

DESIGNING FOR MULTIPLE SCREENS

Email creative that is personalized, mobile-friendly and triggered to customer behavior was the common factor in the 2011 Responsys Email Design Look Book.

Of the 20 companies featured in the Look Book—including MAC Cosmetics, Verizon, Virgin Atlantic, Volvo UK, Zappos, Apple, Anthropologie and Esty—only three were Responsys clients. “This isn’t ‘let’s rah-rah our own work,’” notes Chad White, research director, Responsys Inc. “We want to find inspiration out there and give credit where credit is due, and tell a story about where email design is now.”

The emails chosen for the Look Book do a good job in capturing tried and true

oncoming trends to showcase where the world of email is going. This year, lots of emails featuring mobile, personalization and triggered messages were highlighted, with a focus on more cross channel friendly communications.

“I feel like a lot of brands are going to be caught off guard,” says White. “The pace of people switching off to smart phones is happening at such a rapid clip—two years from now, mobile will be at a point where people can’t ignore it anymore.”

Going forward, what this means for email designers is creating messages that are ambidextrous, to accommodate the most common mobile denominators.

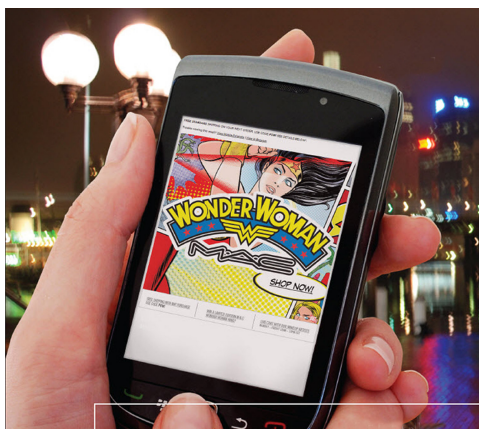
A great example of this showcased in the book was from Volvo UK. The email was only 360 pixels wide and featured lots of small screen sized bites of information, while still looking good on a desktop.

An email from MAC Cosmetics promoting its Wonder Woman product line took full advantage of the graphic appeal of the comic book art, while offering a mobile-friendly interface that worked in any inbox.

The Best Buy entry gives an excellent example of how to use personalization, with an in-store purchase triggering a post purchase email offering installation advice and upsells on accessories, says White, adding that the LinkedIn entry also takes advantage of the data the site has on users.

“Pretty much the entire email is personalized, from the greeting to the number of connections the member has who have changed jobs,” he says. “I haven’t seen anything else approaching this level of personalization.”

Representatives from Responsys offices in the U.S, the U.K. and Australia submitted around 100 emails for consideration for the book. —**BETH NEGUS VIVEIROS**



design fundamentals, notes White.

One great example this year was Minted.com, which demonstrated the power of layering elements, and using images that are slightly askew to create texture. The result draws the reader’s eye through the entire body of the email.

“It looked like things laid out on a table, as opposed to everything very neat,” notes White. “When things are very askew, it seems more organic.”

Of course, the book also highlights

EMAIL CRM:

Don’t Be a Stranger

Want to get a positive response to your email communications and insure they get delivered? Then make sure you’re treating your recipients like valued customers.

“Your email list isn’t just a mailing list, it is your clientele, and you can’t just act like you’re trying to attract people standing on a street corner,” says Robert Consoli, director of deliverability and provisioning services, SilverPop. “You need to understand what recipients want or you won’t get those messages through.”

While consumer patience with messages they don’t open or like hasn’t gotten any worse, the mechanisms are there for them to automatically route your messages to a bulk or spam folder, and that is the kiss of death for an email marketing relationship.

And as engagement becomes more of a consideration factor for ISPs, it might not even be the consumer that starts rerouting those messages. If a consumer hasn’t opened your emails for several months, they may now automatically start being sent to a bulk folder, even though the recipient never actually opted-out or ever marked your email as spam, Consoli notes.

“The biggest challenge today is reputation—marketers need to insure that their reputation is good,” he says.

This, of course, means following best practices, he continues. Make sure you have consent before you start mailing someone, and have a clear opt-out option should they no longer want to hear from you. Make sure the domain you are sending from is authenticated and don’t attempt to mask the domain from the recipient.

“Make it clear and obvious,” Consoli notes. “And don’t vary from your written policies—if you say you’re going to send emails once a month, don’t start sending three times a week.”

Above all, the best thing to do is take your time and do things right the first time around, to insure that your reputation is good from the start.

“The biggest mistake we often see is marketers thinking ‘oh, I didn’t think it would set us back that much if we did this,’” says Consoli. “Make sure you’re doing the right thing before you mail. You can’t just get by claiming ignorance. Even if you do something wrong by accident, you’re going to have to go back and fix it, and, like rebuilding a credit score, that takes a lot of work.” —**BNV**



TIP: GET TO THE POINT

Tweaking creative to get to the point—and not offend customers—has helped dietary supplement marketer Uni Key Health boost sales and Facebook fans via email.

The health food and product marketer sends out email blasts twice weekly to its customer base. These are promotional in nature, but try to educate users about a health issue or product. “We used to do longer, newsier emails, but realized that we weren’t getting high readership because people are too busy to engage with something like that,” says Carol Templeton, marketing director.

This led to a design change, focusing more on bulleted lists and bold text, to get reader attention. But the focus remains on having an educational component.

“Over time, just emailing discounts and offers will devalue your product—people will just wait until it goes on sale again to buy,” notes Templeton.

the medium as effectively as it could. It contracted with iContact to set up an easier to use email system.

Uni Key has an email house file of about 50,000 names; another 40,000 are also regularly reached through co-promotions to Dr. Gittleman’s email list of blog followers. “She talks about different issues in the news, and links to products.”

Visuals are also being constantly tested. With some of Uni Key’s products—such as weight loss supplements—the company has to be cautious, because people are sensitive about those issues.

This means you can’t just put a picture of a skinny girl in a bikini out there with an “Are you ready?” tagline. But, they found that a clean, modern image of a weight loss smoothie drink got a lot of clicks but didn’t translate into sales. A better approach was photos of a thin woman and an overweight woman, both tastefully dressed, with the images cropped to hide their faces.

“You have to create a message,” she notes. “If you don’t, people won’t click through.”

As for the ROI of Uni Key’s email efforts, open rates usually fall in the 13-14% range, while clickthroughs average 2% to 3%. Still,

a higher open rate doesn’t necessarily always mean a successful email, says Templeton. Some messages that had a lower open rate actually were more profitable, because the people who clicked through were more committed to making a purchase. —BNV



Seventy percent of Uni Key’s business is online, with a lot of business generated via word by word of mouth and via PR from a paid spokesperson, nutritionist Dr. Ann Louise Gittleman. The company has been using email for at least a decade, but didn’t feel it was using

HELPFUL HINTS:

Puck Finds the Right Blend

CONSOLIDATE YOUR DATABASES FOR BETTER TARGETING

The Wolfgang Puck family of companies

had a great set of ingredients for email marketing, but they didn’t work if they weren’t blended in the right way.

Wolfgang Puck is comprised of three separate companies: Wolfgang Puck Fine Dining, which operates restaurants internationally; Wolfgang Puck Catering, which caters for events such as the Academy Awards, the Grammys and large fundraisers; and Wolfgang Puck Worldwide, which operates casual restaurants and sells licensed products such as broths and cookware.

Each brand was maintaining its own separate database of email addresses and purchase histories, and they couldn’t be easily shared. The company recently worked with Listrak to consolidate those files and create more cross sell opportunities.

The brands all have distinct audiences. “Someone may be familiar with our grocery store products, but never have dined in one of our restaurants,” says Stephanie Davis, director of brand communications for the Wolfgang Puck Fine Dining Group. “We wanted to speak with them separately, but collectively.”

The goal was to create profiles of the various audiences and target email campaigns to them. Wolfgang Puck did away with direct mail about five years ago, largely because of cost but also because the ability to target and track behavior and measure the ROI wasn’t high enough, notes Davis.

Wolfgang Puck is encouraging email sign-ups on the company’s home page as well as on social media sites. “There is definitely cross-over between the audiences,” says Davis. “We have customers who enjoy all the brands—they go to Spago but also enjoy frozen pizza.”

One interesting impact of the new email database system created with Listrak is the ability to target by users’ travel preferences. “A lot of our frequent diners travel across the country—maybe they live in Los Angeles but go to Atlantic City to gamble,” says Davis. “We want to target the aspects of their life that they care about.”

When someone opts-in to the database, they receive a four-part email welcome series introducing the world of Wolfgang Puck. The content isn’t broken down by company name, because that wouldn’t really be meaningful to readers. Rather, it is broken down by how consumers would experience the products, such as in their home or in the restaurants. The welcome series has an average open rate of 15%, and click-through rates of 3.5%. —BNV

