

Start-Up Toolkit

July 14, 2010

Connecting Your E-mail and Social Marketing

Posted by [Howard Greenstein](#) at 4:07 PM

Your business has accumulated an e-mail list, but you have no idea how to connect those e-mail subscribers to your Facebook page, your Twitter followers and other social networks. You're looking for a relationship with those customers, maybe something more than responses to your marketing e-mails. Enter [Flowtown.com](#).

Co-Founder Ethan Bloch started his first business at 13, using IRC (Internet Relay Chat – the grandfather of Twitter and Instant Messaging) to directly market the products from his electronics ecommerce site. Ethan offered Playstation and Dreamcast accessories during the summer of 1999, and was successful competing on price for 6 months. Then suddenly, he lost all his customers because someone had created a similar website with better prices. Bloch learned at that moment about the value of creating customer relationships.

Fast-forward 10 years, and Bloch, formerly the host of the Internet video show WSYK (What Should You Know) and his cofounder Dan Martel, a Canadian long-time entrepreneur, launched the company. Flowtown is simple tool that allows you to run a list of e-mails and obtain the connected accounts on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [StumbleUpon](#), [LinkedIn](#) and more than 40 other networks. You can then communicate with the people from your list on those networks as well.

Additionally, you can learn your list's demographics, geographic characteristics, and the subscribers' influence ranking. "We reached out to these influencers directly via Facebook," said Meaghan Edelstein, Social Media Director of [Smashyn.com](#). "We said 'We see you're a customer who has purchased before and we'd love to hear what you think, and we'd encourage you to like and link to our customer's page on your own page.' Everyone that we reached out to did this - quickly."

Another feature Flowtown enables is parsing your incoming e-mail subscribers, to see if they meet certain criteria, and flagging them. (Flowtown can be integrated with e-mail services [iContact](#), [MailChimp](#) and [Campaign Monitor](#) as well as form creator [Wufoo](#).). So if a person with a million Twitter followers joins your list, you will find out about it when it happens.

"We push these demographic stories into these mail tools – so they can help you create segmented lists based on gender, age, location and social network."

How would you start such a communication without making your customers feel like you were spamming them on Social Networks? Edelstein told me that her firm used Flowtown for their client [Natural Skin Shop](#).

"With our first outreach, the client increased the "Likes" on their Facebook Page by over 50%. Further, we sent out a campaign to all the customers who were on Facebook asking them to post on the Fan Page wall why they love Natural Skin Shop. In less than 24 hours around 200 posts from customers showed up on the wall. Twitter followers increased as well but not by as much. However, the number of people who purchase products from natural Skin Shop via Twitter has increased significantly."

What kind of return on investment did they achieve? Flowtown can cost a few dollars a month plus about 4.5 cents to import each user. Bloch says "If you can get one influential person to blog about you, it should generate more marketing attention than the \$450 you would spend on Flowtown for importing 10,000 users."

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Howard Greenstein is a Social Media Strategist and Evangelist, and President of the Harbrooke Group, which specializes in helping companies communicate with their customers using the latest Web technologies.

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