



Whitepaper

**Recession Marketing & the Power of Email
Top 10 Tips during the Credit Crunch**

Marketing in a Recession

This is the first time there has been a recession since the dawn of the digital era it will be extremely interesting to see how things will differ for marketers now than in the early 1990's. Count yourself lucky that you are a marketer in the new millennium: you have cheaper, more accountable alternatives to traditional marketing methods which your colleagues a decade ago did not have access to. Namely the internet and email in particular.

The World Wide Web is now more important than ever during these times of economic uncertainty thanks to its innovative and accountable nature not least its value for money, especially when marketers are having to justify every pound spent from their budget. In a recession, the perception is that marketing budgets should be one of the first areas to cut costs, however the reality is that it's absolutely imperative to increase your marketing efforts and doing more for less is key to your success during an economic downturn. This is where online marketing – and email in particular – comes in.

Recent research shows that companies believe email marketing is the tool which has helped them connect with their customers the most with 59% intending to increase the marketing spend on this medium in 2009, with email and e-newsletters becoming the main focus of the majority of organisations¹. Experts have also predicted that online spend will continue to grow in 2009 as marketers ditch traditional methods of marketing in favour of email and online².

Furthermore according to experts, digital commerce will be less affected by the credit crunch than commerce in general and as buyers in the digital market can see quicker turnaround times, demand better payment terms and most importantly see results instantaneously. You need to be swift to react and deliver your customers exactly what they need and when they need it. Email statistics from the last quarter of 2008 prove that there has already been a massive shift of major consumer brands to email with volumes jumping 25% as brands ramped up their Christmas campaigns with less expensive marketing methods³.

To summarise, as a marketer you must justify your existence by delivering sales and tracking revenues quickly and cheaply, and therefore moving away from less measurable, traditional forms of marketing towards online and digital marketing is definitely the direction you need to move in if you and your organisation are to survive the recession.

¹ e-consultancy and cScape's Online Customer Engagement Report 2009

² ZenithOptimedia

³ AWCM Index

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Here are our top 10 tips for marketing during the credit crunch:

1) Make the bosses understand the value of marketing

Marketing is one of the key lifelines to surviving a recession and helps you to reach new customers as well as target existing ones cheaply and effectively. It should be seen as an investment, not an expense so allocate your budget wisely by understanding the value of email.

2) Focus on measurable marketing

During a recession it's fair to say that marketing tools which fail to provide measurable ROI will fall victim to a cull so focus on relationship-based tools such as email and web analytics which can deliver same-time results. Concentrate on spending where it can have the greatest impact.

3) Put more intelligence in your email marketing

When you have to make do with less the performance of your marketing campaigns will depend on two things, firstly the quality of your contacts and secondly accurate targeting. The good news is that by utilising a professional email marketing software the costs of realising this are low compared to the benefits you will reap. Through profile enrichment and segmentation capabilities that email software provides increased clicks and sales conversions are guaranteed.

4) In house v. outsourcing

Outsourcing can more often than not be better value for money than keeping things in-house. Look to outsource to a professional organisation that has unquestionable industry knowledge and experience as well as a proven track record in delivering results in all areas of email and online marketing.

5) Quality vs. Quantity

Increasing turnover from email during hard times may seem easy – just increase the frequency of your send outs. However, if the content isn't relevant you'll only increase your churn rates. You need to treat your customers as individuals and provide them with offers tailored to them. To find the right balance between quality vs. quantity triggered emails are the answer. With this approach, you can take a step back and allow your email software to automatically deliver emails based on user behaviour. Applications of triggers are numerous including, shopping basket abandonment, registration, loyalty bonuses, and purchase confirmation amongst others

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6) Make sure your website TALKS to your customers

Traffic driven to your website will come from many sources such as Adwords, affiliate programs, email newsletters etc. Depending on the quality of traffic, some people will purchase but the majority of traffic won't convert immediately but will generate leads for your business. As such, you need to ensure your website can qualify those anonymous visitors into different quality leads and capture the email addresses of hot leads. If you have your email marketing and web analytics integrated, you'll then be able to send those website visitors highly targeted email offers based on online behaviour. This will not only generate higher conversions but significantly increase the ROI of your overall online media spend.

7) Customer Service

Never underestimate the value of excellent customer service. Make your customers feel special and they will come back to you to spend more money if they're happy with the service you have delivered. Make sure you're engaging them. Talk to your customers about how the credit crunch is affecting them and then address their concerns with relevant and personalised offers. This will only help to strengthen your bond with them further.

8) Remember to make the best of what you've already got

Remember it's cheaper to look at your existing resources rather than trying to source new ones. Allocate some more time to marketing to the prospects and clients you already have. Get to know their needs and carry out some lead-nurturing campaigns offering good deals and new content as well as cleaning your database with further profiling.

9) Make yourself as appealing as possible

A buyer is going to be more cautious during the credit crunch and therefore it will be tempting for them to be attracted to safe options. Customer references, testimonials and accolades can make your organisation more appealing to a nervous prospect. Providing access to whitepapers and best practice advice is a good way of showing that you are experienced and knowledgeable in your field.

10) Remember Pareto's Law

As we all know, the rule of thumb is that 80% of your business comes from 20% of your clients so this is well worth remembering when allocating your budget and resources.

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About eCircle

eCircle is one of Europe's largest digital direct marketing companies, owning the most comprehensive permission marketing database for email campaigns and lead generation as well as a state-of-the-art technology solution for digital direct marketing. Since 1999 eCircle has stood for innovative and efficient online marketing for customer acquisition and retention. Leading organisations such as Argos, HBOS and Samsung trust our consistent customer care, our long-term experience and not least our highly motivated and committed employees. The company has more than 200 employees, with headquarters in Munich and additional offices in London, Paris and Milan.

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