

# W3

## Wednesday Morning

### Fax

from

## The Castle Press

## How To Time Direct-Response Offers

Astute direct mailers keep the month, and even the day and the delivery hour in mind before sending out their offers. Some months – January, for instance – usually produce higher mail responses than others. Some days and times are hotter than others.

Marian Black-Ruffin of United Airlines Loyalty Services, speaking at the latest Chicago Direct Marketing Days, pointed out that a delay of only 24 hours can ruin an otherwise successful promotion.

For instance, she said, the Friday after Thanksgiving Day is vital for sellers who want strong activity in December, but, “Waiting until Saturday is the kiss of death.”

Once Christmas arrives, she advised, e-mail response withers. However, she said, “January is a good month for sending out anniversary and birthday reminders.”

The summer months – when many marketers slacken their promotional efforts – often are good for back-to-school sales.

Ira Dolin of UAL advised that the best days and times to reach business people are Tuesdays through Thursdays from 11 a.m. through 3 p.m. On the other hand, “For consumers, aim for Friday through Sunday, between 5 p.m. and 8 p.m.”

Dolin recommended launching business-to-business e-mail messages at 1 p.m. Central time. But do not send after 3 p.m. the day before. “The routers get jammed, images break, and customers get ticked off,” he warned.

*A recent university study found that 60% of Internet users said pop-ups might make them distrust a brand. Around 50% close pop-ups before they finish loading. Only 2% remembered a pop-up advertiser’s brand name.*

Make sure that ISPs and firewalls aren’t gumming up your message deliveries, he added. If you transmit a message at 1 p.m. that is not delivered until 5 that afternoon or later, “you need to accommodate.”

To avoid ISP blockages, send a special message to your customer file, asking these best sales prospects to white-list messages from you on their browsers.

Dolin and Black-Ruffin offered these six additional e-mail pointers:

- Tell your recipient exactly what you want him to do, and why.
- Test your message links after an email launch.
- Personalize. Your recipients expect it.
- Limit your requests for information about the recipient. It scares people.
- Track all your conversions. Remember that some prospects will go directly to your Web site instead of clicking on a link. Count them.
- Follow up.

Black-Ruffin stressed that you can expect to receive most responses within three days of your e-mail launch, “but how many people remember an e-mail from three days ago? You have to send a reminder.”

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