



How to promote your small business online

A beginner's guide

GraphicMail White Paper 2011

GRAPHIC MAIL 

email & mobile marketing solutions

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Introduction

Communication has grown immensely over the years, from the bush drum to the telegraph, to snail mail, then the telephone, then email, SMS and instant messaging (IM), social and mobile. With the change in the tools we use to communicate, also comes a change in the way we market our products and services. We are fast heading towards a never-seen before convergence of communication and thus marketing platforms.

Having a website is no longer enough.

Convergence of communication channels has become the holy grail of online marketing. To use one interface in order to send marketing communication messages in the form of text, video and image makes it so much easier for (small) businesses to communicate and market effectively.

Covering the spectrum of online communication allows you to reach more consumers, and on the platforms they like best.

Where do you start?

You might already have a website; maybe not. The truth is, you don't always need a website. It can also be a blog. Or it can simply be a placement or directory listing on search engines that shows potential clients your physical location and/or your contact details. However, most businesses are advised to have a centre-point for their online presence and that is usually a website. A good start!



Now, where to from here?

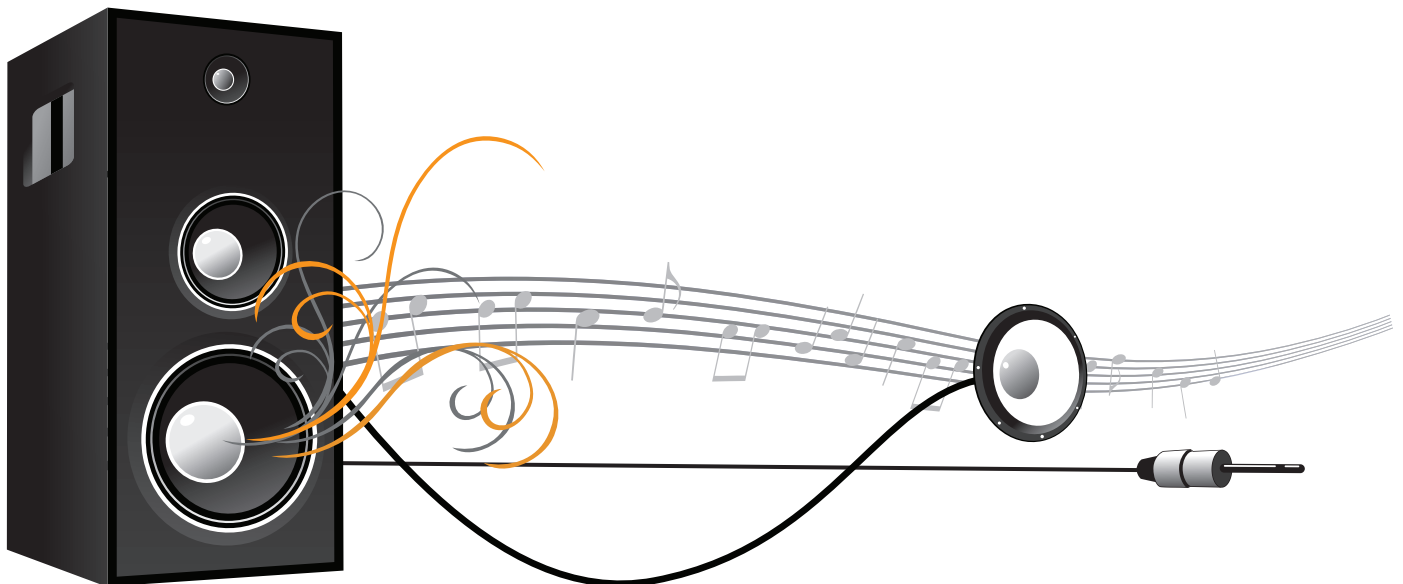
How do potential clients find your site? Now this is not what we help you with, but we can give you some pointers.

One way is to set up a Google Adwords campaign that sends traffic to your site via text or display ads. You can do that yourself (if you have the time and passion) or have someone manage it for you.

Another is to invest time in your SEO – optimizing your pages for search engines and getting quality links from other sites to yours. Best results are achieved when combining the two online strategies: pay-per-click campaigns and search engine optimization.

What we help you with at GraphicMail is to acquire leads through newsletter marketing and growing your clientele through social and mobile integrations. It's less about marketing and more about communication as the online environment facilitates two-way communication between businesses and the public.

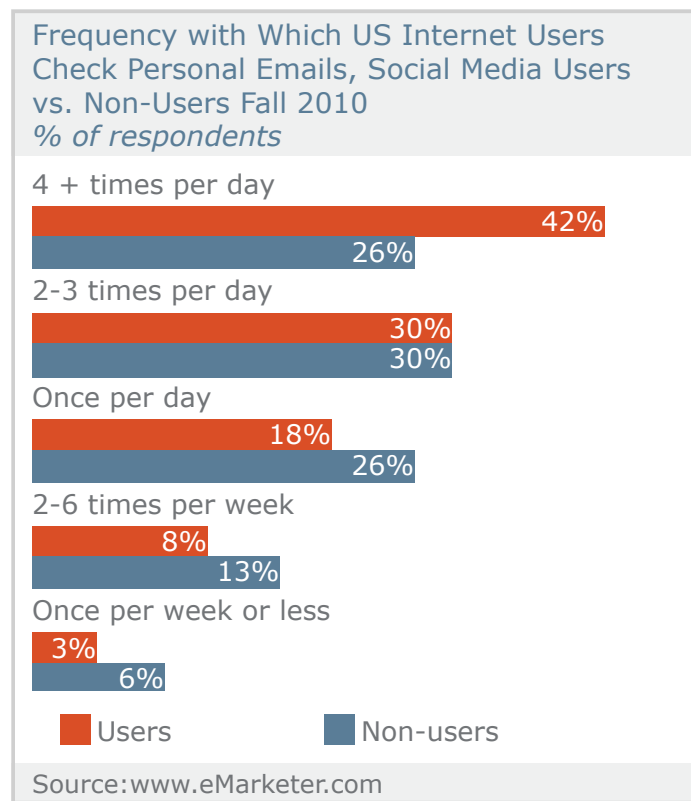
Think of it as shifting from multi-channel marketing to integrated communication.



Your communication channels

Email

Email was the first successful method of online communication and it's still the one most people depend on.



Businesses are focusing more and more on creating engaged communities of loyal customers (or clients) around their brands and email is a very effective way of doing this. Even though people can follow you through various channels online (and, obviously, view your website), research has shown that users who sign up to your mailing list are the ones most likely to engage with your brand.

How can email work for your business?

- It's cost-effective
- Email can reach a very wide audience
- It sends quality leads (people who have shown a definite interest in your product or service) to your website (where they can make a purchase or sign up for your service)
- It's the top-performing direct marketing channel
- It's easy to test, track and monitor email campaigns

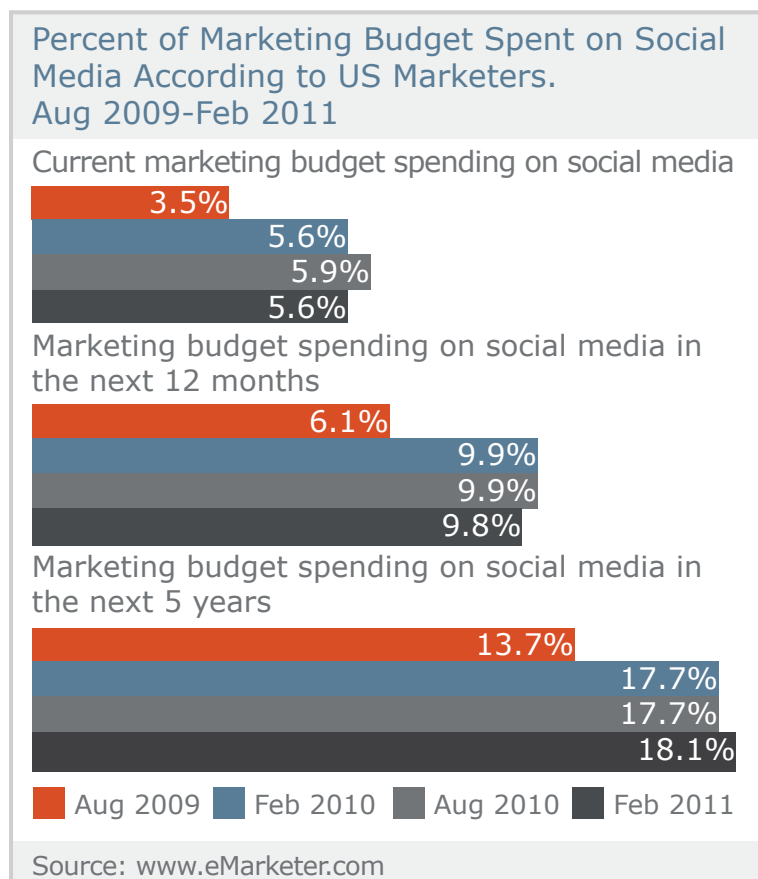
Top tips for a successful email campaign

- **Build a healthy mailing list.** Only send to people who have opted in to your mailings. Don't buy someone else's list – if you send to someone who doesn't want to receive an email from you, they'll simply mark you as spam and damage your reputation.
- **Write an impacting subject line.** The subject line is one of the first things your recipients will see of your email. It's the best chance you have to grab their interest and convince them to open and read your email. Test different subject lines to see which gets you the highest open rates.
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- **Have a clear call to action.** Within the first thirty seconds of opening your email your subscriber wants three questions answered: What's this? What's in it for me? What do I do now? When you send your email there's something you want them to do; whether it's clicking on a link to make a purchase or sign up to your service, or forwarding the email to their friends. Decide what it is you want them to do and make it clear.

- **Give relevant, value-laden content.** If you look at the three questions above, subscribers want to get something from your email newsletters. They sign up for a reason. Make sure that you offer them something of value. People are too busy to read, let alone react to, emails that don't interest them. Your content should be engaging, relevant and offers the reader something of value. Whether it's a promotion, industry insights, news, product updates, or expert advice; give them something that's of use to them.
- **Always, always test.** Testing is the only way to ensure you're sending out emails that will have maximum impact. The only way to continuously improve on your email campaigns is to consistently test new things: Different design layouts, shorter copy, more images, less images, longer subject lines, shorter subject lines, etc. Find out what works best for your subscribers.

Socila Media

Social has transformed brand communication. It's extremely effective for business owners as it establishes an online community around their brand.(Social profiles are even being included in search engine results.) It's a great tool to build brand loyalty and customer relationships.



The most commonly used social media channels:

A company blog

Blogs provide a very engaging, personal space in which you can give your readers more behind-the-scenes info on the latest happenings and developments in your business, or provide them with tips on how to use your products. It's an easy way to extend your site content in a way that's also useful to your clients.

Social networks

It's free to join, puts your brand name out where the people are and is an easy way to interact with your customers. Social networks are **word of mouth marketing**. Get people "liking", talking about, following or referring your business, and you're halfway there to persuading their friends to do the same. It also exposes your brand to a very wide audience.

The best place to start building your social presence, is on Facebook and Twitter. These are the two most commonly-used social networks; both build communities around business brands.

US Facebook Users and Penetration, 2009 - 2013

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Facebook users (millions)	84.3	116.8	132.5	143.4	152.1
- % change	90.3%	38.6%	13.4%	8.2%	6.1%
- % of social network users	74.6%	86.8%	89.6%	90.9%	92.6%
- % of internet users	39.0%	52.2%	57.1%	60.0%	62.0%
- % of population	27.4%	37.6%	42.3%	45.3%	47.6%

Note: CAGR (2009-2013)=10.3% internet users who access their facebook account via any device at least once per month.

Source: eMarketer, Feb 2011

www.eMarketer.com

- **With Facebook**, this is done through a business page. A "page" is not the same as a "profile". Profiles are for individuals – pages are for businesses, organizations or anyone else in need of building a specific grouped community. Once you have a page, is to get your fans to actively engage with your business through your page, by "liking" posts, writing on your wall and commenting on your photos and status updates.

US Adult Twitter Users and Penetration, 2009 - 2013

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Adult Twitter Users (millions)	13.2	16.4	20.6	24.1	27.7
- % change	293.1%	24.0%	26.3%	16.7%	14.8%
- % of social network users	14.1%	14.4%	16.5%	18.0%	19.8%
- % of internet users	7.5%	9.0%	11.0%	12.5%	14.0%
- % of population	5.7%	7.0%	8.7%	10.0%	11.4%

Source: www.eMarketer.com

- **Twitter** is a good platform to get the message out about your business. It enables you to post brief updates (with links) with your latest news and can be a great platform to gather and distribute information – whether it's tips and advice, or new products and developments. Type a topic or business name into the Twitter search bar and you'll quickly see what anyone and everyone has to say on the topic; so it's good to build your business's Twitter presence.

Four tips for using social media

- **Promote your social media presence!** The best place to start building a social following is by getting your existing customers (or clients) to follow you. Put signs up in-store telling them that you now have a Facebook page or a Twitter profile, call it out in your email newsletter and tell customers in person when you're doing business with them.
- As with email, it's all about **relevance and value**. If you're posting updates, make sure that it's something of value for your participants. Don't just post a link – tell them how they will benefit from clicking on it. Keep your updates varied.
- **Social media = conversation.** Your clients follow you on Facebook or Twitter because they want to engage with you. Open up the conversation: Ask questions, and reply to responses. Ideally, you want active, engaging conversations that all your followers participate in.
- As wonderful as social media can be for promoting your business, there is also a danger: Social networks have also become customer relationship management (CRM) tools. This means that if you don't reply to those customer service emails, those complaints could very easily end up in public, posted on your wall or tweeted to the masses. **Quick and timely responses are key!**

Mobile

77% of the global population use mobile phones. Experts estimated that more than half a billion people accessed mobile internet in 2009, and that this figure will have doubled by 2015. With current growth rates, Web access by people on the move — via laptops and smart mobile devices — is likely to exceed web access from desktop computers within the next five years. (Susan Teltscher, head of market information and statistics, Telecommunication Development Bureau, ITU).

(<http://mobithinking.com/mobile-marketing-tools/latest-mobile-stats#mobile-internet-access>) (comScore's The 2010 Mobile Year in Review report also indicated that checking personal email is the most popular mobile internet activity with mobile users — good news for your email campaigns!)

(http://www.comscore.com/Press_Events/Presentations_Whitepapers/2011/2010_Mobile_Year_in_Review)

Go where your customers go

Given the statistics, you can imagine why mobile is receiving so much attention from marketers. It's a relatively new, but fast-developing marketing channel. And how can you afford not to be part of it? It's happening whether you actively participate in it or not; we advise you to start campaigning on mobile phones, to make sure you speak to your consumers where they are, or soon migrating to— a mobile device.

It's new, it's overwhelming, it requires time — we hear you. That is why it's important to start simple, and to know your customers. Next time you analyze your website, find out how many of your clients have tried finding your services/ your site via their mobile phone browsers (you can do that easily with Google Analytics). Or send out a simple survey with one of the many free survey tools that ask your current email marketing newsletter subscribers if they would rather receive your updates via an SMS, or an SMS with a link to more information (something like a WAP push). A good email marketing service provider will also afford you with free subscription forms to add to your site or blog, on which you can give your potential subscribers the option to either sign up to SMS or email communication.

Food for thought: In the USA, there are two times as many users of SMS than there are active users of email, says Punchkick and Interactive & Mobile Marketing Watch. Mobile marketing communications can range from a simple 160-character- SMS to an augmented reality campaign. Before you embark on high-cost, low-reach mobile campaigns, consider sending out simple, personalized bulk SMSs or an SMS with a link inside the text that opens up in a mobile web page with graphic-rich information.

5 tips on mobile campaigning

1 – Make it fun

Most people carry their mobile phones on them, or very near them, night and day – mobile phones have not just become our own little personal assistants, but also our pocket-entertainers. How often have you whipped out your phone to check SMSs, browse the web, check the weather or latest sports score, updated your social profile or played a game while waiting somewhere? If you want to reach your consumers in these precious moments, make sure your message is fun, relevant and entertaining.

2 – Respect everybody's right to privacy

Wouldn't you find it annoying if you received SMSs at 6 AM in the morning, especially if there weren't from a loved one but a brand trying to push their way into your bed? Your consumers would too. So be sensitive when choosing the time of send, and day of the week.

3 – Engage your consumers

It's not about pushing out messages to your potential customers, sitting back and waiting for them to come knock on your door. It's about giving them something of value, but more so, listening to them and getting them to actively participate in your brand. Consider asking for opinions via mobile quick polls and surveys, or ask them to submit short video clips or images, testimonials and anecdotes (user generated content).

4 – Integrate your mobile campaign

Not everyone is the same – while some of your consumers prefer receiving brand communications via their mobile phones, others prefer their desktops to check emails or would love to get a call from you – or see you pop up in TV commercials, on billboards or in print media articles. The truth is, none of us are only getting communications via a singular channel; so why not syndicate your message via mobile phones, in offline print ads or articles with a built-in short code or QR code, via an email campaign and a radio interview with a call centre number to call for more information?

5 – An incentive goes a long way

Offer an incentive such as access to relevant information, real time alerts, exclusive mobile content or even a coupon to increase your mobile subscription rate and client engagement.

How GraphicMail can help you with integrated online communication

GraphicMail specializes in enabling our clients to create, build and manage email, social and mobile marketing strategies from within one platform.

Setting up your own email campaigns

Our email service provides clients with all the tools they need to create, send and track their own bulk email campaigns. This includes:

- Fast and simple campaign creations with our template library, online drag-and-drop editor and easy image uploader.
- Build and manage your mailing lists with our subscription form builder, automated list management tool, viral forwarding, multiple datasets and secure online storage.
- Refine your campaigns with our sophisticated reporting.
- Create your own image library.

We also offer dedicated support via live chat, video tutorials, online help, FAQs, phone, email and our online Resource Center.



Incorporating social media

There are various ways of incorporating social media into your email campaigns. GraphicMail offers:

- FeedMail: Publish your latest blog posts or site content straight to email.
- Social widgets: Allow your subscribers to share your email on their favourite social networks. All their friends and followers will see your newsletter update posted on their profile.
- Social Share: Publish your newsletter straight to your social network. That way all your Facebook fans and Twitter followers will be able to read it too.
- "Like" – Insert a "like" button in the header of your newsletter, enabling your readers to "like" your newsletter on Facebook for all the world to see.

Going Mobile

We're also extending our mobile offering, enabling you to:

- Build and manage opt-in SMS lists
- Create, send and measure personalized bulk SMS messages
- Send an SMS on steroids – a text message with a link that opens up into a mobile web page
- Create a mini company mobile site with forms, polls and surveys, unlimited pages
- Manage your email campaigns from your iPhone with the GraphicMail iPhone app