Boost Email Relevancy with Dynamic Content

Using Dynamic Content for Advanced Personalization & Customization

Net Atlantic

| Introduction

In this paper we'll discuss using "dynamic content" to deliver relevant content to your email subscribers. It's a method for customizing parts of your email creative with text or images personalized to each recipient.

When properly executed, dynamic content is an effective way to capture your recipient's attention, personalize the customer experience, and dramatically improve the relevance of your content through one-to-one marketing messages.

Use dynamic content to create personalized email programs that evolve to match prospects' and customers' needs and increase the relevance and impact of your emails.

By using dynamic content, you can ensure that a more tailored message is reaching your targeted audience. By tailoring a message to the specific recipient, your message takes on additional value and the potential for increased sales opportunities.

Benefits of Dynamic Content Marketing

The single biggest benefit is its power of relevance. Relevance is the key to successful email marketing—which means striving to customize messages for each recipient based on profile and behavioral data. Relevancy in email marketing can be achieved by using dynamic content, a marketing method that enables direct marketers to send the right message, to the right person, at the right time.

A more advanced form of personalized marketing, dynamic content marketing combines marketing analytics, behavioral insight, messaging and creative to customize portions of your email with text or images personalized to that specific individual. For example

- If you publish a newsletter about basketball, you might want to send news about particular teams to particular subscribers, based on the geographic information they selected on your signup form.
- A used car dealer can customize its newsletter and showcase cars based on an individual buyer's profile. The low budget car seeker could be presented with this week's Ford Fiesta, while the high budget car seeker might be presented with the new Lexus in inventory.
- Some offers may be more appropriate to subscribers of a particular gender. A retailer of golf apparel might want to target males and females who live in different states with an offer to purchase particular lines of golf apparel. In this case, each gender would be targeted based on their geographic locale and be presented with different subject lines, headlines, images and text.

This combination produces powerfully engaging one-to-one communications, which are ultimately more responsive and have much more impact than the traditional 'one-to-many' or 'batch and blast' approach. Dynamic content marketing is successful because it is driven by data, intelligence and relevance. This allows direct marketers and businesses to communicate with their customers and prospects as individuals (one-to-one), rather than as a group (one-to-several).

Benefits for marketers
- Saves money by reducing time spent on producing multiple campaigns
- Generates loyalty, anticipation and increases retention rates as customers feel more valued when receiving personalized communications
- Increases leads and revenue by delivering highly relevant and personalized content that increase the likelihood of conversion
- Enables cross-selling of complementary products and services
- Establishes credibility and produces significantly higher response rates

Benefits for customers
- Customers receive information and promotions specifically related to their interests and needs
- Customers don't receive communications about topics they are not interested in
- Customers are able to locate the relevant products and services on your site faster

Personalization, Relevancy and Dynamic Content

When properly executed, dynamic (personalized) content is timely and relevant, making it a very effective way to develop relationships with prospects and market to a segment-of-one. Dynamic content can be set up based on what you know about your customers (i.e., their demographics, past behavior, and even customer preferences).

Create one message with dynamic content, and automatically deliver unlimited variations of that message based upon rules you assign to each piece of content. For a visitor you've identified as a marketing qualified lead, you might want to send a more product-specific call-to-action such as a free trial or discount offer. Dynamic content can also be used for:

Email Alerts and Updates
Out of stock, cart abandonment, and trigger email messages can all have dynamic content based on customer attributes.

Webinar Reminders
A reminder email about upcoming webinars could be tailored to display only those that match a prospect's pain points and interests.

Lifecycle Stage-Specific Campaigns
If prospects have just entered the sales funnel, dynamic content can help ensure that they're seeing the most appropriate information to move them through the sales funnel. Conversely, prospects that are further along in the sales process should see more calls to action that will motivate them to convert.

Here are some interesting marketing stats to support personalization, relevancy and dynamic content:

- Personalized emails improve click-through rates by 14%, and conversion rates by 10%.
  (Source: Aberdeen)
- 62% of adults under 34 are willing to share their location to get more relevant content.
  (Source: JiWire)
- 80% of mobile internet users would prefer ads relevant to them locally.
  (Source: JiWire)
- 70% of consumers prefer getting to know a company via articles rather than ads.
  (Source: ContentPlus)
- 75% of respondents say lack of relevance is the biggest reasons subscribers choose to opt out).
  (Source: Merkle Interactive Services)
- A high-impact recommendation from a trusted friend conveying a relevant message is up to 50 times more likely to trigger a purchase than a low-impact recommendation.
  (Source: McKinsey Quarterly)
- The top reasons for U.S. email users to unsubscribe from a business or non-profit email subscription are too many emails (69%) and content that is no longer relevant (56%).
  (Source: Chadwick Martin Bailey)
- 53% of retailers plan to focus on web personalization engines in 2012.
  (Source: National Retail Federation)
- In a study of 650 multi-channel marketing campaigns, personalized campaigns consistently and overwhelmingly beat out static campaigns in generating a high response rate from recipients.
  (Source: MindFire)

Using Dynamic Content to Drive Relevance

People want targeted and relevant content. Use your data to identify meaningful segments of your audience, and integrate dynamic content into your marketing strategy to improve the effectiveness of your campaign and boost your return on investment.

Dynamic content is content that is tailored specifically for an individual prospect or customer and generated automatically from one recipient to the next according to predefined rules or variables, usually according to preferences the subscriber sets when opting in to messages from a sender. It can reflect past purchases, current interests, geographical location, and so on.

There are four basic customization techniques:

1. **List segmentation.** Divide your list into segments (groups of people that share a similar quality) and send each segment a different message.
2. **Variable substitution.** Fields are placed in the message template representing recipient attributes and are substituted differently for each recipient.
3. **Conditional blocks.** Sections of text that are unique in the sense that there is a logic statement behind them, a piece of 'what if' code (e.g., If the condition is "True," insert this section of text; if "False," the section of text will not be inserted. An "Else" clause can be included so that a different section of text will be inserted into the message when the condition is "False.").
4. **Content insertion.** Similar to variable substitution; the main difference is that rather than supporting an insertion of a block based upon a recipient's attributes, complete sections of content (i.e., whole paragraphs, phrases and images) are placed into the email template.

How to Leverage Dynamic Content

Any available data regarding your mailing list may be used to personalize content to a recipient based upon:

- Demographics (B2C): Basic background information including name, company name, job title, phone, zip code, gender, education, email address.
- Firmographics (B2B): Company location, annual revenues, number of employees, and industry.
- Past behavior: Responses to emails or actions taken on your website.
- Behavioral: Past purchase history, shopping cart abandonment, website or newsletter engagement to up-sell or cross-sell relevant products or services.
- Psychographics and preferences: A prospect's interests, attitudes, and opinions.

The content is created dynamically based on the subscriber profiling data and the predefined business rules pull the correct content into each message, resulting in an email that seemingly appears to be created for each person individually.

By inserting a first name field into a subject line, or sending emails to individuals with different content based on geographic locale or purchase behavior, your email becomes "dynamic" by tapping into the profile data for each contact.

Conclusion

Dynamic content allows you to define attributes to content, adding an unprecedented level of relevance to your messages. Instead of viewing customers as single-minded groups, all with the same wants and needs, consider how wants and needs might differ among them, and how those differences might influence their purchasing patterns and behaviors.

The goal is to extract out of your database the "right people" (i.e., the ones that are interested in buying your product or service) and send the "right message." Then use dynamic content to create personalized email programs that evolve to match prospects and customers' needs and increase the relevance and impact of your emails.

Dynamic content is well worth the time and effort as it provides benefits that greatly outweigh those found in generic 'batch and blast' email campaigns. Making full use of dynamic content in your emails can make a mass email to many feel like a one-to-one interaction for each recipient.

It relies on a single message template with multiple customizable fields. These fields merge with the company's subscriber database or business applications to create highly personalized and relevant customer mailings based on specific user preferences, online behavior, demographics, and personalities.

Instead of sending one generic message to every subscriber, dynamic content allows you to build multiple versions of highly-targeted, customized -messages that speak to each subscriber individually. However, because it is template-based and the content is created once, stored, and reused as needed, these messages can be created with little effort.

By using dynamic content to tailor specific elements of your email marketing to the preferences, location, past behavior or other personal attribute of each recipient you will not only improve results but also prevent list fatigue and reduce the number of unsubscribes.

A highly-personalized email can also leave each recipient feeling more valued, which could motivate them to make a purchase in the future. And, because these dynamically generated emails are much more engaging, they are likely to be opened faster and more frequently; thus, there is a much higher chance that you'll get the conversion lift you want.

However, personalization and dynamic content are only as effective as the quality of your database and the information you are able to capture about your recipients. Maintaining a clean and up to date marketing contacts database will allow you to automatically target your email campaign content to each individual recipient.

| About Net Atlantic

Since 1995, Net Atlantic, Inc. has been assisting organizations of all sizes communicate effectively online. We have partnered with Lyris and StrongMail to offer our clients the most feature-rich email marketing solutions at a cost-effective price. With unparalleled email marketing capabilities, expert deliverability management and responsive technical support, Net Atlantic's solutions provide you the ability to create, send, track and manage your email marketing campaigns successfully. To learn more about Net Atlantic's email marketing solutions, please visit www.netatlantic.com.

For more information, contact an Account Executive at (877) 263-8285 or email sales@netatlantic.com.

Copyright © 2013 Net Atlantic, Inc.