

TRUTH

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Keeping your email program
alive when budgets are cut

Say you've done everything you can to justify the request for a bigger email budget, but the money simply isn't there. We've all seen the rise and fall of budgets over the years. And, while everyone mentions that advertising and marketing budgets are the first to be cut during any kind of economic downturn, you can make the case for keeping your email marketing program running. Why and how, you ask?

Remember that your customers want email communications (they provided permission, right?) and depend on it. You've taken the time to invest in email marketing, so stopping midway through would be countereffective. With what other channel can you have a personalized one-to-one communication platform that is not cost-prohibitive to utilize on a frequent basis (hopefully not too frequently though)?

- **Email is the perfect complementary channel**— Email should not be executed in a silo. Not only should email programs be centralized, they should also be used to further broader marketing efforts. Email is best when integrated into overall marketing and branding efforts. By pulling back email efforts, you would be diluting one of the most personal and direct methods to achieve these high-level marketing goals.
- **Marketing plans and business strategies plans change**—There is no quicker and easier way to communicate with the people most interested in your company than emailing your opt-in list with timely and relevant news and updates. When timing is key, email is the way to go.
- **Where else can you test campaign concepts, creative, and offers?**—As previously discussed, email provides an unparalleled opportunity to test creative elements, copy, and specific offers while also tweaking overall concepts and value propositions before they are implemented across other more expensive channels.

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- **Email gives you the data you need to determine success**—Most marketers can gauge the success of their campaigns within 24 hours and make adjustments as needed. It is not a wait-and-see type of measurement approach that goes along with other marketing platforms.
- **Email is a branding tool**—While some views may vary, email provides ongoing impressions and can impact brand awareness and reputation (both good and bad). Email should not be overlooked as a branding tool and, on the downside, as a branding liability when email campaigns behave badly.
- **Email cuts other costs**—Email is mainly seen as a relationship- and revenue-generating tool. However, one of the most underutilized aspects of email is for reducing costs from other sides of the house. I've worked with several companies where email marketing was the centerpiece of major cost-reduction efforts. Think about the way email can minimize printing, call center, and direct mail costs by stepping up to handle those internal company newsletters or costly postcard direct pieces and proactively provide essential information that can often lead to a customer service call.

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Email is viral

Effective email messaging can lead to your subscribers forwarding the email to others and, in turn, assisting your marketing efforts. The power of viral marketing is substantial, as the value of your campaign can increase exponentially. For a message to be passed along, it needs to be unique, compelling, and valuable.

The ROI argument

As discussed earlier, email's extremely high ROI justifies the consistent use of email marketing, regardless of an economic and

company situation. Assuming your email campaigns are fully tracked and return a favorable dollar amount, there is reason alone for email's constant spot in the marketing mix.

There are many other ways to ensure your email budget goes further, but now is the time to make sure you champion these email assets internally and add to your program's value to all stakeholders.

