

## Living in the MOEment: Strategies for Successful Merchandise Messages

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If you are looking to improve e-mail relevance, moments of engagement are a great place to start. After all, lifecycle management is one of the six factors of e-mail relevance identified in e-Dialog's Relevance Trajectory™ methodology, and moments of engagement provides you with a constructive framework for orchestrating and managing your e-mail contact strategy.

In our last article, we focused on lifecycle moments of engagement, or MOEs. These are touch points based on consumer actions, or lack of action, in the case of a lapsed customer. In this article, we're moving on to the next set of moments of engagement in our arsenal, the merchandise MOEs. These messages are based on events or actions related to your products. The merchandise MOEs are designed to help drive not only customer engagement, but more importantly, revenue. They are all about taking advantage of customer behavior and timing relevance. Whether retail, travel, publishing or entertainment is your specialty, merchandise MOEs are worth considering adding to your e-mail marketing program. These moments are not as intuitive to discern as customer lifecycle MOEs, so we've identified three key variations that can make a real impact. These are Replenishment and In Stock, Low Stock, and Price Changes.

### Replenishment and in-stock

The moment of replenishment and in-stock are two key areas of opportunity. They are a great way to remind customers that they may be due for additional merchandise or alert them when desired merchandise is available and in stock online. Replenishment programs tend to perform very strongly, with results upwards of three times the average conversion revenue. In-stock programs have been even more successful, with upwards of seven times the average conversion revenue. These two types of triggers are so effective because they are highly relevant. For in-stock notifications, a customer has identified a product that they already want or need. Replenishment e-mails use timing relevance to full advantage, showing up in the inbox as a help, not an inconvenience. This applies not only to retail, but also to subscriptions and memberships. The point is, these types of messages make it easy for customers to purchase and continue to be engaged with your brand.



### **Low stock notifications**

Letting a customer know when inventory is getting low can be a key motivator in driving the purchase. If a customer has placed an item in her shopping cart or on her wish list, she has expressed an interest in that item. Like the Replenishment and In-stock MOE, these messages make the most out of timing relevance. Knowing an item has a limited quantity or is being discontinued creates a sense of urgency, but is seen by the customer as a service message rather than as promotional. Generally, this sense of urgency triggers a customer response that may not have happened if a communication had not been sent.

### **Price changes**

In the same way the low-stock messages drive purchases, price changes are highly motivating to customers as well. These e-mails can be used as a more general communication or be more highly targeted, if you have the data to support the segmentation. Airlines have used this type of message effectively for years, using “home” or preferred airport information from frequent flyer profiles to promote sale fares on specific routes. For retailers, sending a note to a large portion of your list that a specific category of merchandise is on sale, or merchandise by a particular manufacturer has been reduced, can be very effective. You could also send triggered price change e-mails based on previous purchases or items on a wish list. Knowing that a purchase was made when the item was full price can indicate a willingness to purchase an additional item once the price has been reduced. Also, if a customer has placed items on a wish list or in an abandoned cart and that are now on sale may just be the motivation needed to complete a purchase.

Merchandise MOEments are a tremendous opportunity for you to reach out to your customers and deliver a relevant message that will drive engagement and most importantly, revenue. It may not be realistic to implement all of these merchandise messages right away, so step back and think about which ones will be the most relevant and provide the most reward for your business.