Email Marketing for Small Business

My name is Rich Brooks, I'm the president of flyte new media. And today we're going to be talking about, *How to Use Email Marketing for Your Small Business.*

Email marketing has always been one of my favorite parts of digital marketing, I think it's some of the most effective ways to market your business. And so we're going to be doing a dive into that today. Kind of talking about how to get started, how to build your list, best practices, how to get the best results out of it. This is one of our 30 minute webinars. I'm going to do my best to keep it in that 30 minutes for the content, delivering you as much 'no fluff' content as I possibly can.

And then at the end of 30 minutes or so when we're done, I will answer as many questions as I can for as long as I possibly can. So feel free to stick around and ask questions. I probably won't be checking the Q&A or the chat during the presentation, but I will take a look at it and answer all those questions afterwards.

If you do have to jump off, we are recording this and I will make the video available. It probably will take a few days to get it ready, but it will be available for you.

So here at flyte, email marketing is part of something we call the "B.A.R.E. Essentials of Digital Marketing". And B.A.R.E. is an acronym, and it stands for 'build'. So basically your digital marketing is to start with a platform that turns visitors into customers, aka your website.

The next step is to 'attract' people to your website. And so that's about search engine optimization, social media, and digital advertising.

Then there's 'retain'. How do you stay in touch with people after they've left your website? And that's where email marketing really shines. You can also do some retargeting advertising, and to a lesser degree social media can be another way that you can stay in front of your audience while they're not on the website.

And lastly, 'evaluate'. Taking a look at all the things that you're doing and finding out what works and what doesn't work, so you can continually make improvements and increase your ROI.

Those are the B.A.R.E. Essentials of Digital Marketing. But those of you who don't know who I am, my name is Rich Brooks and I'm the president of flyte new media. We're a digital agency located here in Portland, Maine, which means that we design and build websites, we do search engine optimization, social media, paid social like Facebook ads, email marketing, content marketing, and webinars. We basically help our clients with anything they need to reach more of their ideal customers.

I'm also the founder of the Agents of Change conference. This is an annual conference and a weekly podcast, where I interview digital marketing experts on search, social and mobile marketing. Basically, how you can reach more of your ideal customers. And definitely check out the podcast if you like podcasts.

I'm also the 'tech guru' on 207, which is the evening news program here on the NBC affiliate in Maine, with hard hitting news stories like where the best recipe sites are online and how you can take better pictures with your smartphone. And then I wrote a book called *The Lead Machine - The Small Business Guide to Digital Marketing.* And that's available on Amazon and bookstores near you, assuming you live on Munjoy Hill in Portland, Maine. I think that's the only bookstore that carries it.

And then I co-founded something called Fast Forward Maine, which is a weekly podcast and in person events, although now with Coronavirus we're just doing webinars. Thank you, Coronavirus. That's all about growing businesses here in the state.

So in other words, I love digital marketing. This is my playground, and this is where I hang out all the time. And I'm a big fan of email marketing, as I mentioned earlier. And why do I love email marketing so much? Well, there's a lot of reasons.

First of all, email is a great way to build rapport with your audience. Build trust, have a conversation. Even when you're doing a blast email, there's always the opportunity for somebody to hit 'reply'. If you start that one on one conversation, which is a great way to build rapport and set the tone for your business. It's also stable, and by that I mean it's not changing all the time. Google constantly is changing its algorithm, one day you're on page one and the next day you can't find yourself. Facebook is constantly changing their algorithm, usually making it less friendly for business. Used to be that all you need to do is post something from your business page and it would be seen. But really these days often it's one, possibly 2% of your fans will ever see what you post on Facebook.

With email, the algorithm doesn't change. Really, it doesn't change much at all. In fact, the last 15 to 20 years, the biggest difference in email has just been it's become mobile friendly. So that's really the only change that there's been when it comes to email marketing.

It's mobile, and I don't mean mobile friendly, although that's important. I mean that you own the list. You can take it. If you are on Constant Contact and you decide to switch to MailChimp, you just take that list with you. If you are on Facebook and you get sick of Facebook and you want to move everybody over to LinkedIn, you can't take that audience with you. You own your own email list, so you can move it from platform to platform.

It's also unavoidable. Unlike Facebook posts or tweets, which you might miss if you're not constantly on a platform, every email that's in your inbox is still going to be there until you deal with it. So it really is unavoidable.

And also email triggers action. If you want people to do something, whether you're trying to educate them, inform them, sell something, email triggers that action to could get them to do something, is it a website to download something, to get behind the cause, whatever it may be. So definitely email is great for getting people to take action.

So one of the reasons I like email marketing so much is because you always do it by getting people to opt into our email newsletter. We never buy it. So it's always about getting that trust from our customer or prospect, which gives us access to the most valuable piece of real

estate on the internet, our customer's inbox. And once we're in there, there's a lot of benefits of having access to that customer's inbox.

So if you're just getting started, or even if you've been doing this for a while, one of the things that you're going to want to spend some time on is in building your list. Because the more people who are qualified prospects that you can get on your list, the more value that list has. So we want to take some actions to build that list. And although there are multiple places where you can get people to register for your email list, the majority of them are going to come through your websites. So we're really going to focus on that today.

So obviously you need to have a website. You need to choose an email service provider. You don't want to be sending out emails through your own email when it comes to this type of email marketing. You want to use a service like MailChimp, Constant Contact, HubSpot, Salesforce, whatever you want to use as long as you're able to send out those emails through a third party.

And another thing about these email service providers is they do a lot of things to make sure that your emails are mobile friendly. They allow you to write and send your email out when you want it to deliver that. They can do some A/B split testing and handle all of your unsubscribes automatically. They make sure that you're in compliance with the canned spam act. All these benefits that you get and really very cost efficient, depending on the number of people on your email list and/or the number of times you send out, your email monthly cost could be anywhere from $0 dollars to a few hundred dollars. But for most small businesses, you're probably looking at under $50 a month, very often, $20 or $30 a month. And then you're also going to want them to have some analytics and reporting, and we'll take a look at some of the things you can do to get a better sense of how your email marketing is going later on in the presentation.

Now recently I have been doing some research into e-commerce. In fact, I presented at an *Email for E-commerce* webinar recently, and if you are doing e-commerce, there are some additional considerations you should have when you're taking a look at these email service providers.

One is that these providers should have an abandoned cart in them. So basically what happens with the abandoned cart email is very often, in fact they say 65% to 75% of people who put things in their cart online abandon them in the cart and just move on, they don't do anything. Maybe the shipping costs were too high. Maybe they got distracted. Maybe they decided not to move forward. If you've captured their email already, your system can actually automatically send them an email and give them either an offer or just remind them there's something that's in their shopping cart. And surveys show that that will actually increase the chances of getting that sale by 30%. So it's something that really pays for itself, a very powerful tool.

Also the system should have purchase and shipping confirmations that automatically go out, the ability to set up upscale emails. So if they bought one thing, the system will be smart enough to send them an email that says, "Hey, I saw that you bought this sprinkler. Do you

also want to get this hose? And perhaps this bag of seeds?" Something like that. And you can set that up automatically beforehand.

Reviews. If you're running an e-commerce site, reviews are critically important and the system can send an email after delivery and say, "How would you rate this product?" And then also a bunch of different types of triggered events. If somebody buys for the first time you can have an automatic response enticing them to buy more. Or if they haven't bought in a certain period of time, you can actually have an email that will go out after one, three or six months and say, "Hey, you haven't bought in a while, have you looked at this?" Or perhaps give them some sort of discount that's only available for those people. So you can set up these triggered events.

Now you don't have to have an e-commerce site to do this, but if you are going to do e-commerce, these are some critical tools. And Klaviyo is the platform that we're using when it comes to these e-commerce email needs.

So getting back to email in general and your website. A lot of places on your website that you should be looking to get people to opt into your email newsletter. You might have a header or footer that has an email sign up. This can be a sticky header or footer, or it can just be a traditional one that just sits on the page. I was surprised actually, when I looked at our opt-in rates. The bottom of our page, where we basically just have a sign up for an email, but generally, I recommend having some sort of offer because people don't want to sign up, but a lot of people did sign up at the bottom of the page. So making sure that there's an email sign up on every single page of your website is great for building your list.

If you've got a blog, on the blog homepage you should definitely be having some sort of call to action that says, "Never miss another blog post." Obviously if they're interested in enough to go into your blog, they're interested in your content. So why wouldn't they want to be alerted or get an email every time your blog has an article or new blog post on it. So put it at the top of your blog homepage, and then also include it perhaps as a call to action at the bottom of every single blog post. And that's something you can just build or your developer could build into the framework of the page so you don't have to do it every single time.

Also, you may create some page specific value ads. So for example, we have articles on LinkedIn on our blog about how to do better prospecting or how to build a perfect LinkedIn profile. And from that, we have a LinkedIn cheat sheet that just has all the information you need to optimize your account, your profile, which we allow people to download. Now it is behind an email wall, so email registration. So people have to give us their first name and email to get it, but generally they're more than happy to do it to get head value at. So think about the content on your own website. Is there some sort of value add for a specific article with blog posts that you could make available and tie that into your email signup?

On your contact form you should always have a box that asks people do they want to be added to your email list. And using an email service provider, like MailChimp, like Constant Contact, you can actually automate this process. So we always leave the box open, meaning that somebody has to opt in rather than opt out, like unchecking the box. We require people to opt in. If they do opt-in, automatically, they're added to our email list, we don't have to

do any extra steps. And then on our thank you page, we also ask if people want to join our mailing list. Now if they have, obviously that's a little redundant, but a lot of people might fill out the form. They're obviously interested enough in what you have to sell or what you're offering, so why not ask for that email signup and strike while they are in his hot?

Oh, and then the popup, everybody loves popups, right? Okay, nobody loves popups outside of marketers. But the thing is they are very effective. In fact, a lot of you signed up for this webinar because you saw the popup on our website. Nothing gets more signups for an email newsletter than a pop up about an upcoming webinar or event or something similar. They just work. And I know some marketers even hate them and all these other things, I'll give you some hints so they work better.

The first thing is never have a popup appear seconds after somebody arrives at your website. They don't even know who you are. Nobody likes going to a store where they have an overly aggressive greeter who immediately wants to show you around, something like that. Just let it sit. And most of these popups can be timed. So it might be 15 or 30 seconds before the popup shows. So they've already had a chance to kind of take a look at your home page or other page, scan through it and get a sort of idea of what you're about before you hit them with a popup.

Another alternative idea is that you can have the popup only show up on a secondary page. So in other words, on the first page, they go through it won't show, but as soon as they go to that second page, then you show it. Because at this point there's a little bit of trust built up, there's some obvious interest from the person, you're not going to scare them off. But if you show them that pop up before they got a chance to make a decision about what kind of person or company you are, all they're going to do is scramble and hit that little "x" to close it out and then you're never going to be able to get them to sign up.

Another page on your website where you can collect emails actually is not part of the navigation, so you can't get to it when you're on the website, but these are called landing or squeeze pages. And these are often driven through an external event. So maybe it's a Facebook ad, or maybe it's a social media post, or maybe it's a Google ad, but you're driving traffic to a specific page that has no navigation and just the offer. So if you're doing a presentation, say you want somebody to download the workbook that goes with it, you can send them to a squeeze page. And they go there and then there's nothing else, there's no distractions. And you're going to find that you get a very high conversion rate on this squeeze pages. People give you their name, their email address, whatever you're looking for, so they can get information and they can get access to that information that you promised. And all of these then get funneled into your email service provider.

Now, those are a number of different ways in which you can get people to opt in, but let's talk about how you increase the chances to get them to opt in. What can we be doing on your website that are going to increase the chances that somebody's going to give up their email address?

First thing is draw attention. It seems pretty obvious, right? If you have an email signup box that kind of fades into the background and nobody notices it, they're not going to pay

attention. But if you can make it bigger, bolder, I use an action color on it so it really pops. Maybe it slides in on certain pages, pop ups certainly draw attention. Maybe there is a finger or an arrow pointing to the signup. Those things work surprisingly well, even just having a photo of a person and they're looking at the signup box. That can increase the conversion, increase the number of people who subscribe to your email newsletter.

Another thing is to build trust. A lot of people don't want to give up their email address, so you need to build trust. One way to build trust is through social proof. If you have an email newsletter - and I'm not suggesting you make up these numbers - but if you already have a pretty decent list you can say, "Join 5,000 other marketers and subscribe to our weekly email list", or "Join 10,000 other dog lovers for our monthly email list", whatever it is. Just build that trust, show them that there are hundreds or thousands of other people who have already found the benefit of subscribing to your email newsletter.

Another way to build trust is maybe having an influencer that's big in your industry who would be willing to say, "Oh, I can't believe all the great content I get from subscribing to this company's newsletter". That might be enough to get somebody to sign up. In fact, years ago I signed up for these Social Triggers email newsletter because I saw a quote from Chris Brogan on how valuable he found the content to be, and that was enough. I'd never heard of Social Triggers at the time, but seeing Chris Brogan's name and photo on the signup page gave me enough reason to roll the dice and give my email address up to that site.

Here's something ironically that doesn't work, putting any mention of your privacy notice on the signup. There have been plenty of research that shows that even though you're saying you're going to protect people, you're not going to spam them, and you've got a privacy statement. Whatever it is, are our base instincts take over and we get very protective when we see issues around privacy, and so we won't move forward. I'm not saying don't have a privacy statement. I'm saying don't make it part of the signup because you'll actually break trust, you won't build trust.

Establish expectations. Let people know what they're going to get with your email newsletters. Are these are going to be filled with sales items, or is it going to be filled with information that they can use? There's no wrong answer here, it's just about establishing expectations. Are they going to get a daily email or is this going to be a weekly or a monthly email newsletter? Those are the kinds of things that people want to know before they sign up.

And perhaps most importantly, create an offer. Nobody wants to sign up for yet another email newsletter - even your amazing email newsletter - so give them something in return. There's a lot of different things you can provide for people. One would be some sort of download a white paper. I mentioned for flyte we often will do cheat sheets. Something like that, or checklists, whatever makes their life easier. And you only need to create it once and then you can basically just set it up. The way that we usually configure it is somebody gives us their name and email address. And then we email them the link to where they can download it. That way we ensure that we're getting their actual working email address and they don't just put in something on exit xxx.com so they can get the stuff and not sign up for

any new stuff. Obviously they can unsubscribe seconds later, but the thing is if they get something of value, they'll probably stick around for at least a few more newsletters.

Webinars like this one I found to be a fantastic way of getting people to opt into your newsletter. Offering a free online course, very similar. And this is something that you can set up once and then just make it available for people. And this could be a video course, an auditory course or a written course, whatever you prefer. And a lot of times that can just be gathering up a bunch of previous blog posts or podcasts or anything, and just kind of repackage it. So it's not something you always have to create from scratch. Contests, obviously any sort of raffle once a month, you're giving away something, and if appropriate some discounts in your store, maybe. I know some people will give away discounts only to email subscribers, special discounts. Other times your first purchase is reduced because you sign up for the email newsletter. So those are different ways to get people to join your list.

So once you get people on your list, that's not the end of the battle. Then it's about getting that engagement to ultimately get the business. And one of the most important emails you're going to send out is actually the first one, the welcome message. Research shows that your welcome message is going to probably have the best open rate of any email you send, probably because they just finished signing up for your newsletter or your giveaway or your download, and they're looking forward to hearing from you.

Recently, I signed up for a service called Sunday, which is kind of a lawn care program where they just send you all the stuff and you take care of it yourself. And I got this nice little welcome message. These two brothers - obviously they're having a good time and they're very casual - they love green moms and organics and all this sort of stuff, and it just kind of sets the tone for what's going on. So, like I said, it's got the highest open rate of all your emails, so it's critically important. It sets the tone of what they can expect and also sets expectations. So you can spell out when they're going to get emails and what kind of emails you're going to get and all this other fun stuff. So very important message right off the bat.

Somebody asked beforehand about drip campaigns, are they effective? Yeah, they can be really effective. And the nice thing about drip campaigns is that they avoid that pause between signup and delivery of the first email or beyond the welcome email. So you sign up for an email newsletter and they only send it out monthly and you signed up on the second and they send it on first. It's 30 days before you get the first one, you may have moved on. But with a drip campaign write once and it will run over and over and over again for every new subscriber.

So again, I'm loving the emails I'm getting from Sunday. In fact, it's basically causing me to rewrite our entire drip campaign as well. They're sending a bunch of emails and these are every few days, and their product is basically they ship you the product, you're going to do it yourself. So they want you to succeed so they're teaching you the best way to. So this one was a better way to mow, there was another one about when to water, when to weed, all this information so you can have the healthiest possible lawn. That helps them and it helps you, and just really nice, clean, simple, actionable tips.

This is their campaign. I'm not saying that your campaign has to be exactly the same, but this I found to be a very effective campaign for getting people excited about opting into the Sunday program.

And then past those first emails, past the welcome, pass the auto drip campaign, which can be set up so basically it could be any length of time before the first one arrives, and they could arrive every single day, they could arrive every three days, whatever it is. There's no right answer. It's about playing around and figuring out what makes the most sense for what you have to do.

I know that AWeber does one that's every day for 30 days, and then there's a strong call to action on the 30th day. So there are different approaches to it. There are also different approaches to the style of email.

So, this is an email I get from John Lee Dumas, it comes in every day, and this is very typical for internet marketers. So it's a very casual, stripped down email. There is some bolding and italics and links in there. So it's not necessarily just like what you get from a friend, but it's pretty close and it feels very personal, even though apparently he didn't have my name he just had "Fire Nation".

Then there's ones that maybe were a little bit more branded. And this is a recent email newsletter from flyte where we're a design company and we want to have some branding. This one doesn't have an image up top, but we do have some branding in terms of the colors and that diagonal line that repeats throughout our website and a lot of our new marketing material. We just recently relaunched our website and a lot of our marketing material.

And then there's just going all out with images like Living Social, that basically all they're doing is selling. And so everything's really image driven, showing pictures of the product with people enjoying the products with just a little bit of text and links to it. There's no wrong answer. It's just about what makes the most sense for your business.

Now whatever style you choose and you don't have to choose just one, you can play around and do different ones. It's really important that you get people to open up your emails. So the first thing you can do to improve the open rate of your emails is improve the subject lines. So I'll tell you what doesn't work for subject lines, "June Newsletter". Nobody wants to read your June newsletter, so get rid of anything like that. Instead, either tell them exactly what they're going to get from opening the email, or cause some question about what they're going to get, some sort of information gap - as psychologists call it - where people are dying to know exactly what they're going to get by opening an email.

So these are some different tactics. In fact, the best open rate I ever had from any email I ever sent the subject line was simply, "Tuesday?" with a question mark at the end. Well, everybody thought that perhaps they had an appointment with me or something, whatever it was, they opened those emails and we got a huge open rate. Now it turned out I was saying, "Tuesday is the last day of our early bird discounts for the Agents of Change Conference, I just wanted to make sure you knew about it. Did you?" So, I got a couple of

hate mail emails, but those were from people who were friends of mine and they just thought it was funny, so no big deal.

The other thing you want to keep in mind is who the email is coming from. And I noticed this, I created the screen capture earlier today that in one place it says, *flyte new media,* and further down there's an email also from us that says, *"Rich Brooks",* I'll have to talk to my team about that.

But, there's some question and some discussion in the industry about what works better, in email from a person or from a company. And a lot of people say it's always the email from a person. People want to do business with people, not businesses. While that's true, if the person who is your recipient doesn't know the person who's sending the email, then it completely falls on my face. I deleted a whole bunch of emails from somebody at Hubspot before I accidentally opened their email and realized these were emails that were coming in from HubSpot. So if your company name is maybe more familiar, than use your company name. And really what I want to do going forward is probably say "Rich at flyte", in the "from" line for us, because I think people will recognize who I am and they'll recognize the name "flyte".

But subject lines are critically important and this is one of the easiest things to do, A/B split testing. If you've never done A/B split testing, what that basically means is you can try out two different emails - or in this case, maybe two different subject lines - to see which one gets a better open rate. And so using a tool like MailChimp, you can set up maybe one is like, "our products now offer free shipping." And then the other one is a "20% off all products". And you can find out which one opens, and so then that becomes the one that you should use going forward. In fact, you can set it up where maybe 10% of the emails go out with A, and 10% with B, and then the rest of the emails go out with whatever the winner was. So you can automate that in a product like MailChimp.

Also in every email there should be a call to action. You want to get people to take some sort of action, move from their inbox perhaps to a sales or landing page. In this case this is just one little snippet, but we have the 'register now' button below the upcoming events. We wanted people to register for this so we promoted before in the email newsletter. Give people direction, tell them what they're supposed to do, register now. Few calls to action are better than many calls to action, and one is the best.

Now we do have multiple calls to action in our email newsletter, but if you can get away with just doing one- and we do that sometimes when we're just talking about one event - just having one call to action will usually convert at a higher rate and just make it pop, make it stand out. Obviously we use red because we weren't using that anywhere else, except as an action color within this email newsletter.

And then you want to make sure that you're constantly measuring what's going on. And in your email service provider admin area, you can take a look at your overall health of your email marketing as well as individual campaigns. And different platforms will give you different metrics, but it's important to go in there a few days after a campaign - because not everybody's to open your email on day one - and kind of see how it is working. And again, if

you're doing A/B split testing, that will give you a sense of, are people more interested in free shipping or are they more interested in overnight delivery, whatever the case may be.

And beyond just your email reports, you also probably want to be checking your Google analytics. Because for a lot of you and myself included, the purpose of email is to drive people back to the website, to engage them and get them to move further down the sales funnel or to buy something. So Google analytics is not always great attracting emails by themselves. So what you want to do is use a tool - and it's free, there's a bunch of them out there - but I use Campaign URL Builder. You can just Google that, it's a free Google service.

And basically as you can see on the screen capture, I put in the URL that I'm trying to drive traffic to, in this case it's the homepage, but really could be any page on a website. I come up with a campaign source. We can see some examples, Google, newsletter. Our newsletter is called *Navigator*, so I type up Navigator. The campaign medium, in this case obviously emails, so I put in 'email' and then I can give the campaign a name if I wanted. I just put in 'new site', and then down at the bottom you'll notice it's kind of a long uglier URL. But when people click on that link, It carries all the information over to Google analytics so that in Google analytics we can start to see different campaigns we're running and how much traffic drove to the website, whether those people were new, whether they took a desired action, whether they just looked at one page. But now we can really measure the effectiveness of each email marketing campaign just by using this free campaign URL builder to get a little extra information.

So I want to take your questions. So if you have any questions and you haven't put them yet in either the chat or the Q&A, please go ahead now. But I did want to just kind of recap what I think are the most important takeaways for today.

First off, you want to create multiple opt-ins or ways for people to subscribe to your email newsletter throughout your website. You should definitely utilize the welcome and drip emails that are available. Welcome emails, as we talked about, had the highest open rate. And drip emails, you can just write once and then are automatically sent out to every single person who subscribes to your email newsletter after that. A great way of building trust and establishing expectations. And again, just getting people to move further down the sales funnel.

Write compelling subject lines so your emails kind of stand out and also get people to open them and read them. Include a call to action. Tell people what the next step is in your email so that you can have high conversion rates and high ROI (return on investment). And continually monitor and measure what's going on with your email newsletters and your campaigns so you can continually improve it. If one type of subject line doesn't work, then you want to switch that up. If one day of the week doesn't seem to get as high open rates, then maybe you don't want to send out on that day. If you suddenly don't put images in one of your email newsletters and has the best open rate or the best click through rate, then you know that maybe your audience doesn't want images. So we don't know these things unless we're taking a look at our reports.

Alright, thanks everybody for tuning in today. I'm going to go now and take a look at your questions, if you have any. And again, my name is Rich Brooks, as you can see my contact information there on the screen. If you have any questions that you want to ask, and either you're watching this on record or you don't feel like asking right now or you don't think of it till later, feel free to reach out to me. And we did record this and we will be sending out a link to the video in the next few days.