



How a Seasonal Retailer Evolved from Promo Emails to Year-Round Content Marketing

Marcia Oakes

Senior Online Marketing Manager

Calendars.com

Courtney Eckerle

Manager of Editorial Content

MECLABS

Session Speaker



@Oakes96

Marcia Oakes

Senior Online Marketing Manager

Calendars.com

Marcia directs the email marketing channel for Calendars.com, an *Internet Retailer* Top 500 site and the largest online calendar retailer. Marcia has 15 years of marketing experience, including 11 years in B2C marketing and six years managing email and loyalty programs. Prior to moving into the e-commerce arena with Calendars.com, she directed marketing efforts for several restaurant concepts and also has experience in media planning and advertising sales.

About Calendars.com

CALENDARS.COM DOGBREEDSTORE.COM Free Shipping On Orders of \$20 or More! Login My Account Store Locator Help

CALENDARS.COM The BEST SELECTION of Calendars in the Known Universe.™

Search by Keyword, Topic, or Publisher Search

My Cart 0 Items Total: \$0.00

CUSTOM | Categories | SALE | Puzzles | Games | Books | Folk Art | Dogs | Travel | TOP 50

Browse by Format

- Wall Calendars
- Desk Calendars
- Mini Wall Calendars
- Engagement Calendars
- Personalized Calendars
- Accessories

Gifts for Dog Lovers!

DogBreedStore.com Nothing but the breed.

Browse by Category

- STAFF PICKS
- PUBLISHERS
- TOP RATED
- TOP 50 CALENDARS
- Just Arrived
- Americana
- Art & Architecture
- Entertainment
- Cats
- Children
- Dogs
- Flowers
- Food & Drink
- Games, Puzzles & Toys
- Humor
- Lifestyle & Culture
- Moms & Family

FREE SHIPPING when you spend \$20 or more, or \$5 flat rate! Get organized for less! DETAILS ▶

Desk Calendars for Everyone!

Featured Items:

- 365 CAT zen** **SHOP NOW**
- BOOK LOVER'S CALENDAR** **SHOP NOW**
- Fact or Crap 2014 Desk Calendar** Size Opened: 6.00" X 5.00" Publisher: Calendar Ink Status: IN-STOCK **\$3.49 More Info**
- What Cats Teach Us 2014 Desk Calendar** Size Opened: 6.00" X 5.00" Publisher: Willow Creek Press Status: IN-STOCK **\$3.49 More Info**

Cats Rule, Dogs Drool!

Shop Cats **Shop Dogs**

Shop by Type:

- desk
- mini wall
- engagement
- wall

LANG Calendars 75% OFF! **SHOP NOW**

Best Sellers:

Our Thanksgiving Gift to You: Black Friday Starts Now! [Shop Now](#) View in: [Browser](#)

CALENDARS.COM Need Help? [Email Us](#) | 800-366-3645

Search by Keyword, Topic, or Publisher Search [Search trouble? click here](#)

CUSTOM | BEST SELLERS | DOGS | ART | TRAVEL | SPORTS | SALE

SHOP OUR BLACK FRIDAY SALE EARLY!

UP TO 60% OFF EVERYTHING

FREE SHIPPING! See details below. **Shop Now ▶**

[My Account](#)
[Store Locator](#)

CONNECT with us

- f
- t
- p
- r

Recommended for you

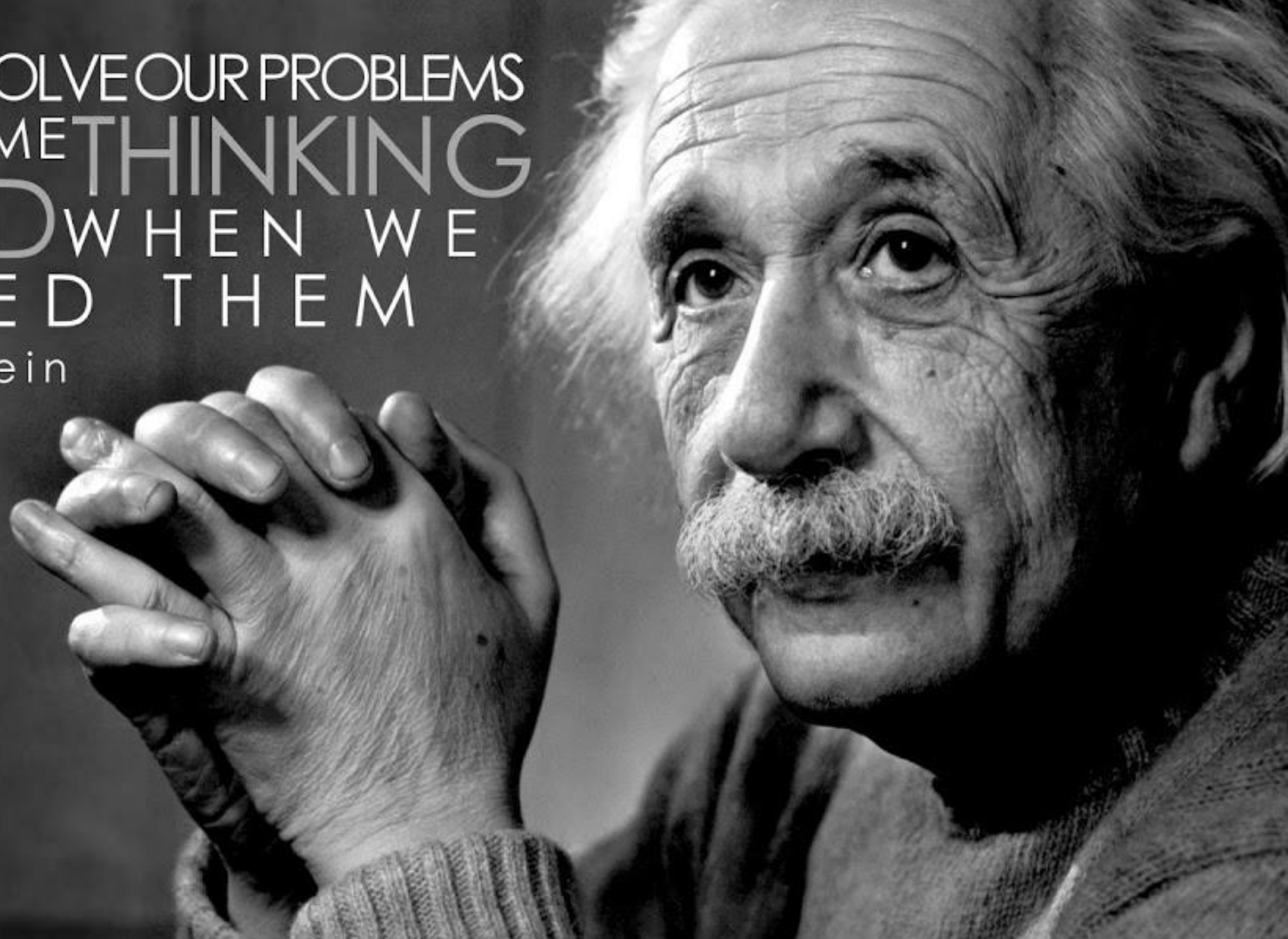
Hello Marcial! We've found a few calendars that we think you'll like.

- 365 Cats Page-A-Day 2014 Desk Calendar** **\$13.99** **Buy ▶**
- Dilbert 2014 Desk Calendar** **\$14.99** **Buy ▶**
- Mom's Family 2014 Wall Calendar** **\$13.99** **Buy ▶**
- Charles Wysocki Americana 2014 Wall Calendar** **\$15.99** **Buy ▶**

#SherpaEmail

WE CANNOT SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS
WITH THE SAME THINKING
WE USED WHEN WE
CREATED THEM

-Albert Einstein



The problem

Highly seasonal product

- Compelling promotions in off-season is a challenge
- Deliverability issues from decreased engagement and inconsistent mail volume

The problem



Trapped in endless “buy now” messaging cycle

- All emails were promotional in nature
- All emails had high revenue expectations



The problem

Trapped in endless “buy now” messaging cycle

We needed a
new way to engage

- All emails were “buy now” in nature
- All emails had high user expectations



Problem solving

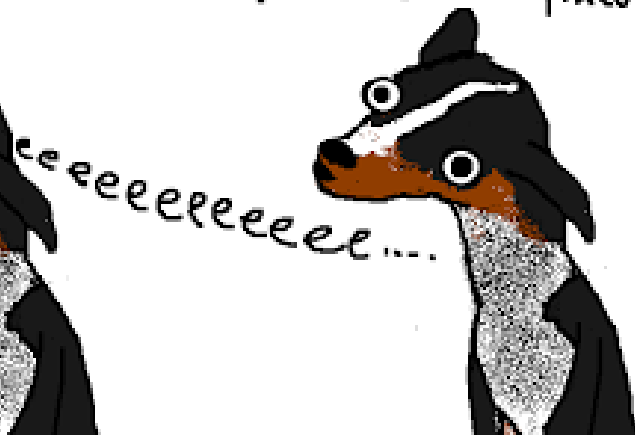


① Become aware that there is a problem.

② Wait 19 seconds

③ If problem Persists, begin making high-pitched sounds.

④ Continue making high-pitched sounds until problem is fixed



The solution



① Become aware ② Wait 19 ③ If problem ④ Continue
that there is something wrong
making high-pitched sounds until
the problem is fixed

Create an email newsletter to deliver
compelling content all year long.



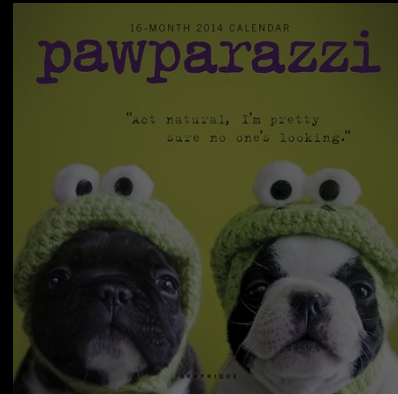
Unlikely Friendships®

2014 CALENDAR

Bridging the gap

INSPIRED BY THE
NEW YORK TIMES
- BESTSELLER -

A Celebration of Remarkable Friendships in the Animal Kingdom



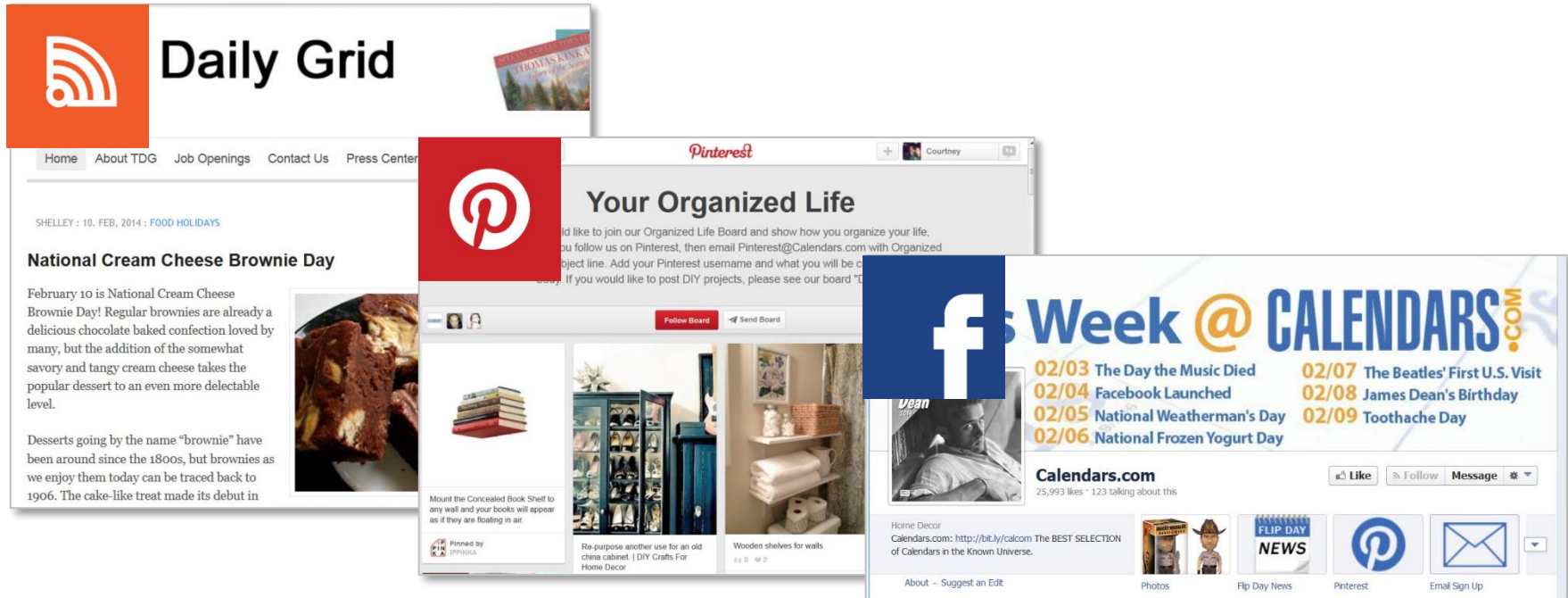
Defining objectives



- Engage subscribers in a new way
 - Provide interesting and relevant content all year long
-
- **Utilize our trademarked phrase:**
Flip Day™



Defining Objectives: Promote social media channels



Unlikely Friendships

2014 CALENDAR



A Celebration of Remarkable Friendships in the Animal Kingdom

16-MONTH 2014 CALENDAR

pawparazzi

"Act natural, I'm pretty
sure no one's looking."

Finding our voice



GRAPHIQUE

16-Month 2014 Calendar

KEEP
CALM
And
CARRY
ON

GRAPHIQUE

Being ourselves *with* ...



Strategic Design + Content

- No boring, traditional newsletters
- Design that builds on our brand
- Content that entertains and informs



You can't always get
what you want

*... and it takes a significant
time investment to get
what you need.*

#SherpaEmail

THE ROLLING STONES



2013 CALENDAR

You can't always get
what you want

*... and it takes a significant
time investment to get
what you need.*

THE ROLLING STONES

Connecting content to consumers

- Develop quality content
- Identify “evergreen” content you may already have available
- Create a content calendar – **make a plan** for the resources and time you need

Connecting to our content

THESE TIPS WILL HELP YOU START THE SCHOOL YEAR OFF RIGHT

EXPLORE OUR INTERACTIVE CALENDAR

4 SCHOOL MORNING TIME SAVERS	5	6 ARTIST OF THE MONTH Andy Warhol	7	8 FLIP DAY! THE PERFECT COMMAND CENTER FOR YOUR FAMILY	9 BOOK LOVER'S DAY	10
11	12 HOMEWORK ORGANIZATION	13 INTERNATIONAL LEFT HANDERS' DAY	14 WIFFLE BALL PATENTED IN 1953	15	16	17 ODD WORD OF THE MONTH Tachydidaxy a short or rapid method of teaching
18 BAD POETRY DAY	19	20	21 HAWAII BECAME A STATE IN 1959	22 RAY BRADBURY'S BIRTHDAY	23	24
25 SCHOOL SUPPLIES ORGANIZATION	26 WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY	27	28 25 MAKE AHEAD BREAKFAST IDEAS	29	30 LITTLE LEAGUE WORLD SERIES CHAMPIONSHIP	31 Eat Outside Day

August 1

Flip Day MONTHLY

Brought to you by: CALENDARS

Organization academic calendars GAMES History news

AUGUST 2013

BACK TO SCHOOL!

THESE TIPS WILL HELP YOU START THE SCHOOL YEAR OFF RIGHT

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Staff Picks

Check out some of Megan's favorite products!

» See More

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erin smith art

dog shaming

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Real dates in history

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FLIP DAY!

MAGNETIC LOCKER CALENDARS

The Daily Grid

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WEDNESDAY, 22 AUGUST 2012 8:00AM

Ray Bradbury's Birthday

Celebrated American writer Ray Bradbury was born on August 22, 1920 in Waukegan, Illinois. Bradbury mainly wrote within the fantasy, science fiction, horror, and mystery genres, best known for Fahrenheit 451 (1953), The Martian Chronicles (1949), and The Illustrated Man (1951).

Ray Bradbury died at the age of 91 on June 7, 2012. He continues to be one of the most celebrated writers of the 20th century, and many of his works have been adapted into comic books, films, and television shows.

Sources: Ray Bradbury.com, Wikipedia

Be Social! Share!



August 1

Flip Day MONTHLY

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Real dates in history

Celeb b-days

FLIP DAY!

MAGNETIC LOCKER CALENDARS

Pinboard

Your Organized Life

If you need tips to stay organized, visit our site and see how you can get your life in order. You'll find a lot of tips and tricks to help you stay organized. You'll also find a lot of inspiration to help you stay motivated. You'll find a lot of tips and tricks to help you stay organized. You'll also find a lot of inspiration to help you stay motivated.

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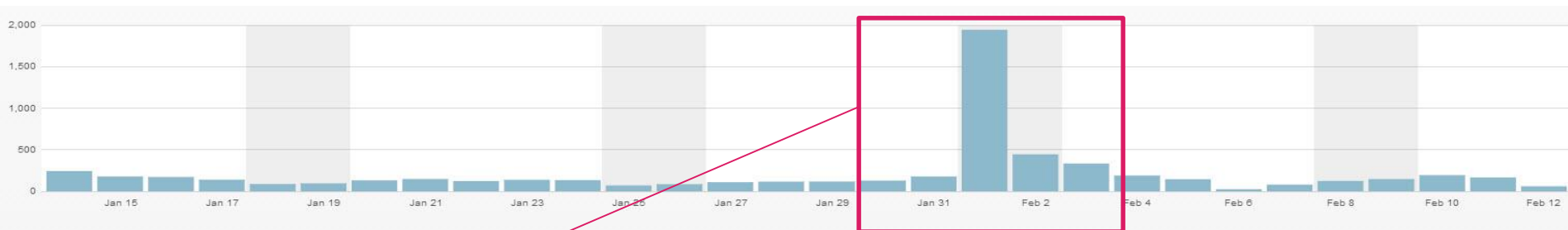
Connecting to our content



Links directly to popular Pins



The results

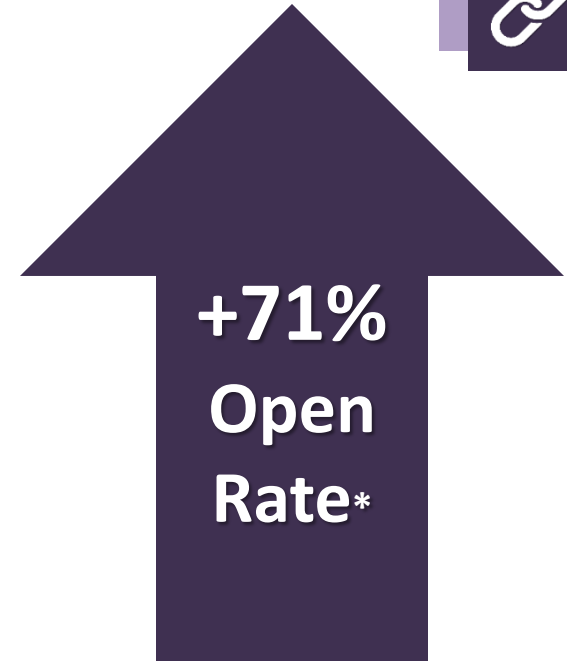


Blog traffic after Flip
Day newsletter send

The results



- Newsletter produces **a positive ROI**, despite low conversion rates
- Good customer feedback



The results



"You nailed it."
-Beverly

- Newsletter produces positive ROI, despite low conversion rates

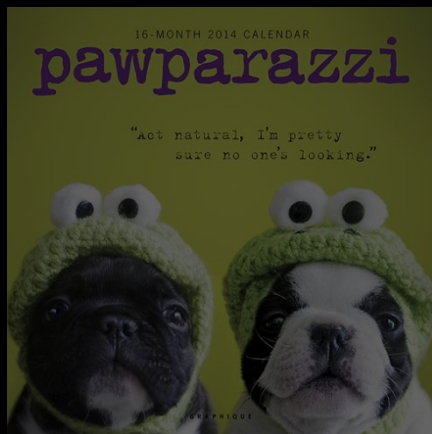
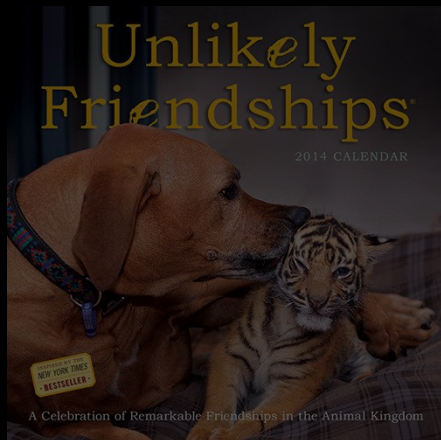
"I enjoy reading your
monthly Flip Day
calendar."
-Kim

"BRAVO for your wonderful
Flip Day newsletter!"
-Claire

+71%

Open

*



The challenges

In-season messaging conflicts

Flip Day was developed during the **off-season** to promote engagement ...

In-season, it caused *messaging conflicts* and concerns about *list fatigue*

First tested combining Flip Day with a promo campaign, and saw poor results



July is here! Celebrate Flip Day with FREE Shipping on ANY Order for 48 Hours! [Shop Now](#)

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Solution



In-season messaging conflicts



98% Increase in open rates

Compared to Flip Day open rate during off-season months

Strategically identified audience for Flip Day during high-frequency months of September through January

- Recent purchasers who are typically suppressed from promos
- Subscribers who have previously engaged with Flip Day

Current challenge

Unsubscribe rates

Subscribers opt-out at a **higher rate** on Flip Day messages

#SherpaEmail



Current challenge

Unsubscribe rates

Subscribers opt out at a
higher rate on Flip Day
messages

When using the filtered, or strategic
audience selection, negative impact is
minimized.



Solution: Unsubscribe rates

Preference Center changes are planned this year to provide a choice about receiving Flip Day.

- Assumption is that some subscribers only want promotional messages
- Adding other opt-down choices as well

Current
Preference
Center: No Flip
Day option!

Sign Up for Calendars.com Exclusive Money-Saving Offers

Enter your email address below to receive Free Shipping on orders of \$15 or more.®

Email
Address*

Help us send you better emails by telling us a little more about yourself.

First Name

Last Name

Birthday -- / -- / --

Gender ☐ Male ☐ Female

Tell us about your favorite type of calendars so we can recommend the best titles for you

What is your favorite calendar category?

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Art & Architecture | <input type="radio"/> Flowers & Gardens | <input type="radio"/> Religions & Inspiration |
| <input type="radio"/> Cats | <input type="radio"/> Food & Drink | <input type="radio"/> Sports |
| <input type="radio"/> Children & Family | <input type="radio"/> Humor | <input type="radio"/> Travel & Scenic |
| <input type="radio"/> Dog Breeds | <input type="radio"/> Models | <input type="radio"/> Other |
| <input type="radio"/> Entertainment | <input type="radio"/> Pets and Animals | |

What is your preferred calendar type?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Wall Calendar | <input type="radio"/> Desk/Box Calendar |
| <input type="radio"/> Engagement/Journal Calendar | <input type="radio"/> Mini Wall Calendar |

Mobile #: (999) 999-9999

☐ Calendars.com may deliver mobile offers and promotions via text message in the future. Check the box if you would like to receive these offers and promotions on your mobile phone. Message and data rates may apply.

SUBMIT

The takeaways

1

Don't be afraid to try something new

2

Manage expectations for the executive team

3

Watch your metrics and adjust your strategy as needed

4

Ensure your design, content and voice work together to positively reinforce your brand

Thank you to my team!



Sarah Farrar
Calendars.com
Email Channel
Partner-in-Crime



Ashton Fasel
Calendars.com
Graphic Design
Content Curation

Thank You

Marcia Oakes

Senior Online Marketing Manager

Calendars.com

marciao@calendars.com



Courtney Eckerle

Manager of Editorial Content

MECLABS

[@CourtneyEckerle](https://twitter.com/CourtneyEckerle)

