

AMP 019: Art Marketing Playbook - Overtime



Show Notes

- [017: The Holiday Art Marketing Playbook](#)
- [018: Facebook Messenger is the New Email](#)
- [001: How to Combine Online and Offline Selling with Artist Kim Vergil](#)
- [Rate and Review](#) the Art Marketing Podcast on iTunes

Transcribe

Just when you thought the game was over, the official just blew his whistle and we're headed into overtime. So on today's podcast, we're going to cover the only three ways you can increase your online sales, how to email your customers that both purchased and your unsold shopping carts, presumably after a holiday discount, I will include some sample email copy, and then just some of the trade craft and nuance that goes with it.

So, let's start at the top. There's only three ways to increase online sales. What are they? Number one, the one that everybody always loves to talk about that we spend the majority of our time talking about, is increasing the number of customers. More traffic, more eyeballs, in the retail sense more people walking into your art gallery. That's the one everybody talks about. Number two and number three, though, they rarely get the same level of attention but they are equally powerful and sometimes more so. Number two is by increasing your average order size, AOV. Best way to think about this is: Do you want fries and a coke with that, right? You had your original order. You asked a customer to get something else. You bolt it on, you increase your AOV. Number three is by increasing the number of repeat purchases.

So for the purposes of the rest of this episode, a lot of today's episode is going to build upon obviously the Art Marketing Playbook, which we just released. I think it was episode 17, so this over time concept we're bolting on to the end of the playbook. So if you haven't listened to that one, highly encourage you to do so. We'll put a link into the show notes to it, but you don't necessarily need to to get the value out of today's.

So let's assume you have a website and you have a website that is equipped to sell art online, meaning you have a shopping cart that takes credit cards, you can audit your transactional data as well as your unsold shopping carts. If you don't, the 21st century is calling. Pick up the phone and answer, please. You need one. So I'm going to assume that is the case, but don't worry if you don't. There's actually going to be parts of this technique you can use even if you're completely selling all of your art offline. And let's also assume a holiday just went down. You ran a marketing campaign and sale. At the time of recording this, it's been Black Friday and Cyber Monday, right? We just got through that turn, but whatever holiday that just finished it works whenever you're listening to this.

So the number one group that we're going to talk about are those that placed an order during your holiday sale. The number two group that we're going to talk about are those that added an item to their shopping cart and then bounced and left your site without purchasing. So those are the two groups that we're going to address.

So first, let's talk about group number one. These are the folks that placed an order. So just to further set this up, they placed an order, and let's stick on the Black Friday, Cyber Monday. So during your sales period, however long it was, somebody came and they placed an order. So here we are a couple of days after Cyber Monday let's just say, and let's say our buyer's name was John. I immediately send John an email and I say, "Hey

John, I just wanted to thank you again for your purchase. It means the world to me. As a way of saying thanks, I wanted to present you with an additional offer. For the next week, take 30% off on any additional purchases. Whether you're Christmas shopping for yourself or others, the least I can do is offer an even bigger discount as a way of saying thanks for your patronage."

So I've attached a few images of some of my best sellers. "The deal expires Sunday at midnight. I appreciate you tremendously and hope you have a wonderful holiday season. Patrick. P.S. Can I ask how you heard about me?" So that would be the sample email copy that I would use, but I want to break down some of these elements. Number one, saying thanks. That's always a good idea, right? Number two, offering them a deal. In this case, we offered 30%. What we normally recommend folks do is offer an even bigger deal than they got originally. So if your Black Friday, Cyber Monday sale was for 20%, it's a great idea sometimes to kick this one up to even 30% or even more because they're a repeat buyer. You're trying to get them to buy again.

It's critical that you have time sensitivity or scarcity, right? In this case, the deal is going to expire Sunday at midnight, so there's got to be a clock to it. On any deal, there's always got to be a clock. It'll increase things for you. And I've got a P.S. in there, and I love, love, love the P.S. asking how you heard about me. This is a customer that came and they bought, because you get some real validation for your marketing efforts, where are your sales coming from?

In my experience, by asking, and often times with a P.S. is a great way to do it, and obviously you're not going to get everyone to respond, but you do get a lot of responses, is you get some insights in their words about where they heard about you, how they found out about you, and it's like, yeah, you might look in your Google Analytics and say, "Oh, okay. I can see this came from Facebook, a Facebook ad, they came to my site and purchased," so the tendency is to go and give all the credit to Facebook, and then you ask this person, "John, how'd you hear about me?" and John says, "Oh, yeah, so I went to your gallery show four years ago, and then I saw the Facebook ad." And so it's like, yeah, Facebook gets some of the credit, they do, but they went to the gallery show.

So I think all of those elements are critical to put into the email copy, and what we're trying to do here is we're trying to get your current customer to order again because normally the way these things work out they're not coming back, they're not going to order again. So you really want to incentivize them to do this

Now, in terms of the Art Storefronts side of things, I don't normally use this podcast to hawk our software or get into it, but this is a feature we're insanely proud about so I want to reference it, and there might be some applications for you to do it offline. We have this proprietary cookie running on all of our customers' accounts. Without getting into the fancy business of it, it's a line of code that tracks your visitors and gives you additional information, and we call it "the detective", and so what this does is it will let you look down at a granular buyer level, assuming you have their email, a buyer level, and you get to come and see what pieces they looked at, how many times they've come back and looked at the piece, and it puts all of that in a database file for you. So after the holiday sales are over, what you do is you go and you look at your customers and you see what pieces of art they looked at in addition to the one that they purchased.

An offline example, it would be like having a surveillance camera on your art gallery that you own on Main Street. Somebody comes in, they scan the entire shop, then they walk up to the first piece of art, the second piece of art, and the third piece of art, and they pause and they look at all of those, and then they end up buying the fourth piece of art. Well, it stands to reason they scanned the whole shop, then they looked at those first three pieces, that it would probably be a good idea to include those images in the email, so that's what we recommend our customers do. You go in and you audit your file, you audit your detective, and you say, "Okay, so here's what John looked at. He looked at A, B, and C, and then he bought D, so I'm going to put A, B, and C in the email," and you noticed in the email we had some language in there that says, "I've attached a few images of some of my best sellers."

Well, we don't say anything, but we just include the best sellers being the ones he already looked at. It's a nice little bit of trade craft, but it's also potentially some trade craft you can use if you do this offline and you know some other pieces that they were looking at. We mentioned this in I think the first episode of the podcast where we interviewed Kim Vergil where in her instance she hand delivered a painting and while she hand delivered the painting that someone purchased she actually took three or four other ones that she knew he was interested in, this particular buyer, and brought them, and this guy ended up buying a few extras, and so there's an offline application, and I'll also link to Kim's episode in the show notes. If you haven't heard it, really powerful stuff.

So let's talk about how you're going to go about executing and sending this email. If you're pressed for time, you can just grab a list of customers that you had. This applies to not everybody but certainly some people they get a tremendous amount of orders. It's very difficult to send these one by one, but you can just grab the list of

customers, throw it up into your ESP like MailChimp or AWeber or Mad Mimi or Drip or whoever you use, and send one blast email to all of them. I don't recommend that method as the number one preferred way to do it, but it's certainly better than not doing it, and so time is of the essence. You can certainly do that. Grab that bit of email copy, and, again, we'll have it in the show notes. Put it into your language, into your words, into your terms, and send it to your customers after you run a sale.

The other way to go about it is the old-fashioned way, the by hand way, right? Ever have a mother that made you write thank-you notes? I did, and I still do. Well, to write the thank-you notes and have your mother, actually, now that I think about it, but for most folks, not everybody. The number of orders that you got over this particular holiday, whether it's let's just stay on Black Friday and Cyber Monday, is probably not so tremendous that this task is going to be so daunting, right? Like, what did you get? One, two, three, 10, 15, 20 orders? Even if it's 20, you can write 20 personalized emails. You have the ability to do that.

The key is, the trade craft here, the nuance if you will is you send them by hand one at a time. Not only do you send them by hand one at a time, but what I recommend doing, what is so powerful about this technique is that you send them from your personal email, not from your AWeber or your MailChimp or the Constant Contact, whoever you use. You send it from your personal email client, whether it's Outlook or your Hotmail or a Gmail or Yahoo or AOL, god forbid [inaudible 00:09:37], any of those. You send the email from that, so it is a personal personalized-looking email.

And so what happens here is a couple of things. One, your buyer actually feels like it's a personal email because it is a personal email. Two, because it's a personal email coming from a personal email sending address, the spam filters are not going to be looking out for it. They're like, "Hey, this is personal correspondence," and so especially if you're someone that emails a lot and your stuff is constantly ending up in the spam filter, you think it is, your open rates are down. The point is is the trade craft is by sending the personal email, you're going to get a much higher open rate. So highly recommend way of doing this is sending them from the personal email, and I think the biggest bonus that nobody ever talks about in all of this technique.

So now we've got a customer, we've got an order, we're creating an additional discount for him, we're sending him an email, we're sending him a personal email, and all of that is amazing, and we're asking how he heard about us, and so even if he doesn't want to order potentially, we're going to get that feedback piece. So all of these are tremendous parts of this technique, but the biggest bonus that nobody ever

talks about is you send these personal emails and often times this is just such a fantastic way to actually start a relationship with whoever your buyer might be. There is like such a tendency in this digital and [inaudible 00:11:05] walled-in digital world that we live in where everything gets relegated to a social follow and a transactional email that your shopping cart software sends, and maybe you send a thank-you note at Christmas time, but so rarely do we engage in actual correspondence and relationship building.

It doesn't default to that anymore, and so sending this type of email from your personal account really does give you a genuine opportunity to strike up a conversation and start having an actual one-to-one relationship with somebody. I mean, this buyer might just buy again and again and again for the next 20 years. I mean, how long do you intend to be an artist selling art online, right? It's for life. I mean, this particular buyer might have people over to his house for dinner. They might just ask about your piece on the wall. That buyer might just beam with pride and say, "Oh, yeah, it's a phenomenal piece. I actually know the artist. We've been corresponding quite a bit. We're good friends." So it's just a tremendous opportunity to build a relationship, and I think that's one of those things that doesn't get talked about anywhere near often enough. So, that's how you handle the customer portion, okay?

So now for number two we're going to get into the unsold cart portion. So if you have an e-commerce software, a platform, they pretty much all show you the unsold carts, right? So somebody came to your site. They got your holiday email marketing, they saw their discount or they hit your site, whatever they did. They came, they looked at a piece of art, they picked the size, they picked everything else, the substrate, and they put that thing in their cart, and right before the time to pull out their credit card they left, they bounced.

So you also have an opportunity after the sale to go after these folks, and so, again, let's put an email together. So what I would say in this type of situation, "Hey John, saw you had an image in your cart over the holidays." I would insert this image in the email with a link to the product page where you have that image, right? Okay, so let's get back to it. "Hey John, saw you had an image in your cart over the holidays. Not sure whether you were just kicking the tires or close to buying it and got distracted by the holiday craziness. Regardless, I figured I would reach out and give you another shot at the piece if you did want it. So I'm extending that same holiday discount and the discount is going to expire Sunday at midnight. I just wanted to say I appreciate you, and I hope you have a wonderful holiday season. Patrick. P.S. Can I ask how you heard about me?"

So, again, let's break down the elements of that email, right? You're taking the exact item and/or items they had in their cart and you're linking to them in the email itself. In our first option, we were a little bit sneaky. If we knew which pieces they looked at, we didn't necessarily reference it, but in this case he put something in his cart, you know he put something in his cart. It's okay to put those images in the email and show them, right? Again, we're going to add in the time sensitivity, the scarcity, like, "Deal expires on Sunday," and then again the P.S.

The two emails between the two are extremely, extremely similar, and then when you go to send, again, you're in the same bucket. Now the added to cart volume will likely be much higher than the actual sales volume, so depending on what kind of an artist you are and if you're doing prints and you're high traffic or if you're smaller, you're in the same situation. So if you're got 250 add to carts, you're probably not going to want to send 250 individual emails, although I highly think you should. You might want to just load them up in bulk, throw them in your ESP like MailChimp or whatever, and send out one blast all of them, which is, again, it's better than not doing it. Significantly so. Obviously, there's some systems that automate this, but I prefer the by hand version. It's just more personalized.

But, again, the ideal way to do this is the one-on-one personalized email for all of the same reasons that number one worked so well. Starting the conversation, avoiding the spam filters, and really focusing in on relationship with the people that are your potential customers or close to it, right? That's an incredibly and impressive digital signal to latch onto. I mean, not only did they come to your site and not bounce, not only did they come to your site, not bounce, and stick around for a while, they came to your site, they didn't bounce, they stuck around for a while, they put in an email address to get access to the piece and have it in their shopping cart, and then they bounced, so there is no better person for you to be having a conversation with after the fact because they have shown so much, so much interest.

Now, this technique as we've highlighted it, as we're calling it over time to the playbook, the best thing about it is that it's holiday agnostic. You should run it after every single solitary big sale you have, whether it's Black Friday, Cyber Monday, the Christmas sales and New Year sales, or the made-up sales, for whatever reason that you're having one, and it is just so often glossed over and not done and so incredibly powerful.

Now, what I want to say summing things up about this episode is in episode 17, again, link in the show notes, we've gone over the Holiday Art Marketing Playbook, right? This is a bolt on in addition to the Holiday Art Marketing Playbook, but it's all part of the same playbook, and so both of these in conjunction can be used at any time throughout the year when you're having a sale. One of the things I've mentioned in the past is for Art Storefronts we have this private Facebook group. We put all our customers in there. It's where we do all of our coaching and stuff, right? So in the lead up to Black Friday and Cyber Monday, we were hammering the playbook. I mean, from every angle possible. We were having webinars and blog posts with subject lines in the timing and did the podcast.

We did everything, and what's awesome after the fact now is number one, I can say that a solid, solid number of our customer base either ran parts that they could or the entire playbook, depending on their specific situation and technical acumen, and the feedback that we got after the fact on this has just been tremendous. It's been amazing. Now, it's also run the gamut. It's been everything from crazy sales volume for the established artists that have been online and selling for years to a few sales to their first sale ever, and then even some that ran the playbook and made no sales at all but went through the motions and their traffic and email sign-ups spiked a much higher level than they'd ever seen before, and I love reading and seeing all of that, and I really want to riff on some of this stuff quickly because I think it provides some tremendous context.

Oh, and I would even say some folks fell completely flat on their face, pulling their hair out, losing their mind, but they did run their first Facebook ad or they did send their first email broadcast in MailChimp. So most important to keep in mind with all of this is the context, and first I'd like to say it's probably one of the most important parts of this entire playbook and discounting whatever it is during holidays or otherwise. It's less about how skilled you are at running the playbook, and instead it's what you've done all year long to work up to the holidays. In the sports and the playbooks lexicon/analogy I was on, summer bodies are made in winter, right? Or another way to think of it is that the work you put in in the offseason determines how well you play in the game.

So what does that look like in our context, in our example? You've got to be romance marketing your audience throughout the year. You need to be building the know, likes, trust factor all year long. You do that by storytelling without selling across the digital platforms, and it changes everything. It's not that even that it just gives you the audacity to ask for a sale with the coupons and everything else during the holidays,

but it just makes folks amazingly, amazingly receptive to your sale because you've done that work all season long. I think some of the feedback that we got in our Facebook group was like, "I went through all of that, I learned all those steps, and it was so hard and I was pulling my hair out of my head and I did it, and I didn't sell anything."

I get that and I get why that's frustrating and maybe you, you're not a customer but you ran this as well and maybe you're feeling that, some portion of it you ran it, and I just want to say a large amount of those results in my estimation come from the fact that this was the first time that you did some serious active marketing and really hammered your list, and the first time you did all of that was with a sale. You went for the jugular. It was a right hook without the jab. So I think that's some really, really important context in there. It's just never a recipe for success to do that, so you have to put in the work throughout the year for this truly to be successful at the level where you're going to sell 30, 40, 50, 100 pieces of art depending on who you are or one or two huge originals.

So that's number one, the first part. Second, I would say I loved hearing, loved, loved hearing about those that did this for the first time and really struggled, and I mean literally pulling their hair out, kicking and screaming, "This might as well be quantum physics," I think one person said. Like, "I have never done any of this. I might as well be reading Chinese. This is just crazy. It is so hard." And I loved reading that not because I'm a sadist or like compunction or schadenfreude or the rest, but because that's the game. It does not come easy and there is no shortcut for doing this. There's no way to cheat it. The only way you can do this, to run an effective marketing campaign, is to learn how to do this and learning through experience and stubbing your toes is how every single solitary person that's good at it now got there. You just have to do it. There's no shortcut, but the great news is that it literally it gets easier every time.

I see these comments that these people that went through all of this and I'm just, my heart just explodes with joy because it's like the next time you go and do it, you're going to be like, "Oh, I know where that is, oh, I know where that is," and then you're going to add on a couple levels of complexity, and then the next thing you know six holidays down the line you're going to have the thing mastered.

So there are multiple, multiple opportunities throughout the year to run the basics, to run this operation, and it's never going to change. I don't care if it's we're coming up on Christmas or if you're doing like a made-up holiday a la Prime Day, or you're just having a discount because you feel like it. These same principles apply, and they just work, and so I think that's the big picture belief that we have certainly as a

company, but even just as a marketer. I mean, this just works 100% of the time. It's tried. Like crazy disruptions of history and technology aside, this is going to be a foundational part of your business for the rest of your career selling art online. It just is, and so I believe it is extremely worthwhile to invest in learning the playbook, in gaining the experience is just you're going to continue to go back to the well year after year and year after year for the next 20 years and probably beyond.

I'm dead serious when I say that. I mean, it's almost industry agnostic too, right? Like I had one guy in the Facebook group say, "You know, I just got started. I'm trying to sell my photography, and I ran the whole playbook and it didn't do a damn thing for me. I didn't make a single solitary sale." And then he goes, "But, I ran the same playbook for my other business and it completely kicked butt." I say that to say whether you're selling art or whether you've got some other business, it doesn't matter, whether it's selling software like us. We are all at war for attention. That's it. You want to sell more than you did last year, more than you did the last holiday, more than you did last quarter? Do you want to make more money? Do you want to potentially quit your job or just increase your income period? How much of a sales pitch does that sound like? Anyway.

The bottom line is you need attention to do that, so you run the playbook, you get more attention, more eyeballs looking at your art, you have the ability to sell more. And I'll say in the years going forward, this will never change in terms of what we're offering A, as a podcast, and B, as a business is the skeleton, the bones of the Art Marketing Playbook, the Holiday Art Marketing Playbook, will never change. Are new things going to get bolted on? Absolutely. Facebook Stories was a big addition to it this year. Facebook Messenger, a la the last episode, link in the show notes if you haven't heard that one, it's awesome, is going to be in there as well, and we're going to come into the tactics. So some things, some services and apps and channels are going to fall off, and some new ones are always going to come on, but the bones, the structure of the playbook is not going to change. So we really believe that it's foundational. It's a foundational part of your business. So I just wanted to say all of that feedback and everything else that no matter where you're at on that scale, if you're just getting started, if you're really rolling, if you've mastered it, I believe the investment in getting good at it will pay dividends for years and years and years to come in your art business.

You're going to hear us continue to hammer it, so for as long as you're listening to this podcast we're going to just keep adding on to it, adjusting it, and making it better. So, yeah. It's awesome, the playbook. Let's get into some fan love. And so I've got here from Jennifer [Maylay 00:24:37], artist and teacher, left us a review on iTunes.

Five stars. "This podcast is super motivating and much needed relevant art biz strategies." She says, "It's clear, concise, and always keeps my interest. The short and sweet strategies and metaphors make understanding the business of art realistic, exciting, hopeful, promising, as well as humbling," which I think is an important balance, and it goes on, and this is an awesome one, so thank you very much, Jennifer.

By the way, checked out your website really quickly by Googling you and I see you're on Squarespace, which is great, but you do not have the Facebook pixel installed. Jennifer, got to get that Facebook pixel installed. So thank you to Jennifer for leaving the review, and for all of those that have left reviews in the past, if you are enjoying the podcast, are getting some value out of it, we'd really appreciate you if you'd leave us a review on iTunes. That's how people discover us, and from there on out if you're listening to this now, it's about to be December, Christmas is coming. It's time to run the playbook. Thanks. Have a great day.