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**Kristy Short** • Mar. 19, 2012



Email remains one of the best marketing channels for educating and influencing

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savings associated with email marketing. As firms move forward with email as a primary component of their marketing efforts, it's critical to understand what elements are required to make email communications successful and turn leads into profit.

## **Content is King**

A core rule of email marketing is that communications must be content rich. Remember, you are educating prospects on your services and the value of those services, so you have to make sure that every email tells an engaging story, is factual, and highlights your key value propositions.

The term *content marketing* is a good one to know. Content marketing is a strategy that involves the development and distribution of valuable information to engage and attract a defined audience. The objective is to drive leads to your door by peaking their interest enough to take action. That means that content marketing also requires use of effective calls to action (CTA)—that is, clear direction on what you want the prospect to do next (e.g., call your firm or visit a specific page on your website).

It's also important to understand that content should market your firm to prospects...not sell. The sell comes much later. You first have to get the attention of your key audience, educate, and move them to action. Content marketing is considered a “non-interruption” marketing strategy because it seeks to help prospects make better and more informed decisions regarding services required. That means you need to provide valuable information, not a sales pitch. The premise of this strategy is derived from the “quid pro quo” philosophy: if you provide useful information to your audiences, in return they will offer their business and loyalty.

Regardless of what audience you are marketing to it makes sense to integrate the content marketing strategy into your email marketing plan. The more facts and

information you can provide leads, the more likely they are to check you out further.

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to invest ample time explaining the value your firm can offer. Your email communications should be geared toward educating your audience and building relationships. Next, narrow the focus: Are you marketing to a specific niche (e.g., physicians)? If so, you will want to cultivate a message that emphasizes both your tax and accounting experience and expertise working within this niche.

If you don't truly know your audience, there is no way you can communicate with them effectively. Take the time to dig deep and understand the audience's needs before you develop your campaign.

### **Expand Your Online Marketing Program**

Email continues to excel at converting conversations into revenue. There is no question about that. However, once you are up and running, consider expanding into other online marketing areas like social media. These new and innovative marketing channels help you push your message out to your audience effectively — for free!

You will want to take the time to consider how social media channels fit in to your overall marketing strategy. Don't just jump in with both feet before really thinking through a plan to integrate. Consider how these new channels will enhance your brand, improve your messaging, and help build relationship capital and your bottom line. Also be sure that you have the capacity to keep up with your social media activity. If you can't commit for the long-term, it's better to wait until you can.

Follow these tips as you put together your email marketing strategy, and you are more likely to be successful. Without a proper message, a thorough understanding of your audience(s), and a vision for future expansion, you can't begin to turn leads into profitable clientele.

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