

Foundations—a Pedestal Group Publication

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FOUNDATIONS

The Pedestal Group

The Keys to Successful Email Marketing

Special points of interest:

- *Time Management*
- *Review LinkedIn*
- *SnagIt Snagged Me*
- *Tools to Make 2010*

AND MORE!

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Every couple of months some marketing guru declares email is dead. But the reality is email is vital to everyone's business and the only place you know you can reach people. In fact, no matter how ubiquitous social media becomes, you still need an email address to sign up for any particular service!

With that in mind, many people flooded email inboxes in December with all kinds of deals. And it wasn't just retailers who jumped on that bandwagon. But instead of gaining more customers, they ended up alienating people who otherwise would have been interested.

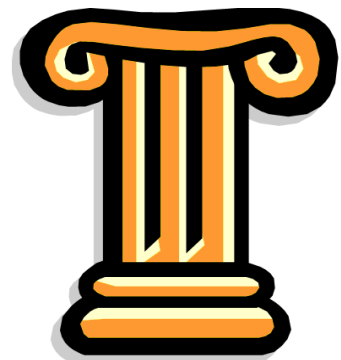
So how do you rise above the noise, get your email through to the person and get them to pay attention? In a new book out by Eric Groves, Senior Vice President of Global Market Development at Constant Contact, strategies and tips are given to accomplish these goals. In addition, there are hundreds of blogs, news articles and marketing white papers on what to do. What follows is a summary of ideas we like.

The bottom line is content is still king. Whether you choose to blog, write a newsletter, send an email or just have a website, your content has to be your number one priority. So in an email marketing campaign, you have to give your reader information they want to read. That means it has to be relevant and engaging. Where can you get content?

Create a folder on your computer and / or in your files for content ideas. When you are reading information, talking to clients, or generally doing your daily tasks, file away anything that would be good content. The ultimate goal is to have enough stuff that it is hard to choose when it is time to write it!

Think about what areas customers expect you to be an expert in and write about that. Since they already expect you to know this area, this will reinforce your standing as an expert.

What are the top question you are answering for people right now? What comes up in every conversation? Those are great things to write about



What is the top question asked by clients?

GREAT CONTENT

because it is clearly on everyone's mind. And the best thing to do here is get a little research on real answers. Numbers, facts, predictions by industry leaders, or answers can help and cause people to keep your email long after you send it as a reference point.

As you think about customers interacting with your product or service, can you think of any problems they might encounter that you would like to head off? An email marketing campaign is a great place to handle that. A Top 10 list is a great way to point out things people can do to avoid problems or issues, or to use

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Time Management

Many of us set a goal for 2010 to better control our time. It is easy to let time get away in a day and at the end, you wonder what you have accomplished. Try these tips to more effectively manage your time.



Keep an activity log for 3-5 days. Write down everything you are doing all day long. At the end of the week, you can see how you spend

your time and where you can manage things better.

Rules—In email, you can create rules to auto-route email to a folder in Outlook. Newsletters and information from LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, etc. can be automatically routed to a folder to wait until you have time, keeping your inbox free of clutter.

On your calendar, schedule times to process email. Setting aside specific times will help you manage it more efficiently.

Limit multi-tasking. If you want to finish a task quickly, block time to focus on it. Close email, put the phone on DND and work for that time on the task. You'll be amazed at the quality improvements!

File—If things are in the right place, you spend less time looking for them. Spend time each week putting papers and electronic files in the right place.

Controlling how you spend your time will increase your efficiency and boost productivity. Make it a great 2010!

Review Your LinkedIn Profile

WORK YOUR LINKEDIN PROFILE TO GET THE FULL BENEFIT

Everyone needs a strong LinkedIn profile, but once you've got yours to 80% or more complete, why do anything else?

Reviewing your profile periodically to make sure it is up to date and accurate is important. Here are some areas to check out:

Be sure to include your location in the actual text of the summary or other areas of the profile. Currently your geographic location is set to a city and the surrounding area. Not very specific if someone needs a service provider in a specific area. If you include your area in your profile, the searcher will find you faster than most because others haven't taken that step.

Use the name people know you as—If you always go by Joe or Kate, having a profile with the name Joseph or Katherine isn't going to help people

find you. Also, you can include other names as well (like maiden names) if that will help people find you.

Professional Pictures only—Think how many people will see your profile—do you want an unprofessional picture to be the thing they see first and foremost?

Be sure to have a solid, professional headline—Make this a one-line bio of who you are. This is a great place to include your location if you work geographically or your industry if you work a niche, etc.

Email or Phone optional—There are those that will complain if you include contact information in your name or headline. However, if your contact information is easy to find, more people will use it. We know many people who have gotten the contact because it was the easiest!

Past Positions—When you describe what you did in past positions, write them with an eye to how they support what you are doing now. How did that job four years ago set you up to

serve your clients more effectively today? Those kinds of details can enhance your reputation and reinforce you as an expert.

Websites—When listing websites or blogs, be sure to select "other" when choosing company, personal, etc. This will allow you to name the website / blog yourself instead of just having the word "company" or "my blog" as the title. This is beneficial in both describing what it is and search engine optimization.

Recommendations—Asking for recommendations can be really hard. Instead, write one for someone you feel strongly about and for whom you can write a terrific recommendation. When they receive it, LinkedIn will ask them to put it on their profile and to return the favor!

Finally, schedule time every day or couple days to work LinkedIn. Find new connections, participate in groups, answer questions, or write recommendations. Being active on the site will lead to connections and business you never thought possible!

SnagIt—Snagged Me!

There are certain tools I can't live without and one of them is SnagIt by TechSmith software (www.techsmith.com). This amazing tool was designed to grab screen shots but it does WAY more than that. Although the screen shots are pretty cool too.

Screenshots are extremely helpful when working with someone else. You can take a screen shot of something and send it to the other person so they see exactly what you are talking about (a picture really is worth a

1000 words!).

Once you take the screen shot, you can modify it by adding or erasing text, highlight specific areas, adding shapes or arrows to a picture, or just giving it a finished edge to show it was a part of something bigger.

In addition, you can use those same functions to draw a picture outright, or make changes to an existing picture that needs some cleaning up. People with red eye? Fixed. Need to remove someone from a picture?

Done. Need to crop the picture? No problem.

At the end of the day, this \$40 program gives me full access to a photo editor, many functions of a graphic design program, and easy screen shots. It is a very cool tool!



Modify images with shapes, arrows, erasing or adding text, and more!

Email Marketing (con't)

something more effectively.

Solid, strong content will handle a lot of what causes an email to not be read, but there are some other areas to keep in mind.

Email format—when you format an email, you have to balance looking good with getting through spam filters. While logos and pictures look great when you set them up, many people don't see them when the email arrives (they have to click to download the pictures) or the message doesn't get through at all. If you want to use pictures, it is best to use an email service like Constant Contact as they work hard to make sure email gets through to the recipient.

You will want to think hard about how much content shows up above the end of the screen and how much people will have to scroll to read your message. If you have a large header in your message, that limits the amount of content you can show. And preview windows in Outlook programs show even less so making sure the

reader is grabbed right at the beginning is critical.

To that end, think hard about the subject and title. You want to represent integrity so having a subject that says what you are sending is vital. Receiving an email with a subject line that isn't accurate or is a bait and switch just makes people angry. Be sure your title shows up high enough in the email to be seen as you may not have as much space in the subject. Also, if you want people to keep the emails as reference documents, be sure the subject is consistent each time you send it and make it easy to file.

When selecting an email service, check to see how they have implemented authentication practices. Email authentication is code within the email that allows the receiving system to track the email back to the sender. The receiving system generally assumes if they can track back to the sender, the email is legitimate.

There are a number of factors that spam filters look at when evaluating

an email as spam or not. One issue that many people are not aware of is the number of emails sent by a domain to non-existent email addresses. The theory goes if you send a bunch of emails to people who are no longer with a company, don't have that email or have changed their email address, you must not know them very well. Clean out the bounced email addresses from your address list each time you send a message to avoid being labeled a spammer.

There are many, many ways to help get email through and this just touched on the surface. But, it is still a very powerful tool and should be a staple in your marketing arsenal.

If you need help developing content or emails, contact The Pedestal Group for quotes!

CONTENT IS STILL KING—NO MATTER WHAT SEO EXPERTS TELL YOU

The Pedestal Group

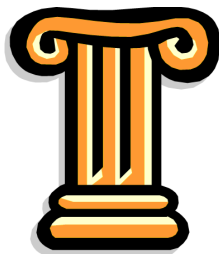
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Putting our clients where they belong.

The Pedestal Group is thrilled to celebrate our first anniversary. It was an exciting year and we believe great things are to come. If you haven't checked out our blog lately, visit www.thepedestalgrou.com to see a series on how to approach your marketing efforts. While many of the points are things you deal with every day, you may not have formally considered how they affect your marketing plan.

We are so pleased we have been able to help over 40 companies in 2009 grow their business, establish new marketing avenues and plan for the future. 2010 will be a great year and we are thrilled to be a part of yours!

Tools to Make 2010 Even Better

New PC tools come out all the time so it is hard to keep up with them all. Here are some of the cool ones we're playing with right now!

Malwarebytes—<http://www.malwarebytes.org/mbam.php>

This spyware and malware cleaning tool rocks. It is easy to use and removes bad stuff automatically.

Putting together a presentation? Find pre-existing PowerPoint slides to use with data already researched! <http://www.slidefinder.net/>



TweetGlide—in the ongoing pursuit of a good tool to manage Twitter, we are currently using TweetGlide

and liking it a lot!

Startup Utility—we are excited about a new find of a package that targets all the different places that launch software as you boot up. Knowing what they are and where they are means you can turn them off and speed up the time it takes to load Windows. No more going to get coffee while you wait!

Need to share large files? <http://drop.io/> Drop.io allows you to upload a file to a password-protected site and then you or another user can download at another location. Much easier to get files back and forth than—ugh—mailing them.

Categories in Outlook—On any given calendar entry, you can assign a category which then colors the entry when you look at the calendar. At a glance you can see how much time you spend on marketing, current customers, administrative tasks, personal stuff, etc. Color coding helps with time management and really let's you see at a glance what you are doing.

These are just some of the tools we are using on a regular basis. And Backblaze, mentioned last month, is proving to be an incredible tool. The whole computer is available any time and completely backed up. It doesn't get better than that!