EMAIL MARKETING

Using Split Testing to Improve Responses

Webinar Questions and Answers Summary

Presented by: Pinpointe and NetProspex

Pinpointe and NetProspex jointly presented a webinar on Email Marketing. This document summarizes the questions that were asked during the session and offline. We had dozens of questions that we were not able to answer online, so if you posted a question that we didn't get to during the online session, please check here, as we've done our best to answer and address all questions that were asked.

Q: Can I send email to people who have not directly request email from me without violating the CAN-SPAM act?

A: Yes. However, your correspondence must abide by these rules in order to remain compliant with CAN-SPAM regulations:

- The header (send-from address) must be accurate. It cannot be false or misleading.
- The subject line must also be accurate. It cannot be deceptive or misleading and must relate to the content.
- Any correspondence must have an opt-out method. The current CAN-SPAM regulation requires that opt-out requests be honored within 10 days. However as best practices, we recommend honoring any requests immediately. Most Email Service Providers, including Pinpointe, automatically manage opt-outs and will automatically remove contacts upon their request.
- Unsolicited Commercial Email (ie, sending correspondence to someone with whom you do not have a pre-existing business relationship and/or has not explicitly requested your correspondence) is fully permitted but must be identified as an advertisement, and must include a valid physical address and phone. In the latest ruling, a post office box is considered to be an acceptable postal address.

Q: Where can I learn more about the CAN-SPAM act?

You can check the FTC website at: www.ftc.gov/spam

Or call toll-free: 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357)

Q: In the various case studies / examples presented, how big are the sample sizes presented?

A: The sample sizes differed between case studies; however the number of emails included in each sample set ranged between 10,000 and 40,000 emails each. Overall, the results presented are consistent with aggregate results we have seen across several hundred million emails. Any 'surprises' were noted in our presentation.

Q: What is Multi-Part vs. HTML-Only?

A: Multi-Part means that, when your email is sent, it is 'packaged' with both an HTML version - for email clients who prefer to open HTML emails, and a Text version, which will be opened on many PDAs, handhelds and where people have set their preferences to only read 'text' versions of email. Most emails are sent in Multi-Part format. Spammers on the other hand rarely take the time to create Multi-part versions and more often will send only HTML versions.

Q: Are there certain words or phrases that should be avoided in the headline? (eg, 'Free', '&' character, or exclamations !!)?

A: A content-based SPAM filter looks at hundreds of words and phrases and gives your email a spam 'score'. Certain words in proximity with others can trigger your email to be filtered based on content. Items such as exclamation points, the word 'FREE' etc can increase the spam score. You can find a reference to a more complete listing of the several hundred tests performed by a Spamassassin engine here:

http://spamassassin.apache.org/tests_3_2_x.html

Q: How do people respond to attachments - how do open rates with emails using attachments compare with emails not using attachments?

A: We did not run this test. However, most spam systems will perform a virus scan on attachments, and many spam firewalls are set by default to quarantine attachments. You are usually better off to include a link to the document vs. an attachment. If you do opt for an attachment, stay away from large attachments; PDF documents seem to get through ok.

Q: What are the best times during trhe day/week to send email?

A: Generally we find that Tuesday Wed and Thursday between 5am and 10am have delivered the best results. However, as more and more companies are focusing on these times, you may find that you get very good responses by sending on Friday or Monday - when overall email traffic is lower. The best bet is to test your campaign timing with your audience.

Q: Do you recommend collecting subscribers' first and last names during registration, and using them?

A: Asking for a first and last name during a subscription process (when you are collecting names from a website subscription form, for example) may cause a nominal drop off in conversions. However, using the first and last names to personalize email correspondence will usually improve email response rates - easily offsetting the nominal drop-off in registration conversion.

Q: What causes emails to be registered as having been opened multiple times?

A: Some email clients will pre-fetch and preview an email. If image display is enabled, this can register as an open. When the user later clicks specifically on the email, this can register as a second open. The specific operation varies from Email client to client and the specific behaviour can be set through client-side options. Good emails can also register multiple opens from the same recipient if they are forwarded on to colleagues and then re-opened. For example, we have included references to funny YouTube videos in some emails and seen an average of up to 2 opens per email (ie total opens = 2x unique opens).

Q: How has the growth in Blackberry and other handheld devices impacted email design?

A: The 'use scenario' we are seeing is that people use their mobile devices / smart phones / etc to do real-time checking (often skimming) of email and making a quick decision whether to keep the email and read it in more detail later, or delete it. They then go back and review / act upon more important emails from their desktop. Industry metrics indicate as many as 40% of Executives check their email on a Blackberry or similar device first. This means that, more than ever, it is critical to design emails with this in mind. Ensure that all correspondence is sent with both HTML and Text versions (using MIME). Most good ESPs, like Pinpointe, support this. The text and HTML versions can be different but ensure that the Text version is concise, includes a link to the web version of the email, and is designed for a narrow display.

Q: If an Email is forwarded, can you still collect open and link click results?

A: If an email is simply forwarded, and the recipient opens and/or clicks on links, the open and click will be registered There is presently not a method to track email opens for text emails; however Pinpointe ***can*** track link clicks even if the content is 100% text.

Q: Is it possible to track emails opened and links clicked from a Blackberry (or other PDA)?

A: There is presently not a method to track email opens for text emails; however Pinpointe ***can*** track link clicks even if the content is 100% text.

Q: You used the terms B2B and B2C - what do these mean?

"B2B" means 'Business to Business' - as in businesses communicating with other businesses, whereas B2C means 'Business to Consumer'.

Q: When using Pinpointe's on-demand Email Marketing service, can we attach a PDF file to the outbound emails during the campaign?

A: Yes. However, we recommend that you host the pdf and link to it in the body of your email. Most spam filters will automatically quarantine any attachments, including pdfs.

Therefore your pdf will not reach your recipients. Pinpointe includes unlimited storage for document and image hosting.

Q: If we download contacts from NetProspex, can we use the email contacts to populate an existing list in Constant Contact?

No. Constant Contact, Vertical Response, MailChimp and most other ESP's require that you use only 100% opt-in email addresses. Failure to comply with these guidelines will result in your account being immediately terminated without refund. You can check each company's respective 'Terms of Use' policies on their websites.

Pinpointe is the only ESP that focuses exclusively on mid-market B2B companies, and we work only with qualified database vendors, like NetProspex. As a result, Pinpointe is able to permit use of non opt-in addresses as long as correspondence complies with CAN-SPAM regulations.

Q: Are analytics and e-mail deployment help, reports and e-mail effectiveness metrics included in the monthly pricing packages for Pinpointe's Email Services?

A: yes, advanced reporting, help and effectiveness metrics are all standard features. If you would like to learn more, or to schedule a live 1 on 1 demonstration of Pinpointe, please contact us at: 408-834-7577 x125; sales@pinpointe.com or cstouffer@pinpointe.com.

Q: How many lines long should an email be limited to?

There is no set length, and it depends on the objective of the email. For example, a monthly update / newsletter format might be 1-2 pages. Be sure to put a list of topics at the beginning of the newsletter, so it is easy for the recipient to 'jump' to specific sections that may be of interest. A brief update, that is extending an offer to download a whitepaper or join an event, usually performs best if the email is short, to the point, and includes links to landing pages with additional information. Another common style is the 'educational, email blog's style. If you subscribe to 'The Motley Fool' for example, you've seen this. The writing style is personalized, 1 on 1 communication that typically covers a topic or two, and explains the topic in detail. This might be 2-4 pages long, and can include links to landing pages and external documents with additional supporting materials.

Q: When sending an email is it better to use a 'send from / reply to' address such as 'sales@mycompny.com' or 'my name@mycompany.com'?

A: In most cases, you will see better results by using a specific contact person (yourself for example) vs. a general address like 'support@' or 'sales@'. Keep in mind that your recipients take only a second or two to decide whether or not to open your email. If they do not recognize your company, they are likely to skip over the email. Also, general addresses are less personal, which reduces open rates.

Actual results. Based on analysis of various campaigns across our system we have seen that using a specific personal name vs. a general email address can improve the net open rate by 15% - 35% (or more).

Q: What qualifies as a call to action (contact us, download, attend...) ?

A: A 'Call to Action' is your offer. For example, an offer a link to download a whitepaper, or registration to attend a Webinar, that is a call to action. A call to action might also be: " please call me at…" or "please email me at: …" However we generally recommend using links within an email when possible because responses can then be directly and automatically tracked by Pinpointe.

Q: What's a "good" open rate, and a "good" click-through rate?

A: There are so many factors that impact open rates that it is difficult to predict a 'good' vs. 'bad' open rate. It is more useful to look at your own open rates relative to other campaigns you are running to determine if one campaign is generally doing better / worse than others, based on net open rates and / or click through rates.

That said, assuming that you are following 'best practices' for the title, offer, content, send times, send frequency, list management etc, you might expect to see the following rough ***unique*** open rates (please refer to slide #15 for 3 specific list response rates):

- **Opt-in / managed list**: 20% - 45% open rates are common; 60%+ are achievable
- **Purchased/ rented list**: 8% - 14% per campaign, assuming you have purchased a high quality list that is not generated using 'web scraping' techniques. After a series of 4-6 campaigns, perhaps over a 2 month period, you might see that overall, 30% of the contacts have opened one or more emails.

Pinpointe Questions

Q: What sets Pinpointe apart from low end solutions like Constant Contact?

A: Pinpointe offers the following advanced features and services:

- Pinpointe services B2B customers, so we are one of the only email vendors that permits the use of purchased lists from qualified database vendors like NetProspex. Constant Contact and others have Terms of Use policies that forbid using purchased lists, and standard policy is to disable your account without refund.
- Pinpointe offers automated A/B campaign testing, so you can try multiple variations of your campaigns automatically, and go with the version that produces the best results.

- Pinpointe transparently integrates with Google Analytics, so all of your campaigns can be tracked, monitored and analyzed within Google analytics.

Q: What is Pinpointe's pricing?

Pinpointe's pricing is based on the number of emails sent per month. There are no contracts, up front fees or long term commitments. Pricing ranges from $49 / month for 5,000 emails to $2,400 /month for 500,000 emails.

Full pricing information is available here: www.pinpointe.com/get-started

NetProspex Database Service Questions

Q: What are the major industries that are covered by the contacts in NetProspex' database?

A: Our database represents all industries. All records include a primary SIC code and many have secondary and third SIC codes.

Q: Does NetProspex data include people in the real estate and mortgage industry?

A: Yes. We have a large amount of contact records in real estate.

Q: Does NetProspex have lists of MD's and Medical Office administrators?

A: Yes.

Q: When selecting NetProspex contact records, is it possible to select contacts at the department level, or title level, such as manager/director contacts?

A: Yes.

Q: How current is the NetProspex db? Is it constantly being cleaned/updated?

A: The NetProspex database is updates daily. Nothing in the db is more than 2 years old.

Q: Does NetProspex merge/purge/augment client-provided lists?

Yes, although often times people find it is more cost effective to purchase contact records. Please contact NetProspex or Pinpointe for a quotation.

Q: are NetProspex records that are downloaded for single use or do they become the property of the client?

A: All NetProspex records you purchase and download are your property. You can use the records as many times as you wish. They are not for one time use (rental).

Q: Do NetProspex contact records include contacts' titles?

A: Yes. Our records include contacts' titles and their title level (such as Manager, VP, etc). This allows you to further target your communications based on title level.

Q: Does the NetProspex database include email addresses for contacts?

Yes.

- 100% of contacts have email addresses.
- 99% have phone numbers, of which 75% have direct dial phone numbers.

Email Service Provider Requirements

If you decide to purchase email contacts, use a reputable ESP with the following services:

- Automatic bounce processing / removal
- Automatic and immediate unsubscribe handling
- Check terms of service to ensure your ESP allows you to send to contacts that have not opted in. For most ESPs, violating this policy means your account will be immediately suspended with no refund.

About Pinpointe

Pinpointe is a leading provider of on-demand email marketing automation software based in the heart of Silicon Valley, California. As former High Tech B2B marketers, we've been in your shoes. Our team has a passion for helping B2B marketing professionals communicate with existing customers and target new prospects through behavioural targeting, improved segmentation and message personalization.

Other Resources

If you're a Business to Business marketer and are want to stay on top of the latest marketing trends, tips and best practices, then please sign up for our twice-a-month Tips 'n Tricks notes. We also run surveys of marketing and sales professionals. We ask what you and your peers are doing and share the results with all participants at no charge. Watch for your invitation to participate and learn.

Pinpointe Tips: www.pinpointe.com/about/subscribe-to-pinpointe-tips

Contacting Pinpointe

At present, we provide sales and support from 8am to 8pm PST, M-F. We can be reached 24x7 at:

Pinpointe Site: www.pinpointe.com

General Information: info@pinpointe.com

Sales: sales@pinointe.com

Please feel free to pass this handy pdf on to all your friends and enemies.

© 2009, Pinpointe. All Rights Reserved.