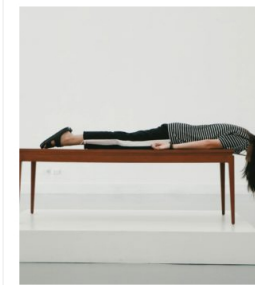


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ANTHILL MAGAZINE MARKETING & MEDIA EMAIL SEGMENTATION OPINIONS & ADVICE

"You sent what?!" Here's what to keep in mind about automated emails during COVID-19

By Anthill Magazine - Apr 24, 2020 0



If you're a frequent flyer, it's highly likely you are currently being bombarded by automated airline email updates encouraging you to take flights and maximise your points, or redeem those points on flights, at a time when international flights have been cancelled and domestic flights have been significantly reduced.

At the same time, the airlines are sending out emails detailing how they are taking steps to reduce the (already low) risks of contracting COVID-19 on board their fleet through the use of increased hygiene and cleaning and improved hospital grade filters.

They're mixed messages, begging the questions; increased hygiene, but from what? Filters, improved how?

Airlines aren't the only ones to have missed their mark when it comes to automated emails. Australian cinema chain, Palace Cinemas, sent out an email to their subscribers in March touting the release of a new Pixar film and inviting people to buy tickets for their advance screening.

A day later, the cinema chain dispatched an email to the exact same audience informing them that they were closing the doors on all of their cinemas around Australia for the foreseeable future. Bad timing? Perhaps. Inability to read the room? Certainly. A case of their not having put any advance thought as to whether it might be appropriate to review and possible disable the 'Send' function on their bulk electronic direct mail (EDM)? One hundred percent.

Continuing blindly with pre-programmed automated marketing and communications during a period of flux or crisis is not just short-sighted, it's customer service and branding suicide. Once automated, the process grinds on regardless of extraneous circumstances and your customer is left wondering if your left hand is talking to its right!

If your company is sending automated emails, do you track and review how many people are actually opening - let alone - reading your emails?

Do you know how many are going straight into email spam traps?

How many - and which ones - are triggering the recipient to actively unsubscribe?

A major bank once sought my firm's advice, to educate its marketing staff on the optimum response rate for their regular EDM communications. When asked why, they responded that theirs had dropped from 1% to 0.89% causing them some concern as to the decreased efficacy.

Staggeringly, it hadn't occurred to them that the real problem lay in the fact that at least 99% of their existing customers were actively ignoring them. If you sent out 100 party invites for your birthday party, and 99 of your friends didn't even bother to respond, what does that say about your friends? Or more importantly, what does it say about you, and your relationship with them?

The point of any communication, especially corporate communication, is to get your message across. Consumers and customers are time poor. They are bombarded from dawn 'til dusk (and beyond!) with tens of thousands of messages, ads, points of view, and new ideas.

How do you ensure yours stands alone?

If your business is based on customer engagement, and sales - show me a business which isn't - you need to make absolutely sure that what is being communicated to your customer base is not simply the product of an automated 'marketingbot'.

Especially during uncertain, ever-changing times like that which we are facing during the current COVID-19 crisis worldwide, with every single business affected one way or the other, your messaging needs to be ultra-responsive. You have an obligation to your customer, and your brand, to ensure that all of your communication comes from a place of honesty, integrity, and empathy.

Consider that before hitting 'Send' on that next email campaign.

Darren Woolly is the Founder and Global CEO of TrinityP3, a global marketing consultancy. TrinityP3 believes that to solve complex challenges requires evidence-based thinking combined with design-focused creativity. They challenge their clients, and themselves, to continuously evolve in thought and approach, to develop innovative solutions than result in competitive advantage.

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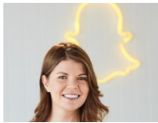
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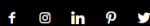
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