WHY EMAIL AND SOCIAL CAMPAIGNS SHOULD BE INTEGRATED

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Date : January 17, 2016

Integrating data and processes across business departments is hardly reinventing the wheel, and for years **brands** have been moving away from silos and toward overlapping infrastructures. While some companies are getting better at adopting integration, many still fail to replicate this merger when it comes to **marketing** outreach. In particular, many marketers struggle to craft email campaigns in tandem with other **digital** channels like **social** media.

As **brands** begin to bring together information about shoppers across **social** and email, they can generate personalized, timely and relevant content and campaigns. The more marketers know about those they are reaching out to the better, and a cross-channel approach to **digital** outreach offer retailers this degree of insight. Just as it's helpful to know personal details about your coworkers to improve professional connections, when **brands** learn more about consumers from multiple perspectives they can develop stronger online relationships.

From links and **social** share buttons to **brand**ed hashtags, many avenues exist for marketers to integrate their existing **social** and email efforts. And—as reported by the 2016 Yesmail **Marketing** Channel Report "Back to Basics: Retailers are not Ready for Cross-Channel Integration"—nearly a third of retailers surveyed cited integrating email with other **digital** channels as a top three email **marketing** priority for 2016.

However, while it's true that **social** and email are intertwined more than ever before, 'more' is relative here considering how disparate the two once were. With the sustained growth of **social** heading into 2016, today's **brands** can be doing so much more to productively link email with these channels. In order to increase email's ROI, marketers must use **social** to influence, expand and measure their campaigns' capabilities. **Social** channels are powerful **marketing** tools that can boost email's effectiveness and reach, so long as marketers allow the two to work together.

The Power of Social Integration

With over a billion **Facebook** users and hundreds of millions of tweets sent every day, **social** media becomes a spider web of interaction points for **brands** when integrated with email. While existing subscribers may be the center of this network, **brands** can incorporate features like

social share buttons into their email content to reach new consumers as well.

For example, if a marketer deploys a buy-one-get-one-free offer with an embedded **social** share button, loyal subscribers may think "my friends will like this" and post the **brand**ed news or a promotion to **Twitter** or **Facebook**. **Brands** can then track these shares, monitor activity and reach out to potential new customers. What's more, **brands** can reward active sharers with additional deals or discounts. This means that marketers can strengthen relationships with existing subscribers while simultaneously building connections with new ones. Even if shoppers never go on to make a purchase themselves, every sharer becomes a highly valuable **brand** advocate. The effects of **social** sharing have the potential to multiply over and over again as a sharer's friends engage and share, too.

Due to the nature of **social** media, users are more likely to take note of and appreciate [content shared](content%20shared) by their friends. So long as content is interesting enough to share and can engage with a clear and relatable call-to-action (e.g. a **social** share about "Star Wars" would be relevant right now), email marketers can use **social** channels to motivate loyal shoppers to share **brand**ed conversations and gain traction in the **social** space.

How Big Data Analytics Brings All Channels Together

Although marketers can already analyze consumers' email and **social** habits separately, bringing them together offers **brands** a more holistic understanding of what shoppers want, and what campaigns are working across all available channels.

In the past, **social** media monitoring revolved around analyzing sentiment. A **Twitter** campaign was deemed successful if the majority of responses to it were positive, or a **Facebook** campaign was considered a failure if it didn't exceed its intended threshold of likes and shares. Determining attitude and counting likes and shares is certainly important, but now—in order to compete with the high volume of noise across all **social** channels—these metrics alone are no longer enough. Rather than focusing on how users are immediately reacting to a **digital** campaign, marketers must look at how campaigns are working over time.

Thanks to the evolution of [Big Data](Big%20Data), **brands** can do just that. With every user tracked across **social** and email, **brands** can add consumer information to a growing database that generates a holistic and omnichannel view of shoppers. Marketers can use these **digital** footprints to guide future campaigns and improve performance, both in store and online. For instance, during the holiday season, consumers are looking for deals and are likely to engage with emails that feature promotions or coupons. As **brands** register this high level of engagement and interaction, they can begin to send out similar promotions to those same subscribers via **social** media. And this approach works in reverse, too. Whenever someone engages with specific content on **social**, **brands** should send those same consumers similar content via email. By doing so and tracking consumer trends on multiple channels, marketers can improve campaign performance overall.

By looking at campaigns from both a macro and a micro level, marketers can improve their interactions with subscribers and begin to better understand why consumers act the way they

do. As **brands** learn more about shoppers and become accustomed to their behaviors, they can target outreach with personalized communications on both **social** and email. In addition to mapping likes and share, trends informed across integrated campaigns and Big Data analytics are more thorough representation of customer preferences, perceptions and sentiments that **brands** can act upon.

As **brands** move away from silos and toward overlapping departments, their campaigns will naturally follow suit. However, companies should always be actively seeking out opportunities to further develop their strategies for campaign integration. **Social** analytics is an ever-evolving field that the most successful **brands** must know how to work with, and—as e-commerce continues to grow—retailers can leverage integrated **digital** campaigns to connect with shoppers and grow future sales opportunities.

Throughout 2016, marketers need to master the merger of email with **social** so that they can then push email further into other channels, such as direct mail, SMS and mobile apps. Integrated **social** and email campaigns is just the beginning for marketers. However, it's an important first step and one that **brands** cannot underestimate.

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