Hello CAN Coordinators!

2015 has been quite the year! From the 2015 San Diego Convention to the 2015 Special Education Legislative Conference; from the Raise the Caps Campaign to the passing of the Every Student Succeeds Act, a lot has happened. Now we wave farewell to 2015 and say hello to 2016.

Now is the time to start thinking about our New Years Resolutions especially in terms of your role as a CAN Coordinator. Maybe you’ve wanted to enhance the way you communicate with your network, or present a policy update to your state/division leadership. At any rate, thinking about ways to add to your toolkit is good practice.

In our final CAN Do of 2015, we will discuss ways in which to improve email performance. Emailing information out as well as assessing the effectiveness of your emailing can be daunting but with these tips, you’ll be able to think about emailing timetables, create striking subject lines, make smart choices on content, and grow your network list.

What Day and What Time?

Let’s begin with the basics, right off the bat think about what day you tend to send emails out regarding policy updates, CAN Alerts and other information to your networks. Think about your network audience and what their timetables are usually like. When are they most likely to be looking at their emails? True, some emails are best sent straight away (CAN Alerts) but if you know at certain times your network will be more likely to open an email, take that into consideration.

Once you have thought about the days that work best, think about what time of day. Many people believe the morning is the best time as people are up early to read and prepare for the day, and are therefore more welcoming to emails. Others might say in the afternoon after their target audience has settled in to their day and have more time on their hands. The fact is there is no one time that
can always be perfect for everyone and your job will be to consider which 2-3 times of the day are best and stick to them.

Make that Subject Line Shine

Subject lines can be tricky. Many people make the mistake of making their subject lines extra wordy or even lacking in words. These strategies usually dub the email as spam or perhaps not as interesting therefore resulting in less opens. The true key is to keep it simple, concise and honest. Always set your subscribers’ expectations during the opt-in process about what kinds of emails they’re going to receive. When it comes to email marketing, the best subject lines tell what’s inside. Of course, there are many lesser tips and tricks, such as personalizing subject lines or using selective capitalization, that can move the needle in small ways.

The best approach is to learn as much as you can about how your list reads, and test long and short subject lines over time to see if there are meaningful changes. If you have a network of mainly teachers and administrators their schedules could be tight and so a shorter subject line may be more helpful.

Also take note if your audience might be using tablets, phones, laptops etc. Some subjects lines will take up more or less space dependent upon the median being used to read emails.

Content Always Matters

Successful emails give readers useful information far more often than they ask them to take action. A successful email program provides value. It can be the latest blog post from the Policy Insider or infographic that pertains to the email subject, a press release, a political update, an announcement on the CEC homepage or anything else that helps your network become more excited to receive your emails regularly.

Whatever you choose to offer as extra information, relevant content is essential.

An email should be cast to resonate with the audience. How you communicate with them can set your email apart from all of the other items in their inbox, and that’s an advantage you should leverage. Adding a personal touch is always another way to have your network get to know you. Let them know who you are and that you’re a passionate CAN Coordinator dedicated to sharing the latest CEC policy news and information. It can be more time consuming than simply copying and
pasting text but think of it as time well spent!

Make it fun! Using free simple tools like Survey Monkey, you can ask your readers questions or allow them to take polls (keep it short) and then report back the answers in a subsequent email. This allows them to interact with you and you have the benefit of collecting information from your network.

**Growing Your Network List**

Keeping your network alive and thriving can feel stressful as numbers bounce up and down but have no fear, there are ways to keep it from falling off the deep end. What you must keep in mind is people make changes. They leave jobs. They leave the country. They change email addresses and abandon accounts. They unsubscribe. Focus on what you can do to grow your network.

You can showcase your emails by creating a unique email signature that promotes your role as a CAN Coordinator when shooting off a CAN Alert or a policy update (like a picture icon). You can also create a short summary of what your role is on your state/division site and through social media outlets. It is also wise to encourage your current members of your network to share your emails with people within their own network creating that domino effect.

*The CEC Policy and Advocacy Team wishes you all a Happy Holiday and New Year!*

Questions? Contact Rosie Haller-Kaplan: rosehk@cec.sped.org or 703-264-9498