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DoubleClick 2001 Consumer Email Study

Executive Summary

Permission-based email marketing works. This consumer email study, commissioned by DoubleClick, demonstrates conclusively that email has become a vital customer communication tool and a key to online shopping.

88% of users have purchased either online or offline as a result of receiving a permission-email.

70% plan to use email to assist with their holiday shopping.

Goals

The study examined consumer usage and acceptance of permission-based email.

The study answers the following questions:

1. How has permission-email affected consumer behavior and shopping patterns both online and offline?
How important is email in driving repeat purchases?
2. What topics most interest consumers when receiving permission-email?

Summary of Findings

Impact on Consumer Behavior

Permission-email encourages consumers to act, whether it is to visit a Web site

(98% of respondents), forward a message (78%), play a game (59%), register in a sweepstakes (85%) or watch a video (63%), but most of all, it spurs them to buy online and offline.

Impact on Consumer Shopping

Consumers are buying more often and spending more money online and they have come to expect email to help them get information about special offers, buy from familiar merchants and receive confirmation and shipping information on their purchases. It is clear that permission-email is becoming essential to establishing customer loyalty and increasing customer lifetime value.

Shoppers cite ongoing email communications as one of the primary reasons for repeat purchases.

Permission email is now the most popular way for consumers to find out about new products.

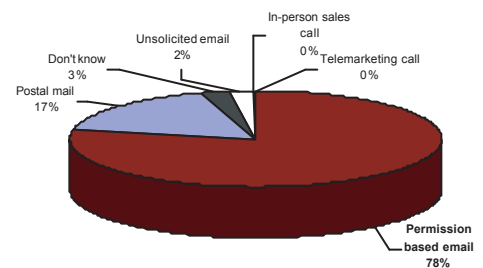
- 91% of users have purchased online in the past year up from 71% in 2000. Respondents made an average of 15.4 purchases in the past year. The average amount spent by consumers online in the past 12 months has increased by 36%, from \$750 to \$1,023.
- 88% of consumers reported that they made a purchase either online or offline as a result of receiving a permission-email (80% purchased online and 68% purchased offline). 37% of shoppers clicked through an email and purchased immediately, up from 20% last year. 70% plan to use email to assist with their holiday shopping.
- 86% have purchased from the same online merchant more than once, consistent with 2000 results (83%). Among those who made repeat purchases from an online merchant, better prices and ongoing email communications were the primary reasons.
- Permission-email is now the most popular way for consumers to find out about new products, services or promotions (65%). Last year, respondents indicated the Web was their preferred method of learning about new offers.

Areas of Consumer Interest

When asked what types of permission-based email they receive, 71% indicated they currently receive information on special offers from online merchants. 27% receive offers from local retailers with an additional 38% interested in receiving this type of email. Local news is also in similar demand. Other top areas of interest include household tips/recipe/crafts (57%), humor (55%), travel (55%), entertainment (49%) and weather (47%).

More than 80% of respondents prefer to receive specials/offers from online merchants or local retailers/restaurants on a weekly or monthly basis. The majority of users prefer to receive weather, local news, humor, sports, and stock information on a daily basis.

Preferred method of contact from favorite online merchants



Other Usage of Permission-Email

Most users (65%) are receptive to getting activity statements via email and to a lesser extent, bills (44%).

54% of respondents receive and read online versions of offline publications via email. In fact, 13% of those that read online versions of offline publications have cancelled their print subscriptions.

Conclusion

Permission-email has become a critical element of companies' marketing mix to communicate with consumers and drive sales. Effective permission-email marketing will require understanding diverse consumer interests, respecting personal information and managing contact frequency. Companies that establish successful ongoing customer relationships through email will reap the rewards of customer loyalty and healthy sales growth.

Background and Audience Profile

DoubleClick DARTmail commissioned a survey from NFO WorldGroup in August 2001 to assess how consumers currently use email, in particular, permission-based email, as part of an ongoing initiative to provide customers with important email trend and usage analysis. A prior study was undertaken in March 2000 providing benchmarks for comparison.

1,015 consumers participated in the study, ranging in age from 18 to 65+, with an average age of 45 and an equal male/female demographic split. All but 2% of the survey participants indicated they went online at least daily to search the Web or send and receive emails and 98% already receive permission-based emails.

For information on how DARTmail Technology Solutions can help your company develop profitable customer email relationships, please email dartmail@doubleclick.net or call 866-459-7606.

For a copy of the full research report, please call (866) 459-7606.