

The Secrets of Email Marketing



Introduction & Contents

This guide is aimed to help the beginner and experienced create an email campaign that will achieve results. Every point has been carefully considered and thoroughly tested in-house by our team of technical experts.

We hope you enjoy!

Topics Covered

All points relevant to a successful campaign will be covered, including:

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1. Why Email?

This is an obvious question but one that is, for whatever reason, so often overlooked by companies.

Objectives of campaign

There are many reasons to contact other companies via email; below are just a few: Some of these are blatantly obvious, others have more subtle implications.

Sales Prospecting	Relatively easy to understand and launch
Compliance	Traditionally gets a good result – shock tactics can be useful
Brand Building	Difficult to measure – generally, more is better
Newsletter	Useful in nurturing and retention
Questionnaire	Notoriously low returns – needs very careful planning & implementation - usually only a one-off chance.

Each of the above requires a different pitch. For example, a sales retention email would be pitched entirely differently to a prospecting email.



Newsletters are a very important part of the mix, often neglected because of the amount of work involved. Aside from the obvious promotion benefits they can also play a part in your SEO work, in the invitation of feedback (good and bad) and countless other areas of your marketing.

If you haven't started a newsletter yet, then do so. If you already have one then resolve to spend some more time each month looking for content. It will reap rewards in terms of customer engagement.

1. Why Email?

Aims & Expectations

It is crucial to set realistic goals before implanting any email campaign. These can then be used as a benchmark to measure and evaluate performance. In practice, this may not be as easy as it sounds – each type of campaign will have different expectations.

Useful measurements are in terms of **open rates** (how many people open/read the email) and **click rates** (how many of these actually click a link within the email, to your website for example).

Open Rates

This is usually expressed as a percentage. To arrive at the figure use the formula:

$$\text{OR} = (\text{ER} / \text{ED}) * 100$$

Where:

OR = open rate

ER = emails read

ED = emails delivered

E.g. $(5196 / 65,000) * 100 = 8\%$ open rate

Click Rates

As above, but usually expressed as a percentage of the emails opened. Use the formula:

$$\text{CR} = (\text{EC} / \text{ER}) * 100$$

Where:

OR = open rate

ER = emails read

ED = emails delivered

E.g. $(5196 / 65,000) * 100 = 8\%$ open rate

1. Why Email?

If the email is sales orientated then the ROI is a relatively simple calculation. Calculating ROI on other types of email is far more complicated e.g. Brand-building, newsletters.

If your campaign is failing to reach a profitable ROI there are some possible remedies:

Increase the profit margin per item This is often possible, especially if moving from traditional retail to online sales. Overheads are substantially lowered and thus the profit margin increases without touching the price.

Increase the open and click rates This is very much a trial and error, suck it and see methodology. Try varying the subject line and rephrasing the copy.

You need to continually make changes and adapt to the new to keep your campaigns current and successful. The emailing landscape changes very quickly and evolution is the key to success.

There may be times when you just need to admit that perhaps the world isn't quite ready to buy into your product.

Too often companies complain that they have a fantastic open-rate combined with a decent click rate, but few if any sales. If we compare this to being a shopkeeper then it is easy to understand.

If you had a shop with a footfall of 800 customers per day, with just 2 or 3 daily sales, then you obviously have a problem.

You are too expensive

OR

Your goods are inferior

OR

The demand just isn't there

OR

A combination of these factors

1. Why Email?

Work Hard or Work Smart

Smart marketing today involves engagement. The Internet means that you are no longer in local competition – it's a global market and your competitors have just declared open season on you. The days of lazy marketing are over. 'Spray and pray' is dead and buried.

To succeed it is no longer viable to broadcast millions of emails and sit waiting for the phone to ring. It is necessary now to become involved and take a far more pro-active sales and marketing stance.

A tried and tested method is that of sales nurturing by email. This enables you to convert prospects to leads, and leads to customers, using a softer approach. Normal methods involve a series of emails that build in importance. The countdown method is also useful, although over-used these days.

- 60 days to the end of our sale
- Only 30 days left
- Last few days
- Final Chance

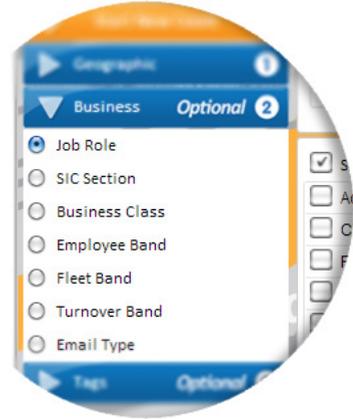
2. Email Data

Data Selection

The best data is your own data - collect data online via your website, your CRM or offline at exhibitions, on the telephone etc. The more data you collect the better.

If you want to rent data then only use members of the direct marketing association - the DMA is the body the direct mail industry uses to self regulate.

When renting data make sure you understand your audience, be specific about the criteria of your target audience - the more targeting you do the better the results.



Important Considerations

There are three points that are crucial to remember in respect to any email list, whatever its source or provenance.

De-dupe – short for de-duplication

- This process involves ensuring that email addresses occur only once within any list. Dependent on source it is very easy to arrive at duplicate addresses, especially when working with aggregated data formed by combining two or more lists.
- Failing to perform this operation will result in a recipient receiving two or more copies of the email, showing you in an unfavourable light and prompting complaints.
- This procedure should always be performed on any new list and following any subsequent additions or updates.

2. Email Data

Unsubs – short for unsubscribe request.

- Best practice insists that you offer an unsubscribe option along with each email broadcast – needless to say any removal requests submitted should be honoured.
- Normal practice is to maintain a suppression list against which lists are screened prior to broadcast. Most broadcast solutions will support this as an automatic feature but otherwise you are left with the manual option.
- Dependent on the system used this can range from a manual system to a fully-blown automated process. This should be given due diligence, as nothing is likely to cause you more problems than this particular area. Get it wrong and your world explodes!
- Always be prepared to deal with ‘forwarded emails’. A recipient receives your email at say john@anyco.com . However, he has an active forward command on this address and all emails are automatically forwarded to jb@hotmail.com . Subsequent unsubscribe requests are pointless if received from the latter address, as the former is still the active address within your data set.

Cleansing

- Failure to maintain your list and especially remove hard-bounces will cause you tremendous problems in the long run. ISP’s are extremely sensitive to the number of bounces recorded against a specific IP address. Repeat offenders are just digging their own graves. Worst-case scenario – you could end up on a blacklist as a ‘spammer’.
- Keeping your data current is possibly the hardest task of all. Many companies try applying a tele-verification model, literally calling each contact in an attempt to verify their details. This is at best slow and inefficient. Given the ‘churn’ within today’s job market it is also akin to the fabled painting of the Forth Bridge ie never ending.
- Customer / prospect engagement can really assist here. If you are on good emailing terms with the contacts in your list then frequent ‘soft’ reminders should prompt a large percentage of them to update their details with you. No list can ever be 100% accurate and the percentage accuracy always falls in line with the list volume.

SUMMARY – keep your lists as clean and current as possible.

3. Email Design

“Unlike marketers in other disciplines, email marketers have to worry about getting their messages to their intended recipients. Regardless of how much time you spend on getting the copy just right and the care you put into your creative, it is all wasted if your message is not delivered.”

The above quotation is from The DMA and illustrates very briefly the dilemma facing anyone involved in email marketing. Email has now become a victim of its own success with ever-increasing obstacles set up to prevent delivery.

Consideration must be given to the type of email desired; prospect, retention or awareness. Style and technique will vary accordingly. As always this is subjective but a quick read of emails currently in your inbox should suffice to outline the major differences.

Spam trigger words

Be aware of Spam trigger words. Spam filters look at a long list of criteria to judge whether or not your email is junk. They will assign points each time they see a spam phrase or word and certain criteria get more points than others. Avoid using phrases like “Click here!”, “Free”, USING CAPS, exclamation points!!!! and others.

HTML or Plain Text?

A HTML email design have lots of appeal for marketers, designers and consumers – but for coders, it’s a real headache to create them properly. There are many elements that can be stripped out by an email client – so never assume that the email will look exactly the same on all email programs. Our HTML design whitepaper includes many useful tips and pointers to create a successful HTML and ways to avoid your email being treated as SPAM.

Contrary to belief it is not always necessary to spend time and money designing an HTML email when a simple text email can be just as effective.

A well written text email should always contain a brief summary of your offer in the first paragraph and plenty of call to actions (telephone number, reply address, hyperlink).



3. Email Design

Content is King

We are often tempted to run offers as a way of generating sales when using email but this is not the only way.

Running a survey by email is an excellent way to engage your audience and involve them in your product and service. Sending information relevant to your industry and your audience can win the mind of the client and make you stand out as a market leader. Emails can also be used to update customers with service updates that can include marketing information.

Writing killer copy

- The text of an email should always be concise and incisive – short, sweet and to the point. This is a practiced art and can often be contracted out. Bullet points always serve to highlight any USP's that you may possess.
- If language and prose is not your forté, then find someone with the necessary skill set. Badly composed emails tend to produce poor results.
- Please always check grammar and spelling and ALWAYS take a second opinion. It is is to easy to overlook mistakes such as the ones in this sentence. Did you spot them? Your critics will! If time allows, revisit your copy the next day and perform a précis exercise on your own work. You will be surprised at the results.
- Remember that your email is often the first point of contact between you and a potential customer, and errors do not impress! You never get a second chance to make a first impression.
- Try to sell your product/service in 3 short paragraphs – Make sure it makes you stand out from the crowd

Use Social Media

Email is an excellent channel to engage prospective and existing customers - but why stop at email? On every email you send include your Facebook, Google+ and Twitter information so that companies and individuals interested in your products and services can receive updates via various different channels, not just email.



4. Email Delivery

Having received the email design we now need to check that it delivers OK. Never assume that your email client is a definitive test. There is absolutely no point creating a stunning email campaign if you can't get it delivered.

Email delivery is an art and only a few get it right.

Do not download software from the internet, install it on a server either in your office or home and expect to get your message delivered - it won't. Use an Email Service Provider - email service providers offer an online solution that has been developed over time - you can upload your list and creative, schedule your campaign then watch the results from the comfort of your desk.

Subject Lines

The subject line is critical - this is what triggers your audience to open the email, if it is not compelling, if it is not of interest to your target audience then the only reason your audience will open the email will be to unsubscribe.

- The subject line of an email is of prime importance. An incorrect or unwise choice can totally negate any campaign straight off the bat. One should try to write incisive subject lines but within certain guidelines, avoiding the use of obvious spam-trigger words and phrases. Remember the purpose of the subject line – “to prompt the recipient to open the email”.
- Do not use capital letters, this is considered rude - do not use lots of hyphenation such as exclamation marks, these are considered pushy and arrogant.
- Various on-line test routines are hosted and a quick Google search will find them for you. As always, I don't believe that any single one should be treated as sacrosanct but they can save hours in the testing procedure.
- Make your subject line fall in line with your offer but leave as much as possible to the imagination such as : “We must be crazy to be running this offer” - instead of “£25 BBQ deals”.

4. Email Delivery

Delivery Process

The mechanics of delivery vary between your elected platforms; basic principles however hold true across them all. The process invariably consists of the following steps:

Upload the cleansed data file

Upload the creative HTML design

Host all images where necessary – note the use of absolute addresses

Setup the broadcast, stating the subject line

Test the email to test addresses

ENSURE that the unsub / suppression file is active

Campaign Launching

You are now on the brink of the point of no return. If anything is wrong the next step is irreversible so check your checklist, then check again.

Click GO – you are now committed and inboxes will start to fill VERY rapidly. It's now a bit too late to find problems. If so, you'll just need to bite the bullet!

More sophisticated delivery systems allow for 'throttled' delivery, usually quoted as emails per hour e.g. 5K, 20K etc. Un-throttled, many systems are capable of delivering millions of emails per hour, or around 300 PER SECOND.

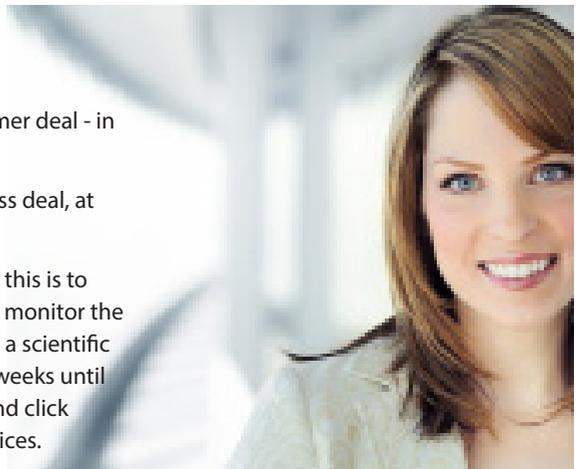
Timing

Timing is key!

When do you send a business to consumer deal - in the evening, at the weekend?

When do you send a business to business deal, at 10am on Tuesday morning.

The only way you will be able to answer this is to test various different delivery times and monitor the response - create a grid and treat this as a scientific experiment - run tests over a matter of weeks until you eventually get an optimum open and click through rate for your products and services.



5. Legislation and Best Practice

Legislation (ICO)

Ensure that you are au fait with the legislation. If in doubt always visit:

<http://www.ico.gov.uk/>

This is the official website of the Information Commissioner's Office, the watchdog for the entire industry. Of particular interest is:

http://www.ico.gov.uk/for_organisations/privacy_and_electronic_communications/the_guide/electronic_mail.aspx

This link states:

"..... We have no authority to take enforcement action based on the content of emails sent to corporate subscribers even though that content may be entirely inappropriate for business to business communications....."

Best Practice

In their Guidance for Marketers the following Q&A appears:

How do the Regulations apply to business-to-business marketing by electronic mail?

Your obligations are as follows.

You **must not** conceal your identity when you send, or instigate the sending of, a marketing message by electronic mail to **anyone** (including corporate subscribers); **and** you **must** provide a valid address to which the recipient (including corporate subscribers) can send an opt-out request

..... In our view, it makes no business sense to continue to send marketing material to a business contact who no longer wishes to hear from you. Arguably, by failing to respect a business-to-business opt-out request you may give the impression that you are unconcerned about your commercial reputation.

The above statement relates to corporate / business addresses.

Be aware always of the difference between corporate and consumer email addresses.

These are two very different animals and MUST always be treated differently.

6. Complaints

Never take a complaint as personal

Some of the more sensitive amongst us have a tendency to do just that. In some instances this can have repercussions on future performance – eg. a growing reluctance to answer the phone. To email successfully and pro-actively, one needs a slightly thicker skin!

It's a fact of life that however careful you are with your emailing activities, you will get complaints. Taking any cross section of complainers they will vary from the mildly apologetic to the raving psychopath, with all shades in between.

So, you've sent your email and have picked up some decent business. The sun is shining, all is well with the world and then you get the dreaded phone call:

It's Mr Know-It-All and he is NOT happy

Where did you get my email address?

Do you know that you're breaking the law!

You're just a bunch of Spammers! etc, etc.

Horror – just what do you do?

How to deal with complaints

Golden rule

Never, never, never get into a verbal argument with this character. Usually he is unwilling to listen to reason anyway and the situation has a way of escalating in a very short space of time.

IF you have taken all the right steps in respect of compliance and permissions then you occupy the high ground which you can defend all day long. The only course of action open to you is to follow procedure – take him off your list and confirm this to him by email. Of course, ensure that he doesn't get your next flyer else you have created a real problem.

Useful tip – when unsubscribing a recipient it usually pays to search your data lists for any other addresses registered at the same domain and remove those at the same time. This should sever all ties with a potential time-bomb.



7. Tracking

So, the email has gone. You looked at the project, costed it out, weighed up all the pros and cons, designed and tested the flyer, set the job ready on the broadcast server and finally, finally summoned the resolve to click the mouse and commit to broadcast.

Monitoring campaign results

What now? It's been 10 minutes and your phone still hasn't rung. Have the emails

actually been sent out? Is anybody reading them? Has anyone clicked a link to your website? Just how exactly do you collate these results?

Broadcast platforms will vary in how these figures are presented.

Use an agency and you should receive a full and comprehensive report some 24 hours later.

Use an online solution and things are better – results may be available in real-time, but in any case within an hour.

OK, so far so good. But let's now be a little pro-active. It would be great if we could see those who read the email as they do so. Why?

Well, what better time to call them, now that you have an electronic foot-in-the-door.



Response Management

When people respond to an email marketing campaign it might be that they fill in a contact form on your website or call you or maybe reply to the email itself.

It is critical you respond quickly and effectively - have information to hand that can be sent by email during the telephone call.

Every email reader that is ignored is a potential lost sale.

If using your own CRM then the process is:

- Record the response
- Call or email the reader
- Establish the interest level
- Nurture accordingly

8. Slicing & Dicing

Once you have completed several campaigns you will begin to see a trend, who is opening your emails, who clicks through on your emails.

Try to segment these audiences into pots and engage them using different tactics - there is after all no point in sending the same offer to the same person week after week if that person is responding but not getting in touch - try making the offer more tempting.

People who never open your email may no longer be interested in your product or service, perhaps they went with a competitor - perhaps you could send this audience information about how your product continues to beat the competition.



Thank you!

Did you find this presentation useful? Would you like to provide us with some feedback?

If you would like free expert advice to improve your current and future email marketing you can contact us on 0845 226 7181 or email enquiries@emailmovers.com

Thank you for your time.

About Emailmovers

Emailmovers has been established since 2003 and is now the UK's leading B2B Email Marketing Agency with in excess of 4,000 clients including Experian, Microsoft and many more.