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Use the Three C's of eMail Marketing to Increase Sales

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1. Collect those email addresses to start your own COMMUNITY

Building your database of email addresses is easy. Start by scouring your Rolodex for business cards with names and email addresses. Put a form on your website to encourage people to join your mailing list. Collect names and email addresses any time you interact with your customers or attend an industry event. Be sure your email delivery software includes the "refer-a-friend" feature and watch your list grow like a beanstalk.

2. Deliver fresh and relevant CONTENT

What's your ultimate goal? To strengthen relationships with existing customers? To establish yourself as the authority? To sell product? Keep your primary purpose in mind when you write your emails. Then be sure to track WHO opened your emails and WHAT they clicked on. Use this data to modify future content. And be sure to include simple surveys, especially the kind where customers only have to hit the "reply" button to tell you what they think. (Give them a chance and you'll find your customers appreciate being able to express their opinions.) Next, start making a list of all the topics about which your customers want more information. For example, you can send emails with special promotions, profiles of key sales people, company announcements and events, holiday updates, application stories and more.

3. Include an element of COMMERCE

Professional speakers usually have material available for purchase at the end of their presentation. While there's no obligation for the audience to buy, they should at least have the option to invest in materials that complement the speaker's topic. Likewise, there's no shame in offering relevant products for sale in your email. Or directing the recipient back to your website with a special offer code. After all, if you don't have sales, you won't be in business for long. Email messages that are relevant, interesting, and include a bit of personality help build strong customer relationships that will withstand the occasional shortcoming or a competitor's lower price. Follow the three C's and email marketing success will be yours!