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Better Emails Generate More Qualified Leads

Everyone is trying to do more for less these days. Yet, as discussed in our last two newsletters on Best Practices for Fund Companies, now is not the time to suspend marketing activities. It's the time to communicate regularly, keeping advisors, clients and prospects abreast of your best ideas and read on the markets.



Dan Sondhelm

Content rich, professional emails are an inexpensive, timely way to stay in front of clients and prospects. While email services offer plenty of templates, the key to a successful campaign is a design that complements your corporate identity and offers compelling content. Use emails to promote recent press and quarterly conference calls with links to videos and commentary on your Web site.

Don't Twitter, Don't Text, Say Something!

E-newsletters can be as elaborate or as simple as you wish, but there is a lot to be said for short and sweet in today's environment of "twittering" and "texting." There is no doubt that all of us are information-overloaded, today more than ever. So, while a market commentary is hardly "twittery news," getting that market commentary in the hands of people who can use it is essential.

Why a Service? We Have Email!

Yes, you have email. But, you don't want the headache of being reported for spam. And, you do want the opportunity to see who is reading your message and clicking through to more information on your Web site. Most e-news services provide a wide set of reporting tools—unfortunately, they are more than most of us can take advantage of due to constraints of time and personnel.

These comprehensive reports tell you precisely who's opened your email (typically 20% to 30% of the recipients). They also show you who has clicked through to your Web site or any specific links, such as your commentary or performance pages. With some effort put into follow-up, and good lists to begin with, your wholesalers are handed a slew of warm leads with very little effort.

Services will also provide you with invaluable learning data to make your emails more effective. They report market wide statistics about average open rates, click-throughs and bounces and provide tips for successful e-news campaigns. For example, according to Constant Contact, the best day to send emails is on Monday and best times are 8 am to 10 am or 4 pm to 6 pm to maximize the chance of being seen.

Rich Content.

So, what exactly is this "rich content"? There's an old adage that says "the right tool for the right job." This is where segmenting your audience comes in. Advisors are anxious for ideas and relevant market messages to share with their clients and prospects, while investors want to know their money is in good hands. Prospective advisors need to understand better what you are all about and journalists need to know you are in the game.

Content that is highly appropriate for each audience is the most likely to pique their interest and build brand loyalty. Most of the direct marketing email packages available today allow you to organize your target audiences in multiple

lists. Consider segmenting your audience into categories such as current advisors, hot prospects, trade show contacts you've met vs. full trade show lists and so on.

In the current market environment, intelligent interpretation of the market's gyrations are invaluable. If you are a fund firm, consider issuing at least one version of your e-news from the advisor. Of course, you'll want to consult with your own compliance officer, but in our experience, the advisor can put forth comments about the market and securities without review as long as specific fund names are not included.

The XYZ Firm Update. Boring...

Enlist the help of the most creative person in your firm to fashion the subject line for your e-news. Nothing is as ho-hum-delete as an email that reads "News from XYZ mutual fund firm." Think about your email box this morning, some jumped right off the page, didn't they? Most people just don't have time to look at every message, flagging many, at least mentally, to get to later. Realistically, the subject line is what readers use to decide if they will open an email or not—a decision made in virtually a split-second.

Keep your subject line concise, no more than 5-8 words. Ideally, these words will offer a benefit or a question that cannot be answered with a yes or no.

Professional Look.

Here again is how an email service trumps your firm's email. What we pay attention to, in the midst of daily messages we're bombarded with from all sorts of media, has a lot to do with visual appeal. Think about bullet points, headlines, pictures and graphs.

In a perfect world, at a glance the reader should be able to identify that the email is from your firm. Don't settle for a "business-template." A small up-front investment will provide you with a banner, fonts and colors that are consistent with your brand. Changing content from month to month is then a simple task.

And in the End...

Always include a clear call to action—click here for our white paper, call 800-XXX-XXXX for more information or to download a prospectus. Pepper your email with links, but remember, attention spans are limited. One clear message is far more effective than multiple messages that may simply confuse.

SunStar has developed a number of e-newsletters for our clients. We can help you craft messages that sell and are integrated into your other sales activities. Call us at 703-894-1046 for assistance in managing an ongoing email campaign or just to get you on your way with a recognizable, professional template you can add content to on a regular basis. The key is to get started and maintain your presence.

Let's discuss how SunStar can help you achieve recognition in this competitive environment.



SunStar: One of Inc. Magazine's 5,000 fastest growing private companies in America in 2007 and 2008.

SunStar works with retail and institutional investment managers and mutual fund firms to attract investors, strengthen distribution and build brands through structured news generation programs and smart marketing. We know the industry and the reporters who cover it. We also understand the often challenging legal, regulatory and compliance issues facing clients.

Find more about smart marketing and successful public relations campaigns in our blog: FundFactor.net