

Reading the Signs That It's Time to Upgrade Your Email Marketing Strategy

Reading the Signs That It's Time to Upgrade Your Email Marketing Strategy

Think of email as the “digital glue” for all your other marketing channels. Marketers who are maxing out their email programs to produce the highest ROI of any channel are using proven strategies and tactics, namely by delivering dynamic, personalized messages.

But the right email strategy is nothing without the right email platform. Today's subscribers are efficient information organizers who know a generic e-blast when they see one. Understanding that email has evolved in its ability to send the perfect message to the warmest lead at the right time is the first step in seeing impressive results.

How do you know if your email program has evolved with its audience? Here are four signs that upgrading to a more sophisticated platform will grow your marketing results.

Sign No. 1:

You're not targeting and segmenting your list

If you're not gathering and using data about subscribers in your emails, you're experiencing significant losses. People come to you with expectations about your products and services, starting with asking discovery-related questions and ending ready to purchase. Web analytics tools help track a prospect's online activity, which allows you to tailor your messaging to these various stages in the “funnel”. Ultimately, subscribers want to see messages about the services and products that fit their genders, ages, and lifestyles.

ARE YOU ON A FIRST-NAME BASIS?

If the e-mail platform you're using now can't help you insert first-name personalization into your messages, your emails may not be as personal as you think. This is the simple stuff. Easy to ask for; easy to use. And people open, click, and convert more often when they see their names in the subject lines and content of an email.

It's also your job to collect other information to create segments and customize email campaigns: subscribers' titles, ages, genders, industries, locations, and birthdays. Set up a segmentation rule that pulls only once from your central master list, and you've successfully (and efficiently) targeted your subscribers.

With an even more sophisticated email service provider, you can even segment the nuances of customer behavior: different offers for opening or clicking a previous email, offer types that subscribers historically responded to most often, or the frequency of subscribers' interactions with an email.

Sign No. 2: Your templates don't support responsive design

Opening, clicking, and buying from emails viewed on mobile devices is not a trend but a fact. And that calls for responsive design, a method of coding your email campaigns so that all viewers - desktop, mobile, tablet - see your optimized version.

If you're using a basic email provider, you're most likely not using responsive design. Even "mobile-friendly" layouts with bigger call-to-action buttons and font doesn't guarantee an appealing and conversion-friendly appearance on all types of devices. An email that renders nicely on an Android may look tiny or distorted on an iPhone.

In order to avoid abandonment and lost potential revenue, you need templates designed to not only look good on mobile but represent your brand and marketing goals with readable, clickable content.

Sign No. 3: You're not (really) measuring your results

If you can't factually measure results and progress within your email marketing campaigns, why do it? Intelligent marketing means monitoring metrics such as the clicks and opens you receive, the devices and browsers used to view your emails, and age/gender subscriber profiles. If your platform needs an upgrade, you may not be able to monitor metrics for every email you send or receive feedback in real time. Other numbers to watch are forwards, opt outs, bounces, unsubscribes, and - of course, conversion rates.

Sign No. 4: You're manually testing subject lines and content

Catchy subject lines and content are effective starting places, but real optimization involves testing for the success of specific types and forms of content. You need to build A/B test campaigns that set up one email against another to decide which ones receive the most attention from readers.

With an updated A/B testing feature, you can test just a portion of your list or prospective email. Subject lines are the simplest to test, but portions of content and design, such as a call-to-action or image placement, can be tested specifically for opens, clicks, forwards, social shares, conversions, and more.

Based on the metric you've chosen, you can automatically launch the winning campaign to the rest of your list. Sophisticated email platforms are not about eliminating the manual element or control but about doing the hard work for you.

Did that hit home?

If those four signs resonated with you, it may be time to upgrade from your current email platform and move on to a more intelligent system that makes your job easier and more effective.