up for your e-list will become customers as a result of receiving your regular emails. But why leave that up to chance? Instead develop a triggered conversion series of emails to sell this prospect on all that your brand has to offer them.

Your goal in this email conversion series is to engage the prospect with your brand, entice them with your products and offers, and remove the risk they face in becoming a customer so they place an order. Risks you need to address: Will your product be as expected upon arrival? Will it deliver the value anticipated? Is there recourse (i.e. a guarantee and/or warranty) if the product doesn't deliver? If they have any problems at all, will dealing with your brand be a positive experience?

What's the best way to achieve your goal? Make the triggered conversion series relevant to the prospect. Initially you may only ask for their email and first name. In the first triggered email response, in addition to thanking them for signing up, start reducing risks by reminding them of your guarantees, your great customer service, etc. Include a testimonial or two related to customer satisfaction for additional social proof of your brand's value, reliability and customer orientation.

You are also in a perfect position to ask for information that will help you make the email relevant to them. Ask the recipient to advise which product areas most appeal to them. Depending on your brand, you may have different questions that are most critical: how urgent their purchase need is, what their occupation or age is, etc.

It's now time for trigger #2 – send your prospective customer an email loaded with content and offers that are directly relevant to their needs. If the prospect apparel for special occasions is their main interest, send an email with your special occasion best sellers, tips for selecting special occasion items, and a first time buyer offer – free shipping, \$\$ off, or a free bonus gift.

A point about special first time buyer offers... make it clear these are solely for this first time buyer. This is critical for two reasons:

1. Add the element of exclusivity; a key emotional drivers of sales
2. Ensure the offer is truly seen as special. Avoid conditioning the new customer to expect deals every time they place an order.



853 Academy ST, Rural Hall, NC 27045-9329

Tel: (336) 969-9538

Fax: (336) 969-0187

E-Mail: SAltman@AltmanDedicatedDirect.com

Web: www.AltmanDedicatedDirect.com

Altman Dedicated Direct

STRATEGY... TACTICS... RESULTS

For your 3rd email in the series it's often best to repeat much of what was in email #2 but add the element of a deadline to encourage taking action. Also remind the prospect of ease of returns, guarantees, and so on to ensure fears that remain in their mind about the risks of doing business with you are allayed.

How many steps should you have in your conversion series? Each brand varies but usually a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 7. Test your way to find the ideal number.

How far apart should each step in your conversion series be? I've seen successful conversion series anywhere from 1-4 days apart. Less frequently will likely lose the connection from one email to the next.

Next month we'll continue our exploration with additional triggered email opportunities for increasing sales.

Shari Altman is President of Altman Dedicated Direct, a direct marketing consultancy specializing in customer acquisition, catalog, continuity, DRTV, and loyalty marketing. Prior to launching Altman Dedicated Direct in 1999, Shari spent over 20 years as director of marketing for major direct response marketers and catalogers. Ms. Altman can be reached at 336-969-9538, SAltman@AltmanDedicatedDirect.com or visit www.AltmanDedicatedDirect.com.



853 Academy ST, Rural Hall, NC 27045-9329

Tel: (336) 969-9538

Fax: (336) 969-0187

E-Mail: SAltman@AltmanDedicatedDirect.com

Web: www.AltmanDedicatedDirect.com