



# New Approaches to Email Marketing

## Part 1 of 4: Defining Social Influencers



A project of  
The Email Experience Council's  
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with contributions from eec members



# New Approaches to Email Marketing

**Introduction by Jeanniey Mullen, with Actionable Insights by the valued members of the eec community:**

- Wendy Ackland, Burnt Toast Marketing
- Sheryl Biesman, NatureMade
- Amy Bills, Bulldog Solutions
- Nicholas Einstein, Datran Media
- Hugo Guzman, Zeta Interactive
- Stephanie Jackson, Zinio
- DJ Waldow, Bronto Software

## Table of Contents:

Introduction..... 3

Four Critical Areas Impacting Email Marketing..... 4

Defining Social Influencers with Email Marketing ..... 5

Step 1: Defining new metrics for success..... 6

Step 2: Realize the changes social media encourages in conjunction with email marketing..... 7

Step 3: Look for ways you can identify social influencers on your email marketing list..... 9

Step 4: Start testing..... 12

About the Email Experience Council..... 13



## Introduction

In 2009, email marketing means much more than just sending a message to a list. From mastering the art of deliverability, the science of creative imagery and design to the basic strategy for messaging frequency, email marketing is anything but simple. In addition to the tactical elements that each successful email marketer is required to master, we are now challenged with merging digital consumers' increasingly on-demand, daily media consumption habits with our strategic approaches.

Less than 60% of people who read their email messages read them exclusively on a computer screen. Digital devices like the BlackBerry, iPhone, iTouch and other Wi-Fi enabled products provide immediate, 24/7 access for consumers. Scanning, accessing and taking action on email marketing messages has never been easier, faster or more convenient.

However, with that ease comes a new challenge related to capturing the focus and attention of the reader. Instead of being able to present your company's story, offer or information to a person who is focused on nothing else except your message, mobility often means that emails are scanned, glanced at, and processed with less than 35% of the full attention they deserve. This means your message must stand out and be successfully processed within milliseconds of being viewed. It also means that your email marketing efforts must evolve; you can no longer rely on your email message carrying your product offering the entire way.

The effectiveness of a single email as a sales vehicle, lead generator, and even as an interest driver is lessening. The interesting thing about email's loss of influence is that it's not giving way to just one other channel (like a social site, or search), but it's becoming one of the many influences a digital consumer relies on to make a purchase or to take an action.



## Four Critical Areas Impacting Email Marketing

How can you ensure your email marketing strategy is built to evolve as the number of digital consumers continues to rise?

The Email Experience Council has identified four critical areas of email marketing that you can adapt, adopt and employ today to ensure you are on the right track. This report is first in a series we will release over the next few months focused on these four areas of influence:

1. Identifying social influencers on your email marketing list
2. Designing emails that work
3. Creating integrated message to maximize response
4. Preparing for future mobility of email access

Each of these whitepapers will dive into key elements that others are currently utilizing to make the market work for them. You will learn tips and techniques you can immediately implement to increase the success of your email efforts.



## Defining Social Influencers with Email Marketing

In the olden days (aka: last year), many email marketers relied on house-list segments that followed the tried and true standard designed by years of direct marketing practices. Most companies' lists were comprised of segments including:

- Best customers (high purchasers, high dollar buyers or even long-time consumers)
- Worst customers (people on the verge of being removed from the list due to non-response)
- New customers (who often went through a 60-90 day on-boarding process to determine what other categories they would fall into)
- Unsubscribes (people who used to be on your list, but aren't anymore)

Across these categories, there are many sub-categories and variations of messaging. Best customers often receive exclusive pre-sale notices, or are asked to "Refer a Friend." New customers are often sent surveys and other educational messages to help increase brand strength. The worst customers are those who receive reactivation emails or who are threatened to be removed from the list.

Those categories are fine to use if you are dealing with your customers on a one-on-one basis. Yes, these strategies and segments will allow you to get Sally to spend \$50 more with you, or, they may encourage George to complete his lead form. In today's digital-driven world, this approach can be very shortsighted. Especially in this economy, we can't afford to spend our resources and messaging efforts on one-to-one sales generation; we need to impact the masses.

Luckily, the hundreds of social networks that have sprung up over the past few years enable us to do just that: enable our email marketing efforts, directed toward individuals, to impact the masses. Here is how to make it happen.



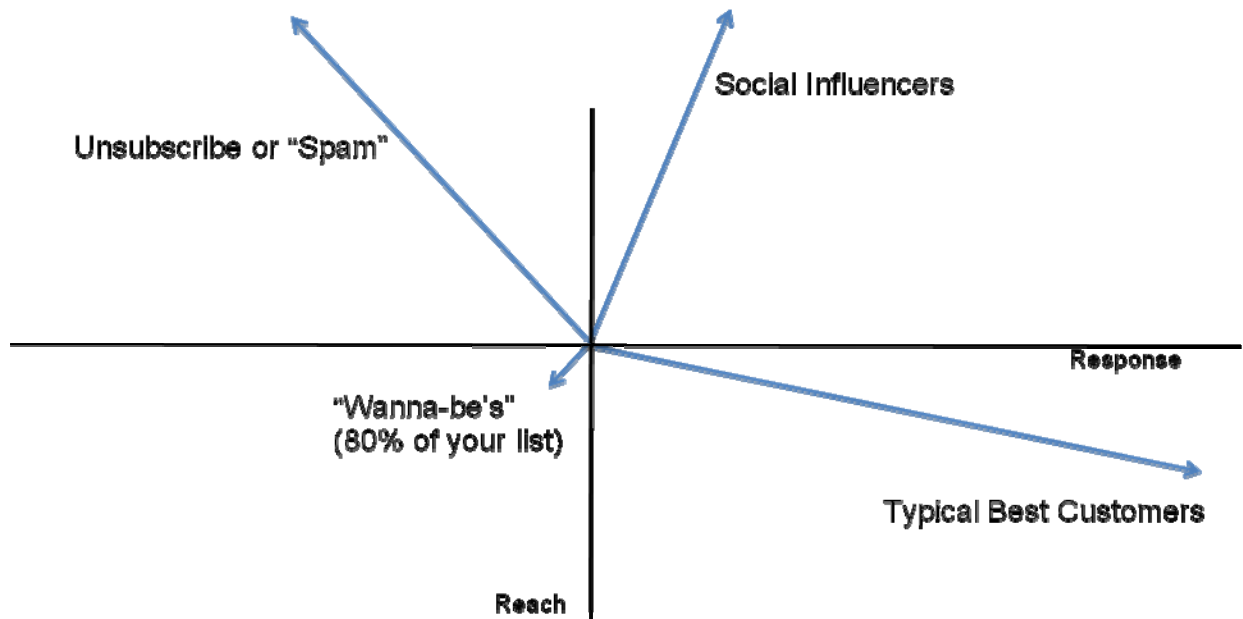
## Step 1: Define new metrics for success

Understanding the impact of social media on our targeted email campaigns opens up an entirely new set of segments to leverage.

Consider how you can split your list, not according to dollars they individually spend, but according to the collective dollars they influence others to spend (on top of their own spend).

These new measurements follow the impact of a combination of reach and response.

Next, review your current segments' best customer impact based on these new measurements. It might look something like this:





## Step 2: Realize the changes social media encourages in conjunction with email marketing

In the past, those people who respond marginally or not at all to your list were typically the people who you would consider removing from your list. Today, those people might not individually respond, but will tell others about your offer, news or sale. These people could very well become your best ambassadors.

See how Wendy Ackland and her team at BurntToast Marketing generated a higher response from a typical non-responder:

*A couple of months ago we managed the event invitation process for a communications provider who was launching a new product to the local market. The event was only publicized via email invitations and all RSVP's were made online via a linked booking form/landing page off the email. The mailing list was deliberately small (426 emails) and there was an event capacity of 50 people.*

*While the event went very well, when comparing the mailing list to the list of attendees it was noted that a particular subscriber who was considered a very 'hot prospect' had decided not to attend and on further inspection, they'd been recorded as not even opening the email. However, they had 4 click-thrus recorded against the link to the booking form. So why had they decided not to book?*

*After a little digging we managed to find the answer. The 4 clicks had come from other people both within and outside the same company who were not on the original mailing list. All four attended the event and after a period of time, all purchased multiple units of the product being launched – as did the 'hot prospect'. As it turns out, the original recipient had another commitment that day so could not attend the launch, but identified others who they felt would benefit and passed-on the email direct from their inbox (as opposed to using forward to a friend). It doesn't sound like much of a forward but this alerted us to a trend which we have monitored ever since in our campaign data.*

*Having identified this behaviour we now look for anomalies in all of our client's lists and are particularly interested in the total opens and clicks recorded for a single subscriber. For example, if a subscriber has a total open rate of 44 but no data recorded against FTAF (which happened this week), there's a pretty good chance they have forwarded their email to a large number of people across their*



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*network and that all of their friends have opened it. When you consider that most email readers have images blocked, that's an impressive total open off a single email address; and a clear indication of "social influence."*

This effect would cause any good email marketer to pause and reconsider dropping names off of their list without finding out if they may be driving sales and new customers for your company.



## Step 3: Look for ways you can identify social influencers on your email marketing list

“How can I identify my social influencers on my email list?” is one of the biggest questions we get asked these days. While the actual methods that work best for you will vary based on the size of your list, your industry and your offering, listed below are a few tried and true examples of what works.

Submitted by Hugo Guzman at Zeta Interactive:

*Send out an email survey asking list subscribers to give feedback on their level of social media engagement.*

*The most targeted and successful approach is to send a series of these emails surveys, broken down by individual social network. For example, one of the survey emails would be focused on Twitter. It would include a Twitter-intensive subject line and would ask a series of questions regarding the user's level of engagement (how many followers, how often do you tweet, etc). It would also be a good idea to offer list subscribers some sort of incentive for responding, but chances are that folks who are big social media users will be happy to know that the brand is interested in them and will gladly fill out survey.*

Submitted by Stephanie Jackson at Zinio:

*Email a request to your Facebook list asking them to help reach a company goal and watch for those who reply. Check to see if they are on your email list. If so, look for people who have similar traits and then send a targeted email asking members of your list to share the word. Follow the responders and watch website traffic rates and trends on Google.*



Submitted by Amy Bills at Bulldog Solutions:

*One place to look for social influencers: your partners and vendors, particularly those who are leaders in the space. These folks are likely on your email list but they are not exhibiting the same activity as a prospect or a current client. Nonetheless, you're likely to find influencers among the ranks of those with whom you do business, and because they know you well and are in tune with the space, their sphere of influence is a perfect fit.*

*To wit: Bulldog is a channel partner and power user of Eloqua marketing automation software. Eloqua's CTO, Steve Woods, is an active evangelical for marketing automation and in fact recently published a book on "Digital Body Language." In recent months we've worked closely with Steve—inviting him to speak on a Webinar we sponsored, collaborating with him on article content—and thus are able to harness his promotional activities while offering him validation and additional exposure.*

Submitted by Nicholas Einstein at Datran Media:

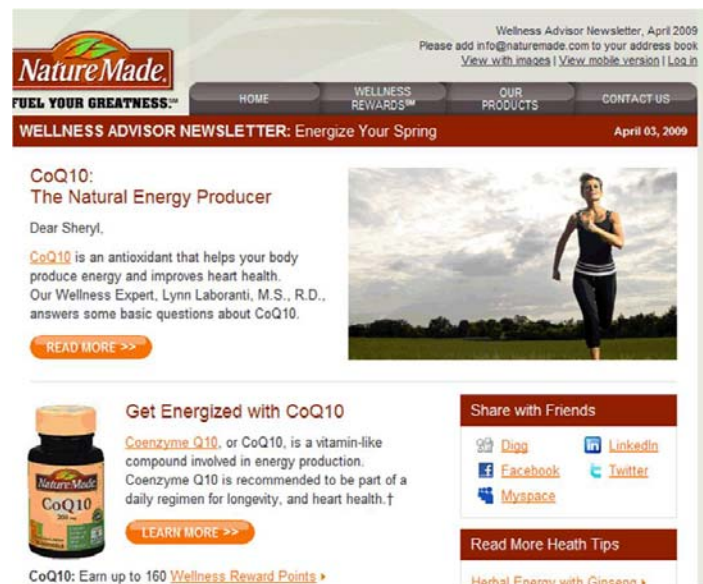
*Savvy email marketers use various conversion metrics and LTV formulas to segment and target high-value subscribers. The rise of social media gives us an exciting new framework for determining the value of our subscribers - value based on our subscriber's power and propensity to share content through their social network and drive viral growth of our programs. Identifying social media "influencers" within our subscriber bases is the first key step in devising a strategy to target them and take advantage of their power to syndicate our content.*

*The first step we take with our clients that include "share to social" functionality in their emails is to track clicks to these links and leverage that behavioral data to drive future segmentation. Subscribers who are sharing your content may not all be true influencers, but it is likely that many of your true influencers will be clicking on the "share to social" link. For clients that are developing sophisticated social media strategies, or may otherwise be good candidates, we explore layering in additional data that more directly correlate to a subscriber's status as an influencer. Companies like Rapleaf, 33Across, Media6Degrees and Unbound Technologies all offer data that can help immediately identify influencers and let you focus on the strategies to target them.*



Submitted by Sheryl Biesman at NatureMade:

*Add links to your email that encourage people to share them on social sites like Facebook and Twitter. Keep in mind that it is important to differentiate between adding social media links that encourage people to "share" vs. encouraging them to add your brand as a favorite. We do both. We currently have hundreds Facebook fans of the NatureMade brand. The vast majority of this is driven by our email marketing.*



Submitted by DJ Waldow at Bronto Software:

**1. Add "Twitter Handle" as a field on your subscription landing page:** A very basic email subscription landing page asks for Name and Email Address. Why not ask for a Twitter handle, too? This will allow you to create separate lists to market directly to Twitter users.

**2. Use social media tools to find influencers:** One way to identify some of the "social media influencers" on your email list is use tools like Twitter Grader (created by Hubspot) - <http://twitter.grader.com/>. This tool even provides the "Twitter Elite" by geographical region.

**3. Use Twitter as another means to drive traffic to your email subscription page:** Send out tweets asking folks to sign up to your email list for exclusive offers. Track this as a source and create Twitter-specific campaigns.



## Step 4: Start testing

Now that you have seen how social media can play a role in your email marketing efforts, it's time to start testing!

If you are not signed up for some of the more popular social media sites like Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn, that should be your first step. If you need to friend someone, friend me: [jeanniey@emailexperience.org](mailto:jeanniey@emailexperience.org) or [jmullen@zinio.com](mailto:jmullen@zinio.com) (empg on Twitter).

Next, determine which tactics make the most sense for your company and design a small test. As you can see from the recommendations above, you don't need to go crazy, or even spend lots of money. All you need is time and a good idea or two.

Once you start seeing how your social efforts perform, you will be excited to try more and you might even get addicted. Integrating social media and email will ultimately help improve the strength of your company's brand, your revenue and your social buzz on the Internet.

This is an amazing time for email marketing. Don't miss out.



## About the Email Experience Council

The [Direct Marketing Association's Email Experience Council](#) is a global professional organization that strives to enhance the image of email marketing and communications, while celebrating and actively advocating its critical importance in business and its ROI value.

We are committed to regularly conducting a broad series of initiatives for a variety of organizations that highlight the positive impact and importance of email as a marketing tool, communications vehicle and branding device. Additionally, eec members are setting the standards for email through our [Member Roundtables](#). The members who belong to our organization are representatives of other trade organizations, agencies, advertisers, technology partners, clients and companies focused on the potential of email marketing via mobile and other digital devices.

We encourage you to become part of the eec at <http://join.emailexperience.org>. Multiple levels of involvement are available:

<b>Complimentary Subscription</b>	<b>Paid Membership</b>	<b>Partnership &amp; Advertising Sponsorship</b>
<p><i>Free subscription to eec email communications. Notifications of best practices, whitepapers, calendar of events and speaking engagements, industry leader commentary.</i></p> <p>You LEVERAGE the eec</p>	<p><i>Access to and participation in eec Roundtables, insights, exclusive content and ability to represent eec at speaking engagements. Ability to set standards and publish thought leadership.</i></p> <p>You ARE the eec</p>	<p><i>Customized partnerships and sponsorships for organizations interested in reaching the eec network and working with us to lead initiatives, research and email position/standards.</i></p> <p>You ENABLE the eec &amp; REACH our audience</p>

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