

How and Why Email Marketers Should Integrate Social

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When social media use started to take off, many posed the question, "Is social media going to kill email?" Now, email marketers realize they can integrate the two channels by using social media as a catalyst for greater marketing relevancy and results.

Email marketers can drive measured, improved campaign performance by...

1. Optimizing social sharing within email by using social calls to action to engage consumers
2. Gathering insight from key conversations to ensure greater email relevance
3. Integrating testing across email and social to discover what type of content works best and where

The first step to integrating social and email marketing is to think of your email messaging in terms of social media, because they have significantly different natures. Email marketing is often used to push content out, whereas social media is much more conversational and it's initiated by the customer.

To better align the two, ask yourself: Is the content of this email share-worthy? Is this content, both the message type and its structure, sharable—or should I share a message that's different from the email itself?

It's important to take that a step further because merely planting social share buttons at the bottom of an email won't necessarily add value to the campaign. Featuring a social call to action in the email, however, should drive stronger results.

For example, use special offers or other activities exclusive to the social venue to entice consumers to engage on both the email and social fronts. That will support stronger engagement with key consumers across channels.

None of that matters, however, if marketers aren't paying attention to the social insights they gain from the customer in an effort ostensibly to improve their campaign over time.

And there is so much to be learned from the social conversation.

What can email marketers learn from social media conversations?

The key is not to merely track the share-button activity but, rather, to pay attention to the insights gained from how your customer interacts on social media sites. Social media allows marketers to learn from people's conversations about a specific topic or brand.

Insights gained from social media can help marketers improve their email campaigns by answering the following questions:

- What are important or hot topics for my audience?
- What are the right tone and message for my marketing outreach?
- What is the viral impact of email content?
- Which social venues are influencers interacting in?
- What type of content drives more sharing?
- Which social environments are best for my target audience?
- What are top venues for driving action and conversion?
- Are email and social media able to drive each other's growth?

Ultimately, the question that's answered is this: Can the two channels be used to increase overall marketing performance? Yes: using both channels in a smart, integrated way can lead to stronger engagement and response.

How can social insights improve your email campaign?

Although the customer data gained from social media helps in email segmentation, it goes beyond just that. If marketers use social media as a research channel instead of just a distribution channel, they can treat it as a focus group by using the information gained to tune and optimize email content.

Understanding who's talking about a product or service and what they're saying enables marketers to make recommendations accordingly. Instead of looking at just basic email reports and attempting to tailor campaigns based on click-throughs and open rates, marketers can gain feedback and insight on what customers truly care about based on their social media conversations. Reviewing social conversations can also help improve subject lines, content, and specific offers.

Marketers are ultimately trying to understand what drives customer action, and social media conversations provide an opportunity to understand that behavior because they act as the feedback loop for campaigns. Analyzing conversations before and after campaigns will make them more effective, which ultimately increases ROI.



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