

5 criteria for evaluating your email marketing program

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While email may not be changing as rapidly as some other digital disciplines, it evolves nevertheless. Gone are the days when a best-in-class marketer could rely on batch-and-blast techniques, whereby 100% of a brand's email distribution list received emails that were 100% identical. Opportunities abound particularly in the realms of personalization and testing.

For years, marketing departments have consistently undervalued the lever that offers them the most consistent ROI. We spoke with a broad range of marketers to understand what they consider makes an email program highly successful. A broad analysis of the market suggests that many email marketing departments may experience the Dunning-Kruger effect, a cognitive bias where people incorrectly overestimate their acumen in a specific discipline. As a result, many email professionals rank their own programs as more sophisticated than they actually are.

In creating our framework for evaluating email marketing as a whole, we factored in what is considered best in class today versus what is moving from best in class to standard customer expectation. The following are the five cornerstones of our framework which any email marketer can use to judge their own program:

Acquisition and Maintenance:

- How proficient is your brand at acquiring new email addresses to market to?
- What is your brand's process for maintaining a clean, healthy email list on an ongoing basis?

Personalization and Segmentation:

- How easily and frequently does your brand take advantage of segmenting its email list to send more relevant communications?
- Is your brand employing personalization on a one-to-one basis, using triggers and other key signals to increase relevancy to the recipient?

Omnichannel:

- How does your brand's email marketing integrate with SMS and live chat?
- What call center and in-person interactions integrate with and inform your email marketing program?

Testing:

- How often does your brand engage in ongoing email testing behavior designed to improve results?
- Does your testing strategy inform not just the email program, but the brand's overall strategy as well?

Internal Processes:

- How successful is your brand at measuring the success of its program?
- Are your processes agile enough with respect to changing tactics on the fly?