Eight must-have qualities of email marketing software

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Email marketing is one of the smartest and most cost-effective modes of marketing available. With the right email marketing software, the process can be easy, productive, and cost-effective. In a 2010 survey, nearly 40 percent of industry executives identified email as the advertising channel performing most effectively for them. So, what are some features a good email marketing software package, or services package, must have? Here's a quick summary.

Simple, easy-to-use

A good email marketing software or services package should be user-friendly and uncomplicated, taking the work out of creating direct-marketing emails and designing marketing campaigns that are engaging and effective. Helpful features include a WYSIWYG editor ("What You See Is What You Get"), email templates and the option to upload your own HTML. The system should guide you through the process, step-by-step so that youâ€™re never surprised with the final product.

Flexibility

Not only should the system offer hundreds of email content and formatting templates to choose from, the templates should be really flexible and open to editing and customization. You'll also want enough space to add any images you wish, making the email fit the look and feel of your companyâ€™s image and brand. A great email marketing software should allow you to do that.

Social media marketing

The software should be integrated with your social media activities, directing traffic from your social media to other marketing efforts, like into a landing page of a subscription form. From one place (like a dashboard), you should be able to quickly create, schedule, publish, manage, and measure all your social media campaigns â€” Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, whatever.

Event Marketing

Your email marketing software should be able to help you host, publicize, manage and promote an event in a user-friendly way. It also helps if it allows you to sell tickets for fee-based events. Optimally, the software would provide a kind of online box office, including a shopping cart and a ticket widget on your website, blog, or Facebook page. For example, check out Vertical Responseâ€™s email marketing software which has event marketing capabilities.

User-friendly, understandable analytics

You need to be able to calculate the ROI, so any email marketing software should provide very strong reporting and analytics features. You'll want to be able to gauge the performance of your email campaigns, comparing them with other campaigns, especially ones within your industry. The system should provide you with valuable reports on critical marketing campaign aspects like number of reads, links that are clicked, forwarded emails, unsubscriptions, and bounced items. It's also useful to have a testing option, which provides an opportunity for you to evaluate critical aspects of your marketing campaign and enables you to improve your email marketing strategy.

Secure email delivery

The system should include well-proven, reliable procedures and protocols to make sure that every user's security is safeguarded and spam is prevented. This includes features such as feedback loops to suppress spam and a component to test words and phrases automatically, flagging those that spam filters typically identify. And it should provide at least several major authentication protocols to thoroughly authenticate each user's email. See, for example, leading delivery rates for email maketing software.

Competitive pricing

To ensure a high ROI (40-to-1 or higher), pricing should be competitive and flexible, and, of course provide lots of value for your dollar. The email marketing software should offer alternative types of pricing structures â€" for example, based on sending unlimited emails to all the addresses in your contact list, or based on a set amount per email sent. If it's based per email, the package should offer either a pay-as-you-go plan or a bulk plan, priced by how many email "credits" you want, and charged periodically (usually, month-to-month).

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With the right software, email marketing can be an extremely-cost effective, affordable business development tool which can assist you in nurturing valuable long-term relationships with your clients. There's a wide range of email marketing software systems available, with a wide variety of features, but the main question you need to thoroughly evaluate is: what does your specific operation really need? For more information about email marketing or a email marketing software, visit a www.VerticalResponse.com.

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