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### Back to basics – the five fundamentals of SEO for etailers

Search Engine Optimisation remains a hot topic of discussion for brands and, particularly in the current market, the question of how to convert search rankings into sales is one that all marketers are either asking or being asked explains Sameer Shamsuddin, chief technology officer, International of GSI Commerce.

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### Email marketing and building surveys

Online surveys are one of the most effective means of identifying your customer's opinions and needs. It is not good enough to just assume you know what your customers are looking for. The results of surveys can be used to review and realign your current programmes to ensure you are actually meeting the ever-evolving expectations of your customer. eCircle's UK managing director Simon Bowker explains more.

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## Email marketing and building surveys

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Online surveys are one of the most effective means of identifying your customer's opinions and needs. It is not good enough to just assume you know what your customers are looking for. The results of surveys can be used to review and realign your current programmes to ensure you are actually meeting the ever-evolving expectations of your customer. eCircle's UK Managing Director Simon Bowker explains more.

Many customers really appreciate being asked their opinion and are happy to provide you with valuable insights that will help you to improve your business. eCircle's recent work with high street retailer Argos, demonstrated the power of asking customers for their input. The campaign generated the high conversion rate of 10% and a very low unsubscribe rate of 0.05%. Here is why you need to be using surveys as part of your email marketing communications and some of the golden rules for getting it right and maximising your return on



### Survey design

Before you begin, take some time to really consider what information you want to know about your subscribers and how you are going to get that information. You don't want to be stuck looking at half answers and murky results wishing you'd approached it differently. Also show that you value your customers by only asking questions that you really want to know the answer to. To get the best insight be careful of accidentally using leading questions which will skew your results. The length of your survey is also a key factor. How many people do you know who have the time to fill out endless pages of questions? If in doubt, keep it short, sweet and specific!

### Test your survey

This may sound obvious but it is absolutely vital that before sending your survey, you test it properly. Ask people who weren't involved in its creation to take the survey. They may spot things you hadn't even noticed or provide useful suggestions to improve the design.

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### **Follow up on customer feedback**

Your survey really comes in to its own once you've had a chance to process the results and can follow up with your customers. People like to know that you've listened to them and appreciate having an input. One quick and easy way of doing this is to set up a personalised email thanking them for taking part. Further down the line if their feedback has played a role in the implementation of a new feature or service you might also want to let them know. This will strengthen the relationship and build customer loyalty.

### **Deliver on responses**

If you've left a space at the bottom of your survey for additional comments, make sure you deliver on requests. If your email marketing software is integrated with your survey solution, delivering on customer responses is much easier. Customer data gathered from surveys can be fed back into your database, allowing you to use the information to send a suitable automated email based on each user's response. Combining these elements is a powerful technique which will help increase response rates and ultimately drive future sales.

### **Reward responders**

Thank your subscribers for taking part with a reward. This could be something like entry into a free prize draw or a discount, but equally subscribers might be keener to receive a copy of relevant industry whitepapers. As long as your incentive is relevant and appeals to your target audience, this should encourage response rates. Subscribers will also feel like their time has been spent wisely and you value their contribution.

If you follow these five simple rules you can make sure your survey deliver useful relevant results for your company as well as making your customers feel appreciated. Make your email marketing program truly interactive rather than only just sending all the traffic one way.