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Best Practices in Email Marketing

Email in the Age of Social Media

The Email Marketer's Guide to Leveraging the Power of the Social Web

StrongMail

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THE RISE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

A year ago, most people had no idea what Twitter was. Today, the media is filled with stories on its phenomenal growth and effect on popular culture. When you have Oprah devoting an entire show on the topic and Hollywood celebrities in a highly publicized competition to amass the most followers, adoption among the general public is almost a foregone conclusion. Already, Twitter projects that it will have 25 million users by the end of 2009[1], which is not surprising given a 1,382% growth in site visits in February 2009 alone[2].

And Twitter isn't the only social networking site experiencing growth. Facebook has evolved from its roots as a social networking site for college students to the largest social network on the Web, with more than 250 million registered users as of July 2009 – an increase of 50 million from three months prior[3]. Today, the fastest growing demographic on Facebook is members aged 35 and up[4].

Online adults aren't just flocking to Facebook either. A recent study by Pew Internet[5] shows that 35% of all U.S. adults belong to social networking sites – four times as many as three years ago. The study also found that nearly three quarters of all adults 18-24 maintain profiles on social networking sites and more than half of adults 25-34 (57%) are active social networkers.

The rising popularity of social networking sites is also evidenced by the change in the top five most trafficked sites from 2005 to 2009. In just four years, YouTube and Facebook displaced eBay and Amazon to take the number 3 and 4 spots behind Google and Yahoo[6]. An even closer look at the numbers shows another compelling statistic: Facebook users spend an average of 25 minutes on the site each day, compared to 10 minutes and less for Yahoo and Google.

It's evident that consumers are changing the way they approach media, circumventing traditional marketing channels such as television and print media in favor of social media sites that provide easy access to information, advice and recommendations.

In the end, people go online to socialize and be entertained. During that process, these connected consumers are actively building and refining their own trusted personal networks. They also quickly embrace new communication offerings, which is why companies like Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace and Twitter have done so well. In fact, these networks now have more members than the entire U.S. population, and their very existence is driving this change in consumer behavior.

Fastest Growing Member Community Destinations in February 2009

Rank	Site	Feb 08	Feb 09	% Growth
1	Twitter	475,000	7,038,000	1382%
2	Zimbio	809,000	2,752,000	240%
3	Facebook	20,043,000	65,704,000	228%
4	Multiply	821,000	2,394,000	192%
5	Wikia	1,381,000	3,758,000	172%

Source: Nielsen NetView, 2/09, U.S. Home and Work

Top 5 Most Trafficked Sites

Rank	2005	2009
1	YAHOO!	Google
2	msn	YAHOO!
3	Google	YouTube
4	ebay	facebook
5	amazon.com	Windows Live

Source: Alexa.com, 12/31/05, 6/14/09

[1] eMarketer, "The Inside Numbers on Twitter," July 2009
[2] Nielson.com, "Twitter's Tweet Smell of Success," Feb. 2009
[3] Facebook, "Now Connecting 250 Million People," July 2009
[4] Facebook, "Press Room," July 2009
[5] Pew Internet, "Adults and Social Network Websites," Jan. 2009
[6] Alexa.com, "Top Sites," June 14, 2009

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As consumers find it easier to plug into the life streams of others, they are spending more time interacting on a variety of levels – from communicating their activities and commenting on those of others to sharing information that they deem helpful or entertaining. In essence, consumers are relying more on their networks to help determine what's worth their attention, and less on mainstream media.

On the social web, consumers often tune out traditional third-party banner ads, instead focusing on the endless stream of personally relevant information being served up by their friends.

This shift requires marketers to think differently about how they spread the word about their products and services. On the social web, consumers often tune out traditional third-party banner ads, instead focusing on the endless stream of personally relevant information being served up by their friends. That's where the new discipline of social media marketing comes into play, which enables companies to identify their biggest influencers online and develop programs that entice them to share relevant information and promotions.

While many marketers are scrambling to figure out how to respond to the rise of social media, the growing interconnectedness among consumers can actually be a positive and powerful development. According to a July 2009 Nielsen Global Online Consumer Survey[7], 90% of consumers trust recommendations from people they know, and even a full 70% trust opinions from anonymous consumers via product reviews.

The opportunity is clear. If you can find out how to integrate social media into your marketing efforts and succeed in motivating consumers to share with their networks, you will have created a powerful channel for increasing your brand's influence in the marketplace.

THE EMERGENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS A DIRECT MARKETING CHANNEL

Dell's Twitter feed @DellOutlet has generated more than $3 million in sales as of June 2009

Not all marketers have sat idly by as consumers flock to the social web. Companies like Dell and Amazon have been widely profiled for how they use Twitter to market their products to consumers, who in turn share the exclusive offers with their friends and followers. In fact, Dell's Twitter feed @DellOutlet has generated more than $3 million in sales as of June 2009[8]. Similarly, many companies have built networks of fans on Facebook to communicate exclusive offers and create a community of loyal brand advocates. However, like any emerging channel, companies are still trying to determine the best way to leverage social media to drive customer engagement and response.

While some companies see social media as simply a channel for building and monitoring brand awareness, there is new evidence that it is emerging as a direct channel. A June 2009 StrongMail survey[9] of more than 500 marketers asked them which marketing function owned social media within their organization.

The survey revealed a "land grab" within marketing departments for control of social media, with 29% of respondents saying that responsibility for social media is shared by multiple functions. However, the majority of respondents reported that direct marketing owns social media within their company, garnering 36% of the respondents. Notably, only 9% of respondents stated that social media was owned by their public relations departments, and a paltry 5% had their own dedicated social media department.

[7] Nielsen Global Online Consumer Survey, "What People Trust on the Internet," April 2009
[8] Wall Street Journal, "Dell Sells $3 Million Through Twitter," June 2009
[9] StrongMail/Zoomerang, " 2009 Marketing Trends Survey," June 2009

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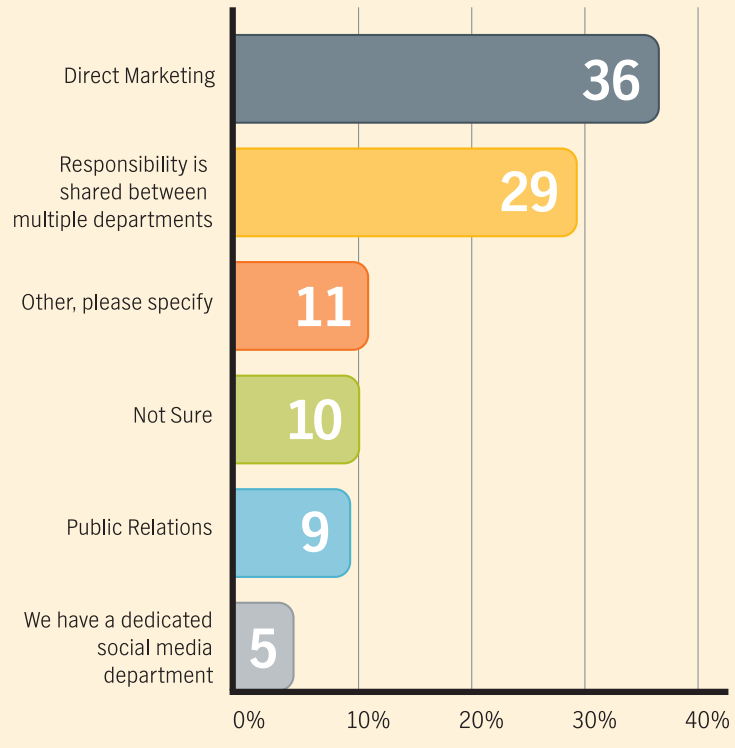
In order to effectively capitalize on its potential, marketers need to leverage social media in the same way that they monetize other online direct channels such as email marketing, online advertising and search marketing.

The survey also confirmed a strong connection with email marketing. In fact, 66% of marketers plan to integrate the two channels in 2009. This move makes a lot of sense. Email is an integral part of social media, as it is relied upon to keep members updated of the latest news and updates taking place on their favorite social networks, blogs and wikis. Given that all social network profiles are linked to an email address, integrating the two channels also allows marketers to get a more complete view of the customer, which is necessary for delivering relevant and effective communications.

The emergence of social media as a direct channel is not without obstacles. According to the survey, the top two challenges for marketers came down to finding the right strategies for measuring success and establishing business goals. In order to effectively capitalize on its potential, marketers need to leverage social media in the same way that they monetize other online direct channels such as email marketing, online advertising and search marketing.

While it's important to continually monitor for brand perception, marketers must find a way to measure the success of any direct marketing effort. That's why marketers need to develop formal strategies and adopt solutions that allow them to evaluate their use of digital channels and then maximize and measure their impact. With the right tools, marketers can create viral social media campaigns that can be tracked, measured and optimized to maximize reach and ROI.



Direct Marketing Owns Social Media in Majority of Companies
What department owns social media in your organization?
2009 Marketing Trends Survey, StrongMail/Zoomerang, June 2009

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The Convergence of Email Marketing and Social Media

Email marketers, specifically, understand the value in sending targeted messages and measuring their effectiveness, which is why it's not surprising that many companies are leveraging email marketing departments for their social media initiatives. According to the survey, of the two-thirds of businesses planning to integrate the two channels in 2009, 48% have already formulated a strategy for achieving this initiative.

Of marketers planning to increase budgets in 2009, 83% will increase spend in email marketing, followed by social media at 62%.

StrongMail/Zoomerang, "2009 Marketing Trends Survey," June 2009

When marketers integrate email with social media accelerators like social networking, micro-blogging, blogging, bookmarking and referencing, it allows them to leverage their most valuable asset, "the customer," to expand the reach of their message and brand to their trusted networks and communities. The global reach, rapid adoption and high engagement of social media networks is providing email marketers with a new channel to engage with existing customers and acquire new ones with similar interests.

Not only are the two channels closely related, they are also the top two areas of marketing investment in 2009 according to the survey. Of marketers planning to increase budgets in 2009, 83% will increase spend in email marketing, followed by social media at 62%.

However, in order to successfully capitalize on the immense potential of social media as a direct channel, email marketers must first understand the differences between traditional direct marketing campaign strategy and the hierarchy of social motivators that makes social marketing programs successful.

FOUR STEPS FOR LEVERAGING SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Understanding Social Media, Influence and Conversations

It's important for marketers to understand why consumers find social networking online so compelling.

Humans are inherently social beings. We find comfort in the connections we make and the company we keep. The instinct to "connect" with others is deeply rooted in our biological makeup – being social allowed prehistoric humans to cope with their very harsh world. Being social was a matter of life and death. Your connections helped you figure out which mushrooms tasted great and which mushrooms might be lethal.

These days, we connect with each other as a form of entertainment. Websites like Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn and Twitter all allow people to create and manage a very large number of connections with others. You can suddenly keep up with more people than ever before, without picking up the phone or even dashing off an email.

Signal-to-Noise

There's a good reason that social networking commands so much consumer time and attention, and it's related to what is often referred to as the "signal-to-noise" ratio.

Consumers are naturally inclined to divert their attention toward high-quality "signal" in the form of personalized, relevant or engaging content. They are also inclined to shy away from noise – ads, obnoxious people they can't relate to, etc. This explains why consumers tune out ads (noise) but tune in to what their friends are saying (signal).

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Influencer marketing identifies people who have influence over potential buyers and orients marketing activities around them. The goal is to leverage their connections and relationships to evangelize a product or service and drive business goals.

Today's connected consumer plugs into the comings-and-goings of their friends – observing their friends' "life streams." These streams are highly personalized and make it easy to jump into conversations by sharing an observation or commenting on something posted by a connection. This is how conversations happen online today.

Social media is all about the ability for consumers to create a personalized, high-quality signal that they can plug into. This is an important concept for marketers to recognize.

Subscribing to a life stream of your friends, colleagues or fellow archery enthusiasts means the content you're subscribing to is nearly all signal, free from noise. You've opted-in to hearing about what's going on in the lives of those you're connected with. Your stream is unique and highly personalized to you. It's formed by people you know and share an emotional connection with, discussing topics with which you can personally relate.

Your Brand's New Job: Be a Conversation Starter

Once you understand why social networking technology is commanding so much consumer time and attention, it's important to know how this impacts business and how your company can play a role in this new environment.

The ability for consumers to tune out "noise" in social networking environments is a big challenge to marketers. The ad rates are typically very low on social networking sites because consumers tend to ignore ads in these environments[10].

These converging forces require a shift in thinking and the application of strategy to drive results. Think of social media like a party where everyone is engaged in a casual conversation with familiar groups of people. Be polite, recognize the fact that you're an outsider, and figure out ways to enhance their social experience by supplying high-quality signal. Be an entertaining host, or an interesting part of the conversation. Focus on how you can contribute to the signal, and not contribute to the noise.

Practically speaking, this requires a new approach to marketing. No longer can you just drop an email to your house file or run a banner campaign with a simple objective (sell more, capture leads, etc.). Becoming a part of the conversation means social campaigns require strategic thinking and creativity.

Influencer Identification

Influencer marketing identifies people who have influence over potential buyers and orients marketing activities around them. The goal is to leverage their connections and relationships to evangelize a product or service and drive business goals. There are three ways to identify your influencers: monitoring, data appending and quantitative identification.

We consult people that we trust to help us make decisions every day. It's human nature. We may watch Oprah or pick up a fashion magazine for advice, but it's our colleagues, friends and family who have the strongest influence on what we eat, wear, watch and read – as well as where and how we spend our time and our money.

[10] eMarketer, "Social Network Ad Spending," July 2009

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People targeted through a consumer's social connections convert at 300 to 500% higher rates than those targeted through traditional marketing channels.

StrongMail Influencer Campaign Data, 2008/2009

When we find a helpful new product, a great deal, or something that's clever or fun, we love to share it with others. With the rise of social networks and new online tools, influence is no longer the domain of a few super-connected individuals or media moguls. Everyone has the potential to start a social trend, from the Facebook junkie who introduces hundreds of friends to her favorite new band to the stay-at-home mom who uses email to forward a fantastic online deal to a dozen friends.

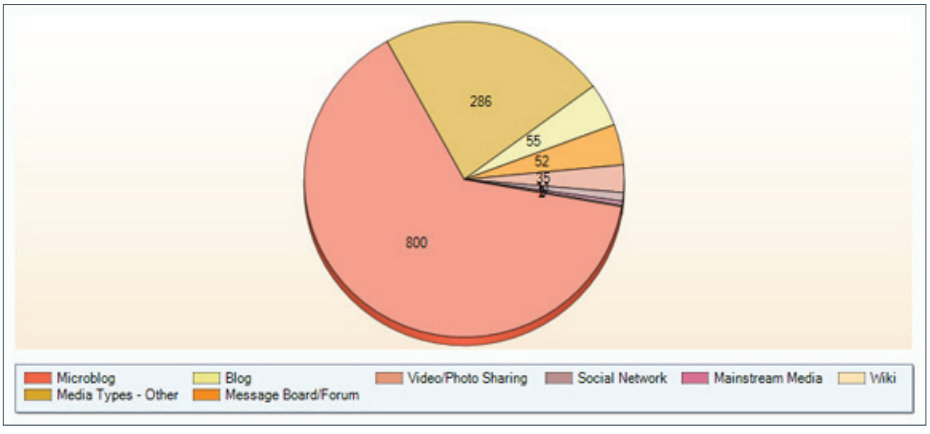
When people behave in this way, they are acting as advocates or evangelists for the brand. This influencer marketing is quickly becoming one of the most powerful tools in a marketer's toolbox. Based on an analysis of recent StrongMail social media campaign data, you can expect fewer than five percent of your customers to deliver 50% of your marketing productivity. People targeted through a consumer's social connections convert at 300 to 500% higher rates than those targeted through traditional marketing channels. The challenge is identifying these segments.

Monitoring Services

There are a number of solutions in the marketplace that help companies analyze social presence. Companies like Techrigy and Radian6 offer web-based services that enable brands to quickly access and track social presence. These types of solutions will allow you to access a variety of valuable metrics, including:

- ***Social Tone***: Is the tone of comments on the social web positive, neutral or negative towards your brand?
- ***Social Presence***: What social websites are most active in discussions around your brand? How does conversation volume on MySpace compare to Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.?

Understanding these aggregate data points will help brands analyze the impact of the social programs they deploy and develop strategies that help drive the business.



Monitor where conversations are happening about your brand with solutions like Techrigy.

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While many marketers are beginning to understand how to identify their footprint in social media and their potential influencers, very few have figured out how to take that insight and make it actionable.

Data Appending

Services like Rapleaf can take your existing email data file and append social information to it. This can be useful for creating new segments based on which social sites your customers are active on or segmenting out people who are highly connected online. This kind of information shows how active or connected your customers are in general, but doesn't really allow you to figure out which of your customers are most passionate about your brand. That's where an applied methodology comes into play.

Quantitative Identification

Any social media marketing tool that you consider should allow you to create social campaigns that are keyed to your email file. As you announce social campaigns or promotions to your list, consumers opt in to participate. This gives you the ability to observe and report on not only which of your customers has a lot of friends online, but who is most effective at persuading their peers to engage with your brand or promotion. You can set the thresholds for what constitutes an influencer for your brand, and then export the data back into your CRM system.

Influencer marketing uses data and analytics to find your true influencers – people who are naturally passionate about your brand and eager to share that passion – and then leverages their enthusiasm to drive your business forward. It's about empowering your key customers and amplifying their voices.

Motivating Influencers

While many marketers are beginning to understand how to identify their footprint in social media and their potential influencers, very few have figured out how to take that insight and make it actionable.

Marketers must understand that successful social marketing is based on getting your identified influencers to promote your message within their personal networks or social graphs. This is very different than traditional marketing communications; instead of a one-way conversation, the brand is now attempting to establish a dialogue between its consumers.

Brands must motivate the influencers to invest their time and reputation (their "social capital") in having a dialogue on the brand's behalf. To do this, organizations must do more than insert social sharing opportunities into existing programs. They must create new communication strategies that get consumers to engage in conversations with their friends – and become influencers.

Social Motivators

- Self Expression
- Achievement
- Altruism
- Self-Reward

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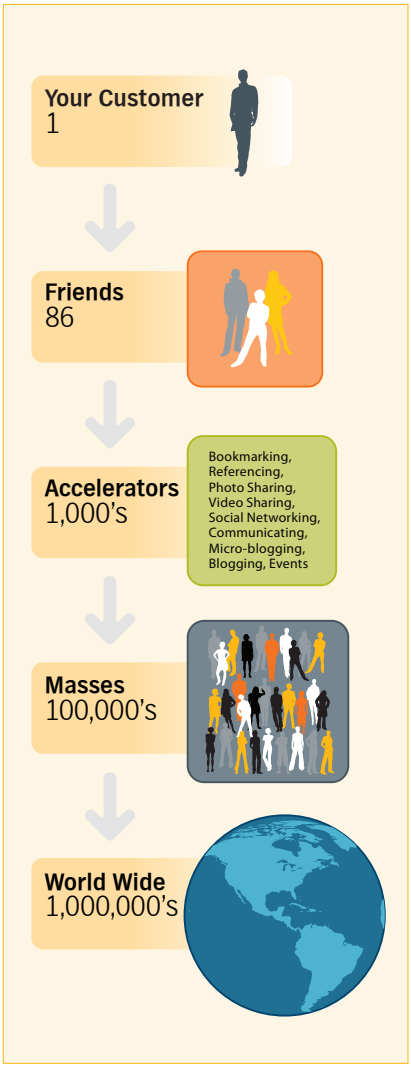

The social web creates a new distribution model that can dramatically increase your reach.

There are four social motivators that can be used to drive these strategies:

Self Expression: The highest form of social motivator, self expression motivates influencers to share because the content they are sharing supports or reinforces their vision of themselves to their peer group.

Achievement: Influencers often enjoy sharing personal achievement with their social network. Whether it be achieving a particular status in a loyalty program, or, better yet, scoring very high on an online quiz, influencers are often quick to share personal achievements with their peers.

Altruism: Influencers are often motivated to share content online that benefits the broader community and not necessarily themselves. Whether it's an article about a new medical breakthrough or a free concert, influencers will share information if they think it will be valuable to their network.

Self-Reward: On the social web, self-reward alone is the lowest form of motivation. Influencers are rarely willing to spend their social capital and harm their reputation in exchange for points or discounts.

When building social programs, companies must consider how one or many of the above social motivators are leveraged to drive sharing among influencers and their overall networks. These factors are rarely considered by marketers in traditional direct programs. Ignoring them on the social web can severely hamper your social marketing efforts.

Tracking Results Against Success Metrics

A July 2009 report by social platform provider Wetpaint and analyst firm Altimeter found that companies investing heavily in social media (companies deeply engaged in seven or more social channels like blogs, branded social websites, Facebook, Wikis, ratings and reviews, etc.) significantly surpass their peers in terms of both revenue and performance[11].

While the report stopped short of calling the relationship causal, the implication is that deep social engagement with customers is at the very least a characteristic of the most successful brands in the world. The challenge comes down to actually proving how social media can drive revenue, and that requires establishing metrics and then implementing solutions that allow you to capture them.

When you integrate social media into your email programs, you need to add a new set of key performance indicators to track success. Being able to track the following data attributes will enable you to determine the value and contribution of the influencers within your email database:

[11] Altimeter/Wetpaint, "ENGAGEMENTdb," July 2009

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Companies investing heavily in social media significantly surpass their peers in terms of both revenue and performance.

Altimeter/Wetpaint, "ENGAGEMENTdb," July 2009

Contacts: As email recipients engage with social content in email messages, the most basic sharing option they have is to forward the content on to their networks via email. To facilitate that, many solutions give the recipient the opportunity to log into their online address books to upload contacts to receive the shared content. Some systems can determine the total number of contacts in these address books; however, these systems do not capture addresses. Instead they can let the marketer know the size of a recipient's network. From an email marketing standpoint, this data is not valuable, but from a social marketing perspective, data around the extent of a recipient's network can be very useful.

Invitations Shared: Sharing content via Facebook, MySpace, Twitter or email is at the heart of every social program. Tracking the number of invitations sent by your email recipients over time gives a marketer a unique view into the potential brand advocates within the email file. While forward-to-a-friend never delivered on this promise, new solutions that motivate sharing within a campaign are providing direct marketers the ability to track social engagement via invitations in a scalable way. Understanding invitation behavior lets marketers target potential influencers in new and exciting ways.

Invitations Accepted: Tracking activity across multiple generations is even more telling for the direct marketer. Recipients within your email database may have large personal networks and send a significant amount of invitations on your brand's behalf, but unless the content you provide them is relevant, you will limit the potential of your programs. Identifying the members of your database that drive actual participation within their networks allows you to focus the development of incentives on your most powerful influencers.

Conversions: As with any other email program, conversions are paramount. Whether defined as a sale or a subscription, tracking conversions driven by each member of your database from their networks is essential. This, combined with the elements described above, allows the email marketer to develop an influencer segment and determine contribution to the organization at the individual recipient level.

All of these metrics are based on the fundamental principle that the initial sharing opportunity originated within an email and are tied to a database record. As a result, activity can be tracked back to the consumer that "posted," emailed or tweeted about your brand. It is this extremely close relationship with the customer that makes the world's most valuable brands successful. With the right strategy, socialized email can help your brand develop similar relationships with your customers and their networks.

SOCIAL TECHNOLOGIES FOR EMAIL MARKETING

The concept of social sharing is not new to email marketers. For years, marketers have had the ability to add forward-to-a-friend technology to their email campaigns; however, clumsy interfaces, the inability to track results and the inability to connect directly with the consumer's email address book have kept it from achieving more widespread adoption. Today, new social sharing technology enables marketers to deliver on the promise of forward-to-a-friend by overcoming these hurdles.

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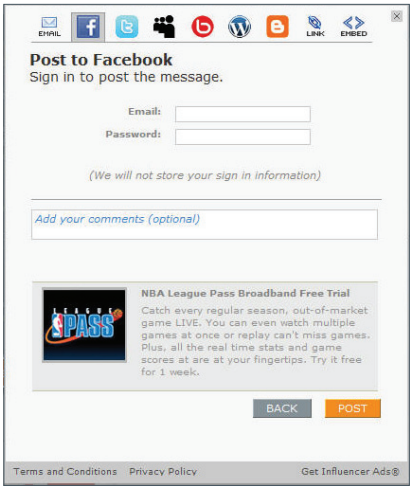
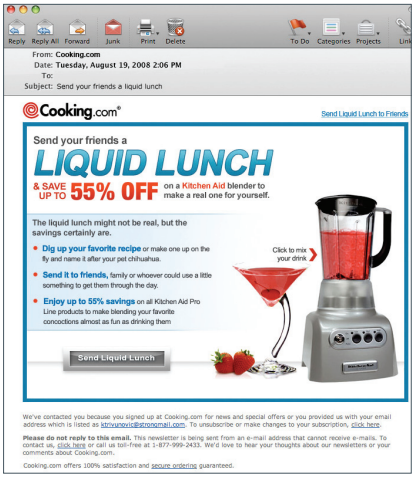


Social Share allows you to easily share any content or product with popular social networks.



Social Programs can be effectively launched via email.

Driving Sharable Content

Social Share enables email marketers to drive list growth and acquire new, highly valuable targets by allowing email recipients to share branded email content across the most popular social networks, blogs and email. Marketers can leverage Social Share to provide targeted offers to their email list that ignite a natural sharing response, inspiring others to opt in for additional special offers.

Social Share is a valuable new tool in the email marketer's toolbox, but it needs to be sharpened and used correctly to accomplish the task at hand. Just enabling someone to share an email newsletter or web page doesn't mean that they will. To encourage sharing, you need to be strategic and develop a viral campaign that taps into the key motivations behind sharing behavior that were mentioned in the previous section.

Communicating Directly with Your Networks

A natural extension of email marketing, Social Direct puts the marketer in control to send targeted and personalized messages directly into social communities. Email marketers can leverage Social Direct to communicate directly with their company's fans and networks on Facebook via messages, status updates and wall posts. Because Facebook makes the personal attributes of each member available, email marketers can also leverage this tool to merge profile data with their email file to drive increasingly relevant campaigns.

Harnessing the Viral Power of Social Networks

Social Programs enables email marketers to create powerful direct-response campaigns that leverage social media as the next generation of forward-to-a-friend. Social Programs integrates email, the Web and social networks to create true viral marketing programs in which consumers spend their own social capital to drive your brand, helping marketers finally deliver on the vision of viral marketing.

With Social Programs, marketers can maintain and reinforce connections between consumers, creating shared experiences around your content, brand or offer. "Inviters" can share personalized invitation links directing their friends to meet them at a targeted destination chosen by the marketer. Those friends can then be greeted by a message from the person who brought them there.

Once recipients complete targeted campaign actions, they are automatically prompted to become inviters. In the end, recipients who get value from the experience will be more likely to invite others to enjoy the same socially engaging experience offered up by a well thought-out social program. And once the recipients become inviters, the campaign automatically taps the power of what's known as a "viral loop," which can increase sharing exponentially.

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CASE STUDIES IN SOCIALIZED EMAIL MARKETING

The following case studies are actual socialized email programs that yielded maximum bottom-line impact for marketers who were challenged with driving new customer acquisition.

Zecco Trading

In four months, the program drove a 941% increase in new Zecco Trading accounts and cut the CPA (cost per account) of Zecco Trading's referral accounts in half.

Zecco Trading, an online discount brokerage, was looking for a way to increase the number of trading accounts and worked with PopularMedia/StrongMail to create a social media marketing program that would motivate investors to invite their contacts to open a Zecco Trading Account.

With rapid cycles of testing and analysis to determine the most effective messages and motivators, ranging from gift incentives to charitable donations, Zecco Trading quickly identified that a combination of altruism and self-interest would be most effective.

Zecco Trading enabled investors to invite their friends to the brokerage with a welcome gift: a free financial and business-related book. Recipients could connect directly to their email address books, Twitter, and social networks in order to invite their friends to receive the investment book. To thank people for spreading the word, the company rewarded successful brand evangelists with $50 that was deposited directly into their trading accounts.

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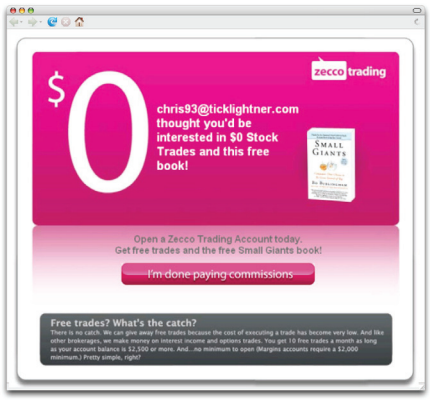
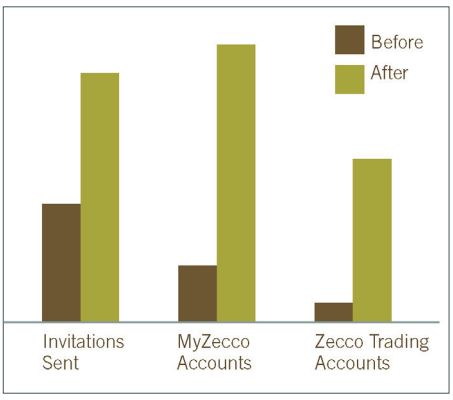


Personalized landing page



Performance Before and After Optimization

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Program Results

- Peer-to-peer referrals drove nearly 3x higher response rate than banner ads or links in marketer emails
- 'Trend-spotting quiz' collected detailed consumer preferences for individually targeted future marketing
- Average user generated 2.5 additional brand impressions
- Highly influential users recruited more than 100 new brand enthusiasts each
- Users promoted the program on their own blogs, MySpace pages, and other social networking sites

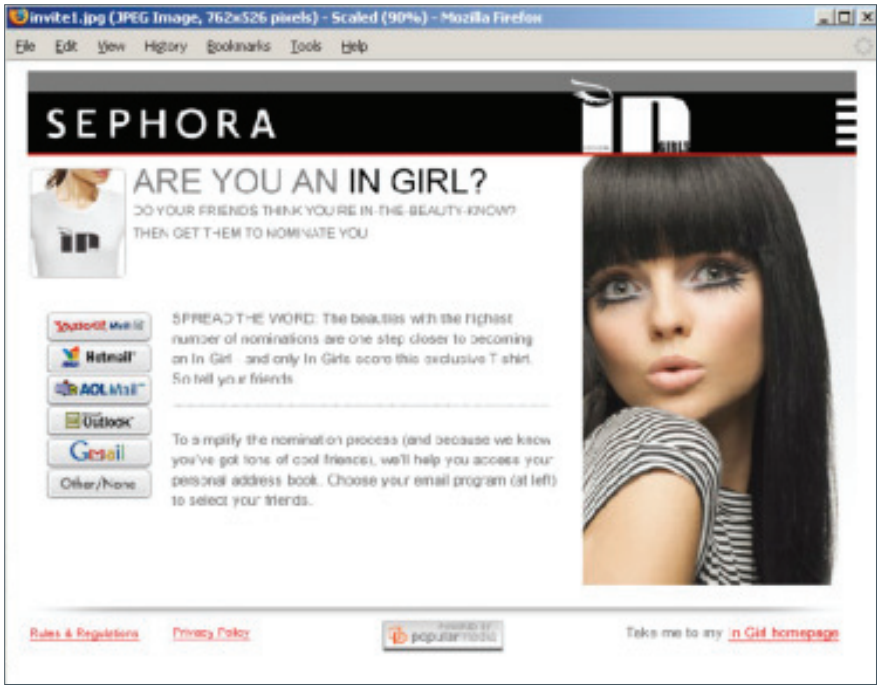
Sephora

Sephora, a global leader in the beauty industry, wanted to integrate social media marketing within its 'In Girl' campaign to identify the most influential beauty enthusiasts in its market and leverage their social connections to build a detailed, opt-in database of qualified leads.

Sephora worked with PopularMedia/StrongMail to design a word-of-mouth program with the incentive to earn spots on Sephora's panel of In Girls and the opportunity to receive free products to critique. The campaign was launched by emailing Sephora's existing customer base, who in turn leveraged their social connections to drive nominations.

With motivation being driven by a combination of self-interest, status achievement and self-expression, the program drove rapid, positive word-of-mouth about the Sephora brand through email, social networking sites, and the blogosphere.

At the end of the program, Sephora was able to drive three times as many referrals with a social campaign as compared to banner ad or newsletter text insertions. Equally important, Sephora was able to identify its most valuable influencers, many of whom recruited more than 100 new brand enthusiasts each.



Women could earn spots on the Sephora In Girl panel by leveraging their social networks and motivating others to engage with the Sephora brand.

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CHECKLIST: 8 TIPS FOR BETTER SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

The following eight tips will help you get the most out of your social media marketing efforts.

1. **Know Your Audience.** If you know your audience, your brand is much more likely to spark a productive conversation. Learn who is talking about your brand online, where the conversations are happening, and what people are talking about. Use these insights to inform your social media marketing campaigns.

2. **Create Compelling Social Experiences.** If your audience likes to be entertained, give them quizzes, games, contests or rich media they can share and post widely within their favorite social networking environments. If your audience is concerned with business goals, give them the answers they need and show them how you can solve their biggest challenges.

3. **Spark the Conversation.** You need to get the conversation flowing. Excite your audience. Make whatever it is fun to give and fun to get. That's harder than it sounds.

4. **Measure, Track, Analyze and Optimize.** Advanced social media marketers use campaign platforms that allow them to serve up different types of social experiences to find out what's going to resonate with their customers – and drive desired business objectives like new leads, sales or exposure. You can't improve what you don't measure. This can be fatal in social media, since you really need to "listen" to your customers to find out what aspects of your brand they find compelling to share with their social network.

5. **Constantly Seed and Evolve.** Success with social media marketing takes dedication. Include social aspects in all of your marketing campaigns. Your goal should be to have as many of your customers engage in a social campaign so you can properly score and segment them as influencers for your brand.

6. **Make It Effortless to Connect.** Your campaigns should integrate sharing and personalized invitation management with leading social networks (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and ISPs (e.g. Gmail, Yahoo! Mail, etc.).

7. **Segment Your Influencers.** Your programs should build an opt-in database of participants, complete with measurements of each person's influence level. Influence level is based on the consumer's connectivity, propensity to share your content, and ability to drive action among the people with whom each one shares.

8. **Stay Engaged, Stay Engaging.** The most important part of any campaign is follow-up. Once someone shows a willingness to spend their social capital on your behalf, keep them engaged. Send them special invitations, preview announcements and more. Target your calls-to-action to their interests, activities and influence level.

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CONCLUSION

Social media adoption has hit the mainstream, which makes it highly likely that a good percentage of your customers and prospects are already engaging in conversations that you could be benefiting from and helping to influence. There has never been a better time to formulate a strategy for leveraging the power of the social web, and that's why StrongMail has developed a range of products and services to help customers do just that.

Adopting social media as a direct marketing channel makes a lot of sense, but you can only be successful if you have the tools to follow through with the four steps outlined in this whitepaper: understanding how social media works, identifying your influencers, motivating influencers and tracking results. It's time to go beyond simply monitoring conversations about your brand and actually follow through with proven tactics to help shape consumer attitudes. Only then can you begin to monetize social media and have your efforts pay off in ways that positively affect your bottom line.

Getting your customers to evangelize your brand comes down to understanding what motivates them and then having a vehicle for tapping into those motivations. StrongMail's Strategic Services team can help you gain that insight and then leverage StrongMail's social media products to create a viral program designed to meet your predefined goals, whether they be conversions, subscriptions or another key metric.

The rise of social media gives direct marketers enormous potential to reach and influence new audiences, but you need the right approach to be successful. For more information about integrating social media into your email campaigns or how StrongMail can you help you meet your email marketing objectives, we encourage you to visit our website (www.strongmail.com), or gives us a call at 800-971-0380.

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ABOUT STRONGMAIL SYSTEMS

StrongMail's marketing and transactional email solutions enable businesses to deliver more relevant, timely and cost-effective messages. StrongMail gives email marketers the control and support they need to improve campaign performance, boost deliverability and lower costs, while also providing IT with superior deliverability and reliability.

Combining an easy-to-use email marketing application, high-performance delivery system, and a wide range of deliverability, strategic and supporting services, StrongMail makes it possible for companies with all levels of resources and expertise to take advantage of its proven solutions.

Headquartered in Redwood City, CA, StrongMail's clients include global leaders across virtually every industry. To learn more about StrongMail, please visit www.strongmail.com.

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