



## Pass it On

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It's one of the trickier challenges of b-to-b marketing: Business purchases often involve multiple people within the same organization. A marketer might have an e-mail address for one contact but lack data on others, making it difficult to effectively reach all the necessary influencers and decision-makers.

Savvy marketers are working around this obstacle with viral marketing, said Janet Rubio, chief insights officer at Engauge, a branding, digital and direct marketing agency. Video works particularly well in viral efforts, she said, whether it's embedded in the e-mail itself or posted on a Web site to which the e-mail links. Video is bringing life to e-mail in new kinds of ways, she said.

For client Best Buy, which has an external sales force for the small-business market, Engauge created a virtual showroom for products such as digital signage and server technology. The showroom features video on various topics and includes extensive information about products.

After a sales call, salespeople send follow-up e-mails thanking prospects for their time and directing them to the virtual showroom. Recipients can view video and forward the e-mail to colleagues who might be interested. We have a tracking mechanism so we can see who's looking at [the video] and what's happening, and then we trigger e-mails from the sales guys saying, "Thanks for looking at it. We'll follow up with you in a few days," Rubio said.

Video e-mails aren't right for every marketer or every campaign, however. There needs to be a strategic reason for it to be done, Rubio said. If you're trying to sell a \$10 widget, it might be overkill. But if you're selling a \$1 million piece of technology and it's part of a longer sales process, the person receiving it will appreciate the time and energy you've invested and that you're talking to them one on one.

Also, marketers need to consider the technical piece of the equation carefully, Rubio said. You have to make sure you don't bury somebody with a file that is this enormous thing that doesn't work and doesn't run, she said.

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