The Great eNewsletter Comparison Project

An expert user"s review of the Web's top do-it-yourself email marketing tools

Inside this issue: **Vertical Response Wizard**

...from GuruGal's desk on Nov 17, 2011

What is "The Great eNewsletter Comparison Project?"

The goal of The Great eNewsletter Comparison (GEC) Project is to compare the features, and ease of use, of the leading email marketing tools: GoDaddy, iContact, Constant Contact, Vertical Response, etc.

Like most marketing communications consultants, when I'm asked to create a customized html enewsletter, email or esurvey, I use my client"s preferred web-based provider.

As well, clients often ask for my advice about which of the leading email marketing tools to choose. I wanted to be able to make knowledgeable recommendations - other than just by price and features listed.

So, I decided to test drive each of these enewsletter builders/content management tools for myself...

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3 Steps for Customizing Html eNewsletter Templates

Web-based html email tools have three basic elements for building custom enewsletters:

1. Choosing the template style and color scheme. Templates are organized into categories (e.g., business, technology, etc.).

Once you choose a template, you can customize background colors, font sizes and colors for headings and body text.

2. Using the online content editor. This is the WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) screen that looks like a Word or other word processing document, but with limited formatting options.

3. Previewing the enewsletter. The preview screen lets you see what the enewsletter will look like, versus what you see in the online content editor.

REVIEW: Vertical Response

The first contender in The Great eNewsletter Comparison Project"s review of DIY (do-it-yourself) enewsletter templates is Vertical Response.

Overall, I found it's an easy to use and customize html email tool that offers several more three ways to customize templates (which is more than some competitors, such as GoDaddy).

• **Wizard**. This is the 'entry-level,' easy to use method for novice users. It offers pre-designed templates that are somewhat customizable.

• **Create HTML.** This option is for intermediate users familiar with templates. It doesn't require knowledge of html, but builds it for the user as s/he adds text, images, etc.

• **Freeform**. For advanced users who already have

what you see in the online content editor.

This important step lets you see potential issues, such as inconsistencies in spacing between text blocks and images, before sending it out.

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designed html templates (in Dreamweaver, etc.), they can use this paste-in option. These users choose Vertical Response solely for the ability to send and track html messages.

I decided to start with level one for novices – the Vertical Response wizard – because this is the core service these appeal-to-the-masses email/enewsletter provide...

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