Ep 81: How to Effectively Leverage Email Marketing

With Kelsey Johnson, Product Marketing Manager at AWeber

- Define the role of email marketing.
  - Email marketing generally plays one of 3 roles within a marketing campaign. These aren't mutually exclusive, but they do tend to rely on different formats, frequencies, processes and tone. It is important to first land on what your primary objective is for your email marketing.
    - Lead gen: These are highly promotional in nature. They tend to contain the latest offers, deals, access to other website or sign-up to get the "latest news", these are the emails you tend to get. The objective is to get you to engage in the platform and buy something. Many people also refer to these as drip campaigns. They are sent out to everyone on your email list on some sort-of-frequency and contain the same message to everyone.
    - Ushering people down the purchase funnel: When someone contacts you or you trigger them as meeting some sort-of-milestone, you can enter them into an automated system intended to usher them down the funnel. This is less of a hard sell and is meant to engage people while minimizing the effort on your end for personal outreach and check-ins. For example, if you already have a lead, you may set-up regularly scheduled and pre-written emails to send giving them helpful tips and reminders to contact you to set-up a live meeting. These need to be carefully crafted so they feel authentic and not automated. This is where a lot of people mess up. They feel more personal than a Lead Gen drip campaign.
    - Brand building: This leans to more of a traditional newsletter format. This is curated content that comes from you that helps to build your credibility and reputation. These can take many forms but the objective is to build thought leadership. But the goal is not always your traditional lead gen.
  - No matter what avenue you pick, what is consistent is that you MUST offer value and you MUST have a clear CTA, ideally with a click button or link.
- Choose a platform.
  - Based on the objective you defined, you need to choose a platform by which to host your email marketing. There are lots of choices out there.
- Be intentional in terms of content, tone, and style.
  - Just like any other marketing channel, your email marketing should reflect your brand. However, because of the constant barrage of emails everyone gets, breaking though can be a challenge. You want to think about your emails as being ones that people look forward to opening. The same rules for creating compelling content apply here. To be of value, you must be either entertaining, inspirational, educational or offer must-have promotions. Many will blend these into a style that makes them relatable and human while still adding value. Which gives a bit of license to have your personality come through.
  - Make sure you disproportionately add value. Audit your competition which may not just be in your industry it is whoever your target goes for similar information. Finish this sentence from your target's POV: "I always go to [name of brand] for this". Then own it.
  - It is critical that it is authentic and consistent. This helps build your community of individuals who will be looking forward to your content.
  - Things to think about:
    - How to talk like a human in your emails, don't be dry in the attempt to be 'professional', write in stream of consciousness and then edit, imperfections are okay, and sometimes cause good results, corny jokes, if that's your voice, emails can be educational, entertaining, or both as long as they drive value.
- Test and learn and optimize.
  - No channel should be set it and forget it. You should always be assessing performance, measuring KPI'S and making strategic adjustments where it makes sense. This is no different in email marketing. Buy pay attention to more than just your open rate, clicks and email list growth. Think about the non-tangibles, Are you closing more deals thanks to your email marketing (hint, you may need to ask people), what are they choosing to click on, are people replaying your email marketing back to you.
  - Another area you will T&L on is candence. There is rule of thumb except to say there is a fine line between being useful and being spammy. If the frequency is too high, you can undermine and dilute your impact. If the frequency is too low, people forget about you. Start with a weekly cadence and then try dialing it up or down. Also think about the best time to send it out. This is where it is important to understand WHEN your target will be the most receptive. For example, Monday morning isn't the best time for a business email because people are generally coming back off the weekend to a full inbox. The same with a weekend email, it will just get lost. Remember to think of who your audience is.

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www.forthright-people.com

april@forthright-people.com
anne@forthright-people.com