

# Understanding customer-centric content marketing for better email engagement

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Email marketing is something most businesses are doing but few get right. Often, this causes frustration because responses are low, or customers simply ignore the campaigns altogether. Fortunately, by tweaking your approach, email marketers can make great inroads to creating content that drives engagement.

The first rule of marketing (including email marketing) is: know your audience. It's about understanding the needs of the people you're writing for, presenting them with solutions to their problems, and making it personal. This is especially important in digital communication, where the communication is one-to-one (you're talking to one person on the other end of their device) rather than one-to-many. And just like you'd do if you were standing in front of someone at a dinner party, this means taking an interest in the other person's life - not just talking about yourself.

## Focusing on the customer

In today's world, it's no longer the brand that's the hero, but the customer. As a marketer, you become their guide, supporting them on their quest to overcome the challenges they face. Welcome to the age of customer-centric marketing that centres on the value and business impact that a brand brings to the consumer.

Research highlights this importance too. According to McKinsey, 70% of buying experiences are based on how a customer feels, while Deloitte has found that 60% of customer-centric companies are more profitable than those who are not. Furthermore, Nielson says 92% of consumers trust earned media like recommendations above all other forms of advertising.

Going this customer-centric route gives your business a competitive edge and puts your brand top of mind. If you run a small business, it can help you stand out from the crowd and show customers that you care. Additionally, customer-centricity can build trust, which improves longevity and positions your brand as a long-term partner.

## Building customer-centricity

Here are five tips that can help you shift towards a customer-centric approach in your emails:

### 1. Know your audience.

Do market research and competitor analysis so you can understand the customer personally and put yourself in their shoes. Once you have this information, you can create buyer personas to help you create personalised email content for different segments of your audience.

### 2. Get smart about collecting data.

Your chances of getting someone to complete a subscription form go down with every form field you add. So, use a short form that only asks for the information that you actually need, like email address and first name.

Once the contact has subscribed, there are two ways to gather more data: by asking them via a survey or update-profile campaign, or by tracking their email engagement and behaviour, like seeing which emails are opened most, and which links get clicked.

### 3. Test different content strategies.

Email marketing is still the most-used channel for interactions between people and companies. But there is no one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to email content. Instead, test and find what appeals to your specific audience. Stay committed to adding value and A/B test things like subject lines, images, and calls-to-action to see what gets the most impact.

#### 4. Customise your content at scale.

Automation and customer journeys enable you to use subscriber data not just to customise individual messages, but the entire email experience - automatically. For instance, you can set up parameters for personalisation in a bulk-communication platform like Everlytic and automate personalisation in real-time on every email sent.

You can also create message workflows, customising things like sending dates and times, delays between messages, and conditions for sending based on personal data or customer engagement and behaviour.

#### 5. Be self-aware and agile.

This is your degree of openness to adapt and receive new information because what works now can change at any time. Assume there's always more to learn.

Another common pitfall to look out for is knowing the difference between being content-centric and customer-centric. Content-centricity focuses on generating and distributing content - a process so many of us marketers can fall into. Customer-centricity, on the other hand, keeps the customer continuously at the centre of our view: who are they, what channels are they on, what are they interested in? Only from this point do we create content for those touchpoints - content generation and distribution comes last.

Bottom line? Your customers are at the centre of everything you do in a much larger, integrated communication strategy. It's worth your brand's while to put them first.

## ABOUT CANDICE LEE REEVES

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