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Chapter 5- Making your E Mail Content Valuable
 People share personal info with expectation of getting something valuable

Repetitive email content w/o interest -> boredom.

-> low open rates, lost clicks, unsubscribe requests

Two basic types of value:

an offer that's valuable when acted upon

an inherent offer; content that's valuable in + of itself

Email needs to have a strong call to action to give content a purpose + prompt audience to help you meet your objectives

I. Sending Valuable Offers

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Offers = conditional statements that give audience 1 or more reasons to make immediate decision

+ nec. require a purchase decision to have value

Sometimes offers = nec. just to motivate audience

to consider all the info related to making a purchase

Offers need to be valuable so audience takes action

Because the value of postponing a decision almost always has to do with the fact that people prefer to keep \$\$,

offers usually take the form of discounts + savings

However, some people pref value other type of offers

A. Creating content to promote something

When main idea of email is to promote p+s,

emails need to include descriptions + images that support your promotion

Here are ideas + sources for creating promotional content to include in emails:

1. Ask manufacturers for content - descriptions, images, headlines
 2. Take digital photos - show services in action
 3. Ask customers for descriptions
 4. Ask people to write testimonials
 5. Tell ing their experiences can be relevant to audience + powerful motivators - must have their permission
 5. Check your email
- 519 Keep track of types of emails your customers ^{send} + prospects to give you insight into what interests them
Use their questions to develop answers -> content that promotes how your p/s help solve their problems

B. Cashing in on coupons

Traditionally coupons = printed on paper + redeemed in person, but email coupons take form of:

1. Printable HTML designs on Web page or in email for use in a brick & mortar store
2. Codes that customers enter into form field when making online purchase
3. Links that include HTML code that applies a change in price field of a product database when someone clicks to view product or add it to online shopping cart

Most ESPs allow you to create dotted borders to give coupon content the appearance = clippable
Make sure that coupons on screen have instructions of how to redeem them

Ex. If need to print coupon, cut it out, + bring to store - tell them

Remember coupons in body of email can be forwarded!
 so make sure you're ready to honor its use by anyone
 If you want coupon to be just for a few selected people,
 ask audience to request an official copy, or
 give coupon a unique code, that allows only 1 use/coupon
 Some ESPs allow you to merge database fields so you can
 assign unique IDs to each customer's printable coupon
 Can use same code on every coupon +
 require audience to create an account
 or to login before using code.

520 Think through the financial implications that
 coupon might create if someone abuses your offer
 Including an expiration date
 Limiting the # of redemptions/customer or product
 can help deter attempts to exploit coupon's intent

C. Including incentives

521 Incentives = limited time offers that reward specific action
 No physical redemption process = needed
 = highly flexible. can take the form of
 financial savings or
 special privileges

Ex. low financing rate = initial incentive to buy a car
 membership to exclusive auto club = additional incentive

Incentives = particularly useful when you can
 identify your audience's specific interests + then
 match your audience's interests + your incentive

Ex. if audience likes baseball give 2 free tickets to game
 as incentive for making an immediate purchase

D. Using giveaways

Giveaway = complimentary p/s that = awarded to

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a single winner or limited # of participants
who take a specific action

Give away allow you to offer a chance for a valuable prize
without your having to meet demand for lots of freebies
In addition to rewarding purchases, use give away to
share more of their interests + contact info
respond to surveys + polls
forward your email to friends + colleagues

Remember - when give away involves prize or drawing
make sure it complies with all applicable laws
Look at your state's sec. of state web site

E. Making gains with loss leaders

Loss leader = offer to purchase a p/s that results in
a financial loss to your bus. to gain a customer
= represents profitable revenue in the future

Ex. sell camera for less than competitors to get
profitable printing + accessory sales

Loss leaders = valuable when audience needs to experience
first hand the value of their p/s. before they can
understand the true value inherent in regular prices
= represent a customer acquisition cost, to reserve them
for customers who + purchased before

F. Extending urgent offers

Sometimes p/s = valuable enough to → immmed. purchase
because they fill a need your audience perceives
as an emergency

Ex. landscaping company offers to blow out sprinkler
systems because of a cold front coming
that will freeze pipes + cause water damage

Offers that highlight urgent needs
= most effective when used sparingly

II. Writing an Effective Call to Action

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Even when your content = valuable, customers just scan & delete your emails unless you prompt them with alternatives

If decreasing your deletion rate = 1 of your objectives
every email you send needs a strong call to action

Call to action = a statement that prompts your audience to complete, for more specific tasks in favor of your objectives

Consumers need directions & compelling reasons for taking specific actions, esp. if requires spending time or \$

Generic phrase such as Click Here + model for writing an effective call to action, which acts like a sign that allows your audience to visualize the steps involved to take advantage of your email's content

Words = building block of a strong call to action

quality & # of words chosen significantly affects how many responses your call receives

Most effective way to write a call to action

begins with 1 or more action words - verbs that propose a specific task to your audience

Action-word suggestions + strong verbs to help motivate

- 1) Read your email - read, look, consider, notice, scroll
- 2) Fill out a form: contact, respond, comment, advise
- 3) Save your email - save, keep, store, file, move
- 4) Request info - download, request, learn, email, compare
- 5) Print your email - print, post, bring, hang
- 6) Visit a physical location - drive, come, park, attend
- 7) Forward your email - forward, share, send, refer
- 8) Visit a web page - visit, view, go, navigate
- 9) Make a purchase - buy, add, purchase, own, order
- 10) Register for an event - register, reserve, sign up, R.S.V.P.

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- 11) Phone your business - call, phone, dial
 12) Make an appt - schedule, arrange, meet, set up
- Build on action words to create a strong call to action
1. Combine your action word with the subject + action word
 Order this item
 2. Include place where action happens
 Order this item online
 3. Add the urgency of this action
 Order this item online, before Friday
 4. Finish with an adjective to underscore inherent value in action
 Order this hilarious item online before Friday
- Remember - 1 or more action words + supplementary word
 = a complete call to action

Writing a good call to action = more art than science
 Becoming a good call to action writer = just practice

Tip - turning your action words into links
 = good way to prompt audience to take action (see C4)

III. Giving Your Email Content Inherent Value

Emails containing valuable info based on your knowledge + experience
 = 1 effective over long periods of time
 than emails that only contain offers

The longer your sales cycle + average time bet. repeat purchases,
 the more you need inherently valuable content
 to keep audience subscribed + interested

Inherently valuable content = most valuable when
 content = relevant to audience's stage in buying cycle
 + targeted to audience's interests

To make sure content = appreciated

ask your audience what they're interested in
 before you start creating inherently valuable content

A. Vraag

Following sections show how to create inherently v. content
 or combine it with various related offers

A. Creating content to inform your audience

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When main objective = deliver information, may need to look for facts, data, + expert opinions online to help you make your case and to add an element of authority

Ideas for creating informative content

1. Be an aggregator - let someone else tell the story.

Info. abounds on the Internet, but the chances that your audience will find what you want them to - relatively low

Aggregating ^{info} content = great way to generate content + inform audience with the info you want them to have

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Make sure you have permission to include excerpts

Ask if you can post content on your Web site with a link to an outside source so that people who click links in your email = sent to your site before have opp. to go elsewhere

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2. Have an opinion - summarize outside info for your audience

E.g. fashion designer summarizes ways to tie a scarf audience + have to read all the mag. articles

3. Be an expert interviewer

Share others experiences - break it up into themes or answer individual questions

4. Find a story teller

People love to tell stories + some of it can inform your ^{customers}
Ask current customers about their experiences with your p/s and your business

B. adding tips & advice

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If your p/s require special knowledge to use, or if audience needs a trusted opinion to buy your p/s - including tips & advice in emails can reinforce your expertise

1. Start a tips & advice email newsletter where the bulk of your content = informative

Ex. gardening center - keep gardens alive with v effort or choose plants that need little or no attention
Include related offers for plants mentioned or separate offers after audience has enough info to engage in buying cycle

2. Include 1 tip in each promotional email you send with a link to additional tips on your website

Ex. ^{shop store} location of a secret hiking path in each email links to archive of hiking paths.
Website that ^{page} includes related offers

3. Share your opinion

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If you + audience share same beliefs, sharing opinions = way to strengthen customer relationship

Ex. store selling recycled products likely has audience that's concerned about environment.

Will value opinions about recycling + offers to purchase recycled products

4. Share another opinion - find an expert

5. Dedicate a section of email newsletter to answering customer questions

C. Providing instructions + directions

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If p/s require customers to follow detailed instructions, include info that gives time-saving shortcuts

1. Ask customers to submit creative shortcuts
 2. Include 1 step with details in each email if directions involve several steps
 3. Include instructions that are valuable for reference + ask audience to save them in email boxes
- Ex. promotion for product with 1 yr. guarantee could include return + refund instructions + instructions for problems with recent/future purchases

D. Putting in entertaining content

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1. Retell stories you hear from customers that relate to using p/s - make sure you have permission
- Ex. boat sales customers - How they use boats to hold parties
2. Include links to online videos related to your p/s
- Ex. guitar store links to guitar hero who uses play same guitar store sells

Make sure you have permission to link to content you don't own - + that content = legal

3. Write your own stories about your experiences or knowledge relating to your p/s
- Ex. owner of restaurant writes about trips to Fr. vineyards that inspired wines she features

E. Including facts + research

1. Conduct your own research + publish findings
- Ex. men's clothing poll of women on pink shirts

- (529) 2. Include facts + figures thru external sources with proper attribution

IV. Finding Help with Content Creation

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Marketing companies + content providers can help when

- 1) you don't have time to create email content
- 2) your content + giving you the results you want
- 3) you don't like creating your own content for emails

Services provided include

1. Copywriting, using themes + ideas you provide
2. Formatting content you provide into HTML for email
3. Custom email template design
4. Advice + consulting
5. Image creation, design, + licensing
6. Matching your website content to your emails
7. Archiving email campaigns to your website

For a list of marketing companies + content providers,

ask for list of bus. partners,

educ. partners,

or professional services

} at www.constantcontact.com