Email marketing campaigns require a well-maintained email database

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My consulting marketing career has taken me to several regions of the Earth on assignments for SMEs, associations and microbusinesses. From the advent of software and companies specializing in email marketing campaigns, I have observed that there is a common failure and fundamental reason for success of every campaign that I have created or managed. A well-maintained database is critical to the success of any campaign.

The reasons for success and failure are not cultural or technical. The problem lies with management and knowledge of marketing and modern communications with clients and prospects. Many managers and owners of small and medium sized enterprises that have engaged my services tend to overlook the value of an email database. There remains a tendency to think of marketing as promotion and advertising rather than communications in all ways – online, offline, immobile and mobile. How can a buyer ever be presented with a product or service by a vendor if there is a communications vacuum? In the absence of communications, how can a vendor close a sale?

For many of Generation X and Baby Boomers entrepreneurs, the realization must soon hit home that we left the marketing norms of the 20th century long ago. We live in an online business environment that is rapidly moving into a virtual world for marketing. For the time being, however, the most common thread that links the technology for communications between vendors and buyers is email. Yes, there are many other platforms for communications like the popular short message service and "over the top" that use telephone contact databases with data packages or WIFI. I have used WhatsApp in an African country to distribute a link to a survey using Survey Monkey and it worked as effectively as if I had used an email database and an email marketing campaign software or service.

A robust and well-maintained email database exported to an email marketing campaign service like Constant Contact and MailChimp can access many features in those services to enhance the marketing campaign of a small business in a major way when built into an online social media network and corporate website. Added bonuses are metrics reports for fine-tuning marketing tactics and making direct contact with clients and prospects that have an interest in the application of a product and service included in a campaign. And, there is compliance with the anti-spam legislation and privacy laws of Canada and Europe.

The place to begin for a small business without an email database is the Excel spreadsheet. Enter the first name and last name of the contact, company name and email address in different columns. You can add as much information as needed for managing relationships with a client, but for a campaign, that is all that is needed.

A campaign can begin with a database as small as 50. If the messages are valuable to the audience, an open rate of 60 to 70 percent and higher can be expected. That translates into an audience of at least 30 opened the campaign and may have read the teasers. Some will click the links to read more. The metrics add more value.

Email databases remain vital to the marketing campaigns of MSMEs. An integrated marketing communications program using offline and online tactics can speed up sales and build a base for repeat business.

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