



Ecommerce Q&A 9: Michael Bower and guest Glenn Stovall - Automated Marketing

Michael: Hello folks, and welcome to eCommerce QA. This is the podcast where store owners, directors of eCommerce and eCommerce managers can stay up-to-date on the latest tools and technologies in eCommerce. I'll be joined on the show by my colleague and partner-in-crime, Dillon Holst. Our goal is to handle one or two questions per episode. You can check us out on the web at ecommerceqa.tv. There, you will be able to get in touch, ask us questions, and just generally participate. And welcome to this episode of eCommerce QA, your source for the latest on the street on eCommerce. Today I am joined by my friend and colleague Glenn Stovall, who is a web developing consultant –who also specializes in email marketing automation, something that a lot of eCommerce companies know they need to do, but the aren't sure how to do it. More specifically, they know there's tools to do it and buttons that you can push, but it's more than that. Like, how do you actually grow your email list in a way that makes sense, as you're starting to do things that are more complicated than simply blasting people with one email after another. How do we segment things out, how do we give an appropriate message at the right time? Glenn, thanks for joining!

Glenn: Hey Michael, thanks for having me.

Michael: Let's talk about some of the core principles of marketing automation. We've got this idea of segmenting, we've got the idea of event-based delivery, rather than just "send out an email blast", and maybe there's other things that you think are core and central to the concept. Can you hit those quickly?

Glenn: Yes, sure. I guess, if I'd sum it up, I think it's mostly sending the right email to the right person, at the right time. So, like you said, that could be based on events, instead of everyone getting the same email at the same time. And then, sending different or more specific emails to some people. One simple example might be, if you are launching a new product you may a two week email sequence that you write out in real time, leading up to

the launch. And that can help then, but then there's sort of "lost in the ether" where if you have a certain opt-in, you could walk people through your two week launch process, anyone could start at day one and you could have that be an ongoing marketing asset.

Michael: So what I think you're talking about, like a Drip scenario, right? Where somebody gets involved, and they get an email, then they get another email after a little while...

Glenn: Right. That's one example, and once — on the list, there's a few other events-based ones: cart abandonment is a big one for eCommerce, someone puts something in the cart and doesn't buy in a few days. Page visits can be a handy one, or multiple visits per week, maybe if you see someone; some of those allow you to see that oh, someone has browsed —say you have a section of your store that sells jackets and they've come by there three times this week— you can send them an email with a deal or reaching out about, say, purchasing jackets.

Michael: Can you talk to us about how you'd want to segment for where you have a lot of people who are coming in, they're clicking Google ads or they're just finding your organically, and they're gonna look at the product and then they're gonna leave? And then you've got the segment that's gonna buy but their orders are not going to be very high-dollar amount. And then you've got the segment that we're really interested in, which would be more of your VIP customers, higher dollar amount orders, multiple items in the cart, more willing to place the follow-up order. How can we speak to these different segments separately?

Glenn: That's a good question. It's a bit of a tricky one, because every eCommerce store is gonna have it's own different ways it may want to segment, like you said. Size of the customer could be one, if you have people who don't buy a lot versus people who might buy higher-end items. Also, with your campaigns, you may even want to segment people who're visitors and not buyers yet, versus people who are your past customers. Like you said, and then you could even have customers into VIP customers. You don't want to get too complicated, but just, if you sold clothing maybe you have Men's and Women's and Children's, or if you sell sporting goods you could tag people showing interest in baseball or basketball goods, versus other things.

Michael: Ok. So let's assume that somebody has their cart abandonment solution already working. It's going to be either something that's already working in your eCommerce platform as a default option —Shopify would be an example, Magento has many options, other

platforms are similar— maybe you've got that. Maybe you've even got the birthday email going out, but how do we start interacting with people before they're even a customer? Can you talk a little bit about how to do email opt-in without being annoying?

Glenn: I think the best way to do that is just thinking of ways to provide value to your customer in some way. The lowest labor-intensive one would be you could offer, say, a coupon code in exchange for that, but what I find is —like you said, I like writing, I tend to do something like, educational content works well for me.

Michael: How can an eCommerce store do that? Would it be like, take a premium product line and then develop educational material around that? Or...

Glenn: Yeah, I would say the question to ask yourself would be what does your potential customer need to know or understand before before they buy. Like, I guess I know one example. Someone, their office is right down the street from me, they sell cooking supplies, and things for smoking and grilling things like that. So, they do a lot of free recipe books and articles like that. They do plank wood cooking, which I wasn't familiar with. So, I guess that's a good example: plank wood cooking? What's that? And this store says, "Oh! Well great! Let us tell you all about plank cooking and here's some recipes and things you can try at home" and then you're like, "Oh! This is all super cool! I guess I need to go. Oh, I need a special kind of cured wood to do that with. Oh look, y'all sell that."

Michael: Now, I think one thing that people often run into with content marketing in general, and marketing automation specifically, is there's so many ways you can go. It's so much easier to send out an individual email or a general email newsletter. It's just easier. And it's easier to be consistent with that; it takes a lot of work to schedule things out, and design the workflows, and so on and so forth. I just want to share a little vignette that I was just thinking of. I was talking to a customer, or a prospect actually, last week. They found that the more specific their marketing automation gets, the more their conversion rate rises. So, in their case they sell a children's toy that's kind of unique and fun. And they found that when they focused on specific subsets of their customer audience, and you think, ok, well it's actually one type of toy —it's like a magnetic wood block- how many different audiences do you have there? Well actually, they have multiple. They can talk to the dads, they can talk to the moms, they can talk to other people, they can talk to customers that have already purchased, and they found that they were able to raise their conversion rate by multiple points by being more targeted with their marketing.

Glenn: Oh, yeah.

Michael: Glenn, let's go ahead and take just a moment, and talk about tools that you recommend for eCommerce marketing automation.

Glenn: Myself, personally, I use Drip, which is getdrip.com. It's sort of my go-to thing. Also, it's on WordPress, but I use a tool called Content Upgrades, which is a way to easily—

Michael: Content Upgrades? Is that the one from Ryan Castle?

Glenn: It is, yeah, actually. I talked with him at the conference where we saw each other, and was a Beta tester, but it's pretty great. So, easy way to offer multiple different opt-in rewards.

Michael: Ok. Great.

Glenn: As far as eCommerce, something I saw keep coming up is Marketo. I haven't used either of those, but I just asked some other friends of mine that are in eCommerce and things like that. Maybe something like HubSpot, that's a bit more expensive. But any of those can work, a lot of them have the same feature set.

Michael: Ok, and basically the things to look for in marketing automation software, I think we already covered, but you want to be able to send out event-based emails; somebody does something on your website, the software needs to be able to know that, so it can trigger an event, or trigger the email. As well as sequenced emails, Drip email would be a good example, sends one and then it waits a day, then sends another then it waits a day, then it sends a third. Things like that, and then the ability to track different segments. Are there any other things that the software really needs to have?

Glenn: I think that about covers all of it, right there.

Michael: Ok.

Glenn: Most of them will have the ability to do more of a standard broadcast email.

Michael: So it's not like you have to have MailChimp and your marketing automation; the marketing automation takes over for your email list provider. MailChimp, for example, has some really rudimentary marketing automation built in, but it's not very robust.

Glenn: Right, and just to go back to one other point when we were talking about the tools and being able to send—even your broadcasts can still be sent to a segment, or maybe you change parts of the email based on the segment. Another benefit to that, besides the conversion rate you mentioned, is that since you're sending to people that are presumably more interested, you're getting higher open rates, higher click rates, which also affects your overall deliverability.

Michael: Good point. Very good point. So, this can actually be good for getting your emails in front of more people, ultimately, is if you're sending more targeted content.

Glenn: Some emails that I have, I've had some that have 70-80% open rates. Which, they've only—they might go to a very small group of people, but that's not numbers you can really get with a weekly newsletter type situation.

Michael: Totally, totally. Great! Well, how can our audience be aware of what you're doing and follow you? And I think you've prepared something special for us today.

Glenn: Yeah, I put together a few resources I have, I've compared a few. I listed out some tools I've used with content marketing automation, along with some headlines that I've had to convert well, some templates, and some recipes for how to set up some email sequences. I just put it all in a marketing automation intro pack, and if your listeners want to go to www.glennstovall.com/ecommerceqa.

Michael: And once again folks, that's www.glennstovall.com/ecommerceqa. We'll have that in the show notes. And how can people follow you generally?

Glenn: I write over on my site, I write on www.glennstovall.com, I try to put out something once a week. I'm GSto on Twitter —[GSto](#)

Michael: Great. Well, we really appreciate your time, and I'm looking forward to trying some of these things out with my clients. So, thank you, Glenn. And we look forward to hearing more from you in the future.

Glenn: All right. You too, thanks again for having me.

Michael: Absolutely.

Resources:

GetDrip: <https://www.getdrip.com>

Marketo: <https://www.marketo.com>

Content Upgrades Plugin: <https://wordpress.org/plugins/content-upgrades>

GSto on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/gsto>

Glenn Stovall's Website: <https://www.glennstovall.com>

Intro Pack: <http://glennstovall.com/ecommerceqa>