

GET YOUR MOICIAL MOJO WORKING:

Effectively Integrating Email,
Social, Mobile and Local

A Silverpop White Paper

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The way we communicate is moving—literally. Smart phones are outselling PCs, and tablet sales are expected to outpace desktop sales by 2013¹. This shift has changed when, where and how we communicate—no longer primarily on stationary office computers, but instead on all things mobile.

Liberated from the desktop, users are shouting about their newfound freedom from the rooftops—or more accurately, from their mobile devices. They're checking in on Foursquare and Facebook Places to meet up with friends and get the latest hot deals. They're posting pics and updates on Twitter and LinkedIn. They're using gee-whiz apps to enhance their experiences. And more than any other mobile activity, they're interacting with their email inboxes².

Silverpop refers to this convergence of mobile, social, local and email as “mocial.” And in a world gone mocial—more than 600 million Facebook users, 200 million Twitter users, hundreds of thousands of mobile apps—marketers must change the way they interact with customers and prospects. But although the screens may be smaller, the possibilities for engagement are larger than ever.

What Does Mocial Mean for Marketers?

Social media sites, email, apps, text messages—people are checking and interacting with these all day long. And where you live and travel is becoming a key aspect of communications, with check-in sites and location-based services such as Gowalla and Groupon adding new wrinkles to how companies are marketing to customers and prospects.

This explosion of new communication channels means that different buyers are accessing information in different ways. A 22-year-old may get info via an app on his phone, while a 54-year-old may access similar material via an email on her desktop computer. This diversification of channel preferences is also creating scenarios in which the same person prefers different forms of communication depending on the message. For example, a traveler might want SMS for flight delay notifications, email for upgrade and mileage status, and a Facebook feed for airline promotions.



Despite the explosion of social and mobile, email continues to play a critical role in how we communicate. There are nearly a billion more email accounts than social network accounts worldwide³, and email is the preferred method for commercial communication for nearly three-fourths of adults⁴. Perhaps as a reflection of this, businesses—particularly smaller ones—typically have far more email subscribers in their databases than Facebook fans or Twitter followers, with Silverpop research pegging the median ratio of email subscribers to Facebook fans at roughly 70:1⁵.

So what does mocial mean for marketers? Ultimately, it's about understanding the interplay between these channels and leveraging each to strengthen the other, thereby increasing customer engagement, moving prospects through the sales cycle and boosting revenue and loyalty. Here's a guide to making it happen.

Determining Your Social Strategy and Goals

With mobile and social growing rapidly, many marketers have been scrambling to bulk up their social presence, throwing up Facebook and Twitter profiles, hastily creating iPhone apps and stuffing sharing links in emails. Whether the culprit is disorganization, a lack of resources or pressure from the C-suite, some marketers are entering the fray with little foresight into how the medium will mesh with their overall strategy. According to Silverpop research conducted in April 2011, less than half of marketers have target list volume goals for social media site likes and followers, blog subscribers or mobile app downloads. And even fewer track frequency/reach of sharing, engagement and sentiment in social media channels⁵.

Before you start tossing money and resources into social pursuits, consider how to best align social media goals and strategies with your core business and marketing objectives. Think about what channels are best suited for sales, customer support, promotions and thought capital. Which are best for retention, and which will be strongest as acquisition tools?

Once you've gotten a better feel for how email, mobile, social and local fit into your overall business and marketing objectives and how you'll measure success, you can better decide what goals make sense for each channel. For example, you might decide that your Facebook page's primary focus should be on distributing broadcast messages. Or perhaps growing the fan base and driving them to your website makes the most sense strategically. Or maybe you want to get Facebook users to opt in to your email program. Whatever you decide, remember to revisit these goals periodically to see how you've done and whether it's time to revise your initial objectives.

Growing Your Email Database Through Social and Mobile

Social and mobile attract a new group of engaged customers, so use these channels to add followers, friends and influencers to the email channel, where nurturing of relationships and conversions may be more likely to occur. Here are five ways to get the list-growth party started:

- **Make sure you have an email opt-in form/link on your company's Facebook page, along with any other key social networks that appeal to your target audience.** It's easy to customize many social network pages to include email subscription forms, yet companies often fail to do so. Remember to follow the same best practices you

would when building opt-in forms elsewhere, such as not forcing new subscribers to fill out a detailed form right at the start. Instead, ask only for key information, such as name and email address, key demographic information (gender, age/birth date, location) and interests/preferences (dogs versus cats, snowboarding versus cross-country skiing)—data you need to deliver relevant emails out of the gate.

- **Include email opt-ins on your shareworthy Web pages.** Sending an email with content that begs to be shared? As your compelling content makes its way around the Facebook universe and Twittosphere, your company will be exposed to an exponentially larger group of new (but likeminded) customers and prospects. And if this content is housed on a Web page, make sure the page has a prominent opt-in inbox so you can potentially capture these new email addresses.
- **Tweet followers to join your email list.** Periodically send a tweet to your followers inviting them to join your email list. Get creative and see how you can incent them within 140 characters.
- **Capture emails via SMS.** A live event can be a great occasion at which to invite attendees to text their email address to a certain number to join your email program. Or, simply send a text directly to your SMS subscribers inviting them to sign up for your email program by replying to your text with their email address.
- **Use app downloads to build your email list.** Whenever someone downloads your app, give them the opportunity to provide their email address and opt in to your messaging program. Then, follow up with engaging content like an app welcome program.

Making Email More Social

The growth of social media networking sites has had a significant impact on how brands and consumers interact. And it's forcing marketers to change their approach to email, or else risk getting lost in the clutter. Here are three ways you can meet and exceed subscriber expectations by making your emails more social:

- **Humanize your marketing content.** The good news is that social media helps businesses put a human face on their marketing efforts. And this is now crucial for success, with customers and prospects accustomed to social media dialogues expecting a more personable interaction with companies.

Upgrading Your Preference Page

Because they give subscribers the power to choose what channels businesses use to communicate with them—which may depend on the type of message being sent—preference pages are more important than ever. Yet many companies are neglecting this critical part of their messaging programs. According to Silverpop research, less than one quarter of businesses that deploy a communication preference center offer communication channel options for Facebook or Twitter. And only about one in 10 offer an SMS option⁵.

Moving forward, as more digital communication channels and platforms spring up alongside email and consumers become increasingly "channel-choosy," offering these options could be the difference between strongly engaging a customer or prospect and having that contact opt out. As appropriate, offer several types of communication channel choices at opt-in, throughout the relationship and as an alternative to unsubscribing. And consider adding a preference center link on your social media sites in addition to placing it in a standard location in every email message you send to subscribers.

The “bad” news? When sending email, there’s a lower tolerance for communications that sound like they’ve been written and approved by an ad agency, legal team or PR department. With that in mind, incorporate education, personality and peer recommendations in your promotional messages and lose the corporate speak. Additionally, break up your message cadence with messages designed simply to inform, entertain, surprise and provide value rather than sell. These messages build brand engagement and loyalty, which leads to greater conversion from your promotional messaging.

- **Encourage social sharing in your emails.**

Email offers an unparalleled way for you to deliver relevant content to the perfect group of recipients, and then through the magic of social sharing find a new audience of very similar recipients ready to act. But beware: It’s not enough to simply slap social-sharing icons in an email and expect your message to take the Web by storm.

If you want your content to go viral, you have to understand what motivates your subscribers to share, target the right networks, educate recipients about the social-sharing process, and deliver shareworthy content (see sidebar). Then, you’ll need to test, analyze and refine your messages so you can optimize design, link location, etc. for optimal sharing.

- **Make email a dynamic content platform.**

Think of email as a template into which you can organize content from ecommerce solutions, product review solutions and recommendation engines via APIs. These integrations enable you to build dynamic messages rich in the peer content that today’s buyers look to when researching purchase decisions.

By pulling this more social content into your emails, you not only engage recipients more strongly, but you encourage them to then engage in social behaviors themselves, such as posting their own reviews.

Extending the Reach of Social and Mobile

Used strategically, email can extend the success of your other social channels—first by promoting these channels, and second by increasing engagement and encouraging ongoing use of these channels. Don’t miss the opportunity to kick-start and grow your social, mobile and local marketing efforts through email:

1) Promoting channels: Use email to grow followers and fans, increase app downloads and/or explain the benefits of your local check-in program. Place graphical icons and related text (e.g. “Like us on Facebook”) for social networks and check-in services in your emails, and explain the benefits of your SMS program, mobile app, etc. along with links for signing up or downloading.

2) Increasing engagement and promoting ongoing use: Amassing followers, fans and downloads is great, but it doesn’t mean much if these contacts lose that loving feeling after the initial contact. Consider, for example, that 26 percent of mobile apps are only used once⁵. To drive return traffic and build engagement, try using email to:

- Announce the launch of a new contest on Facebook
- Welcome downloaders to a new app with an email campaign that provides tips on how to get the most out of it
- Remind subscribers to take advantage of your Foursquare, Gowalla or Facebook Places check-in promotion
- Encourage subscribers to Tweet their thoughts on an upcoming event using a special hashtag you’ve chosen

Bottom line: Email provides marketers a unique ability to deliver dynamically targeted messages in a one-to-one fashion, so take advantage of this capability across your email program—including extending the reach of social and mobile.

Deploying Integrated Programs Across Email, Social and Mobile

Your customers and prospects are moving in and out of different social channels throughout the day, so a multichannel approach should significantly increase the chance of communicating your message. But some companies make the mistake of operating their various marketing channels in separate silos. With some marketers launching new social programs ad hoc, there’s a danger of messaging being fragmented, with channels failing to leverage one another to better engage customers.

With that in mind, aim to integrate social efforts whenever possible, capturing email addresses via Facebook, driving your Twitter followers to your blog with a teaser tweet, and blogging about an exclusive SMS promotion—and vice versa. By reaching out across a variety of touch points in a thought-out, strategic fashion, you achieve maximum impact, driving greater ROI across email, social and mobile channels.

Making Your Messages Shareworthy

How can you craft emails that translate well to the social landscape? Step one is laying a strong foundation by building trust and engaging with your customers through highly relevant, personalized content.

Next, figure out what motivates your customers. Do sales, giveaways or educational content resonate most strongly? Once you’ve got a message that you think is shareworthy, design the entire email around the sharing concept. A short, focused email centered on a single subject is usually best. Make sure the social-sharing call-to-action link is prominently placed, and don’t be shy about inviting recipients to share the content to their networks.

Give customers a good reason to share your promotional emails with their friends, and you can turn them into a powerful extension of your acquisition and awareness efforts, helping you to reach highly qualified prospective customers who share the same interests as your brand’s most engaged email recipients.

When integrating social initiatives, vary tone to match each channel's personality, but aim to maintain uniform messaging and graphics throughout the different mediums. Spread your message wide, but keep it focused. A few examples:

- Send an email and text message about a drive to get "X" friends/fans/followers on your Facebook, Twitter, etc. page, with the incentive that once you reach that goal, all your friends/fans/followers will get a discount, such as 20 percent off. When the goal is reached, send out notifications across all channels to celebrate the good news.
- As part of an email welcome campaign, include a link to your YouTube page with educational videos. When visitors arrive at your YouTube page, invite them to text you to sign up for your SMS program, which you can then use to inform them of special local events or promotions.
- Send triggered emails or text messages driving traffic to a local store, where recipients can redeem an offer by checking in via Foursquare. Afterwards, tweet about the event's success, posting pictures on your Facebook page.

The possibilities are endless, but the point is clear: By flexing your creative muscle, you can integrate countless combinations of email, mobile, social and local to reach a wide variety of marketing goals.

Conclusion

Savvy marketers have been shifting in recent years from interruptive, sales-focused, one-size-fits-all messaging to engaging, behavior-based, personalized

communications. The rise of social is accelerating the need for this shift. Customer and prospect mindshare is further fragmented, dwindling time and attention spans are making recipients less tolerant of irrelevant messaging, and contacts are developing preferences for how they use certain channels—and for how companies use these channels to communicate with them.

Moving forward, the most successful companies will take advantage of this new social landscape to give customers more power, communicate with them on their terms, and leverage these channels to engage, educate, convert and build loyalty. By thinking strategically and holistically about all these mediums and shifting communication patterns to match user preferences, marketers can connect with customers and prospects in exciting new ways.

Footnotes

- 1-Forrester Research, "Forrester Research eReader Forecast, 2010 to 2015," June '10
- 2-The Nielsen Company, "Nielsen NetView—June 2009-June 2010," June '10
- 3-The Radicati Group, "Email Statistics Report, 2010-2014," April '10
- 4-Merkle, "View from the Digital Inbox 2011," Jan. '11
- 5-Silverpop Social Study, May '11
- 6-Localytics, "First Impressions Matter! 26% of Apps Downloaded in 2010 Were Used Just Once," Jan. '11

To find out more about Silverpop's Engage platform and how it can benefit your company, please contact our office nearest you.

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