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LETTERS TO THE C-SUITE:

Sage Marketing Advice FOR UNCERTAIN TIMES

As we head into 2009, there is no doubt that the obstacles we face as marketers have never been greater. But those who invest and get it right will be poised for a major competitive advantage.

To help you prepare for the challenges that lie ahead, we've compiled letters from 13 experts across a range of verticals offering advice on how to emerge successful next year. Within *Letters to the C-Suite*, you will find insights ranging from what to focus your attention on in 2009, the advantages of ROI measurement and management systems, to the importance of innovation and experimentation in marketing. Our team of contributors includes authors, industry analysts, marketing experts, and well-known thought leaders who provide a broad perspective on how to tackle important issues beyond just email.

In addition to these valuable insights, below are three key points that I would encourage you to keep in mind for the coming year.

1. **It's all about the customer.** It always has been and it always will be. You must develop effective, powerful emotional connections with them. Differentiated brands will stand out in 2009. Think about customers first and foremost, and deliver products and services to suit their specific wants and needs.
2. **It's time to connect and engage.** This year more than ever marketers should realize the importance of gaining a 360 degree view of their customer. One way to do this is by integrating your online and offline business systems with the latest technology, such as cloud computing. With your critical systems connected, ExactTarget can help you take targeted action to drive relationships and ROI.
3. **Partner with the best.** In 2009, you will be stretched thinner than ever before. By ensuring that you have top of the line partners for strategy, technology, and creative, you will be in a much better position to make customer-centric business decisions that can have a direct effect on the bottom line.

As we reflect on 2008, we are so thankful to have more than 7,000 direct and indirect customers that represent some of the best collected minds in the business. One of the things I love best about my job is that I am able to make ExactTarget's mission come to life every day by empowering marketers to achieve phenomenal business results. I hope that you will find *Letters to the C-Suite* to be an inspired source for marketing wisdom in 2009.

Regards,

Tim Kopp, Chief Marketing Officer, ExactTarget



Rohit Bhargava

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Rohit is a founding member of the 360 Digital Influence group at Ogilvy and author of the best selling new book "Personality Not Included," a guide on how to use personality to reinvent your marketing that has been published globally in 5 languages. He publishes the Influential Marketing blog, ranked among the top 50 marketing blogs in the world, and has been featured in The Wall Street Journal, BusinessWeek, and other global media. He is a frequent keynote speaker on marketing and business strategy and is commonly recognized as the creator of Social Media Optimization (SMO), a new marketing concept.

To the Executive Team:

I know you're working on some big changes right now. You mentioned that you don't plan to walk into 2009 with the same plan you had for 2008—and you're looking for some ideas on how you might want to focus your attention. Here are six thoughts that might help:

- ▶ **Don't force a comparison between 2009 and 2008.** If your team feels like the only way to explain something to you is in terms of comparing it to last year, they won't try something new at exactly the time when they should. Give them the right incentive to experiment.
- ▶ **Find a way to embrace your accidental spokespeople.** In the social media era, anyone can be a spokesperson for your brand, from regular employees to passionate customers. Find a way that your brand can connect with these voices and amplify them.
- ▶ **Measure effectiveness, not volume.** Forget the days of reporting about the millions of impressions that you received and patting yourself on the back. You need to let your organization know that management doesn't care about the impressions. What you do care about is sales and effectiveness, which sometimes means the numbers will be far smaller. To explain it, use this line: "I want us to reach the right 500 people instead of the wrong 5 million."
- ▶ **Do whatever it takes to listen more.** Your customers are talking online about your brand right now. If you're not listening to them, your competitors will. And, they can use that knowledge to try to steal your customers. More importantly, your customers will leave for brands that ARE listening. So ask your team what's their listening strategy, and if they don't have one—force them to get one.
- ▶ **Lock customer service in a room with marketing.** If you think I'm exaggerating, I'm not. Only good things will happen if you force these two groups to talk to each other in a way that they usually don't. Maybe you need to literally lock them in a room, or change a seating arrangement, or set up a buddy system. Whatever you do, by getting these groups to communicate more, you'll uncover (and start to fix) problems you didn't even realize you had.
- ▶ **Make authenticity a priority.** At the base of most of these suggestions is a corporate culture shift that means you need to get your team to re-focus on authenticity. This comes from the top. So lose the corporate jets and find a more reasonable way to demonstrate you're a real person. Start by taking a few employees out to lunch and go from there.

Sincerely,

Rohit Bhargava, Author of "Personality Not Included"