

Point of View: Email Marketing Reinvented

Creating a value added email program that drastically outperforms the competition

Introduction

Many restaurants, be they in the hundreds of locations or a single neighborhood hotspot, employ email marketing to maintain contact with guests. It's an easy, efficient and proven way to communicate offers, reminders (i.e. the birthday club), and more, all in an effort to stimulate business in a competitive marketplace. Many have also established a presence on social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter, again to provide yet another way beyond the confines of the dining room to create and maintain guest relationships.

What's missing from this equation is recognition that email has become so pervasive a customer identifier that every business communicates in this manner. Email can no longer be considered a competitive, stand-alone approach to restaurant marketing. Open rate as a metric may as well be "Never Opened Rate."

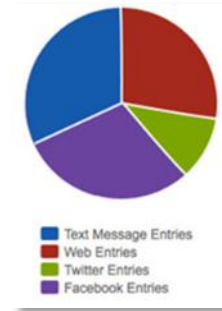
"A consensus has been reached as to where to find more profitable customers: they are those troublesome consumers that cross channels."

*The Cross-Channel Wake-up Call: Benchmark 2010
RSR Research*

Consider also that consumers are more mobile than ever, using their phones to communicate with one another, with businesses and maintain social connections. While email can be received on a mobile device, this is no guarantee it will be seen amid all of these other distracting activities. Continuing to employ traditional email marketing is simply a recipe for disaster.

All is not lost, however, thanks to innovative marketing technology providers like Signal. In developing a technology

platform which integrates email with mobile and social media channels, Signal has greatly simplified the process of



orchestrating customer communications that cut through the clutter by presenting appropriate content matched to the preferences and permissions of consumers. In this way, restaurant marketers preserve their investments in email databases while

drastically improving open rates and response. Adopting cross channel methods means embracing digital channels beyond email, such as text messaging and social media.

Why Text Messaging?

Text messaging has come a long way from just being the preferred method of communication by teenagers; in fact, studies show among all mobile users it's more pervasive than voice. It's also become a critical, real time connection between consumers and the brands they care about.

Although messages are limited to 160 characters, creative marketers today use the medium to deliver expiring coupons, targeted offers based on segments, and register customers for loyalty programs or promotions. It's even being used to connect consumers to rich digital content such as the mobile web and video via web links embedded within text messages.

When used in parallel with email, text message marketing compels guests to spend more, and more frequently than any stand-alone approach could ever hope to. And remember, unlike mobile apps and the smartphones they require, text messaging reaches nearly every consumer in the U.S.

Why Social Media?

As noted, many restaurants have existing Facebook or Twitter accounts, to which they post periodic offers, announcements and other messages intended to maintain connections with guests. Few, however, may be aware of the numerous marketing applications presented by social media that products like Signal embrace at its core.

For example, social media sites attract brand advocates who can be enticed to opt into email or text message marketing programs via links to web forms. Comments posted on social media sites can also be mined for new menu or service ideas when armed with the appropriate monitoring tools.

With Signal you can significantly grow your email list, drive sales with targeted offers, increase visit frequency with timely messages -- all while lowering opt out rates.

The full power of social media comes to life when it becomes an extension of promotions that are fully cross channel. Imagine a sweepstakes promotion for a seasonal menu item that allows entry directly from multiple social networks, in combination with text messaging and the web. With Signal, this and more is possible.

Mapping it Out


Signal has worked with large and small restaurant marketers to build upon existing e-Club programs and significantly improve the performance of email marketing. All while tapping into the real time and location based value presented by text messaging and the viral qualities of social media.

Following are some of the ways Signal reinvents email marketing:

- Send your email database an offer to join a new mobile club by linking to a web form to opt into text message offers. This is proven to accelerate the development of a parallel marketing database to email that offers a more timely and location-centric channel to promote your business.
- When opting email subscribers into the new mobile club, take the opportunity to register them to also receive text message alerts to your marketing emails. Nothing communicates the value of a menu item like email, and this helps ensure your visual communications are received. Consider this approach an “open rate accelerator.”
- Present a single opt-in form for email and mobile (text messaging) programs, whereby you capture more than just email addresses and mobile numbers – such as demographics – that can fuel segmentation and more relevant and higher response offers. A convenient single point of entry for customers virtually guarantees your database will grow rapidly across email and mobile channels.
- Post trackable URLs to your social network sites linking to the cross channel opt-in webpage to build direct digital marketing connections with fans of your brand. Developing a direct connection with your most passionate customers could not be easier.
- Create true cross channel promotions that allow entry and sharing across social networking sites, as well as through direct digital marketing channels like text messaging and web. Even trigger emails to confirm or reward participants. Signal allows creation of a sweepstakes deployable natively within Facebook so that participants may share the contest with their friends. Entry is also possible via “retweeting” of a unique Twitter post generated by Signal, with

participants identified by their @name handle. Combined with entry via text messaging as well as communicating the promotion to the email subscription list with links to enter via the web, you achieve:

- Cross channel nirvana – participation and engagement on a level simply not possible before.
- Significant increases in the number of customers opted into email and text messaging channels, plus the number of fans and followers of social networking sites.
- A Signal Customer Profile database filled with rich insights about customers and their preferences, along with tools to unlock the power of this information to segment your audience and create more relevant offers.

For the foreseeable future, email will remain an important connection between restaurants and their guests, but only for those marketers savvy enough to employ cross channel tools such as Signal. It's simply required amid a landscape of jammed-up email inboxes and mobilized consumers who are interested in engaging with businesses across text messaging, email and social media channels. 

About Signal | Signal develops and provides innovative marketing solutions designed to help companies acquire, retain and develop customer relationships via mobile and other marketing channels. The company's easy-to-use software-as-a-service cross channel campaign management platform (Signal) enables marketers to rapidly develop, execute and analyze campaigns using multiple channels, all feeding a common customer database embracing the concept of a universal profile. Used by many leading brands, retailers, online services, agencies, and broadcast media, Signal processes millions of customer interactions each month. For more information, call 877-450-0075, go to signalhq.com or send email to info@signalhq.com.

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The Signal Platform: Raising the Value of Email

Relationship Management Suite - Raises the value of email programs by using the institutional memory of the customer across multiple channels to send more personalized and relevant offers which drive desirable behaviors. Maintaining one view of the customer is the basis for relevant communications and maximizing receptiveness.

Marketing Efficiency Suite - Raises the value of email programs by allowing parallel use of specialty tools (Quick Response, or QR, Codes, mobile optimized landing pages with data capture forms, coupons, and short URL creation & tracking) in a highly integrated and value-added way with existing programs.

Campaign Suite - Raises the value of email programs by allowing marketers to acquire new subscribers where the customer "lives" -- social media sites and often on-the-go. Incentive campaigns using Twitter, Facebook, SMS text messaging, sweepstakes, store locators, and polling have all proven to dramatically improve customer acquisition.

1+1=3 or Unified Channels - By using channels within a highly integrated technology platform marketers achieve greater value than with historical, stand-alone channel approaches (for example, allow customers to respond to a text message call to action with their email address for an exclusive offer). Unifying channels expands campaign reach.