

# It's Time for E-mail Marketers to Think Recovery

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Retailers learned an important lesson about e-mail marketing during the recent recession; namely that few marketing channels can drive ROI and business goals as effectively as e-mail. And in boardrooms all around the world, executives are beginning to view e-mail as a highly successful sales and marketing channel, choosing wisely to weave it into their business strategy rather than dismissing it as just another marketing line item.

As we enter into an economic recovery, consumers will continue to be financially wary, closely evaluating their spending and prioritizing purchases in retail and across other categories. Retailers can expect e-mail to remain bullish, but for consumers the definition of value has changed following the recession. As a result, acquiring a larger share of consumers' wallets will require some degree of innovation on the part of e-mail marketers. Here are five ways in which e-mail marketers will help fuel the recovery in 2010.

## **1. E-mail marketers will give customers control**

But first they will have to teach customers how to take control. For several years now e-mail marketers have preached the importance of delivering relevant e-mail, but haven't always had the necessary depth of customer data. This year more focus will be placed on creating solutions that enable customers to share information about themselves, such as preference centers and robust social networks. Even more importantly, more emphasis will be placed on helping customers understand the value of providing more information: more meaningful communications, better service, and delivery on the consumers' wishes.

## **2. E-mail marketers will rely on more advanced metrics**

In order to provide customers with more value, e-mail marketers will need to find more convincing and effectual metrics than open rates and click-throughs. Expect sophisticated retailers to more aggressively link disparate customer behavior data captured via e-mail, e-commerce, in-store, and even social networks, as a way to better understand consumer attitudes and how to best influence them. This will enable e-mail marketers to engage their best customers more effectively and retain them longer.

## **3. Retailers will emphasize their unique value proposition in e-mail**

The customer experience is more critical than it has ever been, and in 2010 retailers will place a great deal of effort to make it consistent across their stores, e-commerce sites, e-mail campaigns, and more. In fact, many retailers have begun to shift in-store loyalty programs to e-mail with the understanding that it provides customers with more immediate satisfaction and a more valuable and consistent experience. For the more exclusive online retailers, e-mail is becoming part of the service



proposition. Take membership-driven retailers such as RueLaLa.com for example, where e-mail essentially becomes the product.

#### **4. Retailers will use e-mail as their business bellwether**

E-mail trumps all other marketing channels for its ability to produce compelling metrics that are based on real data. Marketing executives are recognizing this more often and moving e-mail to the core of their marketing communications plan, where it can be effectively used to inform other channels and provide a proving ground for retailers' merchandising strategies. E-mail will be used to drive multichannel success.

#### **5. E-mail marketers will renew their focus on acquisition**

During the recession, many e-mail marketers focused exclusively on retaining customers, while others abandoned best practices causing list sizes to decrease or stagnate. The recovery will inspire e-mail marketers to uncover new strategies for e-mail list growth, starting with integrating e-mail and social media. By driving customers to join networks, enabling them to share content with friends and family, and encouraging new customers to register for e-mail on Facebook and other networks, e-mail marketers can jump-start the e-mail acquisition engine in 2010 and beyond. In addition, e-mail marketers will find value in creating "acquittention" programs. These are campaigns designed to acquire e-mail addresses from customers who do business with you through other channels, such as in-store, call centers, or catalogs, as well programs designed to reinvigorate inactive customers lost during the recession.