

The Year of Social and Email

It's now easier than ever to combine email and social media marketing

Quick show of hands: How many of you restaurateurs were combining your email and social media marketing efforts at the start of 2010? Probably not a lot given the lack of tools to truly make email and social complementary, but as we enter 2011 there are many ways you can use email marketing to power your social media efforts and vice versa.

We've always advised our restaurant customers to make their emails [two-way communication vehicles](#) rather than just talking at recipients, but social media integration takes this feedback cycle to a new level by giving subscribers new ways to endorse your content and connect with your establishment. Now you can start a conversation in an email message and have it continue among subscribers and fans on your restaurant's Facebook Page. In addition, the integration of social media and email makes it easier to extend your content beyond your contact list when subscribers share your messages with their social circle, allowing you to find prospective diners more quickly.

Over the past year, [Constant Contact](#) added new features that any Email Marketing user can (and should) utilize to make their email campaigns more social right out of the gate, including:

Share your newsletters on Facebook and Twitter: When sending a newsletter, you can automatically share a link to the web version of the email with your Facebook fans and Twitter followers. This will get your newsletter content in front of both your subscribers and all your social media connections simultaneously.

Include a Social Share Bar with all your outgoing email newsletters: Adding a [Social Share Bar](#) to the top of your email newsletters makes it easy for recipients to share your message with their own social media connections. This can help spread your content and messaging beyond the original distribution list. It's supercharged word-of-mouth marketing about your restaurant.

Naturally, when it comes to social media, you only want to share content that's meant for wider public consumption. Restaurants sending out loyalty club member-only communications may not want to add share features to their newsletters, for example.

Social media is more than just buttons

Of course, social media is about much more than adding Tweet and Like buttons to your outgoing emails and sharing your messages through social media. You have to



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[give people a reason to connect with you](#) and interact with your content on social media sites. And, you may have to tell people who are less social savvy than you are to go ahead and click the share buttons or connect with you on Facebook, Twitter, Yelp, Foursquare, and other pertinent social networks if that's what you want them to do.

If you want to find success on social media, here are three other best practices to follow:

Use your subject line as a tweet: When your email message is shared through social media, the subject line is often the default text that gets published, particularly via Twitter. Make sure your subject line is appealing to both email recipients and those who might be seeing a link to your content via social media. Consideration for Twitter's 140-character limit will help keep your subject lines short and to the point. (Even better, keep it shorter than 120 characters so your followers can easily [retweet](#) it.)

Drive the conversation: Your content should be engaging, whether you're sending it to and sharing it with 10 people or 1,000. To ratchet up the sharing, add a social call to action, such as a question at the end of your newsletter articles (i.e., "What menu item is your favorite?") that directs readers to your Facebook Page to respond. Or tell recipients to tweet their response along with a [hashtag](#) of your choice.

Track your social shares: With [Social Stats](#), you can track how many subscribers shared your email

with their social media connections and see how many people clicked to view your message via social media. It's a great tool for seeing how far your message is reaching beyond your original distribution list and can be used to see which social networks are most popular with subscribers.

Don't forget to listen

Social media is a great way to spread your message further and to reach new prospects more quickly, but, in addition to generating share-worthy content, you have to remember to step back and listen. Take the time to read what your customers and patrons are posting on your Facebook Page or on [Yelp](#). Monitor Twitter for mentions of your [handle](#) or restaurant name to see what people are saying about you. By listening, you may also find new trends or morsels of content to share with your newsletter subscribers and social media followers. Social media is a two-way cycle of content.

Keeping a close eye on social media can be resource consuming, but tools such as [NutshellMail](#) and [HootSuite](#) can help cut down on the time spent on the task and allow you to respond quickly to those with a complaint and thank those with compliments.

When the year started, business and organizations were using social media and email as almost separate marketing entities. As we enter 2011, they're a complimentary team that can help power any restaurant's marketing efforts.

Get started today!

<http://sysco.constantcontact.com>

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