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TECHNIQUE

## Test your lists for better campaign targets

April 06, 2009

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*The right testing programs can make or break your marketing campaign efforts, particularly in a tight economy. Four list experts tackle which tests work and how to make them work for you*



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In a tight economy, it is more prudent than ever to make sure marketing efforts are highly targeted – not only for the bottom line, but to increase response rates, ultimately increasing top-line sales.

One of a company's most valuable assets is their customer and prospect database. It has been our experience that the traditional 40/40/20 rule applies not only to postal mailing, but e-mail marketing as well. With success of a campaign riding on 40% list; 40% offer; and 20% creative, there is an excellent case to make sure all your marketing lists are as clean and accurate as possible.

E-mail marketing campaign list testing increases your customer knowledge, fine tunes lists and creates highly targeted segments for tailored offers. There are several key, common-sense techniques for successful e-mail list testing.

For example, pay attention to basic essential housekeeping with what you already have in your house files. Remember the basics such as data cleansing, standardization, merge-purge, de-dupe, etc.

Once you've established regularity with an e-mail list, you will probably find a group of recipients who have opted-in but have not opened or clicked through in several e-mail blasts. Segmenting and testing this group of unresponsive recipients can yield important information on why they are not responding.

Split-creative testing is always a good idea. A split creative test is generally two or more messages created with one specific variable and sent to random, equal portions of the larger list. However, as a word of caution, we recommend that marketers resist the temptation to include so many variables that results are not measurable or actionable.

Additionally, one cannot emphasize the value of tracking enough. While this seems obvious, it is important to apply tracking codes, a unique campaign ID or specific landing pages to every link in your e-mail, to identify and analyze trends within a list.

Implementing a program of continuous testing and measuring the results against definitive objectives will help increase responses and make good lists great.

One more thing – all e-mail broadcasting and testing should comply with industry standards for permission-based use only, such as CAN-SPAM.

### THE TAKEAWAY

Tracking codes, unique IDs or specific landing pages help identify e-mail list trends

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