

Email marketing:

Start the
new year
with a

“blast”

(part 1 of 2)

by Douglas Knorr

When I invite you to start 2012 with a “blast,” I don’t mean New Year’s Eve. I’m talking about an email blast (eblast), when you send (blast) a message to a group of email addresses such as your customer base. It sounds simple but an eblast is like any marketing tool: If it is not used correctly it could do your store more harm than good.

Every advertising medium has its intrinsic, unique strengths, and you’ll want to use each medium in a way that optimizes those strengths.

In this issue of NHFA’s *Home Furnishings Retailer* we will discuss what makes a good email blast and what makes a poor one. In upcoming issues we will look at great examples of email blasts and how you can make this marketing tool a more successful part of your advertising tool kit in 2012.

Eblasts: What NOT to do

Here are the most common (and lethal) mistakes we continue to see in email blasts.

#1: Too much text – or nothing but text – in the entire email. Too much text makes your eblast resemble common spam (undesirable email) and busy consumers may delete it unread. Instead, present a well thought-out message, an offer that's clearly defined, images of the offer and your logo.

#2: No clear offer or a ho-hum offer that doesn't grab the recipient's interest. If they don't see real value in your message, people can easily delete your email or, worse yet, opt out of receiving future emails from you. As in any direct mail piece or ad, make sure you make your offer a good one – and make it clear right away.

#3: Too many offers. To keep your message focused and clear, not confusing, put only one or two offers in each eblast – and link each eblast back to your website so they can see all your other options and offers.

#4: No links back to your website (backlinks). In every email you must provide helpful backlinks to make it easy for people to go to your website as the next step in their process of getting them to your store. Backlinks can include coupons or additional relevant information that will entice them to go to your website.


#5: Using images consumers can't see. Images are blocked in emails going to up to 40 percent of email clients (including those using the popular Microsoft Outlook program), and the recipient has to voluntarily "click here to download images." Make them want to! Add an

enticing line or two explaining what is in your email and the blocked pictures, such as, "Our dining groups have a high-end designer look but cost much less at our post-holiday sale." Use "plain text" for your basic message to ensure all recipients can understand it even if they have to download images.

#6: Not including offers for email readers.

Exclusive offers for email members only help you track consumer response to your email campaigns. Encourage consumers to keep getting your emails and not opt out.

Done right, eblasts can spur more frequent shopping as well as boost loyalty and foster a strong top-of-mind awareness of your company. In the March issue we will focus

on what well-crafted email messages look like and how you can make sure that your emails are more effective in the coming year. 

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Douglas Knorr, known as a "retail marketing activist," is president of Knorr Marketing (www.knorrmarketing.com), a full-service marketing and advertising agency specializing in the home furnishings industry. The agency provides strategic planning, creative production, public relations, sales promotions, website development and media buying services. Headquartered in the resort community of Traverse City, Michigan, the firm serves clients throughout the United States.

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