

Checking In...Without Them Checking Out!

The frequency of custom can make or break its effectiveness—but that doesn't mean you need to be right on day one

Human beings are creatures of habit. The garbage is collected the same day of the week. The mortgage is due the same day of the month. It makes our life easier—it reminds us of the cycle of life. But there's a difference between a cycle and making us sick. Marketers have long had the dilemma of how often to hit their audience with information. Do it too infrequently and they barely even remember you exist. Do it too often and they want to forget you ever existed! So how do you find that proverbial sweet spot before you lose the initial audience you'll muster?

- 1) **Don't be afraid to experiment.** Though we can tell you a daily message is probably too frequent, we can't automatically say it can only be once in a blue moon. Picking out a frequency of weekly or monthly is often best to begin but occasionally throw in a "bonus entry" outside of the normal routine. How many readers choose to opt out of receiving further communications when you check in a little more often? If you see your audience holding steady or even increasing, it's a telltale sign that there is a need for greater frequency. You can also even be so bold as to—that's right—ask them. A minor survey at the end of custom material about frequency, especially with a small gift as inducement, can often get a large enough sample size to let you know where you stand.
- 2) **News you can use.** Beyond numbers driving the material, the news can as well. If you find genuinely important news breaking every week for your company, a possible weekly video recap with a custom production team could be a welcome addition to your reader's reference. However, if you know that breaking information is few and far between, don't stretch for attention which just isn't there. Nothing worse than the marketer who cried wolf...
- 3) **A year to remember.** Regardless of the frequency you pick for your regular custom product, a once-a-year special edition to celebrate your anniversary will remind your customer of how successful you've been. After all, bad businesses don't live to put many candles on their birthday cake.

Nothing Set In Stone

No matter what, the worst thing to do is remain indecisive while competitors are gaining market share through greater branding. If the frequency doesn't work out, you can always scale back. Nonetheless, patience must be adhered to since it still takes time to build a custom audience. Word-of-mouth can be powerful but some ears take longer than others to hear them. The payoff is once they join you, you're no longer just a product—you're a community.

And people love to give back to their community.

Word-of-mouth may be a powerful marketing tool but the mouths don't all come at once.