

DIRECT MARKETING

Vol. 25 • No. 10 February 2013

THE ART & SCIENCE OF PREDICTABLE MARKETING

At the speed of sight

Visualizing the world of marketing in real-time



Lori Bieda at the SAS Toronto office

By: Lori Bieda

The rise of visual information

Anyone remotely web-savvy has likely come across an infographic. These fun devices are a hit with social media goers as a means to display all kinds of information and relationships visually, in formats easy to consume for all of us. They have the added benefit of simple “share-ability” – enabling users to click and share with their entire social network whether through Facebook, Twitter, or any number of other platforms. Between increasing interpretability, and sharing at the click of a button, visual information in the Internet Age means people receive information faster, and are better poised to use it easier than ever before.

Visual information is on the rise in all aspects of society. Business professionals and educators alike turn to PowerPoint to visually augment presentations, lectures and speeches. At the same time, news media feature graphs, infographics and sidebars to add visual colour to print material. For those ahead of the curve, deeming static graphics passé, they leverage new tools like Prezi adding a multimedia dynamism to communications. No matter where you look, visualized information is the new norm in a multimedia world, because in a small piece of real estate, an entire story can be told.

Today’s analytically-savvy marketer has been steeped in data for years, and is in the business of selling ideas. The skilled ones have learned how to represent information visually, be it campaign results, sales, or the media plan for a multi-media campaign. The fact is, we are all visual creatures and trading numbers for diagrams helps almost everyone comprehend information, however simple or complex it may be.

The time for real-time is now

The drive for real-time information and marketing is more topical than ever before. Why? Because as marketers we’re faced with dwindling outbound response rates, burgeoning do not solicit lists, not to mention the consumer migration to online. To be where the consumer is and capitalize on the interaction, marketers are

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Editor's Letter
Amy Bostock

Not just another data issue



Here's something about me that most of you don't know. I'm an animal person – a hard core pet lover. I am currently owned by four horses, a sweet but not overly bright Lab x and a very bossy tabby cat. I also spend a lot of time shopping for my four-legged kids. Bet you didn't know that. Why would you? Heck, my own husband only thinks we have three horses. But do you know who does know these things about me? PetSmart, the OSPCA and the mail order people at Greenhawk Harness and Equestrian Supply. All of these people have captured my data during my shopping experiences and have done a fantastic job of sending me relevant offers – either online or with direct mail pieces. And because these offers are relevant I always click or open them. I realize I'm not telling you anything you don't already know but I wanted to illustrate why we at *Direct Marketing* decided to have another issue focused on data

management and data analytics. In this increasingly competitive business landscape data is King and companies are coming up with new ways to collect it, manage it and use it every day across all verticals – from retail to fundraising.

On the fundraising side of data analytics, Jan Kestle talks about how with budgets constantly squeezed, marketers are looking to data analytics to cut costs while increasing response rates.

Our *Directives* column this month comes to us courtesy of John Leonard of Coverall who talks about what to do with all of this rich data once you have collected it.

In order to analyse data you first have to collect it and this month we focus on email marketing and how companies are using it to effectively reach out to, learn about and engage their customers in a way that is relevant to them.

If data is King then relevancy is his trusted

advisor – you can have all the data in the world but if you aren't using it to communicate to me about things I care about and in the channel I want then I will just tune you out. Going back to my PetSmart example, they know that my silly dog can only eat venison and sweet potato dry kibble (I kid you not) and have enrolled me in a program that will see me walking out of the store with a free bag once in a while. And they email me coupons during the day - because they know I shop on my lunch hour. Now that's good use of data!

You can have all the data in the world but if you aren't using it to communicate to me about things I care about and in the channel I want then I will just tune you out.

Directives After the database, putting it to use

By John Leonard

There is much being written around Big Data. It can all seem very daunting for those working with it and appear ominous for the public. In many organizations these are real issues about a great deal of personal information, security and privacy. Make no doubt about it, sensitivity to our personal information is critical for customers, businesses and ultimately to build trust between the two. Data is being collected on every one of us faster than we sometimes realize. This sensitive and some of it regulated data is useful for a variety of reasons, some of which are administrative or government related.

A portion of the work we perform for clients is transactional, working with communications such as bills and invoices. However, a larger percentage of our business is working with clients promoting products, services or fundraising activities. We will sometimes differentiate between administrative data – those critical identifiers required by entities such as government, healthcare or financial institutions for transactions – and historical or preferential data. For marketers it is this preferential data that they can utilize to extract the best value.

There will undoubtedly be a chorus of "ah-ha! Collecting my preferential data is to extract value for the company". The value of this preferential data should be viewed as being for the recipient. For each individual recipient their perception of value can be different based upon their own wants, desires and needs at a given time. Using this data in communicating with customers or prospects can take different forms. Once collected, extracting

value from the investments made on data by executing effective communication can sometimes be the next hurdle marketers (or IT departments) face.

The idea of listening to the customer is something that's been around for a long time. Collecting data about customers in one form or another has been a staple of administration for as long. Large companies have created databases and the extremely small companies tend to be very hands-on and personal in their approach to retaining data. Today many mid-sized companies can now collect and use this preferential data to their clients' benefit as well. While many do, I often wonder if they give the preferential data the same resources as the administrative data and what the pitfalls and opportunities might be in executing communication with this data. Although off-line data still has an edge today as far as depth and being more robust, companies should be paying attention to both types of data collection and stay focused on what clients prefer both individually and as groups.

First do you explain to clients or prospects why you want to collect data? In recent years while visiting retailers websites I've noticed screens that ask if they can capture information so the next visit is more personalized. Should we as marketers be more direct about what we're asking for and the value to the consumer? I think there is room for improvement and I think this concept should be considered across any media that a customer or even prospect is willing to engage with us. When asked for financial information I can become cau-

tious, but when I am asked about preferences I tend to be more understanding and subsequently willing to provide it, especially in the right context. There is a disconnect though, and maybe it's training or compensation, maybe it's the overall concept a company is trying to deploy, but I often perceive the person at the cash to have limited interest in obtaining the best possible (or accurate) information.

Inaccuracy in source data can foil the entire database and every communication afterwards. Conceptually we all understand that if there is a sound foundation of understanding about preferences, marketers can create content and messages that are meaningful and even helpful to consumers, resulting in better relationships. However, if the data is not accurate the effect of the communication for the recipient is greatly diminished. Today in a world where data is everywhere the old adage of "garbage in, garbage out" couldn't be truer. The multitude of messages consumers view each and every day makes our creating communication that is relevant more important than ever before.

A great example is a nameless sports store I go to about 4 – 6 times each year. It's about an hour away and I drive there with two buddies or ride the on my motorcycle with my wife. As you may guess, I go for the motorcycle stuff and my neighbors go for the snowmobile stuff. You probably couldn't guess that because you don't have any data on them. But the company does. Every single item my buddies have purchased is focused on snowmobiles. Every single item I have purchased is motorcycle related (cruiser

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The value of this preferential data should be viewed as being for the recipient.

Coming in the March issue of *Direct Marketing*

FUNDRAISING ISSUE
Hear from some of the biggest names in fundraising including CDS Global on reducing costs and driving revenue in today's economy, Blakely & Associates on a case for legacy giving and Stephen Thomas on the secrets of attracting young people to your cause.

TECHNOLOGY IN THE CONTACT CENTRE
Call centres have come a long way and in this issue we take a look at the technological advancements that helped them on their journeys. Contributors include SAS, Interactive Intelligence, Servion and Five9.

TUGGING ON THE HEART STRINGS
Grab a tissue (or four) and read about how a recent "labour of love" campaign for the SPCA resulted in one of the most successful appeals in the history of the organization.

DATA MANAGEMENT

The importance of being valid (and why it may not be the case)

By Kristi Kanitz

There is a common misconception that “mailing” software on the market today is “simple technology” and should not be used for address management. While it is true that adding data around your address, such as geocoding or demographic information, will provide a fuller view of your customer or prospect, having an accurate, up-to-date address is an essential starting point and so-called mailing software is an important step in the process.

Products on the market today go far beyond the validation of an address based on a postal code. They can tell you whether the address receives mail, if the intended recipient has moved, remove duplicates, provide targeting including geocoding, ensure addresses are correct on entry, and many other sophisticated filtering and targeting options. What software can also do is identify which addresses need to be examined more closely and provide information that may help resolve errors. There is a wide variety of excellent software available for those that wish to handle their own address management either completely or in partnership with their mail service provider.

One of the most challenging and frustrating tasks facing those of us dealing with address quality is how to fix invalid addresses, whether this is a file produced by the software or a pile of returned mail. It is great to have demographic information to use with your mailing list but how useful is that information if a significant portion of your addresses are identified as invalid by the software or your mailing house or, worse, are returned after mailing?

I am frequently asked why addresses are uncorrectable especially when a check of the Canada Post website seems to indicate that the address exists. People have e-mailed photos of residences and businesses to me as added proof that there really is a building there. I have reviewed tens of thousands of invalid addresses over the years and here are 5 of the most common reasons addresses cannot be corrected or are returned as undeliverable.

The address is “out of range”. For example, the valid range is 1 to 99 Main Street and your address is 101. Out of range addresses are generally not deliverable. If an address is “out of range” for that street number, it either has a different postal code that cannot be resolved by the software (and is probably on a completely different letter carrier walk) or it receives its mail elsewhere (like a PO Box). These addresses usually require some investigative skills to resolve.

Following from this: a PO Box is required but a civic address was entered. This happens most often with business addresses such as warehouses, plants, golf courses, schools, etc. where the mail is delivered elsewhere. These are generally undeliverable as the PO Box location is not normally anywhere near the physical location.



Kristi Kanitz is General Manager of Flagship Software Ltd. (www.flagshipsoftware.com)

“Whether you are using software in-house or receiving files back from your provider, make use of the data to ensure your address information is complete, correct and current. The rest of the data won’t make sense without it.”

A rural route was provided but Canada Post requires a civic style address. Or vice versa. Or Canada Post requires both and both were not provided. Referred to in my office as the Canadian Rural Headache and often difficult to resolve even after contacting the recipient. If there is sufficient identifying information (i.e. PO Box, street address, RR number, name), these are likely deliverable. Canada Post may have a specific piece of information they need to consider the address “correctable” such as a PO Box but most rural post offices and carriers are very good at making sure the mail piece gets to the intended recipient.

A suite number is missing and one is required to consider the address valid. If the recipient is a business, the mail will likely arrive as long as the street address is valid and deliverable and the company is clearly marked. In the case of residential addresses, the mail piece is likely non-deliverable unless the unit is in a small building. Picture finding “ABC Company” in an office building versus “John Smith” in a 1,000 unit apartment building.

Large Volume Receivers (LVRs), such as universities/colleges, hospitals, government facilities and large companies, often require a different postal code even if their street address falls within the range of a postal code. Canada Post needs the postal code of the LVR’s mailroom for delivery. Keep in mind, too, that the mail room may require more detailed information to deliver the piece (such as a building name or suite number) and could return mail as undeliverable if it has not been included, even if Canada Post considers the mail room itself as a valid address.

It is important to note that with the popularity of GPS devices, many companies are providing a “locatable” address

to facilitate deliveries and customer visits even if the mail is not delivered to that location. These locatable addresses have worked their way into many databases and appear valid when compared against a range-based database system. However, if Canada Post does not deliver to these addresses, they are not considered “valid” for the purposes of address correction as the point is to ensure the mail reaches the intended recipient.

Beware the web! Companies will often post their locatable address on their website, usually along with directions to their facility. Look for the words “Mailing Address” when verifying addresses on the web. When searching business or residential addresses on the web (e.g. with Canada411 or a similar service), take note if the address does not contain a postal code. This is a big flag that the address is likely a physical and not a mailing address.

It can be easy to overlook the importance of a correct address when being overwhelmed with the vast amount of data available to marketers today. Terms like “location intelligence” and “big data” can take focus from the basic building blocks of customer communication. A correct and deliverable address is an incredibly important component whether or not your main marketing tool is direct mail.

Software on the market today goes beyond mailing and provides a wide variety of address management features, from validation at entry to batch correction and National Change of Address before a mailing. Companies using mail service providers are already receiving the benefit of such products. Whether you are using software in-house or receiving files back from your provider, make use of the data to ensure your address information is complete, correct and current. The rest of the data won’t make sense without it.

DATA MANAGEMENT

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specifically). It's funny when we enter the store how we split up for 45 minutes. Yet the company treats us exactly the same. Catalogues are the same. Of the 48 pages they send me in the fall, pretty much 44 pages hold no real value. Worse, they also communicate with me via e-mail and they appear to have invested in the format of the e-mail with flip pages etc. But they send them often and many are not relevant to me – unfortunately their e-mails have become part of the message clutter I receive. More targeted catalogues could help them save money and fewer, but targeted e-mails, with relevant information could make their communication to me relevant (and out of the junk-mail folder).

We're developing a product with some other long standing experts in the industry that takes the idea of relevant messaging to the outside of a package. Historically recipients have to get inside a package to begin to view imagery that is meaningful or speaks to them directly. What we're working on is a patent pending process that could bring full colour personalization to tried and true package formats like #10s and 6 X 9s at reasonable price points. Statistics indicate that this level of relevance on the exterior of the envelope increases open rates which in turn increases response.

Part of the current challenge is that there exists so much data in so many formats that sifting through it all can be difficult. Validating data correctness (and freshness) is a critical component to developing your database into a useful tool, but this can take time to achieve. How many times might we be on a database due to sloppy keying on our part, clerically or intentionally? Administrative data can be intricate and changing what may be perceived as a duplicate can be a risky endeavor. When working on a promotional campaign there are ways to minimize duplicates and there may even be opportunities to capture additional information and complete more clean-up. Sending out an entire database without thoughtful cleansing is probably a waste of some advertising dollars and won't necessarily endear you to customers or prospects.

In the last 20 years there have been a variety of data processing programs that have migrated to the PC platform. Some were originally mainframe applications and some were born on the PC. The price range can vary from hundreds of dollars to the tens of thousands of dollars. There is merit to the concept about getting what you pay for and typically the higher the price tag, the more complex situations software can handle. But there are also cases where one tool might perform certain specialized tasks better than another. As an example, Cover-All uses three different software applications, of varying costs, to manage and report duplicates. Depending on the input files and the clients desired output we may employ one solution and in some cases multiple solutions to achieve the desired results. Some might consider this overkill, but it speaks to a commitment and fundamental belief that accurate data is the most important

part, and the starting point, of all effective communication.

Another way of going beyond is in the area of accenting. Software packages allow for the searching and the applying of French language accents. Cover-All has taken that a step further and over the years added scenarios to create what we believe to a very complete method of applying accents to data.

Some of the standard procedures have become matter of fact and marketers should be asking themselves how they can use the processes to improve their data, not just to be run as a matter of course. Though it's required in order to take advantage of postal savings for most incentive mail products Address Accuracy can be used before a duplicate elimination to improve the accuracy of the output. NCOA data (on your current customers) can be back-fed to your database.

Focus on data processing appears to be cyclical. The industry is very focused on collecting this data. Were there was once a great deal of attention on (the accuracy) of data it has almost taken a back seat to volume of data. Maybe it's due to the low-cost applications to parse, purge or sort, or possibly it's just that as an industry there's a perception that "it's just data" and more is better as opposed to better is worth more. Though data accuracy and cleanliness is a pretty dry topic, it's an important component that some companies may undervalue and treat as a cost centre as opposed to a way of creating value. Unfortunately we sometimes see requests for data processing with little detail on what the expected outcome is intended to be and the business rules to get there. Investing an hour with marketing, internal database programmers and the (internal or external) supplier can provide substantial dividends in cost savings, effectiveness and (end) client satisfaction.

The preferential data an organization collects can be very powerful and the creative options to execute relevant communications can be amazing. Extrapolating prospect data also becomes more effective if the initial database is accurate and the result will be better relating to acquisition. If customers, or potential customers, understood the value of providing valid feedback many (not all) might be more apt to provide it. From personal experience I have yet to meet an individual who, after a careful 5 minute explanation around data and preferences, does not see the value in collecting and using data to create relevant communication, a few still prefer to opt-out, but all understand the value. On the contrary, there seems to be some backlash about organizations (and even more sensitive when its third party) collecting information without the consumer realizing its being collected. Transparency in messaging, short and succinct, is paramount to gaining access to information.

Once collected data must be carefully secured, maintained, managed and then it should be used effectively in subsequent efforts to provide more value back to clients for furthering an existing relationships and with new prospects to nurture and cement new relationships.

► *Continued from cover*

building real-time marketing capability to capitalize on the inbound leads. Whether the customer is at the till, on the website, or calling the call centre, the need to respond fast is very real. And this means information needs to be available and consumable in near real-time too.

To top this off, data volumes have been steadily increasing (the world's data doubles every 1.2 years). Of the 24 quintillion bytes of data the world produces daily, 80 percent of it is unstructured. That's big data on top of an already big business need.

This combination of pressing business timelines, with the unprecedented volume and variety of data available to marketers can be mind-blowing. Yet, just as data has grown (in size and complexity), so too has technology, enabling us to not only keep pace with big data, but to visualize emerging information as never before. High performance analytics and visual analytics now bring insight to marketers' desktops faster and more clearly than ever before.

This is good news for marketers, who need quality information fast to make decisions – be it retooling online campaigns, resting bad offers, or addressing negative social media swell. It's good news for marketing analysts, who have for decades lived on subsets and random samples to run their projections. Why model off a randomized sample, when the whole dataset is available at your disposal? The marketer can now feast on a meal of speed and precision.

That bodes well with today's 24/7 consumer who is armed with a mobile device, and willing and able to shop and surf around the clock. When the customer is awake, the analysis must surge on.

The visualization of marketing analysis

Marketing analysts, for decades, have lived off a steady diet of SAS code and excel. They've exported information from raw code into excel to create tables and graphs which they'd hoped their less technically adept audiences could consume. But they were never pretty. Few even ventured into the bowels of PowerPoint, adding colour to their findings in an effort to convince and organization to head down a particular path, to invest, to cease investment.

Yet, despite their almost pretty graphs and solid data underpinnings, every marketing analyst has been sent back from the boardroom table to run more data, to show it this way or that, even to change the question being asked of the data entirely. And most often it wasn't because the answer



Lori Bieda at the SAS Toronto office

wasn't available, or known, but just that it was never clear to the audience to begin with.

The power of SAS visual analytics enables that same marketer to transform data into a story and moreover, to make searching for the plotline in the story that much simpler. Visual analytics enables one to search for patterns in data, for correlated variables, for trends. It's a visual cockpit sitting on top of a world of data beneath it. It helps the marketer see the world they manage and diagnose what's happening on the ground, and on the horizon.

And it's not just for marketing

analysts. Designed for the business user, and the analyst wanting to search for and showcase their information more quickly and dynamically, visual analytics helps make accessible valuable information across an enterprise. It helps an organization compete analytically.

So, with massive amounts of valuable information now available at our fingertips, the only thing to do is, decide how to act on it.

Lori C. Bieda is Executive Lead, Customer Intelligence for SAS Americas

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DATA ANALYTICS

Cutting costs, increasing customers

With budgets constantly squeezed, marketers look to data analytics to cut costs while increasing response rates.

By Jan Kestle

When the Canadian Wildlife

Federation wanted to increase its donor base, it used a data-based segmentation system to determine the best postal codes for reaching receptive prospects. Their targeted initiative succeeded not only in increasing the number of donors among the target audience by 20 percent over a random group of recipients. It also allowed CWF to reduce its mailing costs by about 7 percent using a basic telco list rather than a more costly magazine subscription list.



To predict which customers will buy insurance products, a national insurance company used data mining tools to analyze its extensive customer file so it could better understand the drivers behind insurance sales. Analysts used PRIZMC2 segmentation to profile customers by insurance product type and then predicted sales by incidence and dollar value of qualified leads. Then they employed a visualization tool to explore the data in real time with constant queries so they could extract new insights for reaching newly targeted prospects. The initial results were impressive: Response rates from telemarketing calls went up 37 percent. Just as important, acquisition costs plummeted and resulted in a steadily rising ROI.

Data analytics-based campaigns like these are becoming increasingly common. With their budgets under constant scrutiny, marketers are discovering that data analytics can help reduce the cost of connecting with receptive customers while improving effectiveness. Despite the initial expense of acquiring new data and analytics software, many businesses and not-for-profits are realizing that data analytics can be a cost-effective solution for a range of challenges—within and beyond the marketing department.

Consider Canadian Wildlife Federation's challenge to increase donors for its programs in conservation education, awareness and outreach. Like many not-for-profits, CWF in the past typically acquired new donors by renting selective magazines' lists and mailing fundraising appeals to their subscribers. But the group worried that it was wasting money sending solicitations to people who had no interest in CWF's goals.

By identifying postal codes that contained previous donors and were classified among the top-performing PRIZM segments—clusters like Cosmopolitan Elite (very wealthy middle-aged and older families), Young Digerati (younger,

upscale urban trendsetters) and Suburban Gentry (wealthy, middle-aged suburban families)—its segmentation-and-behaviour approach helped it and other not-for-profits reduce their fundraising efforts. Because charities typically trade their house databases with each other based on costly magazine subscriber lists, the groups are constantly recycling the same names. But CWF's innovative approach brought new blood into the donor pool through rental lists, and there's no limit on the number of new names that can be acquired.

Data analytics is also proving its value in helping companies mine their customer data—a critical function in this era of Big Data. When a national life insurance company acquired a new direct marketing client with a large customer credit card database, it found that identifying new insurance prospects was difficult: the company lacked prior experience with the database, it had limited ability to select records for a campaign and had no access to historical response data, customer profiles, segmentation strategies or targeting information. Before proceeding with a direct marketing program, the company wanted to better understand the new client's customers, identify potential market segments and leverage its knowledge of existing policyholders to better target its

“With their budgets under constant scrutiny, marketers are discovering that data analytics can help reduce the cost of connecting with receptive customers while improving effectiveness.”

its marketing campaigns based on the changing insights and performance trends—findings delivered by the tool in a matter of minutes rather than the hours or days required for tabular reports.

With the segmentation and visualization results, the insurance company quickly built response models that allowed analysts to quantify the size of the opportunity for converting client cardholders into insurance customers. And over the past two years, the company launched a series of direct mail and telemarketing campaigns to the targeted cardholders that have proven remarkably successful. Between May 2010 and October 2011, for instance, the company's gross response rates increased by 93 percent. And its acquisition costs? They declined by 78 percent. And with each campaign, the costs dropped further as analysts refined their targeting strategy.

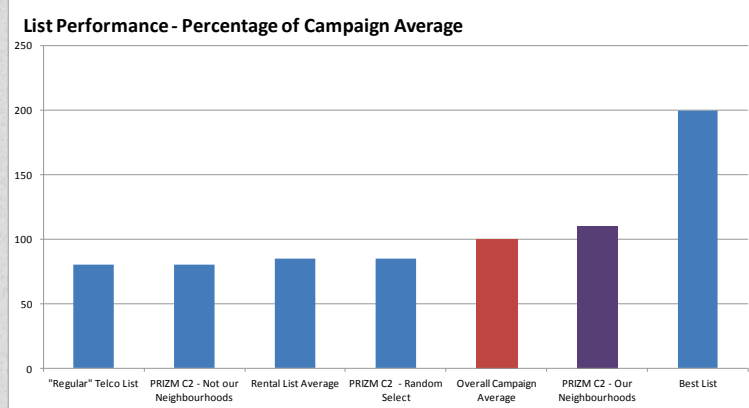
But data analytics are helping reduce costs and improve effectiveness in areas beyond the marketing department. Not long ago, a shopping mall operator sought to attract Canada's increasingly diverse population. Squeezed by online retailers, upscale merchants and downscale outlet stores, mall managers knew they needed to better understand the “diversity within the diverse groups” as a matter of survival. “If we don't, some other mall or shopping center will,” one company marketer observed.

So the company turned to data analytics to determine the right mix of stores, restaurants and food courts to serve its diverse mall customers—and reduce the failure rate of new tenants in their properties. Using PRIZMC2 to locate areas with high proportions of Chinese and South Asian consumers, researchers conducted a shopper intercept study to determine the residents' tastes in products, apparel and food. Then analysts integrated the survey and PRIZM data and develop three distinct target groups in each mall trade area: Affluent Chinese (middle-aged to mature families), Comfortable Chinese (middle-aged families) and South Asian Families (younger to middle-aged families). The analysis showed each target group possessed different levels of disposable income, shopping patterns and social values. For instance, Affluent Chinese members spend disproportionately more on women's clothing categories, Comfortable Chinese exhibit above-average expenditures on food and members of South Asian Families score high for buying men's clothing. Mall managers were surprised by the findings that revealed different kinds of consumers within an ethnic group. As one put it, “We can't say that whatever works in Markham will work in Richmond.”

That realization spread across the company as the data-based findings made a financial impact in many company departments, including operations, leasing and strategic planning. Mall managers are now using the shopping preferences of the ethnic target groups to guide their retail mix at company properties, while leasing agents can now approach retailers armed with hard data on the shopping preferences of ethnic groups in their mall trade areas. And marketers have begun using the results to inform their media strategy and better anticipate how the second and third generations of different ethnic groups will behave in the future. By amortizing the cost of the data analytics across their enterprise, the company concluded that the initial expense had in fact been a bargain.

Jan Kestle is the president and founder of Envionics Analytics.

SEGMENTATION PLUS BEHAVIOUR INCREASED THE RETURN OVER THE CONTROL



...AND REDUCED DM COSTS



...AND REDUCED DM COSTS



The Canadian Wildlife Federation found that using data analytics not only improved its response rate for a direct marketing campaign, it also reduced costs.

marketing to prospects within the new database.

To help it value the database opportunity, the company scored every current client record according to its PRIZMC2 segment and created a product penetration index for each cluster. Then analysts developed a data visualization platform to conduct a multivariate analysis of the new customer database to determine the drivers behind responsive customers—drivers like recency and frequency of client credit card usage. But unlike a static model, the visualization tool allowed analysts to pose constant queries so they could develop new insights to help them better position their offers and messages—and reduce costs. Every month, the company revised

LoyaltyMatch OnDemand unveils new data analysis feature

Over the past year there has been intense interest from loyalty marketers in the use of analytics to evaluate and analyze their ever-increasing volumes of data. Our customers have told us that data is important, but it's not just about the data. It's about knowing how to use it to monitor and validate a program's return on investment.

In order to simplify turning data into information for our clients, LoyaltyMatch OnDemand has introduced its Key Program Indicator dashboard.

The Key Program Indicator dashboard provides program managers with analytics and data visualization tools that generate a holistic view of their loyalty program and its membership. By offering high-level dashboard data, a program manager can quickly determine how members are earning points from commerce or other activities, how quickly they are rewarding themselves and with what rewards, and how engaged a member is with the brand. The engagement metric is often cited as the single most important metric of program success. For more granular data analysis, various reporting tools are available to provide the program manager with the ability to analyze the data in more detail.

The Key Program Indicator and reporting tools used in combination with other LoyaltyMatch OnDemand features can help drive smarter communications, marketing offers, and loyalty program.

The Key Program Indicator dashboard is available to all LoyaltyMatch OnDemand clients.

Prime Data awarded Canada Post Expert Partner Status

Prime Data announced recently they've been selected as one of a limited number of Canadian companies to be certified as a Canada Post Expert Partner.

Canada Post Expert Partner designation means Prime Data clients benefit from:

- access to additional postage savings and discounts,
- faster, one-stop set up of mail accounts,
- a pool of resources including market studies and test cases in many industries, and
- experts who participate in ongoing Canada Post training including monthly webinars and regular postal service updates.

"This designation recognizes that we are a strong advocate for direct mail as a successful, measurable channel in an integrated marketing industry," says Steve Falk, President, Prime Data. "We're honoured to be acknowledged for our leadership in the mailing industry as it forms a part of so many successful media campaigns for our clients."

Through their Unaddressed Direct Mailing Services. com portal, Prime Data plans, prints and prepares millions of flyers, cards, and brochures every year. Small business marketers looking to send unaddressed direct mail learn how by viewing a five minute starter video on the subject from the website above.

"Many people think of postage and mailing as a fixed cost. The reality is our expertise in this area helps our clients save thousands of dollars in postage costs through targeting or benefitting from our discounts. Most importantly, we help our clients measure response and understand the return on investment (ROI)," says Falk.

Do you really know your customer data?

Behind-the-scenes look: how organizations fail to leverage customer data from the IVR to improve customer experience

By Justin Lemrow

Nowadays organizations are inundated with customer data. The debate on how to best leverage this data is a hot topic. Most companies have gotten smart about using data from their web channel and call center agents, but these alone don't provide a full picture. If the goal is to understand the customer's experience with the brand, businesses that don't include data from *all* service channels cannot accurately assess the experience. If enterprises aren't collecting the right data from the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) channel they are missing a huge piece of the puzzle, and one that strongly influences the true customer experience. The IVR is almost always the first interaction that consumers have when they call for customer service; the IVR is like the "front door" to the phone channel – so there is clearly opportunity to mine significant customer data from it.

- Do you really know your IVR customer data? Ask yourself these questions:
- Do you know the top five goals your customer wants to accomplish in the IVR?
 - What success metrics do you define in the IVR? Can you apply the conversion or accomplishment metric from your website to provide channel comparisons?
 - How quickly does your fastest customer navigate your IVR? The slowest?
 - What points cause the most difficulty in your self-service channel, and when do customers opt out to the live-agent channel?
 - What analytics are you using to ensure your IVR is performing at its peak?
 - Do you leverage the web interaction data in your IVR? Visa versa? With call center agents?

As a leading provider of customer self-service solutions, our organization (Contact Solutions) has experience helping large businesses across myriad industries to optimize their IVR systems and glean the most useful data from them. What we've found is that many enterprises make basic mistakes that seriously impact the value of their data. First and foremost, many organizations don't take a fully representative sample of customer data. For example, one client was using a customer scoring system by analyzing data from the website and the live-agent interactions in the call center. However, the company was not including data from the IVR in its analysis of its customers, effectively ignoring one of the most important – and frequently used (more than 50% of all customer interactions) – customer segments where first impressions with the brand are made. The result: the client damaged the validity of its data and therefore missed an opportunity to make a positive impact on the business and instead made a service change that was largely ineffective.

Also, we regularly see businesses failing to use collected data to improve the customer experience. Companies must not only track customer data across channels, but utilize it immediately and with fluidity in order to best serve clientele – otherwise known as the practice of service continuity. These actions can sometimes be quite simple, but can have an enormous impact on customer satisfaction. For example, when consumers call customer service and are required to enter an account number or phone number in the IVR, they shouldn't be required to repeat that information if transferred to a live agent. Similarly, if consumers are using an online service channel and then choose to call customer service for additional help, the phone channel should be linked to the online channel in order to pick up where the customer left off and expedite the service process.

Enterprises also frequently miss the opportunity to tailor the IVR experience based on past customer behavior. For example, imagine a customer who frequently calls the IVR for service surrounding the same task or problem. Each new instance that this customer calls he should be offered a shortcut to accomplish that goal, since there is a high likelihood that is what he is calling about. By implementing personalized touches like this in the IVR, companies can reduce customers' time and effort and thus reduce customer service costs by hopefully allowing more customers to be serviced effectively in the IVR without needing to transfer to live agents.

However, with so many avenues to leverage data to improve customer experience, many organizations get overwhelmed and don't know where to begin or how to translate it into business results. When the prospect of big data is intimidating, sometimes it is better

to start small – and what better place to begin than analyzing customer interactions that are already happening in the customer service frontlines, the IVR? We suggest the following four actions to take today:

- IVR customer interaction data represents the voice of your consumer and should be considered as valuable as receiving daily focus group results. So to begin, make sure to mine the right data; track the Who, When, Where, Frequency and Length of customer service interactions, and compare them with benchmarks – both industry and other channels. Consider, are you managing your IVR by art and intuition or by using data-driven customer insights?
- Next, ensure that data entered in the IVR is immediately visible in the call center and other service channels, and vice versa. There is no use in having valuable customer data if it can't be effectively leveraged to improve customer experience on the spot.
- Once the right IVR data is in place and being mined on a regular basis, be sure to share the findings with your marketing, sales, account management and even executive-level departments to drive business decisions. This data is critical to the continuous improvement of your customer experience and has direct influence on revenue.
- Don't forget the big picture. IVR is a good place to start, but establish a plan to incorporate and compare customer data from all service channels to best complement an overall brand strategy. Customer perception data from surveys is also valuable, especially when combined with actionable information from all customer service channels.

Justin Lemrow is the Director of the Continuous Improvement Practice at Contact Solutions.

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EMAIL
MARKETING

The hidden
costs of email
marketing

By Patrick Surry

The average consumer receives over 3,000 marketing messages each day, causing true information overload. In part, this is due to the modus operandi that has grown up in email marketing. When the channel first became popular, the strategy was simple – the more emails sent, the higher the return rate. No wonder legislators have rushed to the consumer’s aid, first in Quebec, with the 1993 ‘act respecting the protection of personal information in the private sector’; more recently nationwide with the new anti-spam law, CASL, or ‘act to promote the efficiency and adaptability of the Canadian economy by regulating certain activities that discourage reliance on electric means of carrying out commercial activities,’ which was passed in December 2010.

Rather than giving businesses the desired kick in the pants to address the root cause and improve their customer communications, in many cases it has led to opt-out being considered as a purely compliance issue. But consideration of opt-outs needs to go beyond answering the letter of the law and compliance box-ticking. It also needs to be a topic in campaign evaluation for marketers, especially if we hope to see any real improvement in the dialogue between brands and consumers.

According to the *Q4 2011 Email Trends and Benchmarks* report issued by Epsilon, email open rates in North America were the highest reported rates (24.8 percent) since the beginning of 2008. Businesses are realizing that an email marketing strategy cannot be about just pushing out the same content to a mass number of people on a daily basis, which is considered by most, spam. Customers want to know that the companies and brands they love are paying attention. They want a customer experience where personalization comes not only in the form of offers, but also in terms of the messages they would like to receive.

Less is more

Many marketers look at email as being a free channel to market customers and even though it can be a cost effective way to reach customers, it does not make it easy. “Free” emails may create a much needed short-term boost for business, but in terms of customer lifetime value, they often result in setbacks. It is crucial for businesses to weigh the actual cost of a direct mail piece against its expected return – and this cost includes assessing how many customers were lost. Bombarded customers can choose to manually opt-out or mentally opt-out by simply ignoring the messages in their inbox. When a customer opts out, a business loses a connection and the opportunity to nurture the customer relationship as well as any cross-sell or up-sell opportunities through that channel.

How to prevent opt-outs

Reducing opt-out rates is not simply a question of concentrating on what might interest the customer. It takes a concentrated effort to suppress communications that “may not” be of interest. For more effective emails that do not drive customers away, businesses must focus on the following four best practices:

1. Identify the best targets

With each email sent, there should be a potential to add business value. By only contacting the persuadables, the

Email opens on
mobile devices
steadily growing

Recently there have been many reports and theories written about email readership growth on mobile devices. As an email marketing agency we are constantly monitoring consumer trends for our clients so we felt compelled to take a deeper look at our client’s customer behaviour to discover just where they’re opening their emails. For our study, we chose to analyze Open rate data across over 25 of our clients operating in Canada and the United States from September to December 2012. The goal of the study was to gain insight into preference and growth of Email Opens on mobile devices.

Overall, we analyzed millions of messages opened over the four month period noted above. Our data shows incremental growth month-over-month with over 40% of our client’s customers currently opening their emails on mobile devices, and it’s growing. Our highest overall Open rate average came in our Telco category with 46% Mobile Opens even though that percentage ended up -1% in December vs. September. The category showing the largest gain over the past four months was the financial category with a 9% gain in Mobile Opens compared to Desktop.

Based on the trending data, we estimate that if the current growth in Mobile Opens continues we will see Mobile Opens eclipse Desktop as early as March 2013. Be sure to check back with us at the end of March as we will be releasing the second iteration of this study spanning January through to March. It will be interesting to see if and how the trend changes after the holiday season.

Inbox Marketer (www.inboxmarketer.com) is a digital direct messaging firm that helps organizations use email, mobile, social media and the web to build online communities of customers and prospects. The company offers technologies and services that make it easier for digital marketers to integrate their communications across all digital channels and measure the responses across each communication touch point.

customers who specifically buy or renew only as a result of an effective and relevant email message, business can increase the positive response rates.

2. Relevance is everything

Today’s software solutions make true one-to-one marketing possible and good data provides ample opportunity for businesses to tailor messaging. Personalized messages that include highly relevant and appealing content to the recipient vastly improves the odds for success.

3. How often is too often?

That depends on the addressee. According to the Canadian anti-spam law, businesses must provide customers the option to self-govern communications at any point in the relationship, by offering options as to the types and frequency of emails they prefer to receive.

4. Measure results

Traditional campaign effectiveness is measured by looking at click rates and sales. However, businesses should take a more holistic view that considers true impact to customer lifetime value and the effect that

opt-outs can have on that number.

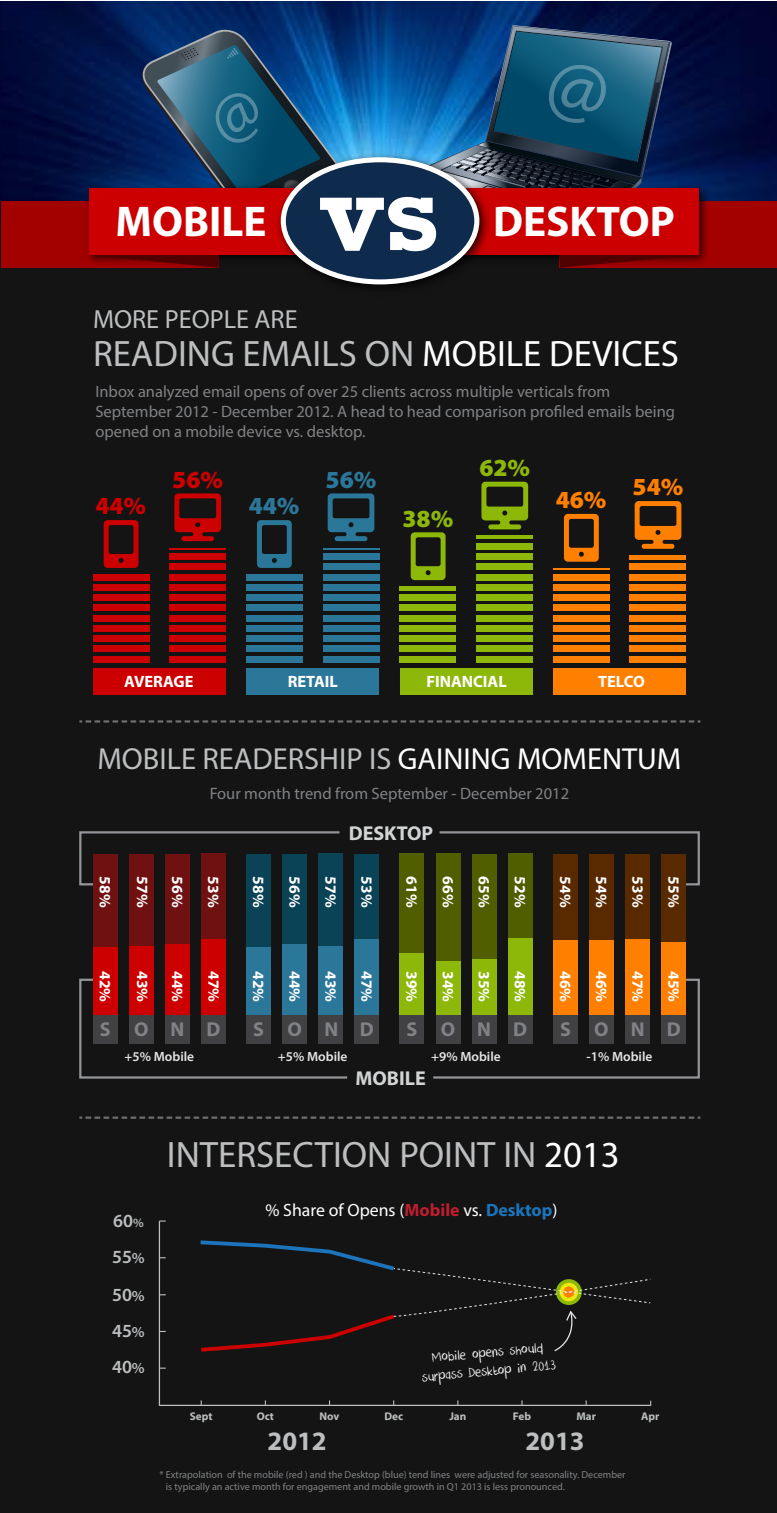
Quality, not quantity

Personalized communications to each customer provides opportunities for a business to strengthen customer knowledge and relationships. Every customer interaction is an opportunity to gain customer knowledge and strengthen the relationship through personalized communications. This means companies need to concentrate on prospects that are persuadable, control the amount of communications sent to a customer and tailor them to each individual. Customizing communications can help an organization respond to customer preferences, take into account previous interactions and incorporate messages based upon an individual’s current and potential future value.

There are consequences in thinking that email is free. Customers want to interact with their favorite companies, but when emails are not relevant and fail to provide any value, “ad-fatigue” settles in and they reach for the opt-out button. It’s critical to consider the effects one too many emails could have on the long-term dialogue between a business and the customer.

It is no longer acceptable for a business to think that email marketing is free and having this mindset carries some serious costs. Email should be a strategic component to overall marketing campaigns. Following the best practices listed above, businesses can help minimize opt-outs and increase positive responses and overall effectiveness of email marketing campaigns, which in turn increases the lifetime value of customer relationships.

Dr. Patrick Surry is a leading global analytics practitioner, with a wealth of experience in real-world delivery of customer insight, predictive analytics and behavior modeling, as well as a recognized expert in uplift modeling research. One of the founders of Quadstone (acquired by Pitney Bowes Software), he has been responsible for many high profile success stories with blue-chip B2C organizations spanning applications such as response, risk, attrition, value, customer profitability, and targeting for direct marketing. He is currently involved in guiding the development of our next generation



Mission intelligence

How a business can benefit from collecting market intelligence.

By Angela Kabir

We can all benefit from a little intelligence; some more than others, but now more and more decision makers in the business-to-business environment, are realizing the benefits that their companies, small to mid-size businesses to enterprise corporations, can also capitalize on gaining more intelligence; market intelligence.

And they're riding the wave. Forget the cloud; catch the wave.

Outsourcing focused companies are riding the crest to greater sales and sustained pipeline leading a wave that is growing among the worlds movers and shakers. No longer is outsourcing confined to payroll or bookkeeping, today's model is way more exciting, and proving profitable.

Sales and marketing, the engine that makes a business purr is being re-defined, re-invented, and outsourced.



CEO's, CPO's, CMO's and all those c-words are breaking the moulds of their predecessors. Streamlining their sales force and pinpointing their sales targets, they are intelligent and they want to know their market inside and out. Caught within a loose oxymoron, all companies face a limited universe of potential clients. And when that universe begins to shrink decisions have to be made. How to grow sales in a shrinking market? How to outsmart the competition? How to quell the new upstarts and their social media gurus? How to win.

Don't panic. Knowledge is the solution. Knowledge is power. Know your universe. Understand your customers. Take the guesswork out of your next go-to-market strategy. Hit that home run.

Today, even the largest companies across all industries are looking outside their doors for answers. Hi-tech software giants, Energy conglomerates, and even Insurance and Finance monoliths are all outsourcing for inside information on all aspects of their clients, from pains to gains.

Due diligence? Don't believe that you know all the answers, get the answers! Discover the truth about what is going on outside of your office. Market intelligence of all your targeted accounts within your universe customized to fit your criteria. That's what is needed; a real-time segmented view of your market. Know

the key contacts and their contact information. Know their buying plans, their buying cycles, and their proposed budget. Understand their strengths and their weakness, where their company is stretched, has pains that your company can provide a solution for. Are they using competitor's products? What do they like about them; or don't like. Get the facts straight. Get the facts.

Intelligence on a systematic basis

Now you can compete. Now you're in the game. Imagine the go-to-market strategy that can be built and delivered. Armed with this extreme level of market intelligence your sales and marketing team will explode with fresh new ideas and strategies leading to new cutting edge multi-channel marketing campaigns guaranteed to reap rewards. Prioritize marketing opportunities, analyze the collected data to know where you can make a difference, expand into untapped territories, reach new markets, forecast trends, and stay one step ahead of your competitors. Critical insight equals revenue potential.

Reach out to your client's based on their needs, a targeted approach, rather than covering them all with an erroneous blanket message.

You need bandwidth. Outsourcing is the answer. A professional B2B center is a sales

► *Continued on page 15*

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Direct & Personal

by Billy Sharma



Steve Falk

The printer who has made a good impression on me

One of the things that got my attention when speaking to Steve Falk was his observation: "It's important to me to lead by example, to take a stand on an issue, get involved and not sit back and observe."

And getting involved is what he has done, starting about 10 years ago when he first heard Stephen Lewis who was serving a term as the United Nations' special envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa.

"Stephen Lewis made a big impact on my life. I heard his interview by Anna Maria Tremonte on CBC. Mr. Lewis was completely distraught with what he viewed as world inaction towards AIDS sufferers in Africa, especially women.

"Within weeks I had found a group of people who wanted to show their support for Stephen's concerns and we formed a not-for-profit in York Region that raised AIDS awareness and one million dollars for the cause. We called it the *If I Had A Million Dollars Campaign* and, yes, the Barenaked Ladies were our Canadian music envoys. I was Co-Chair of the organization for about four years with Mary Anna Beer, a retired teacher. We wrapped it up after the community raised the million dollars.

"After that I sat on the board of a small AIDS

clinic that Canadian doctors had launched in Lesotho. The management of the clinic was eventually passed along to the Lesotho health department.

"Other influences have come from my father and mother, John and Karon Falk. They laid an important foundation but my wife, Jane Taylor, has had the strongest impact for the past 20 years or so.

"My mother loved to help people in the community and that has had a strong bearing on me. She cared deeply for people in need—the elderly, the lonely, the challenged. She was also an advocate and leader for women's rights groups.

"My father always supported this work but he was less hands on—more of a Trustee or Board Member kind of guy. His operational vision and cool, logical approach are things I inherited."

In business too, there is a hint of caring for others.

"I've always jokingly called my marriage with Jane a 'package deal'. She came trailing a family of six brothers and sisters and their broad social and work networks. Their influence has been immense; they are a very artistic, curious, well-travelled and creative bunch and there are many entrepreneurs among them. It's been a rich tapestry of

family and friends to share life with.

"I also think my father's invitation to work with him and his business partner when I was still in school was pivotal. He had just left his corporate gig and one of his colleagues had asked him to start up a business with him. I was asked if I wanted a 6-week stint in the summer to help do some sales and marketing. The 6 weeks turned into 18 years of working with the two of them."

Today Steve Falk, along with his partner Peter Blakely, runs a thriving business called Prime Data in Aurora, a leader in developing and implementing variable data printing.

"I've primarily been a business development guy with a taste for operations. In the early days, it was often a physical item you dealt with—paper, books, magazines, mail, and transportation. Now we are focused on new technology and also developing solutions to execute integrated marketing campaigns and variable data printing projects.

"Being a tech fan (trying to steer away from saying geek) has been helpful and I've always followed the important developments. I'm always trying to infect others with my passion for technology. This has helped us attract great people to point this organization in the right direction. We are embracing the changing technological environment and celebrate opportunities to find solutions for our clients in this rapidly changing environment.

"Recently we worked on a US loyalty program using mobile devices and QR codes. They required VDP (Variable Data Printing) expertise to help them apply 100,000 different QR codes to coupons, door stickers, posters, tent-cards and cash register flash cards. They were printed on numerous stocks ranging from paper to plastic. The QR codes were incorporated into the variable print artwork, then printed and collated into 1000 store sets. When activated by a mobile device at the store, the URL would instantly measure response and loyalty activities per location on a client dashboard.

"And when a pharmaceutical needed to produce 40-page booklets that explained test results to patients, their lab sent a data file containing seven test result fields so that we could automatically merge the data creating a unique book in four languages. Each book was personalized to the patient and was composed of information related to the results of each of the seven tests.

"Marketing communications is integrated now across a number of channels so it is critical to develop the technology channels that play supporting roles to the physical stuff. I'm enjoying this new area of interest but I also enjoy bridging the two so they work well together."

He not only believes in "paying it forward" but practices it too.

"I'm proudest of the fact that we bring in some of the students from the York Region District School Board who face serious cognitive challenges with regard to completing school. Our Lettershop Manger, Manoj Mistry, has been working with these students for over a decade and we've had kids in as often as we can manage."

Here's where it all began.

Steve grew up in Aurora, the oldest son in a family of five brothers and sisters. Both of his parents were teachers, but his father left teaching to work in publishing when Steve was in public school. His mom left teaching to bring up their children but returned once they were in high school.

"Our parents encouraged independence and a curiosity for travel. My sister did a year-long Rotary exchange to Brazil at 14; my brother rode his bike solo to PEI at 16; by the time I was 18 I rode with him around Europe for four weeks with tents and hostel passes. We saved up for a budget of \$15 a day for food and lodging.

"I studied Art History at U of T in a program that had an art studio that ran concurrently with Sheridan College. It was a great program: all the resources of U of T and the artistic personalities, culture, equipment and studios of Sheridan.

"I took nine years to get through as I took a year to participate in a Canada World Youth exchange program

in Quebec and in Costa Rica and another to brush up on my French at Université Laval in Quebec. Plus I was always working a job or two throughout. My résumé from those days included: newspaper photo editor; arctic fishing guide; Quebec City horse and buggy tour guide; taxi driver; St. Lawrence River cruise sailor; Roller Rink DJ; Bingo Caller and convenience store and Home Hardware clerk. I just loved those university years.

"I've been married for 20 years and we have two very bright and talented teenage girls. I've been lucky enough to work fairly close to home for most of their lives so have been able to weave myself into their activities a bit more than I would have if I commuted. Even my wife works three minutes from home and we value being around them whenever we can.

"I have a ton of hobbies from painting to singing, hockey to cycling. I don't have trouble filling a quiet day with something I love to do. I play hockey twice a week but almost never watch it live and love anything to do with the outdoors from canoe tripping to fly-fishing. (I belong to a small fly-fishing club near Uxbridge that has been around for 120 years.) In the summer I've got a few friends with whom I ride bikes, often in the morning before work. I read a lot—a paper in the AM with breakfast and quite a few online resources each day. There is always a novel on the bed table and a few get devoured every vacation.

"Music has a special place in my life. For over a dozen years I've organized a weekly rehearsal for a Motown-style R&B band, The Thursday Night Jam. We have over a dozen players and only play out when we can offer our services for free to charities that need a band for an event. I think we've played about 70 gigs over those years and helped raise millions of dollars at events. On Sunday evenings I help coach a musical group of about 15 youth at the United Church in Aurora—it is a leadership building group that is based in music. We help the kids, aged 13-17, gain some musical experience and plan events, concerts and church services while they their leadership skills.

"My wife and I love a day of road tripping without a particular direction. We love exploring back roads and small towns and if we travel that is usually our agenda. Get a car, drive around, meet people, see places and eat local food. Quiet solo pursuits are not my usual choice. A quiet canoe trip is just too lonely without friends and family along. Even a cross-country ski afternoon is better if the trail is side-by-side so you can chat along the way. I love live music too, especially in an intimate setting, so I try to see a lot of it, often jazz, folk and world music. My wife and I especially enjoy Renaissance music played on period instruments as per The Toronto Consort.

"I began by delivering catalogues for Sears as a 10 year old. Actually our mom drove a carload of us around and we all ran to doorsteps with them for 5¢ each. In my teens I started packing books and mailing promotions for Scholastic books in their Richmond Hill warehouse. Evenings and summer jobs there were an early insight into direct mail and fulfillment. I guess I've never gotten far from print, promotions and the communications/marketing biz driven by data. The warehouse manager when I was a kid was tough and loud like Foghorn Leghorn but he collected stamps (British ones preferably) and really cared for people. Ran a tight ship but was a real humanist.

"I'm really pleased when we encourage colleagues to grow by trying new experiences and continuing their education which we support financially and with flexibility in work routines. We've also been trying to set up some exchanges with similar companies in other countries to get our younger people to see the world a bit and maybe have the world come here too."

Billy Sharma is president and creative director of Designers Inc. He can be reached via email at designersinc@sympatico.ca or by telephone at 416-203-9787

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Lighthouse List Company has launched a new email product called "EBlast". "EBlast" is available for large emailers looking to email more than 10,000,000 consumers a month. "EBlast" is available on all "e-Lifestyle" data cards offered by Lighthouse List Company. "EBlast" is offered at \$2.50/M for all orders of 10,000,000 or more.

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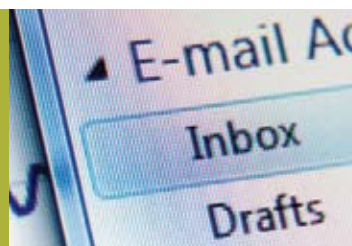
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March 22, 2013 RAC Retail Marketing Workshop Toronto, ON

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CMA Events Toronto, ON

April 11
CMA/MRIA Customer Experience Conference
Keeping the promises brands make
Arcadian Court, Toronto

May 8
CMA/Marketing Mobile Day
Arcadian Court, Toronto

June 4/5
2013 CMA National Convention
Seth Godin, Biz Stone, Mitch Joel and more
Metro Toronto Convention Centre

April 25, 2013
9th Annual Retail Advertising & Marketing Symposium
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Technology and data, ecommerce, and non traditional retail formats are changing everything from how customers get their shopping information to how they make a purchase. At the same time primary media like print flyers and ‘out of home’ have never been more important. Today’s retail marketers have an amazing opportunity to tap into these changes and make their brands stand out and their in-store & online baskets fill up. The 2013 RAC Symposium will present delegates with speakers, panels, and stories critical to staying ahead of the curve in retail advertising today. Contact Mary Markou at (416) 922-6678 ext 236 or via email at mmarkou@retailcouncil.org

Q4 2012 North America email trend results: triggered message volume continues to rise

73% increase over Q4 2011, driving higher open and clicks rates than business as usual messages

Epsilon, the global leader in delivering direct-to-consumer connections that drive business performance, and Email Institute, the Epsilon-powered email best practices destination, today released the *Q4 2012 North America Email Trends and Benchmarks* report. The report shows growth in the use of triggered messaging, up 73% year over year, with triggered messages yielding 70.5% higher open rates and 101.8% higher click rates compared to Business As Usual (BAU) messages in Q4 2012.

Additionally the report’s Email Activity Segmentation Evaluation (EASE) revealed that for the third consecutive quarter over 50% of the average brand’s opt-in email list had no activity.

“In Q4 2012, 63% of the average email file was unengaged with marketers’ email programs,” said Judy Loschen, Vice President of Digital Analytics at Epsilon. “This presents a huge opportunity for brands. Marketers cannot assume that their task is complete after they receive an opt-in to their email program. To continue to drive long term value from each individual subscriber, marketers must constantly work to engage them.”

Business As Usual (BAU) Email Trends

The quarterly analysis is compiled from 7.3 billion emails sent by Epsilon in October, November and December 2012 across multiple industries and approximately 170 participating clients. The analysis combines data from Epsilon’s proprietary platforms.

- BAU Highlights:
- Non-Bounce rate remained strong at 96%.
- Open rates increased both quarter over quarter (+0.6%) and year over year (+10.6%), resulting in an overall open rate of 27.4%.
- Click rates were unchanged from Q3 2012, remaining at 4.5%.

Triggered Messages Email Trends

Triggered message benchmarks are compiled from over 360 million triggered emails sent by Epsilon

in Q4 2012 across multiple industries. Results track campaigns deployed as a result of an action or trigger such as Welcome, Abandon Shopping Cart, Thank You and Anniversary.

- Triggered Highlights:
- Triggered messages accounted for 5.0% of total volume, 73% higher than Q411 (2.9%).
 - Triggered open rates were 70.5% higher than for Business as Usual messages.
 - Triggered click rates continued to perform well, reporting 101.8% higher than BAU. Q411 triggered click rates showed a 123.0% lift over BAU.

Email Activity Segment Evaluation (EASE)

These metrics are compiled from over 710 million non-bounced and opted-in email addresses that were contacted from January 1, 2012 through December 31, 2013 across multiple industries and approximately 150 clients. The EASE analysis, which includes behavioral segments, examined the overall performance of the average email file.

- EASE Highlights:
- 49.9% of an average email file had at least one open or click during the 12 month study period.
 - 63.4% of new subscribers (addresses that have been on a marketer’s file for less than three months) in an average list had no opens or clicks.
 - Approximately 28.3% of subscribers in an average email file had opened or clicked in the most recent three months.
- “Utilizing triggered messages is a proven strategy to maintain subscriber engagement. More marketers are realizing the many benefits of triggered messages, as is evident by the continued increase in volume. However, more is required to predict and meet the needs of your customers and subscribers. Marketers must create a full 360-degree view of the individual consumer and a strategy that takes a personalized approach. It requires a blend of data, analytics and creativity to achieve success,” said Loschen.

► Continued from page 9

and marketing team’s goldmine. An extensive resource to mobilize, utilize, a virtually instant, ardent workforce at your service. And not just any call center. A state-of-the-art B2B call center facility equipped with the highest technologies staffed with multilingual personnel who are thoroughly trained, courteous and professional.

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With actionable market intelligence, the benefits are plentiful, your company is growing, business is booming, so keep the wheels turning.

Angela Kabir MBA is the CEO of PR Exchange Group of Companies Inc.

DIRECT MARKETING

Vol. 25 | No. 10 | February 2013

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Direct Marketing is published monthly by Lloydmedia Inc., plus the annual DM Industry Source Book, List of Lists. Direct Marketing may be obtained through paid subscription. Rates:

Canada 1 year (12 issues \$48)
2 years (24 issues \$70)
U.S. 1 year (12 issues \$60)
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