

Editorial Articles

Crossing Borders with your Email Marketing Campaigns

Key Industries:

Business
Internet

Key Sectors:

e-mail marketing
eCRM

06.08.2009

Communicating to customers on a global level requires more time and thought than simply translating your campaign and firing it out. Using digital direct marketing to speak to your customers across Europe or even around the world faces a number of issues. Here are some of the key challenges that must be overcome to have truly successful cross border campaigns.

Personalisation

In the UK, over the last few years there has been a lot of focus on personalisation: "The more personalised the greater the success" - that's what we've been taught, right? But this isn't necessarily the case in the international marketplace. In some countries or societies, recipients may feel the personalised message is too artificial or too informal for them. Others may be more concerned with privacy than consumers in the UK, so displaying your depth knowledge of who you're sending to may actually put them off.

Think Local Act Global

Another common mistake is to adjust the campaign according to the country but not segment lists thoroughly. Would you target a London based young professional with the same message as a Yorkshire farmer? Probably not. Our European and international counterparts are no different. Geographical, social and cultural divides will crisscross every single country, so you must consider the dialect, currency and language preferences your customers and prospects may have to ensure your communications are appropriate to them.

Timing is everything

The time of day in which emails hit customers inboxes can have a dramatic effect on response rates. It's important to pay even closer attention to this when we're broadcasting to multiple countries. Be aware of the different working hours people keep (e.g. siesta time in Spain), key holiday seasons, national holidays and time zones; then plan your broadcasts accordingly. The key is keeping your messages timely and relevant to whatever is affecting your customers and prospects.

Test, retest, and then test again!

You simply cannot underestimate how important testing various designs, content, subject lines, images etc is. The success of your campaigns depend on your ability to tailor your emails most appropriately to your intended recipients and you can only do this by testing what delivers you the greatest response. In an international context, this is even more amplified as the triggers to action vary according to social, cultural and professional preferences. Remember that what works well in the UK is not guaranteed to work overseas.

Tailoring made easy

Making all these local changes to your campaign may sound like a lot of work. But it doesn't have to be. Take advantage of some of the sophisticated but user friendly email broadcasting tools there are available on the market such as eC-messenger. These tools allow you to incorporate dynamic content which is matched to user/country preferences and carry out highly targeted segmentation. In addition, some Email Service Providers come with ready-made agreements and relationships with ISP's not only in the UK but internationally therefore aiding the deliverability of your emails and giving you a greater chance at success.

Foreign Laws

When you are sending emails out from one country into another you must be aware of the various legal nuances, rules and regulations that apply to the recipient country as you are legally responsible to abide by these as well as laws in your own country. In particular it is crucial you are aware of the current data protection, privacy and use of personal data laws.

It's easy to think that the world is getting smaller. But marketers must remember that even the closest countries don't necessarily share the same social and cultural behaviours. The principles we've developed to give us greater success with our UK campaigns should not be thrown out altogether but rather reassessed and checked that they still make sense for the destination of the campaign. Making the most of segmentation, personalisation and testing, amongst other factors, can go a long way to improving your global email marketing.

Author: Simon Bowker, Managing Director, eCircle