

Reconnecting with Lost Online Customers

The Case for Integrating Dynamic Print and E-mail for Effective Multi-Channel Marketing

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Reconnecting with Lost Online Customers

The Case for Integrating Dynamic Print and E-mail for Effective Multi-Channel Marketing

E-mail marketing directors are under constant pressure to increase the performance of their campaigns. When an online customer is unreachable because they changed their e-mail address, stopped reading e-mails or their messages are being filtered, options are limited. With no effective way to reengage out-of-touch customers, marketing directors have come to accept that some customers are lost forever.

But that doesn't have to be the case. Marketers can now combine the personalization of e-mail with the impact of direct mail to recapture lost customers. Dynamically printed campaigns can help bring back lost customers by contacting them with a relevant and timely printed message.

This white paper examines the challenges of reconnecting with lost customers and introduces the benefits of integrating dynamic print with your e-mail marketing to create more effective multi-channel campaigns.

Marketers Need to Cut Through the Noise to Reach Customers

Customers are inundated with marketing messages from many sources, including e-mail, television and radio. The average American consumer is exposed to more than 3,000 marketing messages each day, across all media. This barrage extends to the inbox, where marketers are fighting one another for consumers' attention. Despite the inbox deluge, sending and receiving e-mail are still the most common online activities. E-mail is also the most popular way for businesses to communicate with their customers, with 91 percent of all retailers now using e-mail marketing.

To cut through the noise and reach consumers, marketers must make their messages more relevant, timely and personalized. Marketing professionals are beginning to explore integrating multi-channel campaigns that blend the unique strengths of e-mail and direct mail to drive consumers back to the web and advance the in-store experience.

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Consumers are bombarded with messages from numerous channels, leading many to ignore e-mail promotions...

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¹ Godin, S. (1999). *Permission Marketing*.

² MarketingSherpa. (2006). *Email Marketing Benchmark Guide 2006*.

³ Ibid.

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With traditional contact methods, there is no easy, automated or trackable way to reacquire lost customers... ”

The Challenge of Keeping Customers Engaged

Marketers are continually challenged to bring back inactive or lost online customers. Every online customer that cannot be reached diminishes the effectiveness of an online campaign.

There are four ways online customers can be lost:

- *An e-mail address becomes undeliverable, often because a consumer switched service providers or moved to a new job.*
- *Consumers no longer open your e-mails, because they may have too many other distractions or because messages are being filtered.*
- *Customers unsubscribe or opt-out of receiving your e-mails.*
- *Customers buy from your web site, but do not opt-in to receive future e-mail communications.*

If an e-mail is undeliverable, sending further e-mails is unnecessary and costly. Marketers clearly need another channel or a combination of channels to deliver targeted messages that can reengage customers.

As any marketing professional will affirm, it costs more to acquire a new customer than to retain an existing one. Paying to reacquire an existing customer is a costly, inefficient process. E-mail address change services cost \$1 or more per name, but recover less than 10 percent of any list. Phoning a customer for his or her new e-mail address can cost up to \$25 per call—and may irritate the very person you are seeking to reengage.

The costs of acquiring new customers are continually on the rise. Online search, banner advertising, co-registration and sales leads from affiliates are becoming more expensive. Advertising with traditional offline media such as newspapers, magazines, catalogs, radio, TV, trade shows, billboards and sweepstakes are even more expensive alternatives.

Sending a “we-miss-you” postcard to your list of lapsed names is a good idea, but can be very time-consuming. This involves pulling data, preparing creative materials, checking proofs, printing postcards and engaging mailing services. Few retailers can justify doing this more than once or twice a year. However, the longer you take to reach out to a lapsed customer, the less effective your results will be.



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Multi-channel marketing combines the unique strengths of each medium to better engage customers... ”

Ideally, marketers need a system to help deliver the right message through the right channel at every key moment in each customer's lifecycle.

The Solution: Integrating Dynamic Print and E-mail

Another channel is needed to reengage any customer who no longer responds to e-mails. Direct mail is the logical choice, especially when it can be personalized with text and graphics that are highly relevant to an individual customer.

With a multi-channel marketing mix of e-mail and direct mail, marketers have a simple, powerful new way to target lapsed customers. The solution is a service that integrates customer data, creative assets and business rules to trigger event- or behavior-based marketing messages.

Having all customer data in one database enables marketers to access any information needed to create and track customer contacts through any channel. Now marketers can respond to specific events in the customer lifecycle—such as an undelivered message—with highly personalized direct mail in near real-time.

Dynamically created direct-mail pieces can be developed in a variety of formats, such as postcards, self-mailers, and letters to name a few – with a high degree of personalization. Since one piece is printed at a time, small volumes can be accommodated without the large setup costs of traditional direct-mail.

With automation removing most of the labor from the process, the solution is cost effective and timely. When integrated with e-mail campaigns, this approach drives better results than either print or e-mail alone. The same flexible and convenient reporting is available for any campaign in any channel.

For example, suppose a customer that fits into a retailer's "best customer" segment is no longer opening e-mails from that retailer. An established business rule could send a personalized postcard to that customer after any set period, such as 30 days.

A personalized URL, coupon code or barcode can be generated for every printed piece, enabling the retailer to track the response and deliverability of the direct-mail piece.

The barcode could also make it quick and easy to deal with any returned mail. Scanning the barcode would instantly update the database with the fact that the customer's postal mailing address is no longer effective.



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Pre-designed creative and pre-programmed business rules can be merged to save massive amounts of labor... ”

The Benefits of Integrating Dynamic Print and E-mail in a Multi-Channel Strategy

Integrating dynamic print and e-mail in your multi-channel marketing strategy provides numerous benefits, including:

Quickly reengages customers: When an online customer can't be reached, actions are taken to reengage that customer before they have time to develop a strong attachment to any competitor. Instead of expensive bulk mailings, multi-channel marketing with dynamic print enables marketers to send individual, highly targeted messages at the most appropriate point in the customer's lifecycle.

Reduces effort and costs via automation: Pre-designed creative assets and pre-programmed business rules can be merged with segmented customer data to save massive amounts of labor. This frees up marketing managers from overseeing every campaign or enables them to focus on the higher-level decisions, such as how to respond best to specific actions in a customer's lifecycle. The result is a much less time-consuming process for reengaging lost online customers.

Generates quick payback on a modest investment: The cost to contact each customer with a dynamic print piece is modest. The marketer can easily monitor the payback with reports that link every action with every reaction from the customer. The faster a customer is reacquired, the less time that customer has to shop elsewhere, so the fewer purchases are lost.

How Multi-Channel Marketing with Dynamic Print Works

A certain customer behavior, lack of behavior or event in the customer lifecycle triggers a pre-programmed business rule to execute a dynamically printed direct-mail piece. Let's suppose a customer has not opened any e-mail promotions for 60 days, so a business rule specifies that it's time to send out a "we-miss-you" postcard.

The dynamic print platform is called into action. A scheduled process runs a database query looking for any customers who have not opened any e-mail in the past 60 days. If customers are found, their postal addresses are collected, along with any other relevant data to be used during the publishing step.

The selected target audience is prepared and passed to the dynamic print platform. This preparation could even include delivery validation and CASS certification to take advantage of pre-sort or third class mail postage discounts.

During the creative phase, a design template is set up and variable data fields are mapped. Nearly every element of the creative, including type, color scheme or even the graphical or visual imagery can be dynamically driven by data supplied with the target audience.



Once this step is completed, the process moves into automated production. Here, the target audience data is merged with its corresponding template and sent to a print partner.

The entire automated process runs in a continuous cycle, producing personalized, relevant messages with a high likelihood of engaging the customer.

What to Look for in a Multi-Channel Service Provider

While many marketers are dreaming of creating integrated, multi-channel marketing campaigns, few are doing it. However, those few are gaining a distinct competitive advantage. Since this approach is so new, you may require help from a multi-channel marketing service provider to guide you.

When seeking a multi-channel marketing service, be sure to consider the following important factors:

Universal data management: The service must be able to capture, store or mine data from any list, database, CRM system, web analytics, data warehouse or any other source that you use.

Centralized reporting: Make sure you can track how an individual customer reacts to each contact with open, click and conversion behaviors. Having a single, integrated view of the customer enables you to track the return on investment of a campaign and fine-tune your marketing efforts for best results.

Automated workflow: Look for a service that automates every aspect of a campaign, including segmenting lists, preparing multi-variant creative or following up according to your pre-programmed business rules.

Flexible testing: Just as in e-mail marketing, multi-channel marketing must support flexible testing of different offers, list segments and creative.

Unlimited output customization: Pick a vendor that supports an unlimited range of paper stock, page count, document size, binding, finishing and dynamic positioning of all text and graphics. You need flexibility to create everything from postcards and coupons to multi-page brochures.

Near real-time direct mail: Speed is important to supplement the immediacy of e-mail. Seek a vendor that can generate direct mail every day of the week. Avoid any that batch mailings and send them once a month.

Full-service campaign management: Look for a service that provides reliable end-to-end project management. Pick a partner who can comply with your strict branding requirements and advise your designers on print specifications.

Value-added mailing services: You may need advice on US Postal Service programs such as CASS and NCOA that clean and update your mailing lists.

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Look for a solution that provides a single, integrated view of the customer, enabling retailers to track the return on investment of any campaign...

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e-Dialog works with clients to create, test and deploy targeted campaigns across e-mail and direct mail channels... ”

Global reach: An ideal partner can print and ship materials anywhere in the world, with knowledgeable support for multiple languages or a good understanding of foreign postal regulations.

Proven track record: Look for a company that knows how to bridge the online and offline channels with a truly integrated approach that draws on the unique strengths of each one. Seek a vendor with a proven track record in direct marketing and with five or more years experience in e-mail marketing.

Precision Dynamic Printing from e-Dialog

Precision Dynamic Printing from e-Dialog is an end-to-end workflow automation service for multi-channel marketing campaigns that provides an easy, efficient, automated and trackable way to help reengage lost customers, retain current ones or motivate customers to take a desired action.

Acting as a single point of integration across multiple disciplines, e-Dialog can provide the strategy, data integration, technology platform, analytics, reporting, creative expertise and campaign management to execute personalized and consistently branded, multi-channel marketing campaigns.

Precision Dynamic Printing has been incorporated into e-Dialog’s flexible e-marketing platform, Precision Central™. This enables e-Dialog to work with marketers to build a comprehensive, actionable view of customers from multiple data sources and then create, test and deploy targeted campaigns across e-mail and direct mail channels.

To create direct mail, the campaign management system includes pre-integrated popular publishing applications from industry leaders like Adobe. Clients benefit from the same data management, advanced segmentation, rules-based custom publishing, live proofing, analysis and in-depth reporting that they are accustomed to with their e-Dialog e-mail campaigns.

e-Dialog’s Precision Dynamic Printing builds on digital printing technologies enabling marketers to efficiently integrate short-run, targeted mailings into their multi-channel communications. Now, dynamically published direct-mail pieces can be sent as a complement or alternative to e-mail messages, based on selected customer data or lifecycle or behavior-based events.

Responses are tracked with personalized web page addresses or barcodes unique to each campaign or each individual. This enables the results of each multi-channel contact to be reported and analyzed in detail.



Subsequent communications can be triggered, based on the individual and overall response, to create an ongoing customer dialog.

The ideal applications for this combination of e-mail and print include:

- *Customer reactivations*
- *E-mail change of address*
- *Catalog requests and delivery confirmations*
- *Reminders*
- *Conversion campaigns*
- *Loyalty program support*

e-Dialog's multi-channel dynamic print campaigns help to increase marketers' engagement, enhance customer service and satisfaction, retain valuable customers and gain important program feedback.

The Benefits of Working with e-Dialog

The specific advantages of e-Dialog's precision e-marketing platform, which allows marketers to integrate e-mail and dynamic print as part of a multi-channel campaign, include:

- ⚡ **Universal data management:** Whatever data sources you use, e-Dialog can capture, store and mine your customer information.
- ⚡ **Integrated reporting:** Enables marketers to track deliverability and response via multiple channels—down to the individual customer level within a single view for advanced query, analysis and segmentation.
- ⚡ **Automated workflow:** Save hundreds of hours with automated list segmentation, multi-variable creative and pre-programmed business rules that prescribe follow-up steps for various behaviors.
- ⚡ **Flexible testing:** Retailers can test different offers, list segments and creative to quickly adapt campaigns based on the results they receive.
- ⚡ **Output customization:** Select from an unlimited choice of paper, size, binding and finishes, as well as dynamic positioning of every element of text and graphics.
- ⚡ **Near real-time direct mail:** Campaigns can be printed and mailed anywhere in the world, in any language, the day an actionable event occurs.



- ⚡ **Full-service campaign management:** e-Dialog provides end-to-end project management, strict brand compliance and support for designers, while eliminating the need for frequent press checks or signoffs.
- ⚡ **Proven track record:** e-Dialog was founded in 1997 by marketers with deep roots in both e-mail and database marketing. The firm is top-rated as an e-marketing service provider.

Take the Next Step...

To find out more about how e-Dialog's Precision Dynamic Printing can help you reengage lost customers and achieve better results from your online marketing programs, visit www.e-Dialog.com or call Ben Ardito at (781) 372-3972 and ask for a no-cost dynamic print consultation.

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