

HOME FURNISHINGS Business

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STRATEGY FOR THE FURNITURE RETAILER

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Managing Email Bonuses

It's a chicken-egg quandary that many furniture stores are facing: How do I start a low-cost email marketing campaign if my furniture store has never collected email addresses?

Try this answer: Tie the bonuses of store managers to how many customer email addresses the store's sales team can gather, said Ken Mahar of Email Broadcast.com, who discussed the email campaigns he runs for retailers during a presentation at the Las Vegas Market.



“When sales managers are partially compensated for their email collection performance, you can bet they’ll pay attention to it and manage people accordingly,” he said.

MOR Furniture, a San Diego-based chain with 15 stores, started an Internet-based marketing program in 2003 with “zero” email addresses, and Mahar said the chain has since developed such a large base of subscribers to its email newsletters that sales the chain announces only by email are “generating hundreds of thousands of dollars” over a weekend.

Mahar said email can also help in retaining sales associates. He advises retailers to get associates excited about email by signing each emailed offer with the name of the salesperson who sold that customer (or collected her name). The commission-boosting practice motivates the sales associates to ask every customer for her email address, and, once an employee has built up a large email clientele, they become less tempted by job offers from rival retailers.

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