

## Why you can't ignore email marketing... or CRM:

**Of all the innovations of the last decade**, email marketing will have the greatest impact on your business and on leveling the playing field against your bigger competitors. According to Anna Chernis, Direct Marketing Association Research Director, email produces the highest response rate and the highest ROI of all forms of direct marketing.

**Make no mistake**, direct response and email marketing in all its forms will be the sales and marketing competency of the next decade. So, now is the time to make sure that you evolve your marketing infrastructure to focus on a few key marketing objectives.

**Here's a few of the basic direct marketing skills** you'll need to cultivate in order to remain competitive in the years ahead:

**Treat customers on the basis of their behavior.** This means that you will have to truly know your customers – what they purchase, their attitudes, their personal demographics, and the nature of their needs. It will even require that you know how your customers wish to be accessed – Internet, paper mail, telephone, or mobile messaging.

**Tie it all together.** All of your sales and marketing efforts will have to be coordinated. What you do on the web, with email marketing, print advertising, telemarketing, trade shows, PR and face-to-face visits, will all have to be coordinated and carefully orchestrated.

**Stay Fresh.** It won't be enough to simply have some stock email promotions, a website, and a handful of printed collateral. The content you present to your existing and prospective clients will have to be fresh in

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By Rick Bellefond, President, RB Data Services - TIP #13

order to get and keep their attention on your business offerings. Part of this will mean that you content will have to use and exploit modern media including audio, video and graphics.

**Test and re-test.** In email marketing, there's only two mistakes you can make: not to test and not to believe the results of your tests. Successful email marketing depends on constant testing of new lists, new offers and new forms of presentation.

**Target.** Carefully selecting exactly what customers or prospects you direct your email and website offers toward, will determine how successful – and how profitable – your email marketing can be.

**Manage your reputation.** In the future (which means: now) your Internet “reputation” and that of the IP address you use, will determine the difference between success and failure. Your reputation will be carefully monitored by Internet Service Providers to assess what type of offers, list management and targeting your email marketing programs are based on. This will determine how much of the email that you send actually gets delivered instead of being blocked by spam filters.

**These are just six of the factors** that your future marketing success will depend on. The other big factor will be having the right tools to manage those factors. It won't be possible without some form of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tool.

**The Bottom Line:** Start planning for email marketing now. Or face the consequences later.

**Grow Your Business Through Better Customer Relationship Management – Stay Informed!**

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