Transactional email report

Continue the conversation and improve the customer experience
Transactional emails

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There is no question that producing a sale is the ultimate goal of most email marketing campaigns. Rather than being an endpoint in the customer journey, the “sale” can be the beginning of a series of engaging emails that enhance and add value to the customer purchase experience. This can be achieved through transactional email programs that provide each customer with a seamless experience and personalized content, in addition to providing brands with opportunities for repeat sales, upsells and cross-sells, as well as ongoing customer loyalty.

When analyzing best practices for transactional emails, Experian Marketing Services studied triggered/automated mailings from seventy-one (71) brands over a period of thirteen months (March, 2012 – March, 2013). The types of mailings analyzed included order, shipping, and return confirmations, as well as order cancellations.
Key features studied

Brand name in subject lines

One of the first tactics identified when studying transactional emails, was the inclusion of a brand’s name in the subject line. Use of this tactic varied greatly, as some brands included their name, others did not (“your brand x order has been received” vs. “your order confirmation”).

For order confirmations, order cancellations and return confirmations, we found only minor differences (+/- two percent) in unique open rates with or without the brand name included in the subject line.

For shipping confirmations, however, mailings with the brand name in the subject line had a 7 percent increase in unique open rates (47.6% with brand names and 44.4% without). As shipping always occurs a period of time after the order has been placed, including the brand name may allow customers to identify the shipping notice they have anxiously been waiting for more easily than the more generic subject lines.
### Key features studied

#### Inclusion of product information

It is an industry standard that transactional emails include information specific to products the customer purchased. Just as we reported in our [2013 Q1 benchmark report](#) which spotlighted e-receipts, transactional emails that enhance this basic information with other features usually benefit from greater customer engagement and more repeat sales.

### More clicks were received by transactional emails that featured:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Click increase</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Unique click rates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personalization in the body of the email</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>“Dear _____”</td>
<td>8% with personalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7% w/o personalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A navigation bar</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7.7% w/o navigation bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Order tracking links in:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Order confirmations</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>“Check your order status online”</td>
<td>11.6% with order link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Shipping confirmations</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.9% without order link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13.5% with order link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8.3% without order link</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Example:**

**Picked just for you**

- **Silk Jacket**
  - Price: $120.50

- **Arden Top**
  - Price: $152.50

- **Combo Day Dress**
  - Price: $212.00
Tip

Loyalty programs

Order and shipping confirmations are also potential sources for acquiring loyalty program membership

Click-to-open rates were higher for both order and shipping confirmations that included invitations to join loyalty programs (26 percent higher for order confirmations and 16 percent higher for shipping confirmations compared to the same mailing types without any mentions of a loyalty program).

Key features studied

Upsell and cross-sell opportunities

Although customers have just made a purchase, transactional emails are a great means of obtaining a repeat sale. The highest transaction rates were seen in those emails that included upsell or cross-sell sections.

Based on transaction rates, the best cross-selling results were achieved by emails that had dynamic product personalization, offering products chosen for each customer.

Boost cross-sell results by utilizing dynamic product personalization, offering products most relevant to each customer.
Tip

Password reset

One often overlooked transactional email is the password reset response when a customer indicates they have forgotten their password. Instead of sending a bare bones, text-only message, consider including cross-sell items.

Remember, customers generally ask for new passwords when they are ready to make a purchase and this gentle nudge can help you achieve higher transaction rates.

Password reset emails that included cross-sell items had a 93 percent higher transaction rate than those without cross-sell items (8.9 percent with cross-sells and 4.6 percent without cross-sells)

Key features studied

Upsell and cross-sell opportunities

With language addressing the customer, such as “our picks for you” or “for your next order you may want to consider,” personalized mailings captured the attention of customers and exhibited transaction rates that were 49 percent higher than transactional emails with static cross-sell items (transaction rates of 0.93 percent for dynamic cross-sells and 0.62 percent for static cross-sells)
6 tips to optimize your transactional emails

Transactional emails are a standard component of most e-commerce programs. By optimizing the features of these emails, brands can generate incremental revenue and increased customer loyalty.

▪ Test subject lines with and without your brand name (particularly on shipping confirmations) in order to determine which ones provide the best open rates.

▪ Use transactional emails to invite new customers to subscribe to your email list and enroll in your loyalty program.

▪ Address customers by name to personalize the transaction.

▪ Include links for order tracking to boost clicks and provide a better customer experience.

▪ Include upsell or cross-sell features and use dynamic content for customer specific product offerings to reflect the personal preferences of your customers.

▪ Be sure to comply with the CAN-SPAM Act and be certain that promotional items are not the main feature or called out in the subject line of any transactional email.
Transactional email metrics

Below is a complete set of metrics for the transactional email types discussed in this report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mail type</th>
<th>Total open rate</th>
<th>Unique open rate</th>
<th>Click to open rate</th>
<th>Total click rate</th>
<th>Unique click rate</th>
<th>Transaction to click</th>
<th>Transaction rate</th>
<th>Revenue per email</th>
<th>Average order</th>
<th>Bounce rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Order confirmation</td>
<td>146.3%</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td>0.99%</td>
<td>$0.78</td>
<td>$112.55</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Order cancellation</td>
<td>145.2%</td>
<td>50.3%</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>1.86%</td>
<td>$3.17</td>
<td>$165.14</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Password reset</td>
<td>100.1%</td>
<td>49.5%</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>135.1%</td>
<td>3.17%</td>
<td>$6.15</td>
<td>$173.34</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return confirmation</td>
<td>129.7%</td>
<td>50.1%</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>0.37%</td>
<td>$0.69</td>
<td>$177.32</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shipping confirmation</td>
<td>149.4%</td>
<td>44.6%</td>
<td>49.3%</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>0.64%</td>
<td>$0.59</td>
<td>$104.80</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Experian Marketing Services' transactional email study March 2012 – March 2013
About Experian Marketing Services

Experian Marketing Services is a leading global provider of consumer insights, targeting, data quality and cross-channel marketing. We help organizations intelligently interact with today’s empowered and hyperconnected consumers. By helping marketers identify their best customers, find more of them, and then coordinate seamless and intelligent interactions across the most appropriate channels, Experian Marketing Services’ clients can deepen customer loyalty, strengthen brand advocacy and maximize profits.

For more information, please visit http://www.experian.com/marketingservices.