



THE *eToast!*

+36 MORE
PRACTICAL *emarketing ideas*
that Create Excitement and
IGNITE SALES!

by Jason Heintz

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Contents

I.	Email the 3RE Way	7
II.	How To Use This Guide	13
III.	Practical E-Marketing Ideas	19
	1. The New Employee ‘Introduction	19
	2. Summer Vacation Pictures	21
	3. The ‘Window Art’	22
	4. The Pre Display	25
	5. Crazy Product Pic	26
	6. Product Cameo	27
	7. In The Press	29
	8. The Preview and Announce	31
	9. Creative Director for a Day	33

10. And If You Dare ...	34
11. The New Customer Gift	36
12. The Obscure Holiday	37
13. Make Up Your Own Holiday	41
14. Graduation? Wedding? Shower?	43
15. The Gift Card	44
16. The Anti-Gift Card	45
17. The Corporate Incentive Program	46
18. Ask For A “Testimorial”	47
19. Now Send The “Testimorial”	48
20. The Before and After	49
21. The Happy Hour	50
22. The eToast	52
23. Bring a Friend	54
24. The Maid of Honor / Best Man	55
25. The Coach or Bus Driver	56
26. The Carpool Queen	58
27. Kid’s Coloring Contest	61
28. The Pet Toy Giveaway	63
29. Be a Drop-Off Point	67
30. Select a Day for Charity	68

31. Product with a Cause	69
32. Get In Shape!	70
33. Go Team!	72
34. The Ticket, Part Two	73
35. Come Claim Your Box!	75
36. You Offer What?	78



Lighten up, *pull back the curtain*,
include some personality in your
marketing... and make a connection.

I. Email the 3RE Way

To get the most from the marketing ideas presented throughout this book, it's important to first understand the thinking upon which they are based.

At first glance it may appear the ideas are simply a collection of cute ways to liven up an email campaign or a few fun or even unique angles to engage customers. And they probably are.

However, in *addition* to that, they are based on and support the basic **3RE**marketing philosophy:

Messages that build **RELATIONSHIPS** with current and prospective customers more effectively increase **RETENTION** and generate better **RESULTS**.

Great! Sounds like a good idea. And it must be important because we marketing people sure like to *talk* about it a lot. But what does *Building Relationships* really mean?

‘Building Relationships’ involves three basic steps:

1. Allow customers to get to know YOU (*and those in your business*)
2. Be Genuine,
3. Bring some value

People like to do business with people they know. Or at least *feel they know*. This does not mean you can fake a relationship or get by just pretending to care.

Customers will see right through it. You should be authentic and genuine in your communication.

People also like to do business with people they trust. And how do you establish trust? By revealing you are a real person. One who not only cares about her customers, but also shares many of the very same likes, dislikes, hopes and even fears as they do.

Here's another way to look at our philosophy:

The Basic Rule of Emarketing -

Along with a specific call to action, messages should include an element that reflects who you are as an owner, company or brand - and connects with your current or prospective customers in an engaging manner.

Of course the tricky part of this equation is actually coming up with the ideas that will engage customers and reflect *who you are*.

The ideas in this book will hopefully help get you started. Valuable content comes in many forms and is limited only by your imagination.

Following are a few places you might find a great idea for an engaging... and *personality revealing* email message:

a story • an account of a personal experience
a photo • a link • a video • a quote
a question • an opinion • an article • a challenge
a poem • song • joke or riddle • an apology
a thank you • a goal or dream • confession • contest
a dare • a triumph • an experiment....

or even... *a Toast!* . . . just to name a few.

As you read through this list, the thought of communicating in these terms with customers may seem a bit unfamiliar, strange, or even downright uncomfortable.

This is understandable. But remember, this may be business but the basic rules of any relationship still apply:

The more you are willing to put in... the more you will get out.

But *How* do you do this...?

We could go on forever discussing the “*What* does it mean” and “*Why* you should do it” part of relationship building, but plenty has been written on these topics and that’s not what *this* book is about.

This book aims to address a need which currently exists for *practical ideas* that can be easily personalized and used to help give customers a clearer picture of who they are doing business with - and, over time, build and strengthen this relationship.

With a little *creativity* and few good *ideas*, it's not difficult to take your communication, and the relationship you have with your customers, to the next level.

That's what this book is all about.

The Two Types of Retailers: Brick and Mortar vs. Online

While most will apply to both, the majority of ideas here focus more on those businesses with one or more *physical* locations. As such, many of the ideas or promotions aim at not only building the customer relationship, but also giving clients reasons to physically visit the store.

You may also notice many of the ideas look quite familiar. In fact, many are classic promotions retailers have been utilizing for years. We sometimes forget that email can be a great (*and cost-effective*) way to take advantage of these inexpensive, time-tested promotions as a way to engage customers – AND help them learn a little more about whom they're doing business with.

II. How to Use this Guide

This book is designed to be used as a tool:

1. To help **freelance designers, copywriters** and other marketing professionals generate more effective email campaigns for their clients.
2. To help the do-it-yourself **business owners** and marketing managers produce more interesting and *effective* in-house campaigns.

While someone in either group is certainly capable of producing a highly effective campaign, it's been my experience that a company is usually better off allowing an outside marketing-minded professional help them write and manage their campaigns for them.

Even though nobody knows a company better than the owner, the ability to determine what should be included in a message and then writing and designing it

in such a way that is precise, personable and also motivates customers to take action is a job – more often than not - better suited for a marketing professional.

Additionally, not only can it be a challenge to write about *yourself* or *your own company*, an outsider's perspective is often a valuable resource when it comes to determining what's important or which topics those outside the company (*aka-customers*) might find interesting.

While many of the ideas on the following pages can certainly be used *as is*, I encourage you to use these suggestions as more of a guide. The ideas presented here, along with your *own imagination, creativity, professional background* and most importantly - ***life experience*** - are designed to help you generate messages that will be both interesting and '*valuable*' to the specific community of customers you are attempting to connect with.

Whether you are naturally creative or not, the same is true:

Nothing generates new ideas... *like new ideas.*

A Word to the Marketing ‘Pros’

For those producing campaigns for a client or business other than your own, you’ll find becoming familiar with a number of these ideas before meeting with a business owner can be an invaluable tool. As you interview a potential client, you’ll be able to recall examples and apply them to that specific business and their customers. This can make it easier for those you are speaking with to *picture* the possibilities and become *excited* about their potential.

While there’s no *single* way to get the most from these ideas, my suggestion is this: read through all the ideas first. Then scan back through them again with a *specific client* in mind. You may find this will help you see the possibilities in more specific terms.

When meeting with a new or prospective client, do your best to ask many questions – not only those that will help you learn more about their business, but also about their **STORY**. How they (or the company) got to where they are today, their hobbies, and what interests and excites them and their customers.

(Note: 3REmarketing Campaign Managers are equipped with a list of simple questions specifically designed to quickly and painlessly bring out this type of information – all in a format ready to be used in an email campaign)

Before long you may find yourself able to make constructive and specific suggestions for their email marketing campaign.

You may even find yourself getting *excited* about the possibilities and the potential.

Go ahead, *GET EXCITED!*

Genuine excitement is a valuable tool.
It will help you win over a business owner and,
more importantly - serve as the basis for a wildly
successful marketing campaign!

4 Walks = Home Run

As you read these ideas, one after the next, after the next, you may start to feel that some of them overlap. That's because they DO! It's also important to remember these messages are intended to be sent out over an extended period of time - usually at a pace of no more than 1 - 3 per month.

Also, keep in mind, you won't appeal to *every* customer with *every* message. It's impossible. The *key* is to execute the message in such a way, through strong or unique design elements or engaging copy, that even if one message does not apply or connect to a customer as much as another, or motivate them to actually make a purchase or visit the store, they will not feel as if the few seconds (*or few minutes*) of time they spent on it was wasted.

You just don't ever want a customer to feel taken advantage of, or *silly* for choosing to open your message.

Remember, just as in baseball - four walks count on the scoreboard exactly the same as a Home Run. And once in a while, you'll hit the Home Run when the bases are loaded.

And you'll be a HERO.

Now, on to the *ideas*...

III. Practical e-Marketing Ideas

1) THE NEW EMPLOYEE 'INTRODUCTION'

This works especially well for companies who've hired someone who will be interacting with customers - either in person or on the phone. Depending on the type of business being promoted, it may even be appropriate *and quite effective* to give a little, or even a lot, of background information on your new hire.

If this new hire has a unique background or specialized knowledge that your customers will appreciate or find helpful when doing business with you, then let them know.

If they worked for the competition but have now come over to the good guys (*your company*), let customers know. This can be particularly effective if you're the small guy trying to compete with the much bigger guys.

EXAMPLES:

Furniture Store or Home Improvement Service

If the best design consultant from the largest firm in town has decided to go into business for herself and you've teamed up with her to offer your clients the best service possible - this is probably something they would find interesting.

OR

Restaurant

If the new guy's a bartender who just moved from New York where he made the best (*insert fancy cocktail*) in the land, but now YOU can experience his talent right around the corner at your establishment, by all means, let your customers know.

OR

If the new Hostess/Receptionist/Stylist/Sales Manager happens to be especially photogenic (and it's appropriate for your business) then it can't hurt to give your customers the heads up... along with a picture, of course.

2) SUMMER VACATION PICTURES

Have a contest where customers send in the best, cutest, funniest, most bizarre picture of their child or children and post them in the store. If you can't post them all, just post the winner and maybe a few runner-ups. This is a great way to get folks into the store (*to see their photos*) and to demonstrate your sense of community to those visiting the store for the first time.

Obviously, this will tie in-especially well with those retailers selling children or baby products.

3) THE “Window Art”

Retailers spend countless hours, lots of energy and often money on making sure the front window is picture perfect. Hours are spent designing it to elicit the feeling from anyone wandering by that *they just have to* drop-in.

SO... why keep it to just those that happen to walk-by? Why not let everyone view it? Or maybe just give them a sneak peek of part of it?

Take a digital picture of the “window art” and include it in an email to your customers.

Even better – include information or even a short story with insight into why the particular elements included in the display were chosen.

(Note: it doesn’t have to be front window – it could also work with a compelling interior display.)

Sure, you could always just send out a nice stock product photo and say... ON SALE NOWbut adding a little twist like this serves the same purpose - in a much more interesting way!

EXAMPLE

-This idea doesn't need a lot of copy – whether you opt for a more serious tone or choose to keep it on the lighter side, it's always best to include a little personality...

Here's one idea falling on the lighter side:

NOW SHOWING:

(funny display name here)

GET YOUR FREE TICKETS TODAY!

(Our displays are always Complimentary!)

Our talented and hardworking employee name(s) here spent almost an entire weekend putting this incredible display together for your viewing pleasure.

See what these critics had to say:

“An absolute MUST see.”

“A Classic in every way”

“I now see _____ in a whole new light!”

“I laughed until I cried. Then I received 20% OFF and laughed some more!”

It will only be up until _____ and then, sadly, we must replace it. *(Employee name)* will be so disappointed if you don't come by to experience her inspired creation...so please don't miss it! ☺

You get the idea. Even if customers don't have a chance to stop in that week or month, if you make them smile they will be more likely to remember you the next time they're ready to buy.

4) THE PRE DISPLAY *(or Window Art Part II)*

Take a picture of two or three different products (outfits, pictures, posters, etc.) and ask your customers to tell you which items they think you should place in the front window. You'll be surprised how many people actually respond.

As a follow-up, a week two later you can send out a picture of the completed window or, better yet – **Let them know they can now stop by the store to see which one was the winner!**

- **PROMO IDEA:**

Give anyone who voted for the winner a discount on his or her next purchase. Another effective way to go about this is to not publicize the discount, but when someone comes in the store and mentions that they voted, go ahead and give them a discount for participating.

This wonderful surprise can be worth more to the customer than the discount itself.

5) CRAZY PRODUCT PIC

Do you know of a customer or employee who was photographed using or wearing one of your client's products in a distant or exotic place, such as standing near an unusual or recognizable background: in front of a monument, at an arena watching an event or with an important or recognizable person?

If there is a picture floating around and they don't mind sharing, **put it in an email and send it out to your list.**

Not only can this be a lot of fun, it can get people talking and be a great way to keep your name and product in front of your audience and thinking about your business.

6) PRODUCT CAMEO

You may occasionally run across your product or service being used by someone famous in a magazine or newspaper. It doesn't have to be something that was purchased at your actual location, but **if it's the same brand or from the same line that you sell, it's absolutely worth mentioning.**

EXAMPLE: Julia Roberts photographed with a brand of diaper bag that you carry, or Matt Damon sporting a cap from your restaurant or shirt made by the same designer that you sell, or even a bracelet supporting the same cause that you've been encouraging others to support and offer in your store.

Also, if you happen to read about a public figure who mentions your product (or product line) or restaurant, etc. but isn't actually photographed with it, it's okay to be a little creative and send an excerpt from the article, along with a picture of the person you obtain online or scan from a magazine. Remember, not all customers will necessarily feel the same about a given person, so it's best to steer clear of anyone prone to controversy.)

Note: If you are worried about whether a celebrity or other public figure would be concerned with your use of them to endorse your product, a good rule of thumb is that the published copy should speak for itself. You should not need to add anything

extra on your own to convey the message. As for photos, just be sure that what you think they are wearing or using in the picture is indeed accurate.

7) IN THE PRESS

If your business, organization, product or service is mentioned in a local or national publication, you will most definitely want to announce your good fortune. *(As long as the article or review is positive, of course.)*

Or, if you've received word that your business will be mentioned or featured in an upcoming newspaper, magazine or other publication, do you really want to just sit around, wait till it hits newsstands and see if anyone notices? NO!

Why not get the most mileage out of it you can and send out an email announcing it will be COMING SOON! Let your audience know exactly where and when they'll be able to find it.

(I know I get 2-3 free publications in the mail each month which – unless I'm looking for something specific – often won't even get opened.)

A good way to spice it up visually is by including a shot of the cover of the publication (if you can get it early) and a good photo of the page where it appears. This is a great way to generate word-of-mouth, as well as increased credibility for your business.

- **INCREASE EFFECTIVENESS OF OTHER ADVERTISING**

If your client is utilizing other methods of advertising, such as TV, Radio, Newspaper or Magazines – and most are – show them how leveraging their in-house list can help immediately increase the effectiveness of this advertising. If you get creative, you'll think of many ways you might accomplish this, but here are a few:

8) The PREVIEW and ANNOUNCE

This one is safe, easy and effective. **A few days before your Ad starts, send a “sneak preview” if it.** If it’s a Radio or TV advertisement, send a link for viewing it. If there were alternative advertising choices that you liked but didn’t but weren’t selected, send those and give customers a one-time exclusive view. *(Obviously, this works better for those companies whose advertising is more on the creative, funny, and entertaining side.)*

You may even consider including a short tidbit on why you chose the creative you did, or a funny story that may have happened during the “making of”. Give the audience a peek behind the curtain by providing bonus features. If it’s a TV or radio spot, everyone always loves a good bloopers reel. You don’t need to make it long. Just a few seconds and a good laugh will achieve the objective here. Ask the producer to provide a short reel.

A business owner will need to be willing to laugh at himself a little bit in order to be on board with the blooper idea, but if they can get on board – it’s usually worth it.

● **PROMO IDEA:** Tell your customers that the first 20 (*or 5,0 or whatever*) people that bring in your Ad, or that mention that they heard or saw it, will receive a free gift or a discount on a purchase. This will get folks talking and looking for your ad. You may even 'tease' the Ad by offering a discount to customers who can answer a question that can only be answered by watching or hearing the Ad.

EXAMPLE COPY: *There's a picture of a woman in the Ad, she's wearing my all-time favorite shoes, what color are they? OR What animal sound does the little boy make at the end of our radio Ad?*

9) CREATIVE DIRECTOR FOR A DAY

Have you ever noticed that as much as people seem to hate advertising, everyone seems to have a bright idea on how it *should* be done? They all seem to have their favorite company's next ad campaign all figured out. Their idea would be funnier, smarter, more ingenious, and would surely break all sales records.

If your client is still developing their campaign, they are likely in, or will soon be in, the process of trying to choose between 2 to 3 different TV storyboards, radio scripts, or versions of a print Ad. Hopefully, you are the one working on this campaign for them, but if not you'll need to acquire the cooperation of whoever is. Once you've got it narrowed down to a few options that the client feels good about, **send out the Scripts or Ads and ask the audience to tell you which one they think will work the best.**

This can be an effective method of testing your creative with your target audience. It also keeps them involved and actively on the lookout for your ad, and more inclined to spread the word with friends before and during the campaign. *"Look, there's that Ad I told them they should run...cool!"*

10) AND IF YOU DARE...

If it's appropriate for a given campaign (*and you're a little more daring*), you could take this idea one step further and **ask your audience for original ideas for a campaign slogan or tagline that would appear with the creative options you have started and run a contest around it.**

There are many people who don't have the opportunity to do much of this kind of stuff in their day-to-day lives, but they enjoy this type of challenge. You will obviously reserve the right to not use *any* of them, but you also might find a fantastic idea or two you would have never come up with on your own.

At the very least, you will definitely learn about your product or service, your company and an interesting perspective on how your target audience perceives you.

FOLLOW UP IDEA

Sending out a follow-up message with the winning idea or, at least, a "Best Of" is another great way to help your audience feel important, involved, entertained and coming back.

- **Asking for Referrals**

By nature, your email campaigns should have a certain degree of virility built-in. However, sometimes it doesn't hurt to straight up ask your best customers for a referral.

The following ideas are a few ideas of ways you might go about asking for referrals, without actually just asking for a referral.

11) THE NEW CUSTOMER GIFT

It's better to give than receive, right? Plus, who doesn't like to give a good gift? **Send out an email to your customers with a Gift Certificate that can only be used by a *New Customer*.** This way they must pass it along for it to be redeemable.

This can be wonderful win-win. Your customers get to enjoy the wonderful feeling of giving... and you get a new customer!

IMPORTANT: Since you are specifying that is only good for NEW CUSTOMERS, this should not be a coupon or other regular discount that your customers have seen before.

It should be redeemable for a FREE Gift or for any product in your store. It does not necessarily need to be a high-value item. The goal is to give something current customers will feel good or even proud to pass along to a good friend, coworker or even family member.

They've likely already mentioned their experience to a good friend. Give them an opportunity to share their good fortune. And make it easy for them.

They may even come by together and make an afternoon of it.

12) THE OBSCURE HOLIDAY... GIFT ANYONE?

There are the obvious holidays: Christmas, Valentines, Easter (*many of which were invented for retail commerce in the first place*),

And then there are those that are not so obvious.

If done in a good natured and lighthearted way, these can be great opportunities to throw out a fun product suggestion that may typically be overlooked.

Remind your audience that there is nothing wrong with surprising that special friend, coworker, boss, secretary or family member with a little something they weren't expecting.

EXAMPLE: The following are examples of how a little creativity can make for a fun promotional opportunity (*or at least some face time and give your customers a smile ☺.*)

Secretary Day's – this may now be a somewhat outdated term – so feel free to call it whatever you see fit – Assistants Day, Office Manager Day, etc. It's a lighthearted

“holiday” anyway – so depending on your audience, you may generate more interest by taking a lighthearted angle...

Restaurant –

Grab your secretary and come out for Lunch or Happy Hour!

Day Spa –

Ever been a Secretary? Give yourself a Gift!

(remember, it often only takes an excuse...)

Boss’ Day –Everyone has one. PLUS, you can have plenty of fun with this one by including all those who may not typically think of themselves as a “Boss”. After all, we are all the boss of somebody – So Treat Yourself! (Stay-at-Home Mom’s, Pet owners - at least you get to boss the dog, right?)

Florist –

“Husbands – why not get your favorite boss a little surprise *(it’ll make her smile).*”

Restaurant/Bar –

“It’s Boss’ Day!! Get him out of there a little earlier. He deserves it...

Happy Hour Anyone?”

(once again, we often just need a reason...)

Other Holidays to consider:

Veteran's Day

Labor Day

Memorial Day

Martin Luther King's Birthday

Presidents Day

Teacher Appreciation Week

...to name a few.

But did you know that in 2009 the month of June is also "officially":

- Aquarium Month
- Candy Month
- Dairy Month
- Fight the Filthy Fly Month
- Gay Pride Month
- National Accordion Awareness Month
- National Adopt a Cat Month
- National Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Month
- Rose Month
- Turkey Lover's Month

BUT that's not all! June doesn't stop there. I bet you also didn't know that this same month is also widely recognized in some circles as home for these special days:

- 4th Hug Your Cat Day
- 5th World Environment Day
- 8th Best Friend's Day
- 16th Fresh Veggies Day
- 18th Go Fishing Day
- 27th Sun Glasses Day

For a fantastic list of more real-life recognized holidays for about anything you can imagine, check out HolidayInsights.com

Again, the key is to select a Holiday that fits with the product or service you're promoting. And it's perfectly okay *if it takes a bit of a stretch to get there. There's nothing wrong with using a little creativity to make the connection. In fact, that's half the fun.*

13) MAKE UP YOUR OWN HOLIDAY

Speaking of creativity, **why not just make up your own holiday to fit your needs?** This is most effective when done in a light-hearted and good-natured way, and can make for a fun and humorous message.

It will get customers thinking about your product and even give them a reason to make a purchase where one might not have existed.

And, of course, it doesn't have to just be a single day holiday – it could just as easily be a week or even a month

EXAMPLES:

Car Wash

- NATIONAL SPRING-CLEAN YOUR CAR MONTH –For those who only do it once a season!

Coffee Shop

- CELEBRATE CAFFIENE WEEK! Let's all get Caffeinated together!

Flower shop

- INTERNATIONAL STOP AND SMELL THE ROSES DAY! Or maybe tulips...

Golf Club

- NATIONAL BAD GOLFERS MONTH! 10% OFF if you're lucky to break 100!

14) GRADUATION? WEDDING? SHOWER?

No need to wait for a Holiday. A special occasion is just as good: Graduations, Weddings, Baby Showers, Birthdays and Anniversaries, just to name a few. While these take place at different times throughout the year, some occur more often during specific times of the year. The spring and summer brings more weddings, and graduations usually happen in May and June.

One angle that I've seen work well is playing on people's desire to give the best gift. This is especially true at Birthday Parties and Showers where the gifts are being opened in front of others. Everyone wants his or her gift to be loved, not just by the person receiving it, but also by everyone else in the room watching.

Why not play on this emotion and **use an email to suggest a unique gift?** Go ahead and set the stage. Describe everyone's faces as your gift is opened. Mention how everyone in the room will be completely envious and make them – *the gift giver* - look like a GENIUS!

15) THE GIFT CARD

For any of the above ideas, **sometimes the Gift Card is the best suggestion**. The last few years have seen the Gift Card take on a life of its own. I mean seriously, McDonalds? If they can have a gift card... anyone can.

While many companies have implemented the gift card they often do nothing more than stack it down at the end of the counter. Other companies don't see how a gift card really applies to their business and don't take the time to incorporate it at all.

Email can be a great opportunity to remind customers of this option and even throw out a few ideas on how it could be used.

EXAMPLE:

Trouble making decisions? *(good place for a humorous photo)*

We understand. After all, trying to decide between our amazing new line of shirts *(photo, product A)* and our latest version of the coolest sandals ever *(photo, product B)* can be too much for even the best shoppers!

So don't. Get them a gift card and let them try to figure it out!

16) THE ANTI-GIFT CARD

You can also **present this as a tongue-in-cheek gift card** by mixing in a little humor. This is especially effective if the product doesn't lend itself to a Gift Card. **It can make for an entertaining message while reminding customers of a great deal.**

Just think of the *picture/image* possibilities:

Dentist or Auto Mechanic – know anyone who could use a little fixer-upper?

Church – give the gift of love! FREE Admission with a friend.

Tanning Salon – Winter get the best of anyone you know?

Does this mean customers are going to come rushing in and actually buy a gift card for these purposes? No, but that's not the point. If it makes them smile and reminds them of your product or service, you've done your job.

Of course it's never a bad idea to throw in an added incentive while you've got their attention. Possibly mention a current Sale or Promotion or include a coupon and you'll receive an even better immediate response.

17) THE CORPORATE INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Starbucks implemented a gift card and it now accounts for about 10% of sales. *(That's A LOT!)* Much of this is due to the card being offered to Businesses, which use it to reward their own employees or loyal customers through incentive programs.

Think about how this tactic could be used successfully with one of your own clients or even cross-promoted through a couple of your clients who could potentially use each other's lists to help promote one another (with consent, of course).

Day Spas, Salons, Car Washes, Restaurant's, Fitness Clubs, Pet Boarding (*for employee vacations*), Travel Agencies, and Hotel Packages all offer products that are wonderful for these types of incentive or reward programs.

Okay, nice ideas, BUT what does this have to do with *email marketing*?

Everyone on your client's list either works or has a spouse that works somewhere. They may be the *perfect* candidate and might not ever think about it, otherwise. If nothing else, it keeps with our theme of TOP OF MIND AWARENESS!

18) ASK FOR A “TESTIMORIAL”

That’s our word for a good TESTIMONIAL in STORY form. It is always a great idea to ask your customers for their success stories. **Few things can generate sales like a good testimonial from another satisfied customer.** This is one of the oldest and MOST EFFECTIVE ways of generating sales. This is especially true with newer products or services that many people may not have tried.

The most difficult hurdle is to get customers to take the time to sit down and give you their story. Now that you have a list of customers, send out a request and ask them to send back a testimonial. **Consider offering an incentive to customers who reply.** You may even want to make it a contest.

Encourage employees to listen for testimonials when talking to customers. Satisfied customers are always back for more, and people love to talk about things that made them happy. They may not be motivated to sit and write it down, so ask if you can have your “marketing person” give them a quick call for a short 5-minute interview. In reality, this will give the “testimonial” the best chance of being something that everyone will find motivating and *entertaining*.

19) NOW SEND THE “TESTIMORIAL”

The best part of getting great testimonials is making sure everyone hears them.

Keep in mind when selecting the testimonials to send, that the best ones contain elements that relate to the largest percentage of your customers. It’s also okay so send more than just one.

Don’t forget to include an image that relates to what is being conveyed in the story. Again, the more unique, interesting or entertaining - the better.

20) The BEFORE and AFTER

This is an obvious choice for clients such as plastic surgeons or dentists or even the guy who trades in an old car for a new one? **Just a quick “Before” photo** of the guy standing in front of really, *really* BAD trade-in **next to the “After” photo** of his brand new ride.

This could also work well for a car wash or auto repair shop and could be a great contest... *WINNER - MOST UNRECOGNIZABLE CAR OF THE MONTH!*

Interior decorators and even furniture stores can incorporate this as well. This can be done seriously or in jest. Envision a photo of a really, *really* bad couch, and right along next to it is the brand new one. This can be a humorous, yet *effective* way to remind people it’s time to fix, repair, clean or even exchange the old for the new.

This same concept is always a good idea for auto detailers, landscapers, interior designers and plenty of other interior and exterior home improvement companies.

21) THE HAPPY HOUR

Take a page from the hospitality industry and have a “Happy Hour”. It could be every day, one day a week, or a special day in a given month. The name alone will inspire positive and fun images in customer’s minds. “Happy Hour” certainly doesn’t have to be just one hour and it doesn’t have to be in the evening, either.

Traditionally, happy hour is used by a restaurant or bar to get customers in the door during what would otherwise be considered the slow time. Your client’s slow time may be from 10-12 in the morning or maybe 2-4 in the afternoon.

Select a time that’s typically slower and turn it into a fun time to shop. Have a wine tasting. If appropriate, you might even offer shoppers a favorite fruity cocktail. If not, mix up an interesting batch of something else like tea or coffee. The more unique the offering, the better the turnout. Coffee and Tea both become much more appealing when they are special blends from exotic places your customers would likely never get anywhere else.

(Did you know... June 10th is Iced Tea Day?? It’s true!)

- **CROSS-PROMO IDEA:** If your store is near a bar or restaurant that actually has a happy hour, this is a great opportunity to piggyback on the crowd that will be in the area anyway. Partner with them and offer to give customers who make a purchase, their first drink or an appetizer for free. The restaurant will also likely be willing to give their customers a card or coupon you provide for a discount or free gift if they stop by your store after having made a purchase at the restaurant or bar. (And these folks are often now in the “shopping mood”)

NOTE: this scenario creates an opportunity to sign-up another client and cross promote the two lists.

22) THE eTOAST

Funny thing about a toast, everyone stops what they are doing, no matter what it is, and listens to the person giving it. Even if you're not with the group involved with the toast, and have no clue as to what the occasion is, you still do your best to *overhear* it!

You just can't help it.

Of course this usually has to do with the fact that it's a special occasion and people tend to respect that. So, while an eToast is not something you will want to do often or it will be abused and very quickly begin to defeat its purpose – **if you have something you feel strongly about – make an eTOAST!**

Some ideas where a “*toast*” via email might be appropriate are:

Your business has met a milestone – such as:

- Number of years in business
- Number of customers
- Top salesperson/employee of the year

- Opening a new store/location
- Merging or Bringing in a new Partner

The Boss or Valued employee is...

- Getting married,
- Leaving or returning from military duty,
- Having a baby or grandchild
- Running a marathon
- Retiring
- Received an award or honor (Employee of the Year...etc, etc.)

Or even a special customer that...

- Is experiencing something significant (such as any of the above)

OR it may not even have anything to do with what we think of as being a subject that is traditionally toasted. As long as you aren't taking advantage of the added attention your audience may be giving an email with the subject "I'd like to give a Toast..." then I say feel free to get as CREATIVE as you can with it.

After all...at the end of the day, it's still... *just an email!*

23) BRING A FRIEND

This is perfect for restaurants and other businesses that lend themselves to social ‘shopping’ experiences (*golf, bowling, theatre, coffee shops, anyplace women like to shop – clothing, shoes, accessories, home furnishings, etc.*)

This is a good way to leverage a big sale your client might be going to have anyway. Instead of just marking a bunch of stuff **25-50% OFF**, open the discount first to **ONLY** those who have a friend along with them.

Be creative with the name of the sale: **“The Best Friend Sale”**, or **“Celebrate a Friend Week”**. **The only people who can take advantage of the special price or discount are those who bring in friends.**

(Remember, sometimes shoppers just need a *reason* to get out!)

This is also a way to introduce new customers to your store (and build your email list at the same time). Their lifetime repeat business can quickly justify the discounts.

24) THE MAID OF HONOR / BEST MAN

This is another variation on the *Bring a Friend* idea - this time taking a page from the wedding industry. You may have seen Bridal or Tux shops that offer a Maid of Honor's dress for free or the Best Man his tuxedo for free - in return for using the shop to outfit the rest of the wedding party.

Send out a message encouraging your customers to bring along a friend - and in return they will receive something for free.

*** Make sure to get that friends email address in order to get their gift!**

25) THE COACH OR BUS DRIVER

Growing up, I went on many trips with my church youth group and remember stopping at certain eating establishments where our Youth Minister (*also the Van Driver*) knew that if he stopped there, he would get his meal for FREE for bringing the rest of us. Believe me, these joints got their money's worth for that free burger.

The same goes for the team Coach who brought in the little league team. I don't know about your town, but in my town, any given Saturday (depending on the season) represented literally thousands of little league baseball, softball, football, soccer or basketball or (fill in blank) players looking for a place to eat with their buddies after a big game.

McDonalds seems to know this and their campaigns capitalize on it without giving away a single fry. But you can still get your share without spending millions in TV ads.

Send out your message in honor of the Dads or Moms who put in their valuable time as the Coach of their little one's team and make sure they

know that their money is no good at your place - at *least not when they bring the team.*

The same goes for Scout Leaders, Den Mothers, Brownies, Cheerleaders, etc. You don't necessarily have to choose only one group, but if you do, for the best results, choose the one your client has a personal interest in or that is most familiar to their customers.

26) THE CARPOOL QUEEN

Here's another angle on The Coach/Bus Driver idea (# 25)

Send out a message in honor of all those Moms (and Dads, too) that spend their days escorting their kids – and friends - around town with the following offer: Next time you need a little snack to help get through the day –stop by and get your meal or dessert or appetizer (or whatever) for free (or ½ price, etc.)

If the business is a restaurant – especially a kid friendly one - requiring the *Carpool Queen* to bring along a van full of kids to redeem the promotion makes the most sense.

BUT what if the business isn't kid-friendly? Don't these carpoolers often need a place to "hang" sometimes between drop-offs? Or maybe just a place to getaway from the crew and relax... chill out a bit...maybe kill some time...or *SHOP?*

EXAMPLE:

HEY CARPOOL QUEENS – for all you do...WE APPRECIATE YOU!!

**If you've just made a drop, between stops...or just need to
get away from the crew for a few...STOP BY!**

**Just swing by in the Mini-van or SUV in the month of _____
and receive ___ OFF**

OR

**pick out any (candle...or appetizer...or any SALE item...etc. etc.)
and take ___OFF!!**

Remember – our ultimate goal (other than sales) is to build RELATIONSHIPS - which is done by building PERSONALITY.

A little creativity is all it takes to turn what might be a simple boring email into an opportunity to entertain... plant a seed... build personality... get customers in the door... and MAKE SALES!!

***DON'T FORGET** to suggest they forward the message to their fellow carpoolers! Most of the kids they're driving around have a parent who also takes a turn...and would find your email entertaining... and relevant!!

****NOT TO MENTION** all those on your list who don't carpool...but who certainly have friends, family, and neighbors who do. This is a chance for them to say, *"Hey, I saw this and thought of you...I can't use it...but maybe you could use a little appreciation!! ☺"*

27) KID'S COLORING CONTEST

When I was a kid, I loved spring. Why? Two reasons. First, I could finally start wearing shorts again. And second, the local grocery store, *Schnucks*, had a coloring contest for a free pass to Six Flags. My mom would pick up a poster from the store and I would color away. *But not right away.*

You see they would hang all the entries up in the store. I loved going to the store (*imagine that – love going to the grocery store?*) so I could see what my competition looked like. That way, I knew what I was up against before I started my masterpiece.

I never won the free tickets. But for about two months, whenever we needed food, I made sure my mom went to *Schnucks* and went as *often as possible* so I could see my poster hanging up, as well as the most recent entries.

I have to imagine that Six Flags got their money out of the Free Pass they gave up, too. Think about it - hundreds and hundreds of kids anticipating a trip to the amusement park, only to be let down after they didn't win. I know I made sure to get to the park a time or two each summer, *despite the lack of free tickets.*

I'm sure you've figured out by now that the same principles could easily apply to any number of retailers looking for increased traffic to their store. As a parent, I know I'm always happy to have something new and challenging and *constructive* to present my five year-old. If it means he might win something, too, all the better.

Your clients can always hand out pictures to color in the store – but how much easier is it to **email the picture to be colored to your all your customers and have them print it?** Another reason to come by the store – bring the picture their child colored and see it proudly hung in the store. **It's a good bet they'll be back at least one more time before the promotion ends.**

- **CROSS-PROMO IDEA:** The opportunities to partner with another local retailer here are surely obvious. Ideally, the picture being colored somehow relates to the prize (*in the Six Flags example, it was a picture of the latest roller coaster*). But even if you don't find a local partner, an item of value from the store could work just as well. *Especially if the Parent somehow wins, too...*

28) THE PET TOY GIVEAWAY

Pets, you might even call them *“the other kids.”* In fact, I’ve seen plenty of pets hanging around town receiving every bit as much love and attention as some kids!

If the owner (or company) is an animal lover, let your customers see this side of you and incorporate those pets into many of the ideas listed above. **Even if the business has nothing to with pet products, find some inexpensive treats or toys to give to your customers as rewards.** It could be an add-on to a purchase, or a photo contest where the winner received something really cool in the store. Possibilities are endless.

You are not only giving customers an incentive to engage in your product or service, you’re also giving them a reason to connect with you on a more personal level.

Little by little, these insights can build up and form a bond.

As we move out of PETS and into the GOOD CAUSE category, here’s a quick note that relates to both. *Almost every single living person over the age of 15 has seen at least one episode of the PRICE IS RIGHT (name one other show you can say that about? Seinfeld? Not even close!)*

And, almost anyone can tell you what former host Bob Barker asks of his audience as he signs off at the conclusion of each episode.

"...and please, remember to spay and neuter your cats."

Now *why* does he say this?

Because he's being paid by someone? Not hardly. (*And even if he were, it wouldn't be for the money.*)

As a marketing tool to connect with his audience? Wrong again.

Maybe to be funny? He has a wonderful sense of humor, but still not the point.

It's because he *loves* pets - specifically cats. It's a cause he is passionate about and chooses to support in a simple, but extremely powerful way.

Interestingly enough, you would not believe how many of the 600+ people who show up three days a week from all over the world feel like they *know* Mr. Barker *personally*, I mean really know him, and they are absolutely *sure* that he would *love* them, too.

Why? Reasons vary, but for more than just a few, it's because they *really* love their cat, too!

Pets just have a funny way of turning complete strangers into instant friends.

(Yes, giving away cars, campers and thousands in cash doesn't hurt either. But you get the point.)

- **CHAMPION A CAUSE**

It may not have been *Bob Barker's* motivation, **but if your client has a charity they work with, it should be part of their marketing. The more personal the reasons for selecting a particular cause, the better.** If it happens to be a local organization, that's good too.

If they do not currently have one, they should get one. Increasing sales is not number one on anyone's list of reasons they hope to gain your support, but they'll take it. *Support is support.* Besides, even it's a primary reason initially, once involved, it's unlikely it will stay that way.

With any of the following, if customers are not already familiar with your cause and involvement with it, you will first want to include a brief history and/or description of the cause and if applicable, your reasons for being involved.

This should not be too long, or too sappy, and should not in any way be a hard sell. *"Here's a great cause I'm involved with, here's why, and should you have any interest, here's how you can help too..."*

The same rule applies for each of the following more specific ways your cause might be incorporated into your messages.

29) BE A DROP-OFF POINT

Many organizations need places for the public to drop-off donations, either directly related to the cause (Toy Drives, canned goods, used eyeglasses, books, etc.) or as part of a fundraising effort (cash donations, recycling cell phones, etc). The more public places that are involved, the more opportunity they have to raise funds.

If your organization needs a drop-off or pick-up point, offer your location and send out a message letting your customers know that you're involved. This is good branding and will also generate store traffic, both from your own customers and those from the organization's efforts in promoting you as an additional drop-off location.

30) SELECT A DAY FOR CHARITY

This is a simple concept, which could take on many different forms or be included with any number of other promotions or concepts. The idea is basically to **just let your customers know that on a specific *day, week or even month*, a certain percentage (“5% of Total Sales” or 10% of every Purchase”) OR a specific dollar amount (“\$2 from every purchase”) will go to help support your cause.**

As usual, the more personal you can make it, the more background information you feel you can share about how a certain cause was introduced into your life, or why it has special meaning to you - the more interesting it will be and greater impact it will have.

31) PRODUCT WITH A CAUSE

As part of their marketing plan, some retailers sell products in their store that have a specific cause already built-in (Saving the Rainforests, Cancer Research, etc.) The Yellow “*LiveStrong*” bracelets are an example of a basic product that supports a cause, but there are numerous other, more sophisticated products available.

If applicable, **consider sending a message promoting a particular ‘cause’ product.** This is especially good if it a new item or new line of products your client is launching.

Another variation is to select a specific product, possibly even one that somehow ties into you or your client’s chosen cause, and promote this particular product as a *‘Product with a Cause’*.

Often, this is presented as a lower cost item or made available for only a limited time. As with the day or week promotion, you simply take a percentage or a dollar amount from the sale of that product and donate it to the cause.

32) GET IN SHAPE! ...OR JUST SPONSOR ME :)

We're all familiar with the 'Sponsor-Me' fundraiser. Participants ask friends and family to pledge what they can and, based on how far the participant is able to run, walk, bike, swim, or crawl - is how much they donate.

(You might "pledge" \$2 per mile to Betty in accounting who is running a 10K marathon and if she crosses the finish line, you donate \$20 to Betty's cause.)

For our purposes, this works especially well if the person taking part in the cause – typically the owner or manager or figurehead of a company or organization - is well-known within the community - *or at least within the community of customers.*

Send out a message letting everyone know that you are in training for your cause and will be participating in X event. For each purchase made up until the big day, you will be donating \$X (*maybe .10¢ - maybe \$10*) for each mile that you finish.

Keep a running tab in the store so everyone can see the progress and how much the store will be donating. You may be able to get 2 or 3 messages out this one campaign by sending an initial announcement, a follow-up with a 'getting close'

tally, and a picture at the BIG DAY with a final tally on how much YOU, the customers raised for a good Cause.

- **CROSS-PROMO IDEA:** If you can find another establishment with a similarly priced but non-competing product (or even another branch of the same store in different location), it's always fun to have the customers compete against each other to see who can raise the most. In most cases, *both* stores will do better.

Each location could put up a sign stating how you “need their help to make sure your store beats Big Al and his customers across the street?”

33) GO TEAM!

Support your local sports teams and ride the wave of excitement that builds within the community at the same time. This can be applied to local High School games to your cities local Pro teams – and any sport will do.

Send out a message touting your support. If possible, make it personal. Did the owner attend the High School years ago? Maybe they have a great story to tell that customers might, if written well, find interesting.

Or maybe the owner had the opportunity to meet a local big time Pro. Or maybe a Pro is a regular customer. Or maybe it's just the greatest memory from a past game. Paint the picture with words. Build excitement. **Then offer a discount to anyone who comes in after the game, or even within the next week after the game, with a ticket stub from the event.**

If a ticket stub is too limiting, make the offer available for customers who come in wearing a hat or shirt with the team's logo. The purpose is to remind customers that you're not in a bubble - your business may not be a sports bar, but you share the same joy, pain, and celebration as your customers - while at the same time, keeping your business on their radar.

34) THE TICKET, PART TWO

Tickets don't necessarily have to be about sports either. It could be the local High School holding their Spring Musical, the band Coldplay or the Rolling Stones performing in town, or perhaps your favorite Broadway shows on tour. If you have a child-oriented business, it could be the circus or traveling carnival.

The *point* here is that you may not see that many *actual tickets* coming through the door, but **it is a chance to select an event that you'd like to be a reflection of your businesses personality, story or brand**. It's a chance to give your customers a little peek behind the curtain into *your story* and even who you are as a business owner.

This also works well when you can tie-in a good STORY.

EXAMPLES:

Does Coldplay support the same charity you do?

Did Bon Jovi *'inspire'* you 20 years ago? Have a photo to share?

Were you Maria in the Sound of Music in *your* school play 25 years ago? Have a copy of the theatre program?

You get the idea. Tie in the current event with something a little more personal and customers will not only appreciate it, they will *remember* it. And better yet, they'll be a little more likely to be *motivated* by it.

Get creative. Really *listen* to your clients and let the ideas roll.

35) COME CLAIM YOUR BOX!

You may have seen this at a Super Bowl party. The host draws a big, square grid containing a bunch of empty boxes. For a price (usually \$1 – \$5), guests can purchase a square – or multiple squares. When you purchase a square you sign your name in that box and you now “own” it.

The numbers 0 to 9 are then drawn out of a hat and, moving across the board, inserted into the appropriate row and column (*see diagram next page.*)

If the final score of the game matches up with your box – YOU WIN!

This game is a fun way of riding the existing excitement of the Super Bowl or other big (even local) game. It can be good for multiple messages and is also a way to get customers in the store – since they can only get a box if they come in. For this reason, it’s best to start the promotion as early as a month or so before the event.

If one grid isn’t enough, you can always continue to create additional grids.

Instead of asking customers to buy a box – you could:

- give away a box to anyone who comes into the store
- reward a box to customers who make any purchase
- reward one box for every \$10, (or \$20, 50, etc.) a client spends (this is beneficial because it allows customers to get multiple boxes – and increase their chances of winning.)
- trade the box for a customer’s email address
- trade the box for a donation to a charity (this could be cash, canned goods or toys)

You’ll need to determine what the “Prize” will be for the winning contestant. As always, the bigger the prize – the more incentive customers will have to get involved. It may be one of your own products you’d like to showcase. Or even a gift card.

- **CROSS-PROMO IDEA:** Here we have another great opportunity to partner with a nearby restaurant or retailer who would benefit from the added exposure by “donating” the Grand Prize.

This is an example of a typical “Super Bowl” grid. In this example: **Mark T** would win if the final score were Giants 29 – Patriots 18 (or any combination where the Giants score ended with a 9 – and the Patriots score ended with an 8.)

NY GIANTS										
	3	7	4	9	0	1	8	2	6	5
	8			Mark T						
P	5							Jennifer H		
A	1		Gavin R							
T	3	David G							Matt V	
R	0				Tara R					
I	4									Eli G
O	2			Tim V				Andy S		
T	6	Keith D								
S	7									Meredith S
	9		Mike S			Eric S				



36) YOU OFFER WHAT?

Does your client have a product or service that customers don't know they offer? If so, this is an opportunity to increase business by educating your customers.

The more creative you are in how you share the information, the better it will be received. A simple method is to tell a story about a customer who was unaware that the store offered (insert product) and explain how his/her life is better / easier / fun / convenient because now they know this service/product is available. "And it occurred to us that there may be others who are also unaware of this...."

Many times these will be "add-ons" that compliment another main line of products.

EXAMPLE:

- A Golf Course offering lessons
- A car dealer that offers oil changes or tire rotations
- A clothing boutique offers gift wrapping
- Pet Kennel offers grooming or obedience school
- Travel Agency offers Trip Planning or Special Packages
- Dentist offers teeth whitening
- Salon offers massage

Conclusion

There are numerous ways to incorporate your personality into your email marketing campaign and personalize your messages.

I hope this e-Book has encouraged you to begin using these ideas in your own business and shown you how, with just a little creativity, you can have a large impact.

With a bit of time and effort toward building relationships, you will be rewarded with better customers, stronger relationships with those customers and, of course, better results!

About the Author

My name is Jason Heintz and I've been in advertising or marketing for about 17 years. First in sales – you name it, I probably spent some time selling it – and then a few years in the agency world. Big agencies, small agencies, and one or two in between. I spent some time on the account side before finally accepting the fact that I'd be a lot happier - and much more productive - on the other, more '*creative*' side.

During this time I had the pleasure of working with some very big as well as some very small companies. While I sure learned a lot dealing with the larger ones, I quickly found much greater success, and *satisfaction* with the smaller and mid-size organizations.

Too often, once you remove the mountains of committees and general bureaucratic bologna you'll find a much greater opportunity to communicate with customers in a more personal, straight-forward and most importantly - effective way.

I started 3REmail in 2005 to help as many companies as I could add some personality to their email campaigns. After a few years, a couple of things became obvious. 1. This philosophy worked 2. 98% of emarketing out there was still horrible.

In 2009 I helped launch 3REmarketing as way to help other 'marketing minded' folks get out there and use their own creativity to help even more companies get better results.