

Desperate times call for desperate measures?

Among the COVID economic downturn, some companies are getting desperate for business, as I wrote in my last post.

If you are desperate for business, does this mean you should do desperate things or act in a desperate manner? In one word, the answer is no. Appearing desperate or doing desperate things will backfire, guaranteed.

Jane Doe thought that she would reach out

Take for example the case of Jane Doe (using this name to protect this person's privacy). Jane Doe attended an online business presentation a couple of weeks ago, as did I. There was a networking component to the presentation, but I did not participate. After the event, the organizers sent a follow up email that included a list of all who attended. Several days later, I got an email from Jane Doe. This is what it said, in part:

It was great meeting you at the virtual event last week.

I am passionate about travel, having traveled to over 80 countries and 60 cruises on 5 continents. At award-winning [our company], we create amazing customized travel experiences for you, your friends, family, colleagues and clients, saving you a lot of money, time and stress, on your "ideal vacation", all with risk-free booking guarantees!

I would like to know more about you and your business and see how we can help grow each other's businesses. Are you open to a 15 minute phone call? What is a good day/time/phone number?

I would like to add you to our email list where you will receive travel deals and travel tips. If you do not wish to

receive these emails, kindly let us know via this email address at your earliest convenience.

I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Right off, I am irritated by this email. First, we didn't meet. Second, this email is not personalized. And third, she says she will add me to her email list unless I opt out. And last, she says (twice) she needs to hear from me at my "earliest convenience." Apparently, Jane repeated it because she meant immediately as she added me to her list and sent me a marketing email just two days later.

Jane Doe became a spammer to her email marketing company

Once I got her marketing email, I immediately unsubscribed. When asked why, I said I had never requested being on this list. That response will most likely categorize Jane Doe as a spammer, since she didn't follow CAN-SPAM rules. People should opt in to your email, not opt out.

Is there a less desperate way?

You don't have to take desperate or even illegal measures just because things are grim. Jane Doe could have reached out and said something like this:

Hello [name of person],

I got your name from the [event name] list, since we both attended the presentation by [presenter]. I enjoyed the presentation and wanted to reach out to attendees to introduce myself and my business.

My travel company, [name of business] specializes in customized travel experiences. For example, we recently created an unforgettable business retreat for a small company, in which we [insert salient details of special

trip].

Is customized travel something you'd be interested in? If so, I'd love to chat with you. Please email me at [insert email] and we can set up a phone appointment. In the meantime, I invite you to visit my website at [insert website address and link] and view some of the many customized experiences we have created. Learn more about our other services, and take a moment to sign up for our weekly newsletter, which is chock full of travel specials and other great information. You can also click here [insert newsletter sign up] to sign up.

I look forward to staying in touch.

The bottom line and three better business tips

There's a difference between wanting to get more business and being desperate to get new business. Here are my four non-desperate, best business and email marketing practices:

- Don't spam people. Know the CAN-SPAM rules and remember you need audiences to opt in, not opt out.
- Customize outreach emails and personalize when possible.
- Write a compelling introductory email. Think about your audience—what's in it for them?