

# eTREND WATCH

## Digital Marketing & Social Media

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By Mayra Ruiz-McPherson

### Twitter: Consumers Explore New Content Via #Hashtags

Many of us have seen brands and businesses on Twitter deploy a variety of ways to heighten the exposure of their Tweets in an effort stand-out from an ocean of other never-ending, real-time Tweeted material. One such way to differentiate or categorize the content contained in individual Tweets is by incorporating relevant hashtags.

Those familiar with the Twitter platform already know what a hashtag is **but** for those who are hashtag-clueless, the Twitter Help Center online provides a basic, helpful definition: "The # symbol, called a hashtag, is used to mark keywords or topics in a Tweet. It was created organically by Twitter users as a way to categorize messages."

While most of us are used to seeing companies and businesses use hashtags to prominently identify or uniquely name promotions and campaigns, we often do not regularly associate the use of hashtags for new content discovery.

A new survey from advertising firm RadiumOne, however, reveals just how

### Email Marketing Central

#### Email Volume Trends

According to the Experian Marketing Services 2012 Q4 email benchmark report, email volume in Q4 2012 went up by 5% compared with the year-earlier period. The same report also revealed another trend for email marketers to watch: customers' response time, especially when it comes to email viewed via mobile devices. "Marketers operate in a time and place where it's more important than ever to continually optimize their marketing campaigns with some sort of testing procedures, especially given the amount of data available today," says Peter DeNunzio, general manager, Experian Marketing Services CheetahMail.

#### Quick Tip for Improving Email Response Rates

**Increase the number of "sends" for a singular offer.** The majority of marketers are still relying on one-time email sends to a specific audience for a specific offer. This is no longer the recipe for success. Three to five sends to the same group of recipients promoting the same offer is going to yield the best results. The key is to have each send build on the previous one. Creating a sense of urgency related to the offer and its availability is what makes this method

### The Biz App 'Round Up!

Business apps for mobile and web are a dime a dozen these days with literally countless many being launched every single week! So to help you through the app launch clutter, I've singled out a few business apps worth exploring.

#### FOR EMAIL MARKETING

##### ExpressPigeon

Email marketers accustomed to working with the typical email marketing services today know these services can often be clunky, at best. To produce customized email designs or templates, these services require email marketers to have HTML/CSS knowledge, effectively excluding a large portion of potential users.

Enter ExpressPigeon, which touts itself as next-gen email marketing services. The idea behind this app is that anyone can produce high-quality email campaigns without any technical expertise. ExpressPigeon enables users to use a WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) interface to manipulate their templates in a variety of ways. ExpressPigeon guarantees that the look of your message will not be altered through different email providers and devices.

*Learn more at*

consumers perceive, value, and use hashtags to discover and explore new content.

While a large pool of survey respondents admit to using the hashtag primarily for communicating personal messages and information, others use hashtags to follow or search for specific companies and brands.

**And consumers?** The RadiumOne study findings, which were compiled from surveying 494 survey respondents who use hashtags, reveal consumers are also using hashtags to explore content with 41% of survey participants saying they would click on a hashtag to find out more about a product or brand.

"Unlike other forms of social sharing, hashtags implicitly reflect customer sentiment and are one of the most powerful ways consumers have to vocalize their tastes and preferences at scale in a real-time fashion," says Kamal Kaur, vice president, mobile at RadiumOne. "We conducted this survey to help advertisers better manage their brands by responding to the needs and wants of their client base through winning hashtag campaigns."

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successful.

### Report: Triggered Email Volume on the Rise

The volume of triggered email, messages customized and sent automatically in response to a prospect's online behavior, rose 73% in the fourth quarter of 2012 compared with the same period a year earlier, according to a report by multichannel marketing company Epsilon. The company's "Q4 2012 North America Email Trends and Benchmarks" report says the increase is linked to better performance: Triggered email yielded 70.5% greater open rates and 101.8% higher click-through rates than "business as usual" email messages sent during the quarter.

### 3 Tips for Improving Low Email Performance

If your emails are not performing well and suffer from low open rates and click throughs, make sure you are avoiding these often-overlooked mistakes:

1. **Careless spelling and grammatical errors.** These completely detract from your message.
2. **A disengaging, dull voice.** Take a look at your copy and ask yourself: Who are we? What sets us apart?
3. **Overly-salesy messaging.** Get to know your audience first. They're real people, and they're more than their wallets.

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*ExpressPigeon.com.*

### WORD-OF-MOUTH MARKETING

#### BestBuzz

According to BestBuzz founder Carrie Layne, the problem with traditional word-of-mouth marketing is that it's often slow and data-less. This was the reason Layne launched BestBuzz which aims to bring word-of-mouth into the tech age.

BestBuzz is an integrated marketing service offering a start-to-finish solution for promotions and campaigns. Not only can businesses reward customers for increasing visibility for their brand via all (not just major) social media through BestBuzz, businesses can also use SMS text, NFC tags, geo-fencing, augmented reality, QR codes, and social media to engage their consumers.

*Learn more at [BestBuzz.bz](http://BestBuzz.bz).*

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