Marketing Message Testing - The Art of Driving "Break-Through" Messaging for Tradeshow Attendance Growth

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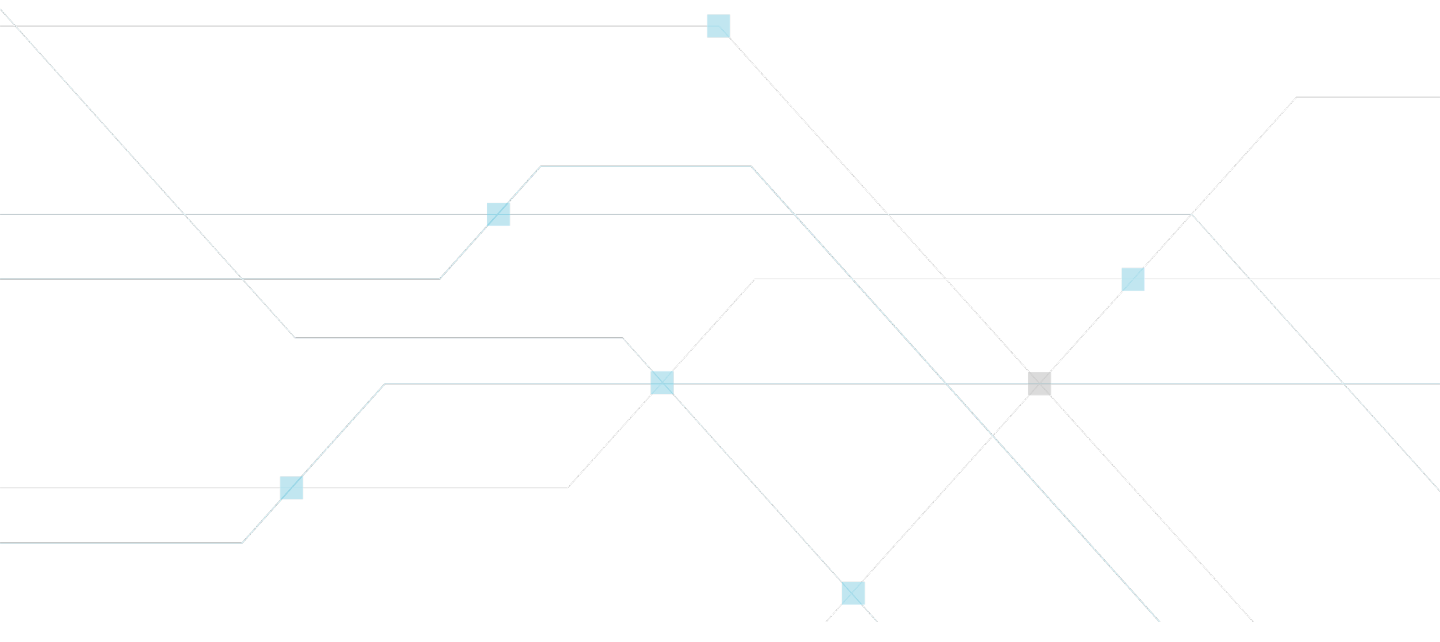
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The modern event marketer faces the challenge of acquiring a diverse and growing audience through new channels, often with attendees committing later in the cycle. In this context, it is crucial not only to focus on quantity but also to cultivate a highly qualified attendee base that meets the expectations of exhibitors and sponsors.
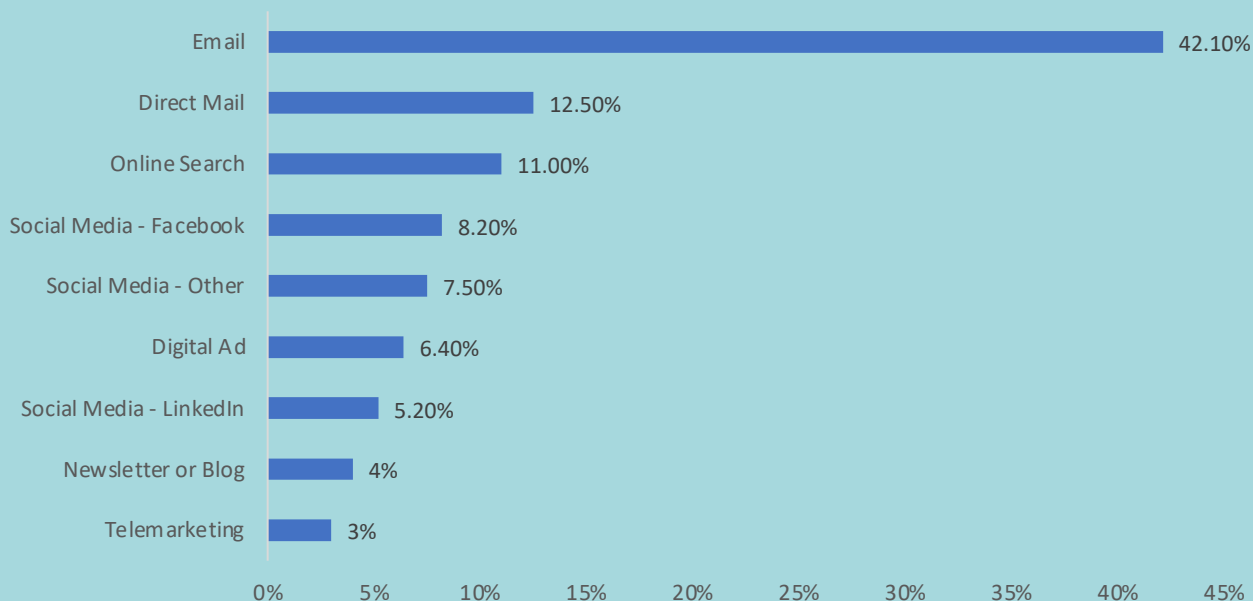
Part 3 of our white paper series on "Data Tracking for Tradeshow and Event Marketing" explores Marketing Message Testing and its role in crafting breakthrough messaging for tradeshow attendance growth.

This paper emphasizes the significance of refining email communication strategies through message testing, providing insights into methods, metrics, and best practices to enhance messaging effectiveness.

Importance of Marketing Message Testing:

With over 80% of tradeshow marketing departments neglecting message testing, this paper highlights the lost opportunity and the conversion rate dividends that effective testing can yield. Marketing messages act as the gateway to connecting show organizers with potential attendees, making it imperative to adapt to the evolving digital landscape and attendee behavior through precise and relevant messaging.

Direct Hit Marketing Studies on Marketing Channel Influencers: Direct Hit Marketing conducted studies on key marketing channel influencers for various events in 2022 and early 2023. Utilizing the "Marketing Influencer" question, the research uncovered pivotal information on self-reported marketing influencers affecting show registrations, as outlined below:

Channel	Percentage
Email	42.10%
Direct Mail	12.50%
Online Search	11.00%
Social Media - Facebook	8.20%
Social Media - Other	7.50%
Digital Ad	6.40%
Social Media - LinkedIn	5.20%
Newsletter or Blog	4%
Telemarketing	3%

While acknowledging the importance of testing across various channels, this paper focuses on email testing due to its potential for quicker impact and efficiency.

Best Strategic Practices for Message Testing:

1. **Clearly Define Objectives:** Determine specific goals, such as increasing clicks, landing page hits, conversion rates, and registrations.

2. **Segment the Audience:** Tailor messages to different segments for more accurate results.

3. **Test One Variable at a Time:** Isolate variables to identify impactful changes.

4. **Iterative Testing:** Continuously refine messages based on test results and evolving audience preferences.

Email Marketing Tests: A/B testing as the Backbone - A/B testing should be a fundamental tool for email marketers seeking continuous improvement in campaign performance. While some tests may fail, the gains from successful tests accumulate over time, significantly boosting overall campaign performance.

Recommendation: Before delving into email testing strategies, it is advisable to conduct A/B testing for landing page alternatives, as they may significantly impact click conversions.

14 Proven Email Tests for Tradeshow Marketing Messaging:

1. **Subject Line:** Experiment with length, capitalization, tone, emojis, keywords, punctuation, and emotive words for higher open rates. Personalization, such as using the subscriber's first name, can increase open rates by up to 20%.

2. **Preview Text:** Test length, keywords, punctuation, and emojis in the preview text to entice users to click and read more.

3. **Sender Name:** Experiment with easily recognizable sender names that promote trust. Consider variations for different campaign types.

4. **Send Times:** Test optimal days and times based on user location and behavior, considering recent trends like increased remote work.

5. **Delay Periods:** Experiment with different delay periods between email campaigns to optimize open rates.

6. **Copy:** Test short vs. long copy, tone of voice, and the soft vs. hard sell approach. Tailor copy to different audience segments.

7. **Content Type:** Experiment with different content types, such as in-depth copy treatments vs. list formats.

8. **Headlines:** Test variations of attention-grabbing headlines for increased click rates.

9. **Primarily Text vs. Primarily Image:** Explore the impact of text-centric vs. image-centric content on conversion and engagement rates.

10. **Resend the Same vs. Resend a Different Message:** Consider resending the same message or crafting a different resend message based on audience behavior.

11. **HTML Email vs. Plain Text:** Test the effectiveness of HTML emails vs. plain text for better engagement and deliverability.

12. **Segmentation:** Utilize segmentation to send targeted content to different subscriber segments, optimizing engagement.

13. **Offers:** Experiment with urgency tactics, countdown timers, and various offers to boost conversion rates.

14. **Call to Actions (CTAs):** Test different styles, text, copy, size, and colors for impactful CTAs.

Effective email marketing testing is crucial for driving attendance growth at tradeshows and events. By implementing these proven tests and best practices, event marketers can refine their messaging strategies, resonate better with their audience, and ultimately achieve higher conversion rates.

How to get started

We have developed and tested a "Marketing Channel Influencer" question that should be included in your online registration data. This valuable data is free if you email Joe or Steve

Learn more about:

- Direct Hit's data analysis services at www.directhitmarketing.com/data-analytics-solutions.

- Discover the power of Bear IQ at www.BearAnalytics.com.

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Thank you for reading

To get started on your data journey, get started **HERE!**