



EMAIL MARKETING GONE SOCIAL

GraphicMail White Paper 2011

GRAPHIC MAIL 

email & mobile marketing solutions

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Introduction

Email as a traditional online marketing channel continues to show immeasurable success for businesses as a direct marketing tool. Social sites have now gained momentous popularity as well and have shifted the way people communicate. However, these two platforms are not so much in competition as they pose very different advantages. Email newsletters have the ability to reach highly targeted groups of people on a one-on-one basis, while social networking sites give companies wider exposure and a more casual and authentic approach. 2011 has been termed 'The Integration Economy' as social media is integrated and used for business. Like two ballroom dancers, both online marketing mediums are very strong on their own, but together they can deliver a showstopping performance. Who likes a solo tango?



Email Marketing

Social Media

An online marketing evolution

Marketing has shifted from a traditionally used above the line approach, e.g. billboards and television commercials, to a more below the line approach that speaks to segmented groups through mass media. There is far more emphasis on interaction and engagement with the consumers, in real time and on demand, through conversations and participation via email, blogs, Facebook pages etc. Marketing has now become commonplace in social networking sites, and through mobile phones.

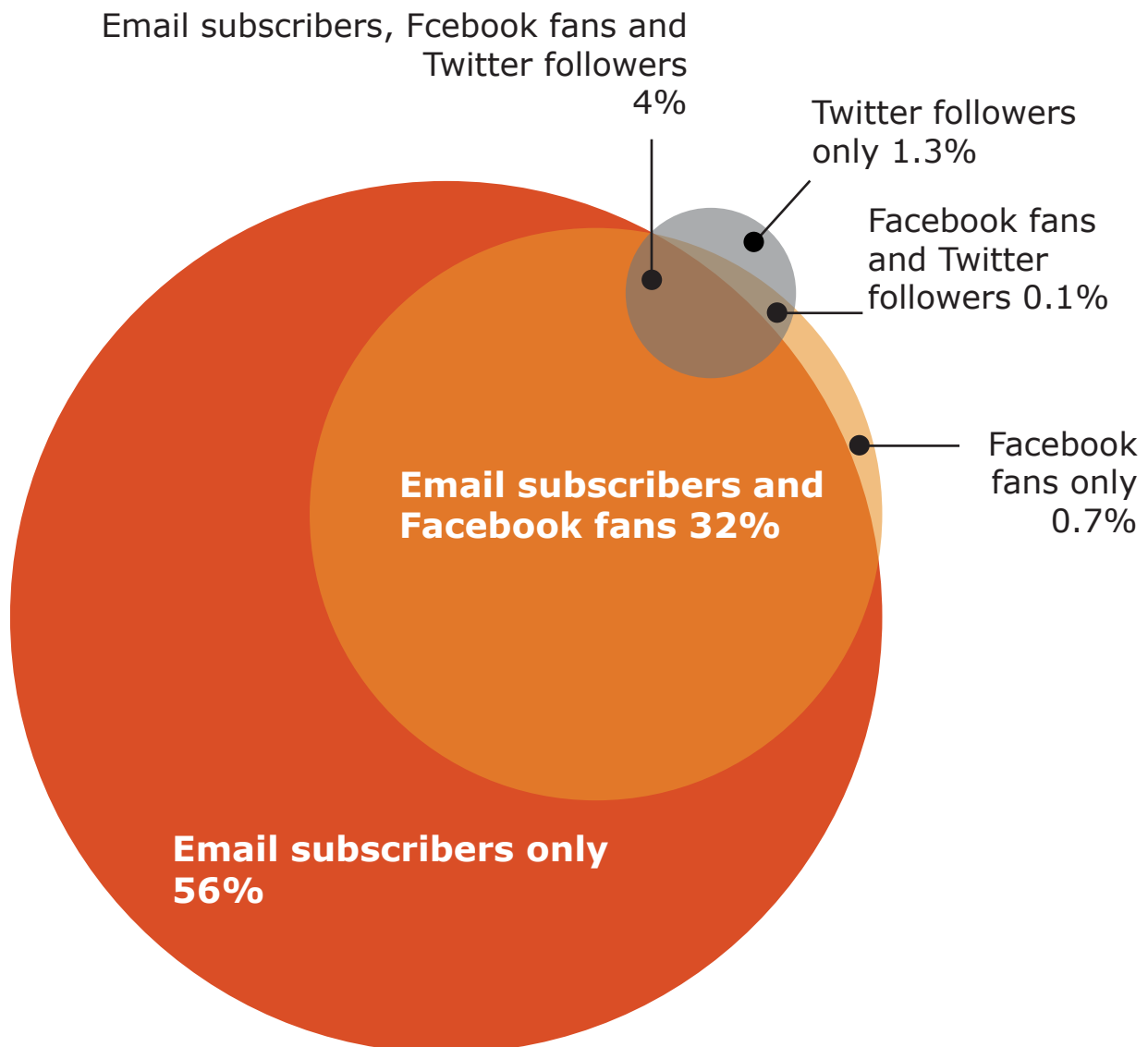
Marketers and business owners are no longer fully in control of their brands. Thanks to social sites; the reader or consumer now has much more control. Brand definitions are no longer assumed or made up by marketing professionals. Due to the increasing interaction between clients and marketing personnel through social networking sites, brands can no longer be controlled; rather, they need to be defined and shaped in relation to what is being said by clients.

Ultimately, the public sphere shapes brand identities and with the public sphere being much larger and more visible, so are brands and their publicity-be it negative or positive. It's necessary to jump onto this bandwagon to be able to monitor what is being said, to constantly improve and to provide feedback in real time to keep a positive public brand image. According to Erik Qualman, author of *Socialnomics**, 80% of Twitter usage is on mobile devices. Since people tweet anywhere and anytime, imagine what that means for bad customer experiences? Furthermore, 34% of bloggers post opinions about products and brands, and there are over 200, 000, 000 blogs with 54% of bloggers posting content or tweeting daily!

40% of marketing email recipients use social sites to search for product information and recommendations (Email marketing gone social, 2008*). Despite the social evolution email is still very active with 92% of adult Internet users sending or reading email. That's far more than those who visit social networks regularly. While email delivers the highest return on investment (ROI), it is best to utilize it in conjunction with social media sites.

Marketing email subscribers, Facebook fans and twitter followers, April 2010

% of US internet users



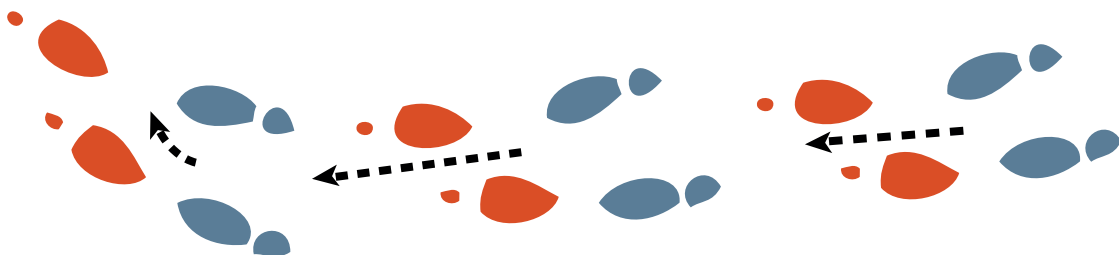
Source: www.emarketer.com

Email marketing and social sites partner up

Combining the strengths of email marketing and social media marketing can fine tune just about any marketing strategy. These two mediums tend to attract different age groups and demographics and the integration allows companies to reach a wider audience. It also allows for increased exposure and increased brand awareness through brand ambassadors. After all, social networking sites have been named the online word of mouth. Additionally, Google searches now pick up social media content. A new development is also social media content so visibility in social sites is publicly available outside of these networks. The invention of social media has led to [social sharing](#). Because social media makes sharing so easy, it's hard to resist sharing the latest bit of interesting news, gossip, pictures or videos.

Email can now be integrated with social and professional networking sites. All it takes is some interaction, and prompts from one medium to the next. With [social widgets](#), Facebook newsletter subscription-forms, and social sharing options, integration and sharing on the internet is easy. Social optimization has been made very simple, for example: You can [share an email newsletter](#) via a Facebook LIKE button, or post the URL of the email to your LinkedIn profile.

By publishing your email newsletters to your social sites you automatically channel your marketing efforts into new networks and reach more people. In a report that has been backed up by other studies, SocialTwist* stated that email was the most common channel used to share content via the company's Tell-a-Friend widget, accounting for more than half of all referrals while social networks made up fewer than a quarter of shares.



Objectives for integrating Email and Social Media, June 2010

% of business executives worldwide

Use email to promote presence on Twitter, Facebook and other channels



Enable recipients to share email content with their social networks



Use email to launch a referral/viral marketing campaign in social media



Integrate user-generated content/reviews into email marketing campaigns



Leverage agency services to build an integrated social media program



Other



Source: www.emarketer.com

The benefits of email marketing and social media integration

Integrating different mediums leads to increased brand exposure, a viral buzz, and greater word-of-mouth advertising via social networking mediums and the internet in general. If you have interesting content and social sharing is easy, then your business is one step closer to gaining more exposure and a larger client-base. Additionally, if sharing is rewarded or incentivized, it will increase ten-fold. Incentivized social sharing can be seen as a form of affiliate marketing. People tend to find new innovations, events, breaking news, competitions, and outreach efforts as particularly share-worthy. Knowing what interests your audience and making sharing easy and incentivized is a sure way to get your web footprint noticed. This does not only lead to a larger customer-base, but also to better relationships with customers.

1. Assess your image, choose the right social media channel

The social networking bandwagon is definitely one to jump on. However, assess your image, audience, and brand before jumping on just any wagon. Choose social sharing sites that suit your company. LinkedIn can work for just about any business, whereas with Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, SlideShare, YouTube, the tone is more colloquial and informal. Generally, it is best to have a big presence in social media. However, it needs to be relevant, and employed correctly to be successful. Interaction with clients is essential in maintaining healthy relationships and increasing brand loyalty.

2. Real time communication

Social networks have transformed the way that businesses and customers interact with one another; it has led to faster communication, more personal communication, and communication that is much more publicised. Product information and recommendations are increasingly being found on social networking sites and public perception is more important than ever.

3. Tagging along of “blind” followers

Often social media sites have ‘blind’ followers or fans due to competitions, invites from friends, etc. An advantage to integrating your email marketing with social marketing is that when integrating your email subscribers you ensure that true customers become fans or followers and their participation on social networking sites will educate ‘blind’ fans or followers who will see these third party endorsements. This will not only educate other fans, but will also increase brand loyalty and will transform followers and fans into actual consumers and possibly email newsletter recipients. Erik Qualman, author of *Socialnomics*, states that “78% of consumers trust peer recommendations, while only 14% trust advertisements”^{*}.

4. The effect of friends following friends

Another advantage to social media sites is that often like-minded people follow or befriend one another, and since existing fans/followers are clearly interested in your product, you stand a higher chance of gaining more potential customers through existing customers. The buzz around social networks might make you wonder if that spells the death of email. Hardly. In fact Forrester Research projects that email marketing will grow more than \$4 billion by 2012^{*}. Additionally, email is a part of social networking: Nearly all social networking sites require an active email address in order to sign-up.

5. Segmented marketing

Combining email (with its strong ability to segment and report,) with social networks and their strong ability to penetrate a larger audience enables companies to transform customer relationships dramatically. With your [email reporting](#) function, figure out which email recipients can be social brand ambassadors and incentivise them for their efforts on social sites and email. (Share to Social, 2008^{*}).

^{*}See references on last page

6. All the way to blogs

Lastly, if you can get brand enthusiasts to [publish your newsletters](#) or promotional emails to their blogs then their support is made public. Remember, nothing does it quite like genuine third party endorsements. Word of mouth advertising has consistently shown its success in increasing sales for any business because people trust friends, colleagues and family more than they trust direct marketing messages.

Social networking sites are an obvious environment for viral activity. Getting the correct person to be a brand ambassador for you on a social networking site can increase your publicity ten-fold. Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, and blogs are the most important social sites to ensure you belong to. So, here's how to get started up and to successfully integrate it with your email marketing campaigns.

1. Getting started on Twitter:

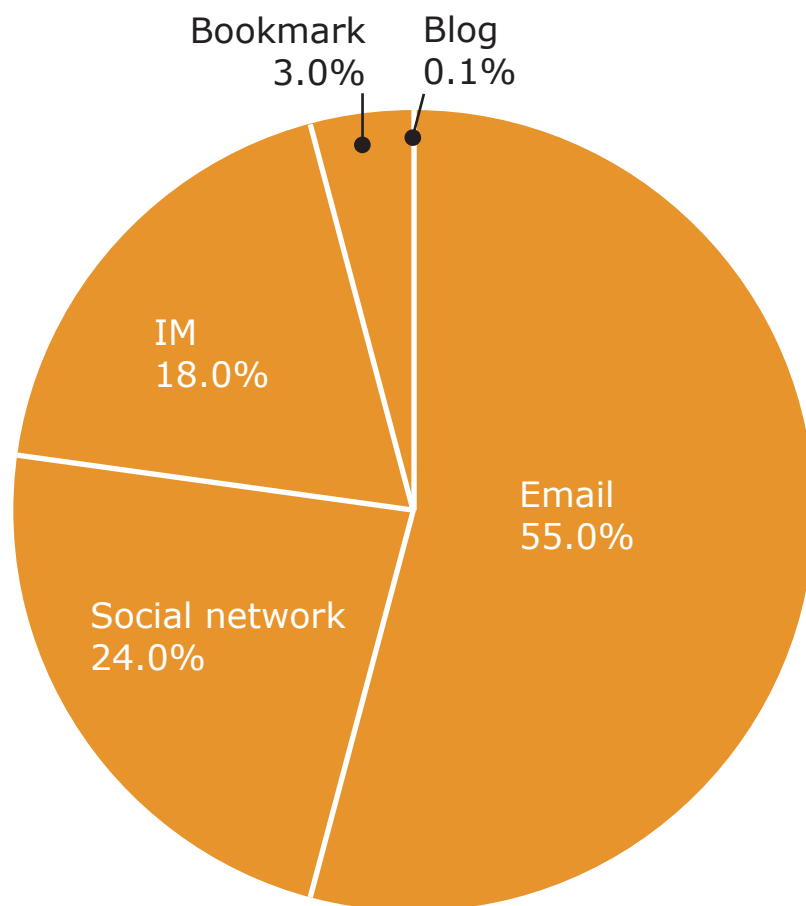
Get an account with your own business name. Then, wherever you post your web address, post your Twitter widget on your site, in email marketing newsletters, on business cards, and in personal emails. Thereafter, tweet your subject line and employ keywords that define you, as there is a search option on Twitter. Get Twitter followers by following industry-related Twitter accounts. Tweet to your followers to sign up to receive 'email only' offers – then link this tweet to an [opt-in form](#).

2. Getting started on Facebook:

Get a Facebook account and set up a Facebook Page for your business. Invite your email subscribers, and suggest to friends to become followers. However, before suggesting to anyone get to know the site; play around a little. It's surprising how many people mess things up on social networking sites when they are new to it. Once you

Channels Used to Share Online Content via the Tell-a-Friend Widget Among US Internet Users, July 2010

% of total messages shared



Source: www.emarketer.com

have the hang of it you can easily target the right groups (segmenting your status updates), at the right day and time (market research) and to the right people (fans).

Once your account and fan page is up and running, update your status regularly, link blog posts, upload photos and videos, start discussions, create events, and publish latest industry findings and company news. Also provide links to your website that sends users straight to your [subscription form](#). Post a 'like' button everywhere where you have your Twitter widget.

Integrate your Facebook account and email marketing by adding a subscription to your Facebook Page.

3. Getting started on LinkedIn:

Create a LinkedIn account and get connections by searching which of your email contacts are on LinkedIn. Search for classmates, colleagues, your employer, ex-colleagues and ex-employers. Join industry-relevant groups that you're interested in, and then have your blog directly linked to your LinkedIn profile. Thereafter, as an industry participant, give advice and participate in dialogue in various groups. This will increase your exposure and establish you as a trusted industry professional.

Include your LinkedIn icon along with your Twitter and Facebook icon to your emails. Also include your popular answers in your email sends. (How to make social media and email work together, 2010*).

4. Getting started on YouTube:

Before getting an account, take videos. Get started with videos on what it is that you do "how to videos", upcoming sales, customer reviews etc. Keep your videos short, simple and relevant. Include a clear call-to-action, and repeat this at the end of your video. Add relevant tags to increase your chances in being picked up in a search. Upload your videos to YouTube, link your video or embed them on your website, blogs, and even in email newsletters. If you're not comfortable sending [videos via email](#) you can always send the link via email newsletters. To ensure that people know your link is a video, employ JPEG images. This usually results in higher clicks.

Integrating your social media with your email marketing is a sure way to drive traffic to social networking sites, and to keep email newsletters fun and social at the same time. Social media can lead to more email subscriptions to newsletters as well. People often follow who their friends are following and after following you they may gain a genuine interest in your product-offering. Therefore, social and email integration is necessary and beneficial to businesses. Remember to stay authentic and natural in your social media presence, it is SOCIAL networking after all.

Best practices for your social media presence

1. Be vigilant - the Net is never asleep! You need to be active to remain relevant and remembered.
2. Encourage engagement through yes/no questions, open-ended questions that request feedback and competitions.
3. Post product reviews and testimonials - this creates trust.
4. Do not be afraid of bad reviews. Rather see it as an opportunity to improve.
5. Let your email subscribers know where to find you. Include all your social sites on your email newsletters, business cards etc.
6. Be more than just a business or brand. Interact and be friendly; people want to know the face behind the brand.

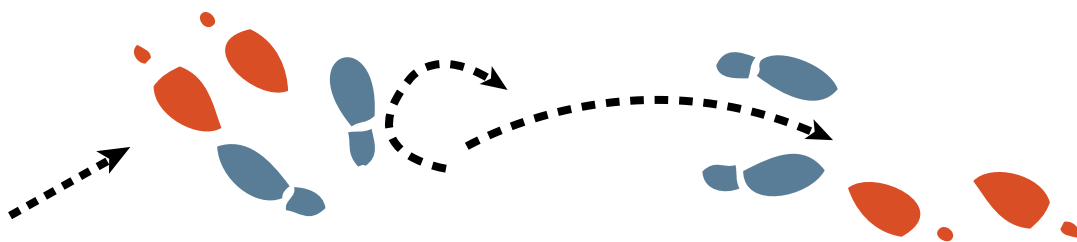


GraphicMail's social media and email integration steals the show

So, everything so far makes perfect sense, right, but where to start? GraphicMail helps you integrate your email campaigns with your social presence through a range of nifty tools.

Share your newsletter on your social account in one click

GraphicMail's social sharing option extends to Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn, Google, and Yahoo. [Social share](#) is a tool that enables you to share your newsletters with your friends and followers on all the above-mentioned social networks. Basically, you're able to publish your newsletter to your social network profile on Facebook, Twitter, etc. It will show up as a brief description of your newsletter along with a link to the full newsletter. It's really convenient as you can now do it all from within your GraphicMail account, without having to log in and post updates on all your social accounts manually. Since tweets are limited to 140 characters, GraphicMail's very own URL abbreviator, the GMTiny, will automatically shorten your link when you share on Twitter.



Add social widgets to your footer

GraphicMail also enables you to place [social widgets](#) in your newsletter footer so your subscribers can share your newsletter through their social network accounts. Basically, you can add Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Digg, Stumble Upon, delicious and Google Share icons to the footer of your email. Should your subscribers have an account with any of these social networks they can click on the widget of that network to share your newsletter with their contacts. They can also share on more than one network.

Track your social shares!

GraphicMail's reporting tool complements your social widget action by allowing you to track who shared your newsletter and through which network they shared it. As with all our reports and stats you can drill down to individual subscribers to see exactly who it was that performed these actions. Being able to identify individual subscribers gives you insights into what information they particularly like, making it easier to target them accordingly through [segmentation](#) or targeted emails.

Get email recipients to 'like' your email newsletters

With GraphicMail you can now insert a ["like" button in the header](#) of your email newsletter. When a reader clicks on the button, your newsletter will automatically appear in their Facebook news feed – so all their friends will know they "liked" it too. Of course, their friends will also be able to click on the link and read your newsletter, which is the perfect addition to your viral marketing campaign - and your email marketing.

Conclusion

Given the growing importance of integrated marketing we have slowly been adding tools and features to make it easier for email marketers to converge online marketing channels. We offer social widgets, and we provide social share statistics.

Email marketing is a particularly effective direct communication channel to build and maintain relationships with existing customers. Social media marketing has proven to be a great interactive channel between marketers and their audience. Unsurprisingly, merging these two channels has shown impressive results.

Social media is the wave of the future. In the US YouTube and Facebook are already gaining more traffic than Google! If social media is this powerful, imagine what you can do with the combined performance of email marketing and social media...



Reference List

- How to make social media and email work together, 2010. Retrieved 07 December 2010 at: <http://www.slideshare.net/jjantsch/how-to-make-social-media-email-work-together>
- How Effective Is Sharing Via Email vs. Social Media?, 2010. eMarketer. Retrieved on 10 December 2010 at: http://www.marketresearchworld.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=3513&Itemid=77