

Searching for the Right Frequency

Two tactics that show relevance helps to determine frequency

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Ben Ardito, & Laurie Stevens

Every day e-marketers remind themselves of their customers' crowded inboxes, shorter attention spans, and general disgust for irrelevant marketing. Some even have nightmare visions of customers skimming past their subject lines in preference of a competitor or readers slamming the delete button in haste. These visuals can disappear if marketers use a few simple tactics to deliver messaging frequencies that are relevant to their customer's behavior.

Relevance is king, in any form, and marketers that apply even basic e-mail-specific segmentation tactics will testify that the effort is worth the return. However, according to JupiterResearch's recent Effective E-mail Marketing report, less than one-third (31%) of e-marketers use e-mail behavioral data such as open and click data to change their strategies. This type of data can be obtained through behavioral segmentation, a process of grouping together individuals that share similar behaviors in order to achieve greater customer relevance.

Behavioral segmentation can help solve one of the most common e-mail conundrums: Sending the right message at the right time. Successful marketers understand this and design tactics based on behavioral data, such as targeted marketing programs and event-based triggers. Doing so requires the analysis of offline and/or online transactional data combined with e-mail behavioral data. The marketer now has a competitive advantage because they can match content, messaging and frequency to the right person; maximizing customer value.

Two behavioral related tactics used to address the appropriate frequency

I. Targeted Marketing Programs

One simple, sometimes overlooked, strategy is right frequency at the right time. Analyzing open and click data combined with assigning customers to their current stage in the Buying Life-Cycle (See Diagram) identifies behavioral patterns that guide targeted marketing programs. This shows the customer that a marketer is paying attention to them and is going to speak when it makes sense to them, not the marketer.

For example, many retail e-marketers understand that increasing frequency for some segments of customers makes sense because if content and messaging is relevant then frequency does not become an issue. However, they also understand that some less-active prospects and lapsed purchasers are going to be lost if kept in the current program. To meet the needs of these segments, marketers adjust the message frequency accordingly. If leads, for example, have not opened or clicked a message after a given time period, they might follow an alternative custom message stream aimed at activating inactives (e.g. potentially withholding e-mails for a short time). See diagram.

2. Event-based E-mail Triggers

JupiterResearch notes that, “few marketers improve message relevancy by tying campaign frequency to triggers that correspond to users’ behavior and/or products’ life cycles.” Event-based triggers give marketers the freedom to be more frequent because relevant communications stand out from the clutter. Triggered messages – stand alone or sequenced – are designed to touch a customer at the most opportune point in their Buying Life-Cycle, whether it is post action/behavior (e.g. a customer has abandoned a shopping cart triggering an e-mail to ask them if they want to save their items), or timed to increase chances of a purchase (e.g. your medium/high RFM customers buy every 60 days, therefore an automatic trigger is sent to that customer around 50 days after their last purchase). It is important to note that these examples work best when the marketer tests the appropriate tactic.

Examples of triggers include:

- Welcome and Thank You messages
- Cross-sell and up-sell messages based on purchase history
- Timed offers/promotions based on clicking patterns
- Abandoned shopping cart reminders
- Reactivation messages to non-active, lapsed customers/openers

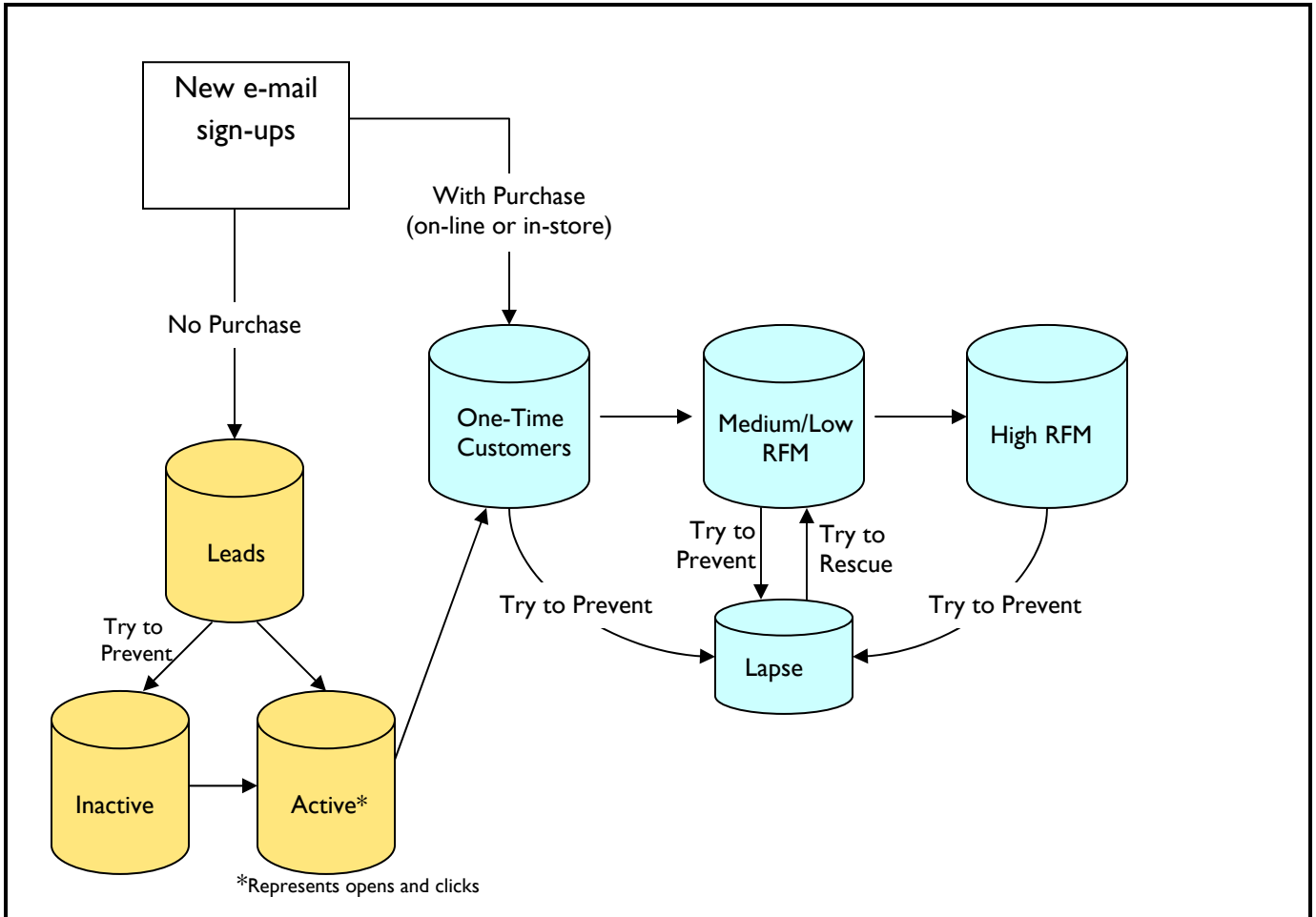
Event based triggers are also a great multi-channel tactic. Catalogers use e-mail triggers to confirm a customer’s catalog request and follow-up to ensure delivery. Other uses of e-mail triggers and sequenced messages are the management of webinar and seminar events, with pre-event triggers used to remind participants of an event, and post-event triggers used to gather feedback.

Whether it be designing a targeting program for specific behavior-based groups or event-based triggers, the right contact strategy improves the chances that an e-mail will get opened and clicked. From there combine the “right frequency, right time” with custom content and personalized messaging and marketers will see a dramatic improvement in their ROI, not only now, but in the future as well.

Additional Notes:

- JupiterResearch also reports that few are doing much advanced personalization (what e-Dialog calls Custom Publishing or Dynamic Content) with the majority of personalization coming in greetings, subject lines, and perhaps one content item. The returns, says JupiterResearch, are worth the effort as e-marketers report increased campaign ROI and long-term customer life-time-value.
- Multi-variable, dynamic content is by far the most effective form of personalization, says JupiterResearch: 48 percent of e-marketers that use multiple. dynamic content see 3 percent or higher conversion rates compared to 43 percent of those that use more simple methods.

Diagram 1: Customer Buying Life-Cycle



About e-Dialog

Established in 1997, e-Dialog is a proven provider of advanced e-mail marketing technologies, products, strategies, and services for permission-based e-mail marketers. The NFL, BMG Music Service, American Eagle Outfitters, TJX, Tesco, Marks & Spencer, and SmartBargains are just a few of the 60 top marketers that rely on e-Dialog’s flexible solutions to efficiently turn complex customer data into actionable and relevant e-mail campaigns that produce unbeatable results. JupiterResearch ranked e-Dialog a leading e-mail marketing service provider in 2004 based on its value and market suitability, and highlighted its reporting, analytics and deliverability features as strong and comprehensive. With offices in Lexington, Massachusetts, and London, England, e-Dialog is a privately held company whose investors include Flagship Ventures and Commonwealth Capital.

To learn more about e-Dialog’s leading technology, services, and solutions contact us at 888-256-7687 or via e-mail at MaxROI@e-Dialog.com.