

# Benefits of B-to-B Email Marketing

By Doug Hudiburg

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Headline: 10 Benefits of Business to Business Email Marketing

Body Text:

If there is any single tool that we should be enthusiastically embracing as marketers, it is business to business email marketing.

There is simply no way to match the value that business to business email marketing provides for communicating with prospects and customers.

The amazing thing is most of us are not actively engaged in any form of email marketing yet. At best, we send an occasional email blast to our customer base to introduce a new product or announce an event.

Many of us have NEVER sent a single promotional email to a list of prospects or customers. So if you are among the few who have, reach right back and give yourself a hearty slap on the back.

I have my theories about why most of us do not use business to business email marketing to its greatest advantage, which I will not go into here, but I suspect it is heavily related to the following barriers:

- 1) We must frequently rely on IT and/or our Web team to provide the enabling infrastructure and we are low on their priority list.
- 2) We do not have direct access to the mailing and tracking tools and have to rely on outside resources to put our strategies into play.
- 3) We do not know exactly how to implement an effective business to business email marketing strategy.
- 4) We fear being branded as a spammer at the slightest indiscretion.

Regardless of why business to business email marketing is not more widely accepted, the fact remains that it is a marketing tool that we must have in our toolbox.

Those marketers who jump on the bandwagon now will have a decided advantage versus the

competition when they deploy their 'secret weapon'.

## Benefits of Business to Business Email Marketing

### 1) Low cost

Compared to any other form of direct marketing, business to business email marketing is fantastically cheap. When you cultivate and mail to your own opt-in email list, the cost per message is so low, you can almost call it free.

You do need to invest in some kind of infrastructure, but if you are smart and careful, you can keep your costs below \$1,000 a year.

If you only send 10 messages to a list of 2,000 subscribers, your cost is just \$.05 per message. You can see how a serious business to business email marketing program could cost just a fraction of a penny per message.

### 2) Metrics Galore

With business to business email marketing, almost every step in the buying process can be measured and tracked on an ongoing basis. You can easily track the total clicks on every link in each message, the conversion of clicks to sales or clicks to leads, and with some programs you can measure opens (how many people opened your message) and forwards (how many people forwarded your message) You can take what you learn from one campaign and apply it to future campaigns with a high degree of precision.

### 3) Permission based

Unless you are spamming (sending unsolicited emails), all effective business to business email marketing is conducted to an opt-in list. This means that every subscriber requested to be on your list, they want to receive emails from you. Because of this, business to business email marketing is one of the purest forms of permission-based direct marketing. Very few direct mail or telemarketing campaigns can claim the same.

### 4) Easy to implement

If you aren't implementing business to business email marketing in your business right now, it may seem a daunting technical challenge to build the infrastructure and tools required to pull it off. But rest assured that adding business to business email marketing to your mix is not as difficult as it sounds.

There are many great tools available on a subscription basis that allow you to outsource the complete infrastructure required for effective business to business email marketing. You will find two great tools listed at the bottom of this article.

### 5) Agile Marketing Tool

All marketers and business owners are painfully aware of the fact that the speed of doing business continues to steadily increase. This relentless acceleration drives the need to be supremely responsive to new trends and opportunities in your market.

There is no more responsive tool available to marketers than business to business email marketing. You can literally deploy the tactical elements of a campaign moments after the strategic and

messaging elements have been developed. In other words, you can decide on a new strategic direction in the morning, develop your message and offer in the afternoon, and have a message waiting in your prospect's inbox the next morning.

That is rapid communication!

#### 6) Highly Targeted

business to business email marketing is the only medium I can think of where you can not only easily segment your list based on demographic attributes, but also where you can segment your list based on the behavior of your prospect. With some of the simplest systems available, you can begin to develop a profile of your prospects based on the kinds of offers they respond to. With the more complex systems, you can track and store ALL of the actions individual prospects take as a result of your email efforts.

#### 7) Can be Personalized

It is very easy to merge database fields in to email messages to add personalization. Simply adding your subscriber's first name to the subject link has been shown to increase readership dramatically.

The real power of personalization in email marketing comes when you can personalize an offer based on information you have added to your subscriber profiles based on their past behavior. Sending someone a personalized message like the following is a great way to leverage email marketing as a sales tool.

'Ted, I know you bought product x from us last month and I just wanted to check in to make sure it is working as well for you as it does for our other customers. I also wanted to let you know that we have replacement filters for product x available at a 30% discount for the remainder of this month. While you probably don't need filters yet, in a month or two you will. Why not buy now to take advantage the special price and make sure filters are on hand when you need them?'

#### 8) Relationship Builder

Through frequency, personalization, and targeting, your marketing communications can be transformed from a traditional broadcast approach into a system that helps you build relationships with your subscribers.

Studies have shown that qualified prospects require 3-7 contacts from a company before they will respond with a purchase. The main driver of this need on the part of the prospect is that they want to feel a level of trust in their relationship with the company.

business to business email marketing allows you to develop a personal presence with your subscribers and the low cost per contact makes it easy to contact subscribers frequently (within reason).

#### 9) High Response Rates

There are many variables that contribute to response rates, but most direct marketing experts agree that email generally pulls a higher response than other direct marketing choices.

One of key reasons is that if you read a compelling offer in an email you can respond immediately by following a hyperlink to an order page or to get more information.

Responding to a direct mail piece requires one to pick up the phone and dial a number, a much more active response requirement.

## 10) Develops a Maturing Asset

The larger and more mature your list is, the more valuable it becomes. Your client database continues to be enriched with additional information about your subscribers and subscribers continue to develop a deeper and deeper relationship with the company.

Over a period of years, your opt-in database is likely to become your most valued marketing asset.

Ok, so there are a lot of compelling benefits...but what does one do to overcome the barriers I outlined at the beginning of this article?

The most important thing to do is to start doing something now, even the smallest steps will lead to big successes in the long run, just put some element of an business to business email marketing strategy into play within the next few weeks.

I've also listed some tips for overcoming the barriers below.

We must frequently rely on IT and/or our Web team to provide the enabling infrastructure and we are low on their priority list.

This one is easy. The best and fastest solution is to outsource. You can task a marketing communications agency with helping you set up a program, or you can subscribe to one of the hosted email solutions and do it yourself. I list some places to start investigating self-service solutions under point the next point.

We do not have direct access to our mailing and tracking tools and have to rely on outside resources to put our strategies into play.

This is why I prefer a do-it-yourself solution, at least in the beginning. Being able to touch and modify your campaigns directly is not only a great way to learn, it will save you a ton of money and help you ensure that your business to business email marketing strategy is truly a low-cost solution.

Here are a two popular tools you can look into...

### 1AutomationWiz:

This is the tool I use to publish this ezine and to automate all of the email follow-up on my site. I chose it because it provides the subscriber acquisition and database management tools I need, allows me to send text or HTML emails, doesn't restrict the number of emails I can send in any given month, and (most importantly) provides unlimited sequential autoresponders. The autoresponder feature is a must-have if you want to truly automate your program.

To learn more about 1AutomationWiz visit <http://www.1AutomationWiz.com>

### Mailer Mailer

This is an excellent tool as well. Mailer Mailer provides a lot more HTML support than 1AutomationWiz (including complete, fill-in-the-blank templates). If your goal is to create good looking HTML messages, Mailer Mailer makes it really easy.

Another thing that this tool has that 1AutomationWiz does not is the ability to track opens (how many times your message was read). What it is lacking is unlimited sequential autoresponders.

To learn more about Mailer Mailer click visit <http://www.mailermailer.com>

We do not know exactly how to implement an effective business to business email marketing strategy.

There are a lot of resources on the Web to help get you started, but this is definitely an area of need. As I look around, I find that there aren't any great, step-by-step guides for setting up an business to business email marketing strategy within a business. In fact, I see such a need that I've started writing a book about it. I'll keep you posted about the progress, but if you have immediate questions, please email me and I'll try to include answers in the Subscriber Q&A in the next issue.

We fear being branded as a spammer at the slightest indiscretion.

Spam is an epidemic, but this concern is overblown when it comes to emailing your customers. If you send an unsolicited email to a customer with legitimate information that they are likely to want, you will not be accused of spamming. Be reasonable, provide an easy way to opt-out, and check your ethics, and you won't have a problem. The best rule of thumb is to give first...then ask. Provide excellent, useful information, and then make an offer.

Of course, if you are mailing (as you should be) to people who have opted-in to your mailing list (thorough a Web form or some other means) then you are in safe water.

Good luck in building your business to business email marketing program!

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Doug Hudiburg is the founder and key contributor to Business-Marketing-Advisor.com a central source for marketing insight and resources for businesses of all sizes.

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