

3 Keys to Highly Effective Email Campaigns

An e-blast is an advertisement sent to an email list. So it's clear that the effectiveness of the list will depend upon only a few key factors:

- The quality of the list
- The quality of the advertisement
- The frequency of the mailing

Before we dive into the details of an e-blast campaign, let's consider the goals of mailing to an email list. My goal in this type of campaign is to build product and brand awareness. E-blasts are one the most powerful tools for exposing a brand to a broad audience of somewhat similar people. A quality e-list will usually be quite homogenous.

The second goal of a email campaign is to encourage the reader to click a link to a deeper presentation about the product. It's best to leave the selling for a landing page. Long copy is needed for an effective sales letter.

The job of the e-blast is to convert readers to prospects.

Quality of the List

The heart of an email campaign is the list. If you know your target market very well, you should be better armed to make a good decision on the list you use.

Does the email list match the profile of the lifestyle of your customers? Think deeper than age and demographics. Does the lifestyle of your ideal customers match the lifestyle of your proposed mailing list?

If you are an author with a book to sell, does the list offer a known profile about the reading habits of the people on the

mailing list?

Quality of the Advertisement

The test of an effective ad is the click-through rate to the landing page. Opinions about what is good or bad in an ad are quickly silenced by data. Obviously, the subject line pulls the reader to open the ad but the headline drives the reader to the click button. I haven't seen any research to change my mind about David Ogilvy's lesson, "90% of your ad dollar is spent in the headline."

Use social media to test headlines. Twitter is a great tool for observing response behavior. And the test is free!

Frequency of the Mailing

Advertising research libraries are filled with articles, studies and books about how much frequency is enough to break-out of the ad clutter. When I taught a media buying course to college students, I remember that Naples studies guided most thinking on frequency. Oversimplified, he proposed a frequency of seven exposures to the message. I taught Naples in the '80s. Has media clutter increased? Aren't there more ad messages competing for storage in our brain than ever before?

My most powerful argument for frequency would be to observe how big brands became big. What if McDonald's burger joint ran only seven messages? I could ask several hundred similar questions about the use of advertising to build brands.

Sadly, many advertisers fail to achieve a threshold of frequency necessary to move the needle to gain share of mind.

Awareness will always precede a click. If your product is very unique and specialized, you may get by with a lighter frequency. But many products only offer a "meet too" version of a product battling against a legacy solution.

In summary, write a powerful headline with a clear message

about a unique and needed product feature. Gain share of mind with heavy frequency. Stop counting. Just build mindshare.

Select a mailing list that matches your target market. Write and test brilliant headlines. Become a household name in households who need what you do.