30 MINUTE MARKETER

Start Mobile Marketing

9 tactics for emails, websites, SMS and more

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TACTICS YOU CAN LEARN OVER LUNCH

Welcome to *30-Minute Marketer* – a resource from MarketingSherpa featuring bite-sized tips for busy marketers.

In this report, we help you figure out how to incorporate mobile strategies into your marketing.

Marketers who want to connect with today's busy customers should consider the potential of mobile. Many people are stepping away from the computer and spending more time on their mobile devices. If your mobile efforts fall short, you might miss out on valuable opportunities to engage with your target audience.

In this report, we'll show you:

- How to blend mobile tactics with your current efforts
- Tips on creating a custom site (and how to decide if you need one)
- Why usability, content and privacy are so important
- How to cut your text down to key elements

We know you're in a hurry, so let's get started. We're eager to share these tips on how you can embrace mobile marketing!

Bobbi Dempsey
Editor, *30-Minute Marketer*

About *30-Minute Marketer*

MarketingSherpa's *30-Minute Marketer* is designed with you, the busy marketer, in mind. We provide quick, simple tips that you can put into action right away.

For each *30-Minute Marketer*, we scour the vast MECLABS library of marketing research, from MarketingSherpa case studies and benchmark reports, to MarketingExperiments optimization tests and analysis. We highlight tips to help improve your marketing performance right now … or, at least, by the time you're done with lunch.

People are relying on their mobile devices more than ever before—in some cases, using a mobile device as their primary (or even their *only*) means of communication.

Consider these statistics from the Pew Research Center:

- 88% of U.S. adults are now mobile phone owners
- 46% of all U.S. adults are smartphone users
- Nearly every demographic group saw a notable rise in smartphone usage from the prior year, and smartphone usage is more than 60% in groups such as college graduates, and those with a household income of $75,000 or more.

Mobile marketing tactics are the latest way for you to interact with and engage on-the-go customers.

Since consumers can take smartphones and other devices with them anywhere in "the real world," mobile can also present you with a hybrid opportunity: a chance to combine both online and offline experiences.

Most marketers have recognized just how important mobile tactics have become. In the *MarketingSherpa 2012 Email Marketing Benchmark Report*, 46% of CMOs said they felt mobile smartphone and tablet adoption would be among the top trends to affect their email marketing programs within the next 12 months. In that same report, 41% said they predict an increase in 2012 budgets for mobile marketing.

But, for many marketers, mobile is still relatively new and unchartered territory, and planning a mobile strategy can be intimidating. We share some quick tips below that will help you get a head start on your mobile strategy.

Tactic 1: Integrate mobile with your existing strategies

One of the first steps in planning a mobile strategy is to look at your current marketing and determine how you can incorporate mobile tactics into the existing framework. Most notably in the early stages, mobile won't replace your existing marketing, but may put a "new spin" on it.

In the MarketingSherpa article, "Get Started in Mobile Marketing: 4 Insights to Guide Your Strategy," by Adam T. Sutton, Matthew Snyder, CEO and Founder, ADObjects, says mobile tactics should be integrated with your other marketing channels.

For example, mobile content should be promoted on your website. If you're advertising a free whitepaper download and it's available in a mobile format, mention this in your website ads.

"Mobile, in general, is the glue that connects all media," Snyder says.

Integrate offline and mobile

You can also include QR codes (also called 2D barcodes) in your offline advertising and product packaging. When scanned by a smartphone, the codes can bring mobile users to your website or landing page. For example, try including a call-to-action to sign up for your email program in your offline ads, and include a QR code that is linked to a mobile-friendly registration page.

To get a QR code, simply search "free QR codes" in Google, and you'll find several websites offering free generation tools.

Tactic 2: Make your emails mobile-friendly

According to the MarketingSherpa *2012 Email Marketing Benchmark Report*, 11% of marketers say their subscribers read emails on mobile phones—a figure that will likely continue to increase.

Email marketing in general presents plenty of challenges. You must keep your message short and succinct, create an intriguing subject line, make it through spam filters, and more. When designing an email with mobile users in mind, there are additional factors to consider.

In the MarketingSherpa article, "Mobile Email Marketing: 3 tactics to improve usability (and ultimately conversions)," Len Shneyder, Product Marketing Director, Unica, says that designing for mobile users provides a good opportunity for marketers to add focus and clean designs to their overall program.

"Mobile is bringing a return to the single-column format," says Shneyder. "And I think this works really well on desktop, Web and mobile [platforms]. A single-column layout with a single call-to-action focuses the message."

Schneyder offers some steps for optimizing your emails for mobile:

Step 1: Estimate your total email readership

A key question for email marketers is, "How much of your audience is reading your email via mobile devices?" The answer will dictate the priority you should give to optimizing your messages for this channel. However, a mobile audience can be difficult to precisely measure.

Schneyder suggests adding a mobile option to your subscriber preference center, and monitoring your website analytics as ways to get an idea of your email readership.

Step 2: Format for the lowest common denominator

Your mobile audience is likely to have an array of devices, both new and old. It can be tempting to create a cutting edge template that looks fantastic on the latest smartphones, but this might neglect a large portion of your audience. The key is to set a low baseline.

Create an email template that will cleanly render on as many devices as possible, and clearly communicate your message. If you *really* want to play it safe, the lowest common denominator in email is the text-only format. This bare-bones design is often neglected in today's HTML-dominated landscape, but remains the most likely to display across a wide array of platforms. See Tactic #3 for more on text-based messages.

Step 3: Prepare landing pages

Establishing a well-formatted mobile email program only makes sense if you're prepared to drive subscribers to well-formatted webpages. Clicking a link in a beautiful email only to land on a cluttered, confusing landing page can be a deterrent for visitors. Landing pages must be optimized for conversions for both traditional and mobile visitors. This presents a unique challenge for landing page optimization, as mobile visitors are an additional audience with completely different needs. Your team should run a variety of tests to ensure an appropriate design.

You may want to establish different landing pages for mobile and traditional visitors. This allows your team to meet the needs of each audience separately, on two distinct pages. Also, website servers can detect a visitor's device and present the best landing page layout for that device. Speak with your resident Web designer for more details about this technology.

Chart: Designing emails for smartphones, by primary channel

		47%
41%		
	33%	
Consumer channel (B2C)	Business channel (B2B)	Both channels (B2B2C)
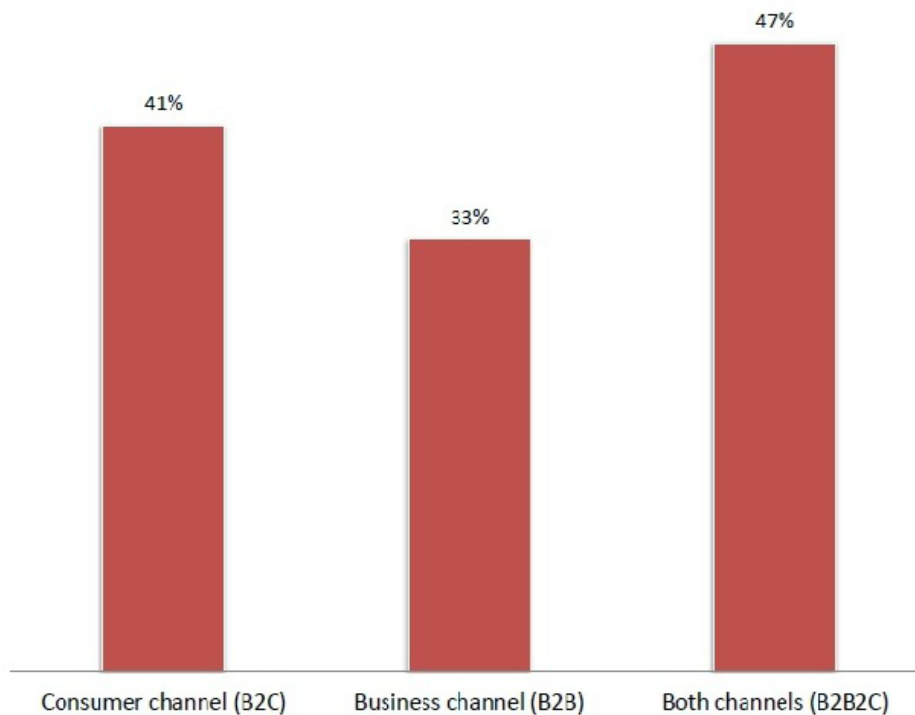
marketingsherpa
Source: ©2011 MarketingSherpa Email Marketing Benchmark Survey
Methodology: Fielded July 2011, N=2,735

As the above chart from the MarketingSherpa *2012 Email Marketing Benchmark Report* shows, many marketers are now designing emails with smartphones in mind. Here are eight specific tips from the MarketingSherpa *2011 Email Marketing Advanced Practices Handbook* for designing mobile-friendly emails:

> **1. Narrow your email** width to around 600 pixels, using a single-column format. We have learned that if an email is 640px wide, it will render correctly on some mobile devices at 320px. Look to create email that is scalable in size – a feature currently available on iPhones. Using a single-column format, or a grid-aligned layout with grouped sections, will make for an easier transition from PC to mobile screens.

2. Increase font sizes to be more legible on small screens. The minimum font size will be 14px, and titles will be more than 30px.

3. Add space around links and increase the size of call-to-action buttons to allow fingers to touch accurately. People have a tendency to hit below mobile links. A good reference is the Apple Style Guide.

4. Prioritize the use of tracking URLs. Tracking URLs can take up several lines per screen, especially if they are reformatted from HTML into text, so do not over-use them.

5. Be brief. Keeping content above the fold is even more critical for email sent to mobile devices than it is for emails sent to your desktop. Requiring readers to scroll down to view messages will only cause frustration. You may consider dropping "add to your address book" requests and shortening the "From" address.

6. Be flexible. Design a fluid and simple layout to render well across a wide variety of devices.

7. Add "View mobile edition" link. This can be a simple solution to ensure a positive user experience. You may choose to send a traditional email with a "view mobile edition" link that brings users to a mobile-optimized webpage version of the message. You can also send text-based emails with a short description of the content, and a call-to-action to view a mobile webpage with more details. Unfortunately, both require the reader to make an extra click to read the email, which may prove frustrating.

8. Preview and test. We recommend testing in-house, or with new paid services that will preview email messages across multiple email client and mobile devices.

Tactic 3: Incorporate SMS messages into your strategy

SMS (text messaging) use has soared over the past few years. According to Pew Research Center, 73% of all mobile phone owners use their devices for text messages at least occasionally. And text messages can be especially effective in reaching the 41% of adults who own a mobile phone that isn't a smartphone.

There are many ways SMS can complement your other marketing channels. You can host a contest that people can enter by texting you a specific phrase or keyword. Along the same lines, you can offer a special deal to consumers who connect with you via text. In your "thank you" response to these texts, you can direct consumers to your website, or provide an email address where they can contact you.

Tip: You want to make it as easy for people to send you a text message. A good way to do that is by providing a short code where they can send a text message to you. Short codes, also called Common Short Codes (CSCs), are typically five or six digits long, which makes them easier for consumers to remember and dial than standard telephone numbers.

You can obtain a short code from an SMS service provider or you can lease them directly from the Common Short Code Administration (CSCA). The CSCA leases codes on a three-, six-, or 12-month basis. The fee is a non-refundable $1,000 per month for "select" codes, and $500 per month for random codes (see links below).

The MarketingSherpa article, "Integrated SMS, Social and Email Promo Capitalizes on Weather Event: 5 Steps," by Adam T. Sutton showed how the team at Eldorado Hotel Casino Reno incorporated SMS as part of a multi-channel strategy to seize an opportunity presented by a weather emergency. A snow storm was coming, and rather than have it drive away business, the team wanted to encourage customers to plan a trip.

Here are the steps taken by the team:

1. **Create a relevant offer.** The team created a package of discounted hotel rooms and lift tickets to nearby ski areas (which would have fresh snow), along with other perks.

2. **Drive search traffic to website offer.** The team purchased pay-per-click advertising in major search engines to promote the offer. Targeted keywords included phrases related to ski packages and the team's brand terms. The hotel also promoted the offer on its homepage and several other sections of its website.

3. **Send a well-timed SMS message.** The team sent a text message to the effect of "Hurry and call today!" as soon as the weather had cleared and people could start travelling (you can see a sample on the next page).

4. **Promote in social channels.** About three days after the SMS message, the team posted another special deal on its social media pages, with an update on the current weather conditions.

5. **Send an email.** About a week after the SMS message, the team sent an email repeating the offer from the social media sites and reminding recipients that rooms were still available.

Thanks in large part to this campaign, the team sold 28% more ski packages in December than the rest of the year combined. Since the team used in-house resources and low-cost channels for the effort, ROI was about 1,200% for the campaign. They used Web analytics and custom phone numbers to monitor performance. The campaign's revenue via channel broke down as:
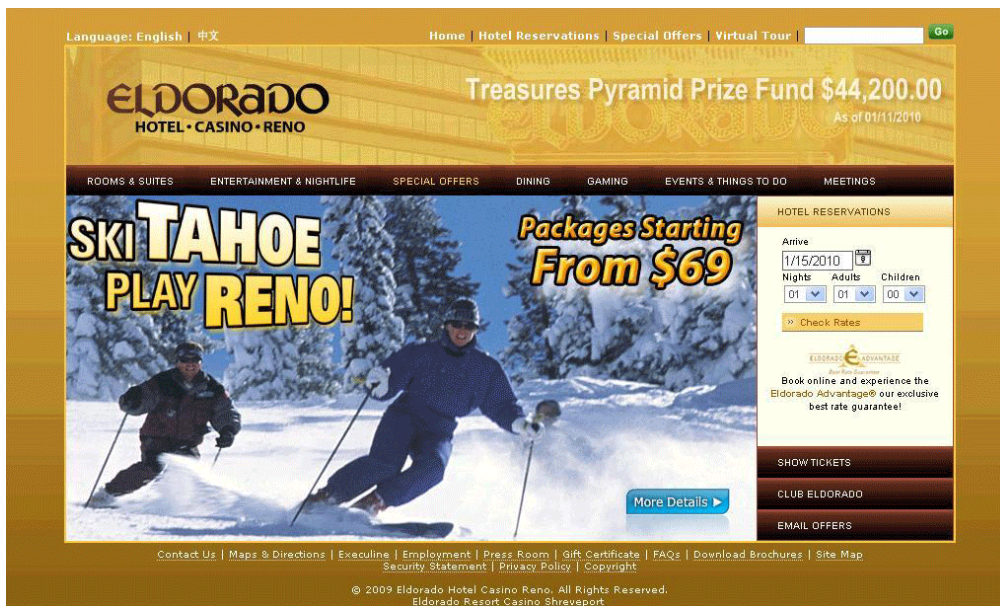
- Email: 56%
- Website: 25%
- Mobile: 14%
- Social: 5%

EXAMPLE: ELDORADO HOTEL SMS MESSSAGE
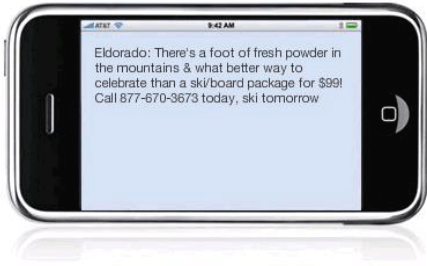
EXAMPLE: ELDORADO HOTEL HOMEPAGE AD

Tactic 4: Figure out what type of mobile Web presence you need

Many companies with on-the-go audiences now realize that a mobile Web presence is no longer optional—it's a necessity. The only question is what type of presence they need.

In the same article referenced in Tactic #1, Matthew Snyder of ADObjects says the cornerstone of any Web strategy should be developing a mobile Web presence. He says this generally involves one of four options:

1. **Mobile versions of existing sites:** Companies have built mobile websites which offer nearly the same features as their traditional websites, but which are adapted to a handheld format.

2. **Plug-in based mobile sites:** Blogs and websites based on WordPress, Drupal or similar open-source platforms can use free plug-ins which format sites for mobile audiences.

3. **Mobile landing pages:** These are single-page entities that can be created quickly to add a mobile Web presence to a marketing campaign.

4. **Dedicated mobile sites:** These sites are standalone, multi-page entities, and not mobile versions of a traditional website. They have their own designs and strategies to meet the needs of mobile visitors.

Determine Whether You Need a Dedicated Mobile Site

In the MarketingExperiments blog post, "Mobile Marketing 101: Should you make the leap to a custom mobile site?" MECLABS Senior Research Manager Tony Doty says going through the following steps will help you decide whether you need a custom mobile site.

Step 1. See how your current page looks on mobile platforms

As you probably know, a site can look very different from one browser to another, let alone on different devices. You should view your site on as many different types of devices as possible. There are also online tools that allow you to see how your site would look when viewed on various devices. While reviewing your site, ask yourself these questions:

- Is the website too cluttered?
- Is it easy to use?
- Are the buttons clickable with my big fingers?
- Is it easy to find the best and most relevant content?
- In the end…is it good? Heck, is it even adequate?

Step 2. Understand your target audience

Google Analytics (or similar tools) makes it easy for you to find out lots of things about your visitors, their habits and their demographics. Some key statistics you'll want to closely monitor include:

- How many visitors come from a mobile device?
- What is the mobile device of choice?
- What pages do they most frequently visit?
- What is the top content overall, and top content immediately preceding a successful call to action?

This data will be very helpful in showing you who your visitors are and why they are on your site. (It would probably also be a good idea to consult with your sales team or other departments that might have some insight as to your target customers.)

Armed with this information, you can evaluate whether your current site is sufficient to serve your customers' needs (perhaps with some tweaks or updates) or if you really need a custom mobile site.

Step 3. Assemble a mock-up page tailored to your visitors' expectations

Now that you know a lot about your visitors and what they want, create a mock-up page (a rough example of what you envision your site to be, including the main features you would want to include) that contains the most relevant content.

Step 4.Decide if the benefits outweigh the expenses

Evaluate how effectively your mock mobile page would serve visitors' needs, and then work with your designers to estimate the costs of development. This cost/benefit analysis—and your overall marketing and business strategy— should make it easier to determine whether you need (and can afford) a custom mobile site.

Tactic 5: Tailor the mobile site to users' needs

In the MarketingSherpa article, "Page Tests Cut Mobile Bounces 22%: 3 Steps to Improve Experience for Mobile Visitors," the team at Vegas.com wanted to figure out how to keep mobile visitors on their site for longer durations.

Mike Brown, VP, Internet Optimization, Vegas.com, and his team looked at website analytics and noticed that mobile visitors to the Las Vegas travel and entertainment booking website weren't staying very long.

"People [on mobile phones] who hit the site either were likely to abandon after viewing one page, or they got one or two pages in and said 'Gosh, this is too hard' and abandoned," he said.

The bounce rate of mobile visitors was about 50% higher than that of normal visitors. Their time spent and conversion rates were also significantly lower.

In an effort to give mobile visitors what they needed, Brown's team created a utilitarian version of its homepage to show mobile visitors (see a sample on the next page). The homepage included:

- Vegas.com logo
- Phone number to call for booking
- Display ad with special offer
- Links to a dozen of Vegas.com's most popular category pages, such as Hotel, Flight+Hotel, Shows and Nightlife

The team designed the page to display cleanly on iPhone, the top mobile device used to access the site. Links were large enough to be easily read and clicked on a touchscreen. The team avoided using too many images to ensure the site would have an efficient loading time.

The category pages the team created were similar to directories. They included links to all relevant information, such as:

- The "Shows" page listed shows playing in town with links to more information.
- The "Hotel" page listed hotels in town, and also hosted a simple search tool to find available hotel rooms.

Once visitors clicked beyond the category pages, they arrived on relevant webpages that appeared in the traditional website's format.

It only took the team about two weeks to revise the site, and the improved site saw a 22% lower bounce rate and a 4% higher conversion rate.

EXAMPLE: VEGAS.COM MOBILE PAGE

Tactic 6: Balance goals and tech resources

Before your team gets carried away with overly ambitious plans for a mobile strategy, it's important to be realistic about exactly what your tech team is capable of, and what your budget will allow.

Depending on what you have in mind, some mobile-related tactics can require considerable man-hours to develop:

- **Apps**, for example, can be time-consuming and expensive. Even redesigning your emails to render well on mobile browsers will require some specialized knowledge.

- **SMS messages** can be created quickly, without using an abundance of tech resources.

- **Simple landing pages** and plug-in based websites on platforms such as Wordpress can also be created with minimal investment of time and resources.

- **QR Codes** can be created even more quickly by using free generators, which you can find with a simple Web search. You can have a 2D barcode that is ready to publish on tradeshow flyers and product packaging in less time than it takes to read this page.

There are numerous easy ways to test the effectiveness or popularity of your mobile tactics. You could simply promote your mobile site on your traditional site, encouraging people to text you with their feedback. Or, you could include calls-to-action in your content on various channels, asking visitors to send you a specific message via SMS. To help motivate participation, you could make this part of a contest or offer participants a coupon or special deal. By using a unique text message for each tactic, you can easily track the responses.

Consult with your IT department to get an idea of its capabilities and availability, keeping in mind that your mobile site and other elements of your mobile strategy will require ongoing maintenance and updates.

Tactic 7: Make sure your mobile site is easy to use

Your mobile site may look impressive, but if it doesn't meet visitors' needs, all the bells and whistles will be a waste of time and money.

In the MarketingExperiments blog post, "[Mobile Marketing 101, Part 2: Ease of use and quality of content are key](#)," Tony Doty lists some important points to remember about mobile devices and usability:

- They have much less real estate
- Buttons are harder to click
- People will be zooming in to see any small features
- When a potential customer clicks on a box to enter text a good portion of the screen is covered by the keyboard

Above all else, it's important that your mobile site be user-friendly. Otherwise, visitors may not even stay long enough to read your content or take any actions. Again, this is where your analytics will prove valuable. If you know a large number of your visitors use a specific device, you can make a special effort to ensure the site looks and functions well on that particular device.

Tip: many marketers find that calls-to-action on mobile sites work better when they are in the form of clickable buttons or links, as opposed to forms that require users to type a lot of text into forms or fields.

Tactic 8: Cut the "fluff" from your content

Mobile visitors have extremely short attention spans. They want to be able to find what the need in an instant, without having to scroll through a bunch of filler.

In the MarketingSherpa article, "B2B Marketing: 7 Mobile and Social Media Tactics," by David Kirkpatrick, Tim Hayden, CMO, 44Doors, stressed that mobile marketing is about the moment someone decides to use a phone to interact with your website, content or other marketing.

At that moment, most people are not looking for:
- Names of executives
- Press releases
- Company history

Including this information can distract visitors, prevent them from quickly finding what they want, and inhibit conversion. What they usually want is useful information, such as:

- Events calendars
- Product information
- Contact information and address

"There are specific, actionable things that they are looking for on the device, and you have to deliver that content succinctly," Hayden said.

Succinctly delivering mobile content means reducing the main website content. If there are 200 words on the homepage, get that down to 20 words for the mobile site. Focus on things visitors are most likely to want to know—such as directions to your location, contact information, prices and special deals.

Tactic 9: Make privacy a top priority

Mobile users are particularly sensitive about privacy, and they can be easily deterred by unwanted contact. Depending on their service plans, users may even be charged for the text messages they receive.

In the MarketingSherpa article, "B2B Marketing: 7 Mobile and Social Media Tactics," by David Kirkpatrick, R.J. Talyor, Senior Director Mobile Products, ExactTarget, commented on guidelines for contacting mobile audiences, issued by the Mobile Marketing Association.

The guidelines emphasize that companies should only message people who have opted-in for mobile communications. He added that one example of an opt-in is when someone sends you a text message to sign up for your program. At that point, the new list member should receive information about:

- The content of the messages they will be receiving
- The number of messages per day
- How to get help
- How to unsubscribe

Talyor also said that having someone enter their mobile phone number on a Web form with a check box to "opt-in" is not considered enough. The recipient has to opt-in from the mobile device. This is a Mobile Marketing Association best practices guideline designed to verify that the person submitting the opt-in does, in fact, own the mobile device for which they are opting in.

Useful Links and Resources:

Mobile Website Advice from Taco Bell

Webinar Replay: Top Strategies for Integrating Email with Mobile and Social

B2B Marketing: A Discussion about Integrating Mobile, Email and Social

Mobile Success in a Down Economy: 5 Strategies to Improve Campaigns

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MarketingSherpa is a primary research facility, wholly-owned by MECLABS, dedicated to determining **what works in marketing** via exclusive case studies, surveys, and results data analysis. Then we publish what we learn so our community of marketers and weekly readers can improve their results and train their teams.

Praised by *The Economist*, Harvard Business School's Working Knowledge Site and Entrepreneur.com, Marketing-Sherpa is distinguished by offering **practical, results-based marketing** information researched and written by a staff of in-house reporters.

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MECLABS deploys a rigorous methodology to conduct research. This research is compiled from:

- More than **10 years** of research partnership with our clients
- **1,300** experiments
- Over **1 billion** emails
- **10,000** landing pages tested
- **5 million** telephone call
- **500,000** decision maker conversations

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