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KNOW HOW

03/04/2004

57% of Consumers Will Give Email Addresses to a Local Retailer -- How to Take Advantage of That Fact

57% of Consumers Will Give Email Addresses to a Local Retailer -

According to new data from Transact Media Group who've gathered 12 months of results from 100-small businesses in the Southeastern corridor, 57% of consumers will fill out a card to receive email alerts when asked to by a clerk at a local small business such as a beauty parlor, car-repair shop, or restaurant.

When you couple this with data from Quris' email study last summer, that revealed consumers vastly prefer receiving email from local "traditional" businesses to any other type of marketing messages, it opens up a world of opportunity.

National email campaigns can be powered by the local level

Agencies and email vendors have already been rushing in to line up small business clients. Plus, many chain retailers, from Affinia Hotels to the Wild Birds Unlimited, are having great success with local programs administered at the national level.

But, let's face it, the vast majority of small local business owners barely have the time to handle traditional marketing, let alone launching an email program.

Why should you care?

EmailSherpa sees this as a significant list building opportunity for both national brands and non-retail companies. And this is an age when a strong house list is worth its weight in gold.

The Quris study cited above also revealed that consumers only want to receive regular email from about 16 companies on average. After you take local retailers, personal finance updates, and editorial newsletters into account, there aren't nearly enough attention slots left for every single brand that would like to get email users' attention.

Why not share a spot instead? Why not use the power of local

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business email to your advantage?

When your sales and distribution reps are visiting local accounts, they could also pitch your co-branded email program. The messages would be "from" the local retailer to their own opt-ins, and "sponsored" by you.

Here's more data on collecting names and response at the local point of sale

- According to Transact Media Group the average small business stands to make roughly \$1,485 in additional sales per year from email campaigns to its house list. (That may not sound like much to you, but for many small businesses that easily covers a month's rent plus utilities.)

This calculation is based on results Transact's seen so far: an average 2% response rate at \$55 per sale.

We've actually heard of local campaigns with even higher response rates. For example, Helen Bateman Shoes, a boutique in Edinburgh Scotland, sells on average 10-15 pairs of pricey shoes per email "postcard" sent to its list of 1,000 customers around the world.

- By pro-active education and running contests between locations, Affinia Hotels got its highest performing hotel to collect emails from 80% of guests. 2% of these names converted to becoming more frequent Affinia guests.

- The 147-seat Mongolian Barbeque restaurant in Bethesda MD was able to collect more than 1,000 email addresses in six months by placing pre-printed 3x5 forms in every check presented by a server. The list generated has an average open rate of 60-65%, roughly double b-to-c average.

- Goody's, a chain of 332-apparel stores in the Southeast, had such success with coupons emailed to local consumers (who are asked for their name, email, and zip code) that the stores began an all-out campaign to convert more shoppers to opt-ins, including prominent colorful signage and regular announcements over the PA, "Got email? Bob wants to send you free coupons twice a month. Sign up for Bob's downloadable discounts today right at the front of the store. It's that simple."

Keys to successful POS email gathering

#1. Don't ask for snail mail address or phone, unless you already have programs to use this data. Your form completion rates will plummet with each additional bit of information you ask for. Plus, once you've got an email address, you can always ask consumers

to give you more data as part of your ongoing relationship.

#2. Consider going with a block-entry form, with a box for each letter in an email address. If not, at least give the consumer plenty of room to write in. Squishing emails into small spaces will raise your bad address rate considerably.

Transact Media CEO Stephen Barfield says his bad address rate is only 2.4% by using non-box forms, but he's got a highly-trained data entry staff and a clean, open form. We've heard horror stories of up to 40% illegibility from other POS collectors.

#3. Train counter clerks to answer questions about email -- with emphasis on the fact that emails will not be abused or rented out. Email use policies should come tripping glibly off clerk's tongues just as a merchandise return policy does now

#4. Don't work with partners who want to use business-cards as an email collection device. Popping a business card into a box to try to win something is so quick and easy, that most consumers forget they've done it a second later. They certainly won't remember an implicit "permission" when you email them a few days later. That way lies spam accusations.

By making people fill out a simple form, you're pre-qualifying them as more eager email recipients. It will help your opens, clicks, and deliverability.

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