



POV: This Holiday Season, Plan Ahead to Cut Through Retail Email Noise

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BEST PRACTICES FOR SENDING HEALTHCARE EMAILS DURING THE HOLIDAYS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The holidays are a time of many excesses, and the volume of email landing in consumers' inboxes is no different. With special offers and Black Friday specials pouring in, healthcare marketers find themselves in competition with major retailers for email opens. On average, brands will send an estimated 66 emails between the months of [November and January](#), and inbox saturation is increasing compared to previous years. During the 2013 holiday season, [brands sent 13 percent more](#) emails than the 2012 season.

Healthcare marketers should be advised that, through the end of the calendar year, grabbing consumers' attention via email will be even more difficult and requires a thoughtful approach.

SEASONAL EMAIL BEST PRACTICES

To compete with the onslaught of holiday messages, there are a number of ways healthcare marketers can cut through retail email noise to help ensure they get what they wished for this season:

HAVE GOOD LIST HYGIENE

Prior to any database communication for a high-volume season, it is important to observe database and list hygiene. Working with a third-party data hygiene vendor will ensure the validity of email addresses and eliminate any corrupt data.

BE FRUGAL

Fewer — but more impactful — messages is a good rule of thumb for the holidays. And for successful delivery and avoidance of being blacklisted, marketers should selectively plan which registrants from the database will receive the holiday communication. Engaged registrants should be isolated and sent the email well before other recipients. This allows for ISPs to notice whether users are actively opening and engaging with the emails, proving relevance of the messaging to recipients.



GO MOBILE

In 2013, 51 percent of opens were on mobile devices, and this figure could increase 8 percent in 2014. These findings reinforce the need for mobile-friendly optimization and innovation. It's estimated that 71 percent of users who receive emails that do not "look good" on their phones or mobile devices delete them. The best way to ensure that emails are providing the most relevant experience for the largest audience is to adhere to a responsive design. Responsive design allows users to engage with the emails via the device of their choosing.

PROVIDE PERSONALIZATION AND RELEVANCY

Relevant communication with customers — whether HCP, patient or caregiver — should speak to the specific individual. Incorporating their name within the subject line or message can create a more personal interaction, ultimately increasing email engagement. And though healthcare marketers typically aren't offering holiday deals, they can, for example, provide relevant holiday recipes, advice for alleviating holiday stress and other tips for keeping disease management as uncomplicated as possible during this busy time of year.

CONCLUSION

As consumers get into the holiday spirit, health and healthcare can understandably be furthest from their minds. The 2014 holiday season is guaranteed to be filled with high delivery volumes and oversaturated inboxes. For healthcare marketers trying to deliver a message, it may not be the most wonderful time of the year, but with a few best practices and careful planning, the remaining days can still be merry and bright.

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