

## How to implement a successful newsletter subscription sign-up process

Email marketing offers the opportunity to incite buying and to establish a lasting connection with the customer. Many Marketing Managers know that a successful relationship with a customer begins with the acquisition of the right customer data. An important way of collecting this data is through the subscription to a newsletter on the company website. To ensure that this customer relationship will last and that they will continue to read the newsletters being sent to them, you need to make sure that the sign-up process and welcome emails are received correctly. In this month's 'Ask the Experts' article Simon Bowker, Country Manager at Teradata Applications, will focus on the newsletter subscription process and will offer some advice on how to collect the right data and the best way to promote your newsletter.

### Where should you position your newsletter subscription sign-up box?

The first step in contacting customers by email is acquiring subscribers. Therefore the option to sign-up to the newsletter needs to be in a prominent position and optimally integrated into the overall company website. Visitors to a website must be made aware of encouraged to subscribe, with the help of a well-designed layout. Making the procedure simple, attractive and easy to find will make for a successful data capture process. Therefore you should:

- Place the sign-up box in a central place on your homepage, ensuring that it is clearly visible
- Consider placing a second sign-up box on your webpage. e.g. near the bottom next to company information and copyright, there is often room for an additional link to the newsletter
- Design your newsletter sign-up process so that it is a simple process for subscribers
- Promote your newsletter to customers. Inform them in detail about the content and point out the benefits

### Choosing the right design for your newsletter subscription process.

The layout of the newsletter subscription should be simply and clearly structured. There are two main forms of newsletter integration which are:

- Subscription via a link which leads to a special sign-up page. The subscription link can be implemented as a text box or graphically separated by a teaser.
- A sign-up box in which an email address or other data is entered directly.

The sign-up box and sign-up link usually differ slightly in both design and visibility. The advantage of the sign-up box is that an email address can be saved right from the first click. Many companies, however, redirect their customers to a registration form after completing the sign-up box. Data is only saved after registration is completed. In this case, any advantage the subscription box has over the link is lost. Subscription links need to be designed to stand out e.g. as a banner or button.



This is particularly important as you do not want detract attention from the newsletter with a busy website showing other offers. Finally, make sure that you highlight any special benefits for subscribers. This will help to increase your number of subscribers.

### **What to include on your registration form (required data)?**

Increasing numbers of subscribers support the use of a sign-up box. Personalisation and tailored offers, however, require comprehensive information about customers. As a result, a number of fields are often required to be completed after clicking on the sign-up link on the subscription page.

There is an area of conflict between the desire for a targeted promotional message and/or segmentation of customers which requires a significant amount of personal data and ensuring that the registration form is designed in a legally appropriate way.

The registration process needs to ensure that there are not too many required fields and long passages of text within the form which may lead to interruptions and abandonments, so it's worth considering the following:

- Forms with a lot of free text fields require a lot of input from the subscriber so the volume of these should be kept to a minimum.
- Data protection violations are increasingly becoming a subject of discussion in the press and people are increasingly not as willing to divulge extensive information on a website.
- Instead of requesting unused information using input fields, registration forms may be used in order to define individual customer interests. Simple choices via optional fields avoid the impression that a significant amount of time is needed to complete the registration.
- Preferences should be requested as early and in as creative a way as possible. They are not obligatory fields under any circumstances; however they do offer an excellent opportunity to partition key customers.
- There should be an average of 5-6 input fields for newsletter sign-ups.

### **How to keep your new subscribers happy.**

In terms of legal obligations, the collecting of email addresses poses every marketer significant challenges. The customer must be informed about how the information they provided will be used, a legal notice containing the necessary information stipulated by the legislator must be present and obligatory fields must actually be used for personalising messages. Data protection guidelines and customer contact information must also feature on the subscription page.

The information which is already shown during the registration process can later be incorporated into the confirmation page (after registration). This page will be opened in the browser following successful subscription to the newsletter and in most cases makes the subscriber aware of subsequent emails.



Once the registration process has been successfully completed, the design scope for the page is however significantly greater than during registration.

Ultimately, new newsletter recipients should naturally be converted into customers. Even during sign-up there are also effective possibilities in order to help achieve this. Here the confirmation page (after registration) is a particular focal point. If the subscriber is merely informed that “the registration was successful” on this page, companies waste the opportunity to turn the recipient into a customer. A small thank you in the form of special offers, discounts or extra product information are a simple, but effective way to achieve a conversion here. Make sure that you design your confirmation page carefully and enrich this with information about the newsletter. This page is the first impression your future customer will have before receiving the first issue.

Finally, even if many companies have designed their newsletter sign-up in a technically and legally competent way, further optimisation possibilities still exist in the registration processes. The optimisation and use of this unexploited potential during the newsletter sign-up can help secure a crucial competitive edge and significantly increase the email ROI.

This article is a summary of Teradata's newsletter "Inside the Marketing Cloud". If this article was forwarded to you as a recommendation and you wish to receive further news from the email marketing sector yourself you can [subscribe here](#).