

Altman Dedicated Direct

STRATEGY... TACTICS... **RESULTS**

Column: "**After the Phone Rings ...**"

Month: **December 2004**

Topic: **Taking Advantage of Email Marketing with Phone Orders**

Most DRTV/radio marketers know that email marketing has advantages for responding to web orders, but it can offer those same advantages for inbound telemarketing orders: cutting costs, saving sales that might have been lost, and generating back-end sales.

But, first a note of caution before delving into specific tactics.... Email is fraught with execution challenges. Not only is technical know-how required – there are many not-so-obvious hurdles: getting your email delivered amid spam filters and sender challenges, the need to be “white listed” with AOL and Yahoo, avoiding being “black listed” (NONE of your email is delivered) -- all mean it is critical to work with an email fulfillment firm that ensures your deliverability remains as high as possible.

Email copy and design are also disciplines that require specific experience, so don't chintz just because email looks easy. Professional copy and design ensures that offers and graphics are the right size, the important things are “above the fold”, the appropriate screen resolution and recipient systems have been accommodated, etc. delivering your best shot at success.

Assuming you have a great email fulfillment vendor and professional copy and design, what else? Capture email addresses from phone orders! Give customers a reason to provide their email – offer to send an order acknowledgement and notification when their order is shipped. If necessary to ensure deliverable addresses, have your inbound service verify email addresses phonetically (“a like apple” etc.).

Your next step is tactics. Here are a few to consider:

1. Send a thank-you/order confirmation email that includes a reminder of the anticipated delivery time. A well-crafted acknowledgement can begin setting the stage for back-end sales by showing the customer that you value their business.
2. If you have shipping delays, notify customers by email. This will reduce “where's my order” calls and will also save sales – customer who are aware of a delay are less likely to be angry and cancel, than those who haven't been informed.
3. Send a shipping acknowledgement email when the order goes out. This will further reduce “where's my order” calls and save customer service expenses.
4. A week or two after the order is delivered, send a thank you email with a special new customer offer. Consider discount or bonus gift “Share with a friend” offers, so your new customer can email their friends, and open the door for you to garner more customers.
5. Develop an eNewsletter to stay in touch with customers and build the kind of rapport that gets them *wanting* to know what you have to sell. But ensure your eNewsletters aren't 100% promotion. Include interesting content that keeps



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customers engaged and wanting to read each issue such as testimonials, interesting tidbits about celebrities associated with your product, tips on product usage, etc.

6. Continuity marketers can use email to alert customers of upcoming shipments. Consider emailing far enough ahead of the shipment date to make offers to add items to continuity shipments. A strong incentive like free shipping on the added items makes this a great tool for increasing average order size. Auto-replenishment marketers can use the alert email to allow customers to adjust their next delivery dates so they remain happy and not overwhelmed with too much product.

Email marketing is a relatively inexpensive tool that doesn't need to be restricted to use with web customers. Anyone employing the tactics mentioned will save service costs and make the most of back-end sales for phone orders.

Have a suggestion for a future column or questions about executing tactics I've suggested? Email me! -- Saltman@AltmanDedicatedDirect.com

Next month we'll investigate which back-end marketing tasks require staff and which are better outsourced.

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