

A newsletter designed to help you build strong member relationships, retain supporters and improve communication with your patrons.

May 2015

Are Your Letters Personal Enough?

You may already know that personalization draws better response rates. It starts with a closed-face envelope--one that looks like "real" correspondence. Maybe you are even springing for a 2-way match, with a personalized salutation. But why stop there?

Once you're imaging the first page of your letter, don't stop with the greeting...and don't stop with randomly inserting the recipient's name. (They're on to that trick!) Instead, think about how you can segment your lists, and substitute a different message for each audience on page one. Even if it's only the first paragraph, making it resonate for your prospects can lift response dramatically.

"Not with my database." I understand. Most of us don't have special interest flags on our internal prospect data. But think for a moment. Did you get List A from a meeting focused on research? Maybe that letter speaks to their desire to stay on the cutting edge. Is List B your former members? A message saying "We want you back" and telling them about recent changes, and upcoming events they won't want to miss--including member-only awards and grants! If your society has an "old boy" reputation, you can append gender to prospects and highlight recognition of women in the field, or use a female officer as signator.

Variable messages can be easier when you are renting external lists, which often have selection criteria that you can break out as subsets. For example, if you rented a list of researchers, it may have gender selects that you can code separately for a women's message.

We often talk about reaching "target audiences" without tailoring our conversation to their interests. This is a bigger problem when it's a new audience! Why should they care about your organization? What's in it for them if they join? Within your member value proposition, highlight two or three elements that are most valuable for each target. You'll find the priorities differ.

Let's revisit my Society of Hypothetical Scientists:

Target A: Young scientists, of course. The Old Guard thinks they need to appreciate how awesome it is to be ushered into the Society! Sorry, those days are gone. We need to emphasize their career-building network, and the opportunities to publish and be recognized.

Target B: K-12 educators. The Old Guard thinks they need to appreciate how awesome it is to...wait, that's the same message. And while educators may agree it's awesome, they don't have an employer paying their dues ...in fact their employer doesn't even pay for class enrichment materials. Why not focus on how important the teacher is to the future of scientific study, the importance of keeping up-to-date, and promise rich downloadable articles they can share with students?

Target C: The midcareer scientist. How in the world are they surviving without the society for so long? Yes, you will need to find the differentiators--what resources makes his/her job easier; what icons in their specialty are society members, or what credentials, grants, and awards are offered only to members? *In fact, I have raised response just by reminding people that members hear about grant opportunities first...as a variable message on the envelope. Let that be a "teaser" for my next column!*

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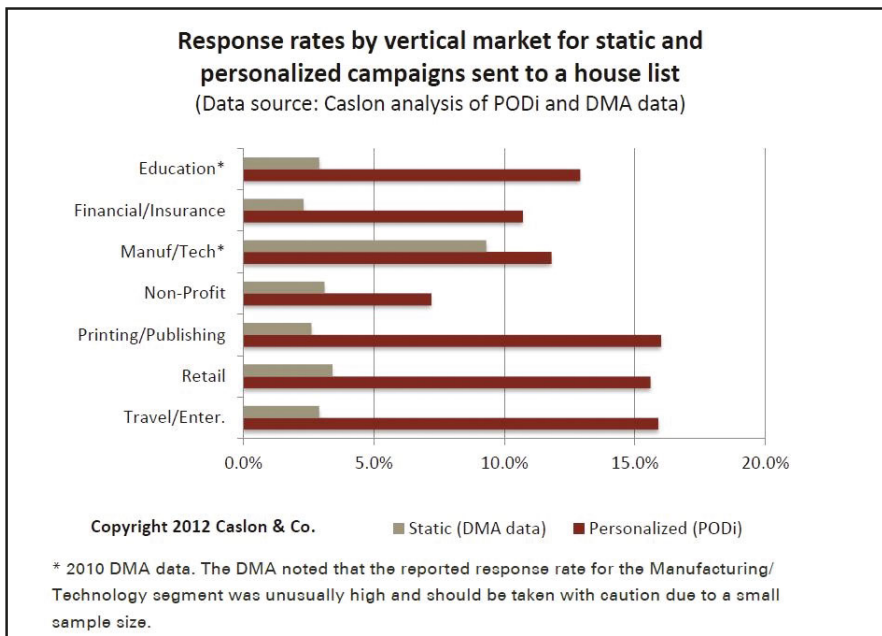
GOOD QUESTION!

We would like to invite you to send us your questions and/or challenges and we will do our best to answer them.

Tripling Response Rates with Personalization?

Caslon and Company's annual benchmark 1-to-1 Response Rate Report has consistently revealed the impact that personalization has on direct mail response rates (as high as 400% in some samples).

Source: www.podi.org



How to choose a dance partner

The music starts. You love this song ... you've requested it. But now, you need a partner! If you're a great dancer, you'll want someone with the skills to make you look good. And if you don't know what you're doing, you want someone who will show you the moves and still make you look good -- not make others laugh at you.

Finding a marketing partner is a lot like choosing a dance partner. It's one thing to find a printer who understands the technology, but quite another when they can suggest strategies for leveraging it to your advantage.

I was discussing some collateral with Sherene at GRC Direct, when she suggested ganging a few projects together to bring the client a better price. We talked about tweaking brochure sizes so a buckslip could be printed on the same sheet -- this is starting to turn into near-free materials!

A dance partner who truly cares about you, what your

budget looks like, what you need to accomplish; one who's in for the relationship. They will always make you look good in the end.

Not everyone can claim that. I once worked with a company whose policy was *"Never call the client's attention to an error"*. Of course the customer owns the accuracy of their project, but who doesn't appreciate when someone with fresh eyes calls to say, *"We just noticed this (spelling, date, low-res image, different logo from the back cover, data anomaly) and want to make sure this is what you intended?"* That is a partnership.

We're all price-sensitive, as are our association members. But just as we say to prospective members, we need to look beyond prices and consider the value of this partnership. I know the people who won't nickel-and-dime me to death; I know the people who will bail me out on an emergency schedule. That's why you read my column here.

-Contributed by Leigh Slayden

Maximize Your Email Marketing Through Simple Segmentation Tactics

Back in 1999, as the airwaves pulsated to Britney Spears belting out *"Baby One More Time"*, and while we all worried about the possibility of a Y2K meltdown, a young marketer by the name of Seth Godin coined the phrase "permission marketing" to describe a megatrend that was taking place. Overnight it seemed that everything had changed.

Just a decade and a half later, permission marketing is no longer a radical new idea -- it is firmly entrenched as a main tenet of how marketing is done in the 21st century. The audience is firmly in control of who has the privilege of communicating with them, and via which channels.

Maximize Your Email Marketing Through Simple Segmentation Tactics (continued from page 2)

The revolution is far from finished there, however; it continues to evolve. Today, your prospective member expects you to deliver your message in a way that's relevant and even personally "fitted" to them. If you do, they will reward you with unprecedented loyalty. If you don't ... well, that "unsubscribe" ("unfriend", "unfollow") button is there for a reason.

Sound daunting? Well, the good news is that satisfying the wants of this demanding new generation has actually become very achievable. You can reach and nurture your prospective members, delivering them exactly the content they desire, using simple segmentation strategies.

Email Service Providers (ESP's) routinely provide the basic segmentation tools necessary for you to customize your campaigns to each individual in your database. You're able to communicate with them in a way that's responsive to who they are, and their previous actions or behaviors.

5 Common Ways to Segment Your Email Lists

- 1. By gender.** This is perhaps the most basic segmenting you can do; it's very simple and can yield quick results. Once you do this, each email can have a male and female version, with different graphics and language to appeal accordingly.
- 2. By age.** Again, the tone and voice of your emails can easily be adjusted to appeal to different age segments.
- 3. By location.** Segment this way to be able to geographically target your audience for events and other local opportunities.
- 4. By trigger.** This kind of segmentation is a little more advanced, but can be extremely effective. It involves noting how a member interacted with your website. A common example is the abandoned shopping cart. Did a prospect begin the process of ordering next year's subscription, or other offer, but not complete it? If they don't return and do so within 24 hours, you can segment them for a specially designed follow-up email campaign.
- 5. By previous purchases.** Once a member has signed up, opted in, or purchased something with you already, they should be segmented for similar offers in the future.

Those are some of the most common ways that savvy marketers segment their databases for email marketing. After you begin sending email campaigns to them, another type of segmentation becomes possible: *behavior-based segmentation*. And thanks to

the magic of automation, once you set up some basic parameters, most of the ongoing work can be done by software using simple "if ... then" parameters.

You can begin by segmenting your list "by email opens". This allows you to quickly determine who didn't open your last campaign (and perhaps who hasn't opened one in a while). Armed with this information you can take action to re-engage with them.

Another way is to segment your list "by email clicks". This allows you to examine the actions taken (or not taken) by individuals once they have opened your email, and adjust your offers and calls-to-action accordingly.

6 Simple Ways to Implement Behavior-Based Segmentation

- 1. BEHAVIOR:** They didn't open your last campaign. **RESPONSE:** Segment those who didn't open, and resend the campaign to them with a different subject line to entice them. Changing the emphasis or tone will often prompt different individuals to open.
- 2. BEHAVIOR:** They opened your campaign, but didn't click on any of your call to action links in the email. **RESPONSE:** Segment them to try a new call to action. Phrase it differently, and consider including multiple links throughout the email that they can use.
- 3. BEHAVIOR:** They've opened multiple campaigns, but they never click through. **RESPONSE:** Prepare a whole new offer for them to consider.
- 4. BEHAVIOR:** They click the unsubscribe button. **RESPONSE:** Redirect them to an "unsubscribe" landing page that offers options to receive mailings less often. You can then automatically segment your list by desired frequency.
- 5. BEHAVIOR:** They do click on your call to action link. **RESPONSE:** Segment the list according to the type of offer they are responding to. Now that you've identified an interest, send them more offers of a similar kind.
- 6. BEHAVIOR:** They frequently click through and respond to offers. **RESPONSE:** Segment the list to send the greatest number of offers to those who are especially responsive.

There's no turning back the clock. Your audience is part of the digital generation who are conditioned to expect a certain level of personal attention. Segmentation is the key that makes it possible for you to interact meaningfully across a diverse membership, and to achieve it relatively simply.

MEMBER-CENTRIC COMMUNICATIONS

A newsletter designed to help you build strong member relationships, retain supporters and improve communication with your patrons.

About Us

GRC Direct specializes in the production of direct mail, print and various communications materials for associations, non-profits, businesses and government agencies. By teaming up with us, you're adding a quarter century of experience to your team, and gaining access to ideas and solutions for connecting with your audience in the most effective ways. We provide all the services you need for the entire production process under one roof, ensuring your project goes out without a hitch.

*Call us today to talk about your next project.
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Always Be Improving:

The Power of Variable Data Printing for Better Testing

Any marketer worth their salt will tell you that what sets great marketers apart from the good ones is testing. The late father of advertising, David Ogilvy, said, "Never stop testing, and your advertising will never stop improving." In his day this could be a painstaking, and often very expensive, proposition (although, as he would argue, not nearly as expensive as failing to do it).

The advances of our digital age have made it so much easier, especially when it comes to the revolutionary technology of Variable Data Printing (VDP).

Advanced Reporting. VDP allows you to do detailed tracking for every campaign, right down to refined

segments and even individual pieces. Customization includes various types of codes, phone numbers, URL's, special offers and other means of tracking that open up so many testing opportunities.

In the old days, creating even two slightly different versions of a marketing piece for a straight A/B test involved high cost. Today, VDP allows you to make unlimited changes to any piece of collateral without blowing the budget. This more sophisticated testing means the potential for constant refinement, leading to increasingly better response rates.

WEBSITES AND BLOGS MENTIONED IN THIS ISSUE:

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