

By Regina Brady



Get the Message Out

Two triggered e-mail programs you can't start 2010 without

Triggered messaging is an important tool in your e-mail marketing arsenal that can increase the timeliness and relevance of your communications. Let's face it, consumers' inboxes are jam-packed with e-mails from marketers competing for attention. It is getting harder to stand out. With triggered messages, you can create communications based on the user's action or behavior. When coupled with the right subject line, you have a chance to capture attention and spur activity.

The beauty of triggered e-mail programs is that you build the creative and set the rules for why and when these e-mails should go out. Then you can sit back and reap the rewards as these automated messages are sent.

Types of Triggers

There are five general categories of triggered e-mails:

- **Functional triggers** that support site activities. Most marketers send automated welcome messages when a visitor opts in or registers at the site, and shipping notices when an order is on its way. Other examples include profile update requests, credit card expiration notices and back-in-stock announcements.

- **Time-sensitive triggers** are useful to wish a customer happy birthday, to announce a promotion or sale, and to remind shoppers of their last chance to take advantage of a sale.

- **Transactional triggers** include abandoned shopping cart e-mails, order confirmations, requests to cre-

Regina, your LEGO® order has shipped. [See details below.](#)

LEGO Your LEGO® order is on its way!

Regina,

Your LEGO order has shipped. The tracking number is 1279R333PP16741229 and you may check the shipping status [here](#).

Order Summary

Order Number: W0373507

Discover more great LEGO collections:

LEGO CREATOR

View at LEGO CREATOR

SHOP ONLINE

SHOP NOW

LEGO's shipping notice e-mail provides the customer with key information about her order, additional products she may be interested in and prominent links to customer service.

QTY	ITEM	DESCRIPTION
1	8018	8018 Armoured Assault T (. V36)

Have More Questions? Contact us.

ate a review for a product purchased, and sales reactivations for those who have purchased in the past but have not purchased recently.

- **Behavioral triggers** take into account the actions or inactions of users. When a shopper clicks on an e-mail link and browses particular products on the site but does not buy, you might want to send a follow-up e-mail presenting additional products or a special offer. If someone on your list has not opened or clicked on an e-mail for the past four to six months, you might want to send a message designed to get him or her re-engaged.

- **Lead warm-up triggers** are designed to move individuals through the sales cycle. These often comprise a series of e-mails that provide additional information and offers to motivate the lead to become a customer.

Of all the various types of triggered messages, transactional triggered e-mails—such as the abandoned cart and order confirmation/shipping notice e-mails—are possibly the most critical for marketers to have in their repertoires.

Cart Abandonment

If you do not have an abandoned cart e-mail program, you need to address this right away. Most marketers find that 50 percent to 60 percent of shopping carts are abandoned. Just think, if you recapture some of these lost sales, you immediately increase revenues to a motivated target group. These shoppers took the time to browse your site and began to place orders when some circumstance interrupted them. If you let them easily pick up where they left off, you should stimulate

3 percent to 15 percent of them to complete their orders.

Here are some thoughts on how to put this program in motion:

- Send the first e-mail quickly. Many experts believe it should go out within an hour or two after the cart abandonment.

- Carefully construct the subject line, and make sure it clearly addresses the purpose of the message. "You have items in your shopping cart." "May we help you with your order?" "Did you forget something?"

- Make sure the button and link to continue checkout is prominent.

- Plan to send at least two e-mails. Many marketers use the first e-mail to present the product and perhaps some additional popular selection. The second e-mail is timed to follow up five to seven days later and might include a promotion, such as free shipping or a discount.

- If possible, picture the item left in the cart. Otherwise, you might develop a standard image evocative of the shopping cart.

- Include your toll-free number. If the consumer did have a problem, it is helpful to allow her to contact your call center for help.

Order Confirmations & Shipping Notices

It's likely you send order confirmations and shipping notices to customers. These relevant messages have very high open rates, so use them as an opportunity to include additional marketing offers. Your audience has very recently purchased on your site; this is the perfect time to cross-sell and upsell these buyers.

Let's look at a prime example of a marketer successfully using trigger messaging in its communications with customers. E-mail service provider Responsys works with LEGO, the toy building block company. LEGO features a few additional products in confirmation e-mails. According to Responsys in its *The Retail Marketer's Playbook* report, transactional messages account for 15 percent of LEGO's e-mail sales.

LEGO follows best practices. The subject line is "Your LEGO Order has Shipped." The main content of the e-mail is the shipping confirmation that takes prominence in the message. The company features additional products in the smaller right-hand column and also includes easy-to-find links to LEGO's customer service.

It's a new year, and it's time to make some resolutions. A good place to start is with these two triggered programs.

Overhaul your confirmation messages, and put an abandoned cart program in place. You will reap the rewards and the sales. Then you can move on to tackle the implementation of other types of triggered messaging. ■

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