

# Business Strategies

## TIPS FOR MAKING YOUR E-MAIL MARKETING STAND OUT

**Cyberguard**, a network security company based in Fort Lauderdale, e-mails a monthly newsletter to its international clients.

"It's probably the most effective way of communicating with customers that I've ever experienced," says Cynthia Sucher, Cyberguard's communications director, who has written the electronic newsletter for two years.

Margie Fisher uses e-mail marketing in her Boca Raton public relations and marketing business. She sends a newsletter to about 250 clients and potential clients every two weeks. "I get so much business from it," she says.

As more and more companies and professionals turn to e-mail marketing to reach customers, businesses



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have to find ways to stand out from the massive influx of e-mails. Experts say e-mail marketing is quickly replacing direct mail as a cheaper, more effective way to reach customers.

But businesses have to be careful not to overwhelm customers with e-mail and to provide them relevant and helpful information.

Sucher uses Cyberguard's

newsletter to tell customers about new computer product information.

"It's so measurable and cost-efficient. We get immediate results. We know how many people opened it. We get people responding," she says.

When a firewall company was shutting down, Cyberguard took the opportunity to inform its customers and tell them about its product that integrates an antivirus mechanism in a firewall. Sucher said the response to the e-letter was tremendous.

According to a report by the Direct Marketing Association, 66 percent of 700 direct and interactive companies surveyed saw an increase in sales as a result of direct marketing.

Why do customers read

these e-mail newsletters or promotional items? Because they've asked for them, via your Web site or through contact with your business. They've "opted in" to your marketing.

Margaret Grisdela, whose Boca Raton company, **Clientize.com**, designed the template for Cyberguard's e-letter, makes several recommendations for businesses planning an e-mail campaign:

- Keep your e-mail short and to the point.
- Measure responses with a "call for action," asking clients to respond with an e-mail or call.
- Build your e-letter to reflect your brand — the look and colors of your Web site, including the company logo.
- Keep the list private and

give recipients a way to get off the list if they wish.

At the same time, Grisdela warns:

■ Don't send out too much e-mail. Try once or twice a month to start.

■ Don't send out any e-mail without testing it through yourself and co-workers.

■ Don't include too many pictures or other graphics that will slow the opening of your e-mail.

■ Don't send attachments. People tend not to open them because of concerns about viruses.

"First and foremost, you have to give your recipients some value: Insights into best practices in other companies or new product developments," Grisdela says.

E-mail marketing also "is an excellent way to drive people

back to your Web site," she says.

Suzanne Mulvehill, president of **Profit Strategies** in Delray Beach, says she works with several small businesses that use e-mail marketing to retain their customers, building on areas of high revenue growth.

She recommends businesses send electronic coupons with their invoices, which also should be sent electronically. And use e-mail to thank a client for business, offering a discount for the next visit. "Look for as many opportunities to market as you can."

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