

Ten quick tips for acquiring new customers



Attracting new customers in a slow economy requires a well-balanced mix of tactics. Use these tips to enhance your acquisition strategy.

Customer acquisition becomes more challenging in tough economic times. Marketers must be highly focused in their outreach efforts while applying smart techniques and tactics to list selection, messaging, targeting and measurement. Now is the time to get ahead of the curve when finding new customers. Experian's Decision Sciences team has prepared a list of 10 quick tips to help marketers enhance their acquisition efforts and project planning initiatives.

1. Customize messages.

Every potential new customer has a messaging "bias" that should be considered when tailoring content. Pay close attention to your customers' attitudes and preferences so you can craft meaningful and effective messages and offers to new customers. For example, profiling showed that customers of a coin collectibles company appreciated value and savings, so marketing messages featured "a penny saved is a penny earned" as a theme and orders increased.

2. Exploit campaign niches.

Dig into response data to find customer niches that contribute greater than average responses. Drill down to better understand these niche groups and then expand your list universe to include more of them.

3. Evaluate your acquisition sources.

If your most profitable customers come from names supplied by a direct competitor, ask your list broker to negotiate for access to names from similar competitors. If you work with several Web sites on a co-registration program, evaluate the quality of names on your e-mail subscriber lists and shift your budget toward the most profitable ones.

4. Let your customers be heard.

Mixing customer reviews into e-mail campaigns improves response. A multichannel beauty retailer incorporated a series of surveys into its promotional mailings, asking new subscribers one poll question and inviting them to provide a testimonial. Thousands of votes and quotes have been collected and utilized in subsequent communications, significantly increasing overall engagement in the e-mail channel and overall conversion.

5. Test, test, and test again.

Effective targeting means establishing a test-and-learn environment and aligning budget to evaluate targets, offers and messages. Data-driven decisions will ensure an effective acquisition framework and the results to inform and justify future marketing investment decisions.

6. Match back all marketing efforts.

In today's sophisticated marketing environment, customers are exposed to numerous promotions through multiple channels. A "match-back" program is critical to understanding which channels influenced a customer's purchasing decision so that customer acquisition strategies can be amended appropriately.

7. Track all acquisition channels.

Evaluate banners, paid search terms and other online sources of new customers the same way you evaluate rented lists. Measure online activity and apply analytics to Web sites monthly or more frequently, depending on objectives and activity.

8. Look outside the box.

Co-marketing opportunities can be a highly effective part of any program as long as they are targeted correctly. Identify what the top 5 percent of customers "look like" in order to profile and mirror their behaviors, attitudes and triggers in acquisition efforts. Understanding behaviors

leads to better knowledge of the best customer and helps identify the marketing vehicles that are relevant to that customer.

9. Find fresh prospect names for better results.

Organize merge schedules to take advantage of updates on the biggest prospect lists and to minimize the time between the update and the drop date of your marketing pieces.

10. Treat your customers well.

Referrals are a powerful resource. A solid referral program based on great customer experiences is well worth the investment. Respect and strive to understand your customers and they will bring you new customers.

Experian's Decision Sciences team welcomes your feedback, ideas and questions. For more information, contact Experian at 1 888 404 6911 or marketingally@experian.com and mention customer acquisition techniques.