

## **Mom's Dating Advice Turned E-Mail Marketing Tips**

E-Mail Marketing – it is what I do all day, every day, so it is common for people to ask my expertise on design tips, deliver tips, content tips, etc, and I am more than happy to share. Sometimes my advice stems from personal/professional experiences, sometimes articles from “the experts”, and sometimes I have to “trust my gut”. So as I found myself telling my daughter the advice to “Trust her Gut and Follow Her Heart” (even though she is 6, it's never too early to start) my mom's voice was resonating in my head much to my surprise of “Oh my Gosh, I am sounding like my Mom”! I am happily married, so fortunately, I have not had to hear or employ any of these tips in several years; but she told me these so many times, I don't have to reach too far into the memory bank to pull them out. I am sure that some of these will sound familiar to you too.

**“You Never Get a Second Chance to Make a First Impression”**: Just typing these words makes me smile and roll my eyes at the same time – just like if I was hearing it directly from her – but it really is true! Make sure that your email is “dolled up” nicely. Make sure that your email makes a great first impression. Check your email for grammatical errors, spelling, applicable offer dates, etc. Also, make sure that there are images that capture the imagination and really set the tone nicely. In addition, make sure that you “Be Yourself” and “If It's Not Important, Don't Say It”.

**“It's OK to be Curvy and Top Heavy”**: Studies indicate that while designing an HTML e-mail, try and put the design in a “s” curve. Your eyes typically look at a page in an “s” pattern. Basically, alternate your text and image going from the right side to the left side starting on the top right part of the email. This blogger does a fantastic job of explaining it: <http://www.retailemailblog.com/2011/01/am-inbox-cascading-s-curve-email-design.html>

Here is another fabulous example: <http://www.retailemailblog.com/2011/12/am-inbox-thats-not-s-curvethis-is-s.html>

As for being Top Heavy, make sure that you have at least one call to action above the fold. Here is a great article on the argument for having at least one placed there: <http://marketingland.com/email-design-tip-the-fold-your-call-to-action-27277>

**“Make Yourself Available”**: Have as many calls to actions as you can. Depending on your goals of the e-mail campaign, I can't site all of the different types of calls to actions, but make sure you have a phone number and obvious clickable link and make it easy for the end user to reach you! Speaking of clicks, the more links, the more interactive, the better! Make sure that links are included for all pieces of information (text and photos) that can be tied back to a web page that has more information.

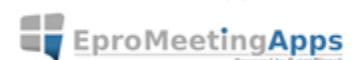
**“Don't Give it All Away on the First Date”**: In case you are wondering where I am going with this...Subject Lines! You could literally spend days reading tips and tricks on effective subject lines. I won't bore you with all of the findings (Don't stand your date up just so you can spend time Googling subject line), but in a nut shell, think of your subject line as a Tweet. Limited Characters (don't use 140!) with relevant info, that has some mystique to make you want to read more and not annoying! EmailLabs.com had reported that emails that had less than 50 characters in the Subject Lines had 12.5% higher open rates than those that had longer ones. On Average, 1 out of Every 3 People Decide if they are going to open your email solely based upon your subject line, so make it good.

**“It's OK to Continually Update Your Black Book”**: If you are spending time, effort, and probably some money on sending out an e-mail campaign, get the biggest bang for your buck! Your goal in sending it out is more than likely getting exposure, engaging your customer and hopefully obtaining additional business. However, you should always be

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using the email as an opportunity to grow your database, especially if you are “renting” a list. They may not have immediate business for you, but engage them enough that they want to be added into your list. If it is already your database that you are sending to, make sure that you have an opportunity for them to share with a friend and/or share via social networking.

**“You Aren’t for Everybody”:** It was always a painful realization for me that not everybody is going to like me and that is OK. I cannot stress the important of relevancy! In a survey the E-proDirect conducted last year, 66% of the meeting planners responded that relevance to my current planning needs is the most important factor influencing the decision to open and respond to the email. We as advertisers/marketers spend a lot of time trying to create an offer that would be pertinent to everyone, and instead of that, we need to be focusing on how we can be relevant to those that “like us” and are potential customers. For a copy of the survey, please go here:

[http://eprodirect.com/mailler/directconnect\\_november2012/index.html](http://eprodirect.com/mailler/directconnect_november2012/index.html)

**“If He Reaches Out To You After the Date, Respond No Matter What”:** In the hospitality industry, I am astounded how many times I hear from meeting planners, “I sent a lead and I never heard back”. As a former Director of Sales and Marketing, this makes me want to puke (PS: NOT a good thing to do on a first date). We spend all of this time and money on obtaining customers through our advertising, marketing and e-mail efforts and when someone reaches out to us, we should reply! Even if you don’t like your date (or in this case the piece of business), have the courtesy to reply. You never know what the future holds! Here is an awesome survey that talks about response time. It also has great information on times of day, days of week, etc. You should utilize this data in considering when to send an email out, because you should be ready immediately to reply once you hit “send”. As it says in here, “Bottom Line is that Responding to Web-Generated Leads Within 5 Minutes = 900% Increase in Contact Rates”.

The Lead Response Management Study: <http://leadmagnets.blogspot.com/>

**“Always have a Quarter with You to Call Me or a Friend”:** OK, so this one dates my age a bit, but it is very true – be prepared to use the phone! As we all know, mobile is booming. Purchases made on mobile devices amounted to \$6.7 billion in the U.S. last year, or about 8% of total online sales, and are expected to nearly double to \$11.6 billion this year. By 2015, U.S. mobile sales are forecast to reach \$31 billion (Source: <http://mashable.com/2012/10/10/mobile-site-small-business/>). Therefore, make sure that your designers are considering this. Here are some great examples of mobile-friendly e-mail campaigns: <http://blog.lyris.com/us/email-inspiration-six-more-great-responsive-email-designs/>

**“When you're in a relationship, keep your friends”:** I see so many times, we as marketers, are so busy looking for new business or spending time with just one customer that we forget about those customers that have been loyal to us in the past. Yes, it is very important to find new customers, but don’t forget those customers/friends that have used you in the past. Make sure that they know that you appreciate them as past customers. We all know people buy from who they know and trust, so make sure that YOU are the one that they consider a friend.

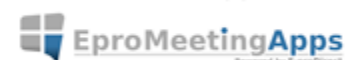
My favorite piece of advice from Mom is “It is Just as Easy to Fall in Love with a Poor Man as it is a Rich Man” and “It is Just as Easy to Fall in Love with a Rich Man as it is a Poor Man”. These were interchangeable depending on whom I was interested in at that time. I’m sure that if I stretched real deep I could find some pertinent e-mail marketing strategy, but I’m not going to even try; I just couldn’t leave this article without sharing my favorite!

In closing, as you decide upon your e-mail, make sure that you do what Mom always taught me in setting and achieving your goals: Review, Reply, Respond, Retain, and Report. Sticking with these 5 “R’s” will hopefully help you obtain these 5 “C’s”: Clients, Cash, Compliments, Celebrations and Cheering!

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About the Author: Chaunsea Keller is Vice President for E-proDirect. She has over 16 years experience in the hospitality sales and marketing field. In Her role with E-proDirect, it allows her to see daily interaction between suppliers and planners; therefore, is a good gauge on the meetings industry as a whole. She resides in College Station, TX with her husband and two children.

E-proDirect is a consulting firm for the hospitality and events industry. They provide a variety of products including Email marketing which allows the industry suppliers to reach our database of over 80,000 Meeting Planners; MeetingMart which allows the industry suppliers to market their services and products and allows Meeting Planners to research needed suppliers and destinations for their next event; and EproMeetingApps which is a mobile app that can be customized for any meeting or event and/or for a destination to enhance the attendees experience while allowing organizations to generate additional revenue.

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