

# Connected Marketing and Why it Matters

BY JOHN JANETOS



**A** goal direct marketers might set for 2011 is to really connect and converse with customers in multiple ways, using multiple channels, wherever they are.

Though email marketing remains the backbone of digital outreach due to its ubiquity and ROI, social and mobile are playing increasingly significant roles. Social media, email and SMS (texting) are symbiotic, so marketers will forge deeper and more relevant relationships by leveraging the strengths of each to enhance the other.

Last year, we all went social. Interactive marketers established their brands' social presence with Facebook fan pages, Twitter, and others. An eye chart of social buttons adorned email campaigns asking customers to *follow* them, *join* them, *like* them, and *share* them. The challenge now is to connect and cross-pollinate all digital campaigns -- from developing the creative, to execution, to tracking their effectiveness --

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the expense from an acknowledgment program and wonder how you could lower that cost. When it shows up separately, we have a tendency to think of it as pure expense, unrelated to the line items in the revenue-generating programs. Rather, show the cost of acknowledgments as an appeal, renewal, acquisition, or other program expense. You'll be less likely to tinker with the costs when they are tied to the revenue.

**3. Multi-thanks.** Thank-yous should not be "one and done." If your donor is making a special gift, then show them you think it's special, too. Your donor will expect the first thank-you -- they should since the IRS requires it for most gifts -- but you'll make a bigger impression when you go beyond the norm and thank them again for that special gift.

**4. Mix it up.** Thank-yous do not need to be limited to the channels that secured the

across email, social, mobile, and web channels so that the marketer gets a complete, and "connected," view of their customer.

Connected digital marketing at its most elemental is a fundamental shift from a campaign-centric view to a relationship-centric view of the customer. The performance metrics of individual channel campaigns, though still important, become part of a larger picture of the ROI of all your interactive marketing. The marketer must now connect with customers where they are, how they like, and engage them in conversation. Making it easy to share offers allows the brand to break free of the inbox.

## Evolving from email marketing to connected digital marketing

In the last year, several of iPost's clients have evolved from email marketing to connected digital marketing. One client started by simply including forward-to-a-friend (FTF) and share-this links in their email campaigns. After identifying their social sharers, they reached out to them with special offers to reward them for being brand ambassadors.

Another client developed a completely connected marketing view of their customers. They first synchronized customer data from disparate data sources -- email, social, mobile, web, brick & mortar -- and then augmented it with the customer's preferences regarding where and how often they want to be contacted. The resulting holistic view

gift. Send one through the mail and email the other if you have the donor's email address. Or, follow up the email thank-you with a phone call from a staff person or volunteer. The key is to integrate your thank-yous and exceed routine expectations in order to get the donor's attention and let them know how much you care.

**5. Be more grateful.** Your donor has just acted out of pure kindness -- she sent you a donation to further your mission. Take this opportunity to really think about what that means, and then express that in your thank-you letters, emails, and phone calls.

**6. Use this moment to inspire your donor to do more.** Upgrades and major gifts don't just happen because we sent the perfect upgrade appeal or "graduated" the donor to the major-gifts department. They happen because the donor felt inspired by what else she could do and what else the organization could do with just

of the customer, which puts their likes and dislikes at the center of all outreach, has allowed this client to run highly personalized campaigns resulting in significant overall ROI. In fact, one of their campaigns would have been considered a failure by traditional open and click-through email-performance metrics. However, when they took into account the social buzz generated from significant sharing activity, the campaign was considered highly successful.

## Effort/Investment

Getting started with connected marketing is simple. First and most importantly, it requires a commitment to social and mobile that recognizes and leverages their increasingly significant role in customer conversations. From a technology perspective, you need a connected digital marketing platform that unifies and integrates email, social, mobile, and web into a single solution. The platform should provide the ability to cross-promote email campaigns in social and mobile and vice versa. Extending the reach of your campaigns beyond the inbox through easy sharing of content for word-of-mouth marketing is another feature to look for. Finally, there should be extensive performance metrics and integration with popular web-analytics platforms such as Google Analytics that enable deep analysis of connected campaigns.

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a little more funding. So no matter the channel, make your expression of thanks noteworthy.

**7. Be creative and keep it fresh.** Change up the copy on your thank-you letters periodically. Link to special photos or videos to show how the money is being used. Include leftover decals or magnets used in acquisition as special inserts in mailed acknowledgments when you have them.

As fundraising goes multi-channel, it's time we use that technology to give good thanks.

Craig DePole is a senior vice president at Newport Creative Communications and heads up the Washington, DC office. Newport Creative specializes in providing multi-channel fundraising and acknowledgment programs that produce uncommonly good results. Our personalized approach to each client's program produces highly efficient, high-impact campaigns at highly competitive prices. Contact Craig at [cdepole@newportcreative.com](mailto:cdepole@newportcreative.com) or 410-793-5418 to learn more.