A Little Festive Effort Can Go a Long Way for SMEs

~ Small businesses can win big over Christmas with online marketing ~

LONDON--(BUSINESS WIRE)--SMEs can miss out on business opportunities if they close their online marketing doors over the Christmas period, according to Constant Contact®, Inc. (NASDAQ: CTCT), the trusted marketing advisor to SMEs.

Those businesses scheduling online marketing activity for during the Christmas break can expect stronger momentum than their less savvy peers as they move into 2013.

Tamsin Fox-Davies, small business evangelist at Constant Contact comments, “As we move into 2013, the business landscape remains tough. SMEs should roll up their sleeves and keep momentum going during the Christmas holidays, in order to start the New Year with a bang. Small businesses frequently trump their larger competitors with their online marketing campaigns, by providing a personal touch that the big companies cannot. It’s important to remind customers over the holiday period of what you can do, and there are a number of easy ways to do that.”

Constant Contact has outlined five steps for UK businesses on how to make the most of the Christmas period. The below tips every SME can take to increase their sales moving into 2013 start with a WOW:

1. Provide a WOW! experience

A WOW! experience is all about impressing your customers and making them happy so that they’ll go tell their friends just how fantastic you are. It doesn’t have to be big or expensive – turning every day customers into loyal fans is all about the wonderful service you give. It can be as simple as wishing customers a Merry Christmas as they leave the shop door, offering in-store gift-wrapping services or providing advice on great gift ideas for their loved ones.

2. Be a source of inspiration

Don’t just bombard your customers with pre- and post-Christmas offers. Be a fountain of inspiration for them instead, getting their imagination flowing! From advice on holding the perfect New Year’s party, to publishing rich media across your social media channels, such as a short video from your smartphone of what you’ve been up to over Christmas. These are invaluable ways to help your customers get to know you – and the types of things that consumers love to share. The goal is to create content that engages people through Likes, comments and shares – all of the actions that make you socially visible to your fans’ friends or network.

Start your festive promotions by helping customers and they’ll remember you when it comes to purchasing time.

3. Combine email with social media marketing to find potential prospects

Email and social are not independent strategies, they go hand in hand and produce the best results in conjunction, so make sure you are set up to get the best from both during the holidays and into 2013. Email is the best way to get your message heard, but social media is the best way to get your message spread. By encouraging newsletter readers to share your email with their networks and friends, your net will be cast wide, which can only help in capturing fresh prospects. A small amount of time spent during the holidays, can reap big rewards in the New Year. Often during this period, customers may not be accessing content in the same way, so combining both email and social media marketing is a way to ensure your message gets through.

4. Avoid radio silence during the break

No-one is expecting you to be manning your social channels on Christmas Day, but some businesses have been guilty of turning off their online marketing while their business is closed. Keeping engaged customers and prospects can be a difficult task so why risk losing any momentum you have created over the year? It is easy and affordable to schedule in email or social media communication over the holiday break to avoid dips in engagement.

5. Have some fun!

Christmas and the New Year can be one of the most fun times in the year to engage with customers, with plenty of festive cheer, so why not indulge? You may spend most of your year with serious communication, so use this time of year to have some fun and engage your customers and prospects in a different way. This could be anything from swapping cards for a social media or email Christmas message, or letting your customer base know about Christmas promotions.

Fox-Davies concludes: “We’re really not suggesting that time-starved SMEs plough in lots of extra work during such a busy period. However, businesses who work in advance to schedule their communications over Christmas and New Year can enjoy their own break with the knowledge they are still maintaining engaged customers.”

NOTES TO EDITORS

About Constant Contact

Founded in 1998, Constant Contact is headquartered near Boston, Massachusetts in the USA and has an office in London. Constant Contact wrote the book on Engagement Marketing™ – the new marketing success formula that helps small organisations create and grow customer relationships in today’s socially connected world. More than half a million small businesses, not-for-profits and associations worldwide use the company’s online marketing tools to generate new customers, repeat business, and referrals through email marketing, social media marketing, event marketing, local deals, digital storefronts, and online surveys. Only Constant Contact offers the proven combination of affordable tools and free KnowHow, including local seminars, personal coaching and award-winning product support. The company further supports small organisations through its extensive network of consultants/resellers, technology providers, franchises and national associations.

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