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Most businesses have a large database of customers and prospects with very diverse interests and needs, yet they tend to send the same general newsletter out to all of them. Imagine how much better the response would be to your emails if they were personalised to your different client groups. Your open rates, click throughs and responses would be far higher because the contacts would be getting something they were interested in. This is niche marketing within your database and is a highly effective way to build your relationships with your customers and increase your sales.

Many businesses successfully use niche marketing to reach small groups of the general public for their products or services. Niche marketing can also be used to target specific groups within your database of contacts. This involves you making specialised information or promotions available to each group within your database. Email marketing is the most effective tool for this, because it is simple to personalise and very cost-effective.

Niche marketing to your database will dramatically improve your relationships with your clients and prospects. Because you are sending them emails that are relevant to them, they will know that you have taken the time to think about their needs and will feel like you care about them. Often, this will lead to a sales increase – people are far more likely to become repeat customers if they feel valued by the business. Niche emails will also boost your sales by increasing your open rates. Your contacts are more likely to open your emails if the content is relevant to them, and once they've opened it and seen your targeted offers and promotions, they are more likely to click through to your site and make a purchase.

A great example of niche database marketing is the vet that grouped his clients under the type of pet they have, such as "dog owners", "cat owners" and "bird owners". He then sent an email containing information specific to dogs to the "dog owners" group and so on. He gave them information on caring for their pets, reviews of new products, stories from his surgery and details of specials. The response to these emails was far better than any of the general emails he previously sent, because his clients only wanted information that was relevant to them.

Another example of marketing to specific groups within a database is the camping shop that grouped its contacts by their interests, such as "camping", "biking", "fishing" and "hunting". He placed his clients in particular groups based on which of his products they had purchased, and his prospects were able to join his mailing list for a specific topic via his website. He sent out a variety of emails on each topic, covering everything from holiday ideas, to new products to tips and hints. Subscriptions to his mailing list grew rapidly and many of his customers became big-spending regulars because of the relevant content of his emails.

Our database marketing system, IntoResults, includes many features for niche database marketing. It allows you to divide your contacts into specific groups based on any criteria that you choose and to send campaigns to only certain groups. It also allows you to schedule your campaigns in advance and automate them to go out on a regular basis. IntoResults has now been enhanced to facilitate niche database marketing. The new features include:

When scheduling a campaign, you can now choose to send it based on the trigger of the date the person joined a particular group. This means you can create a campaign and schedule it to automatically go out to people when they join a group. For example, the camping store mentioned above created a short thank you email that they automated to go out to each contact when they joined the group.

You can easily amend the groups that your contacts belong to and add them to new groups, or remove them. For example, if a recipient of the camping store's hiking newsletter purchased a fishing rod, the store owner could add them to the fishing newsletter.

When new contacts sign up to your mailing list on your website, they can select which groups they want to belong to. They can also change which groups they belong to in the "View My Details" area. For example, a prospect of the vet's could enter in their details on the vet's website and choose to belong to both the dog and cat group. Note "you have the power to make groups private or public within the database. If you have contacts in groups that don't wish them to see, such as "Class A Clients", you can set that group to private and contacts cannot view it or add themselves to it.

Niche database marketing is a valuable tool for your business, because it allows you to build your relationships with your contacts and to potentially increase your sales. Have a go at using the new IntoResults features and watch the responses from you emails grow.

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