

# EMPOWER Your Sales Consultants through E-NEWSLETTER MARKETING

by David Fish



If you're looking to boost the performance of your sales consultants, you should think about giving e-newsletter marketing a try. E-newsletters are an exciting new e-marketing platform that enables direct selling companies like yours to reinforce the corporate brand while exposing you to the valuable demographic and behavioral information in your subscriber database. By helping you communicate more effectively at multiple tiers—both corporate-to-consultant and consultant-to-customer—e-newsletters build stronger relationships across your network and drive higher sales performances.

The direct selling industry relies heavily on building and maintaining strong personal relationships. The e-communications revolution has provided exciting new opportunities—like e-newsletter marketing—for fostering these relationships. Keep in mind, however, that all e-newsletter services are not the same. In fact, while some are designed specifically for direct sellers focused on the party plan selling model, most are not. If you know what to look for, you can choose the best e-newsletter service for your company.

An e-newsletter service should enable direct selling companies to communicate with their consultants on an ongoing basis, keeping them up to date regarding new products, promotions, sales incentives and selling techniques. Consultants who are better informed about the products they're selling are better prepared to represent your corporate brand and are more driven to move your product.

At the same time, your e-newsletter service should also keep sales consultants connected with their network each month. The best e-newsletter service providers enable you to send each customer a personalized e-mail communication, on behalf of your consultants, that provides product highlights and engaging lifestyle content created specifically for your company's target market.

Unlike untargeted mass e-mails, personalized e-newsletters enjoy remarkably high open rates—often exceeding 40 percent. Because the more sophisticated e-newsletters let you supplement product information with interesting and relevant lifestyle content, customers look forward to receiving

*continued on page 58*

# Right Tool Right Result

“The Most Powerful Recruiting  
Tool in the Last ~~5 Years.~~”

*Ever!*



## Why Over 175,000 People Per Week Are Starting A Direct Selling Business!

*Fortune* magazine, billionaire investor Warren Buffet, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Dr. Stephen Covey and others weigh in on the \$100 billion direct selling industry. Prospects discover that only 1% of this industry's potential has been tapped, and why direct selling has been called a "recession-proof" business opportunity.

**INCREASE Prospecting • Recruiting • Retention**

**Call Today For A FREE SAMPLE**



1-800-752-2030  
Tools@VideoPlus.com  
www.TapesAndTools.com

continued from page 56

them each month, and in many cases, open and read them right away. Instead of simply bombarding recipients with promotions, well-conceived e-newsletters balance product articles with engaging content—recipes, fashion and beauty tips, entertainment news, parenting advice, decorating features or whatever may appeal to the target market—to hook readers and keep them coming back for more.

Before signing up, check to see if an e-newsletter service provides reporting based on each reader's interaction with the e-newsletter. These reports help direct selling companies understand which articles and product features most interest your recipients, allowing you to plan future content accordingly. They also help you identify readership trends related to e-newsletter send schedules. "We have learned to send e-newsletters close to the weekend, when our customers have more time to read them," noted a manager at a leading direct selling company. "That's when they will open them almost instantly. We also e-mail them toward the end of the month, when incentives for customers to host events are most effective."

If an e-newsletter service supports this level of closed loop feedback, you'll be able to implement improvements to your e-communications month after month. As a result, you'll likely increase your e-newsletter readership with each send. In fact, the best e-newsletters experience extremely low opt-out rates—often in the low single digits.

Sales consultants readily embrace e-newsletter marketing because it makes their jobs so much easier. On behalf of the direct seller, the e-newsletter service provider automatically sends out an e-newsletter to each sales consultant's contact list each month. Some e-newsletter services personalize each e-mail with the local sales consultant's photo and contact information. Personalization makes the e-newsletter appear as if it were sent directly from the sales consultant, reinforcing the person-to-person relationships that are so critical to successful direct selling.

When it comes to e-newsletters, however, what sales consultants value most is the reporting. The best e-newsletter services capture information about how each recipient interacts with the e-newsletter. The information is compiled

into a report that is automatically sent to each consultant. It's helpful to send consultants reports at staggered intervals—perhaps 24 hours, three days, and one week after each e-newsletter send—so they can begin immediate follow-up. Make sure your consultants can receive reports that show who opened and read the e-newsletter, who is interested in hostess specials, who is interested in career opportunities, and what specific content was clicked by whom. This kind of detail will help your consultants to streamline their call targeting efforts.

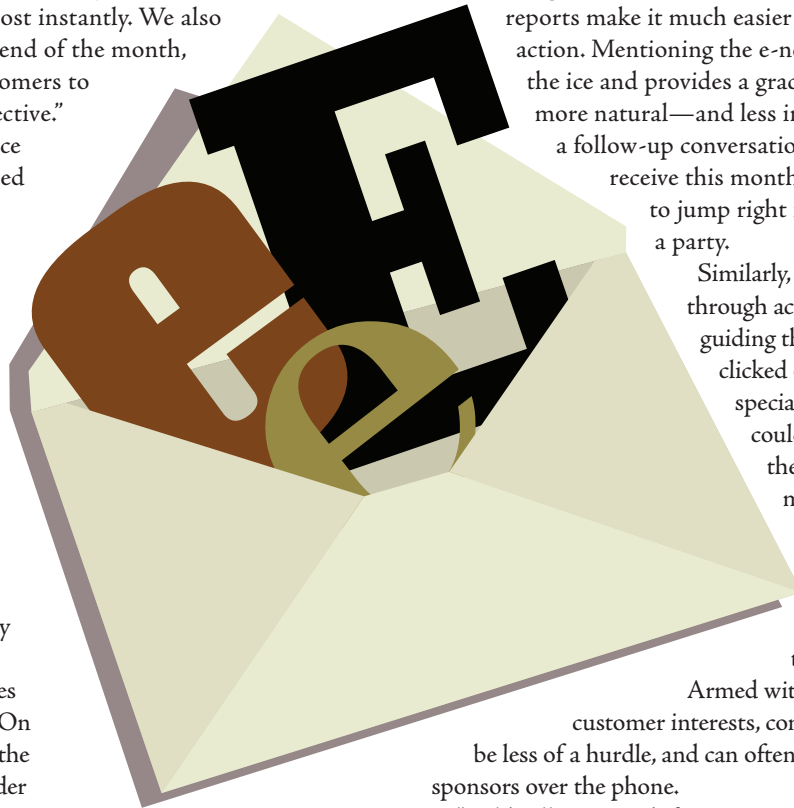
Because sales consultants often have limited time for phone outreach, they can use e-newsletter reports to focus calls on those contacts who demonstrated interest in hosting a party or becoming a consultant. Reports that include customer phone numbers and e-mail addresses along with the details of their e-newsletter interactions make it easy for the sales consultant to follow up with a call or an e-mail. While cold calling can be difficult for some consultants, these reports make it much easier for them to spring into action. Mentioning the e-newsletter helps to break the ice and provides a graceful lead-in. It's much more natural—and less intimidating—to begin a follow-up conversation with, "Ellen, did you receive this month's e-newsletter?" than it is to jump right in with a request to host a party.

Similarly, knowledge of specific click-through activity provides context for guiding the conversation. If Ellen clicked on this month's hostess specials link, the consultant could continue, "When I saw the hostess specials this month, I thought of you." This approach creates a personal connection with the customer, while gently introducing the idea of hosting a party.

Armed with valuable insight into customer interests, consultants find sales calls to be less of a hurdle, and can often secure more bookings and sponsors over the phone.

"Cold calls are tough for many consultants, but insight gained from e-newsletter data can make calling more natural," said a management team member at one direct selling company. "For instance, if a consultant knows that a customer has read an article on guest specials, the consultant might leverage that knowledge to persuade the customer to book a show and encourage her guests to come to take advantage of the guest special."

What's more, if the e-newsletter is personalized with the consultant's phone number and e-mail address, it often drives product orders as well as offers to host a party ... with no follow-up whatsoever required.



Effective e-newsletters pay for themselves many times over. Some direct selling companies pay for the e-newsletter service at the corporate level. Because e-newsletters provide excellent recruiting tools and call targeting reports that make consultants more effective, the companies inevitably recoup associated expenses through increased sales. Other companies pass the monthly fee along to consultants, most of whom are more than willing to assume the cost—especially when they see how e-newsletters can help them book parties, recruit sponsors and move product.

The best e-newsletters not only help consultants build their business, they also give direct selling companies more control over their brand and messaging. With each individual consultant creating his or her own e-mail communications to customers, it's virtually impossible to enforce message consistency or protect brand integrity. By using a service provider for sending out personalized e-newsletters that are professionally written and designed, direct selling companies can control communications across the entire network. All contacts receive the same information, in a format that reinforces the corporate brand. In addition, the most reputable e-newsletter service providers control the e-mail system and processes to ensure that consultants do not violate CAN-SPAM policies, child protection laws or privacy laws under the auspices of the direct selling company's brand.

Through e-newsletter analytics, direct selling companies can monitor customer responses to learn which products attract the most interest. When evaluating an e-newsletter service, check whether it allows you to conduct comparative analysis both over

time and across offers associated with e-newsletter content. These analyses enable companies to determine, for example, which products pull best in the summer months or which promotions were most effective during a holiday season. Companies can then use this information to plan future promotions, drive development of new products, and enhance forecasting to minimize backordered or sold-out situations.

In the world of direct selling, relationships are everything, and for building stronger relationships across your entire network—company, consultants and customers—nothing beats e-newsletter marketing. However, you have to choose the right e-newsletter service platform to reap all the benefits this marketing medium has to offer. With the right service in place, e-newsletter marketing can yield dramatic results for your business.

A manager at one direct selling company summed up the value of e-newsletters this way: "Thanks to our e-newsletter, we now have a highly personalized relationship with every customer and prospect, leading to greater brand awareness and loyalty." With that kind of endorsement from early adopters, e-newsletters are positioned to become the next big thing in e-marketing for today's leading direct selling companies. 🌐



David Fish is CEO of IMN, Waltham, Mass., a leading e-communications service provider. IMN offers IMN Party Pulse™, an e-newsletter and e-mail service for direct selling and network marketing companies and their sales consultants. Please contact David at [dfish@imninc.com](mailto:dfish@imninc.com) or visit [www.imnpartypulse.com](http://www.imnpartypulse.com).



# Smart Office Solutions

Your communication Technology Partner

[WWW.SMARTOFFICESOLUTIONS.COM](http://WWW.SMARTOFFICESOLUTIONS.COM)

- CONFERENCE CALLING**
- REPLAY/SIZZLE LINES**
- UNIFIED MESSAGING**
- WEB CONFERENCING**
- BACK OFFICE SOLUTIONS**

**800.891.8601**