

Holiday Hints

Small Businesses Reap Holiday Rewards That Last All Year

(NAPSA)—Holidays are a big gift to small businesses that know how to leverage seasonal spending opportunities. Despite rising gas, oil, and energy prices, consumers still feel generous when it comes to gift giving. For example, The National Retail Federation expects total holiday retail sales to increase 5 percent over last year for a whopping \$435.3 billion in holiday spending.

As consumers plan their seasonal and holiday shopping, retailers are charging forward in their pursuit of customers. One method that's paying dividends for savvy companies is e-mail marketing. Not only does it make the most out of the spike in holiday traffic and spending, it also creates a positive corporate image. Here are some tips to get started:

1. E-mail early and build your list. Capture the attention of early shoppers by planning and sending your campaigns in advance of the holiday shopping rush. In addition, the holidays are a great opportunity to build your e-mail list given the increased business and customer interactions. Remember: these tactics can be employed for the many seasonal events throughout the year.

2. E-mail regularly. Studies show that it can take up to six contacts before a prospect makes a purchase decision, so one-off e-mails are less effective than regular communications. Being top of mind for your customers is the first step towards repeat business.

3. Remember the basics.

- Ask for permission
- Target the needs of your customers
- A recognizable "from" line with an interesting subject line
- A sense of urgency (e.g., "Act



E-mail marketing can be a great way for small businesses to build relationships with their customers and increase sales.

now and also receive," "Today only").

4. Send an e-mail holiday greeting. Sending your season's greetings via e-mail, instead of postal mail is considerably less expensive and a great time-saver. In addition, it's a great way to thank your customers for their patronage.

5. Use a reputable e-mail marketing service. There's no need to go it alone. There are Web-based e-mail marketing services, such as Constant Contact, that are designed and priced for small businesses and organizations with limited budgets. These services also make e-mail marketing easy for the less technology-savvy user.

"Retailers and other businesses know that proactive communication with customers is the key to increased sales," says Gail Goodman, chief executive officer of Constant Contact. "This is even truer during busy holiday shopping seasons when smaller businesses are competing for consumer attention and dollars. E-mail is the easiest, most affordable and effective tool for reaching out to customers and generating higher revenue."

To learn more about e-mail marketing, visit www.constantcontact.com.