

The (Short) Guide to Email Marketing Success



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The (Short) Guide to Email Marketing Success

Are you getting the most out of your email campaigns? In almost every organization, email marketing is one of the most effective tactics for driving sales. The low cost of creating and deploying your email campaigns makes high ROI achievable for most marketers. According to a [study by ExactTarget](#), 77% of consumers prefer to receive permission-based marketing communications through email. Quality communication with your prospects and customers on a regular basis can get you closer to that nirvana of people looking forward to your message, or missing it when it doesn't show up.

In a few short pages, this ebook looks at the different types of email marketers, what it takes to create a successful email, how to measure the success of your campaigns, and expert predictions for future trends in email marketing.

Of all the different channels that we have access to as marketers, the only one that lets us actively go out and tap a consumer on the shoulder is email. It's that way because it's one of the oldest marketing communication methods. Nothing else functions like email.

Christopher S. Penn, author of Marketing White Belt and Vice President of Marketing Technology at SHIFT Communications

What Type of Email Marketer are You?

Not all organizations utilize email marketing. Organizations that do have email programs might not employ the best practices needed to reap the benefits of this tactic. Depending on your organization's level of proficiency in email marketing, this guide can help you build an email program from the ground up or hone your skills as an email marketing master. How do you rank in the world of email marketing?



Beginner

The qualifier for Beginner level is a simple question: "Can you get an email to your target customers or prospects out the door?" Compiling your list of targets, writing copy (a compelling offer please, not corporate PR-speak), and checking simple diagnostics like open and click rates are the basic competencies. At this stage, list management can be a significant headache, and testing or multi-stage campaigns are enough to make your head explode if email is not your strength.



Intermediate

Intermediate email practitioners know how to get their message out the door and analyze and test for effectiveness. Splitting your list to optimize subject lines, message length, graphics, and infinite combinations of other elements will be critical to the success of your email campaigns. Ironically enough, the most common mistake in this stage is too much testing. At some point, you need to perform an ROI analysis to see if the results generated from your tests are worth the resources. You may find that if your mailing lists have fewer than 100,000 recipients, you'd be better off spending more time creating and promoting content on your site, blog, and networks rather than trying to squeeze out another 0.1% on the conversion rate.



Experts

Experts push their email vendors to the feature limit. They've integrated the email process into other systems. Here are some of the tactics Experts use in email programs:

- Taguchi Testing: also known as multi-variate testing, where multiple variables are tested at the same time
- Throttling: stretching and testing send times to see how results are affected
- Advanced Integration: leveraging CRM and marketing automation for further activity tracking

At this level, the Experts are always testing and reaching new milestones (customer acquisition, form completes, awareness) that the average email marketer never sees. They have envisioned the huge opportunity in marketing automation. Marketers who do not see return on their email campaigns are likely sending content that nobody wants, or they're failing to effectively communicate the benefits of doing business with their organization. There's no reason that the best practices from various industries cannot be mastered by all marketers.

How to Create the Perfect Email

Developing an initial relationship with a prospect or maintaining a dialogue to drive brand loyalty requires mastery of customer insights, strategy, and tone. Email marketing can help with these objectives, but there are certain challenges and pitfalls to plan for:

- Your audience receives 20 – 100 emails per day, and they unsubscribe from yours.
- They don't read your email, because it wasn't relevant to them or it was trapped by a spam filter.
- You nail the subject line, but the preview text looks like spam or an auto-generated response.
- You sell too hard, too soon.
- They don't respond to or follow the CTA.
- The benefits are not clearly defined or easily scannable for your readers.
- You blast out bad emails.

The good news is there are steps to improve your email success:

1. Test your content

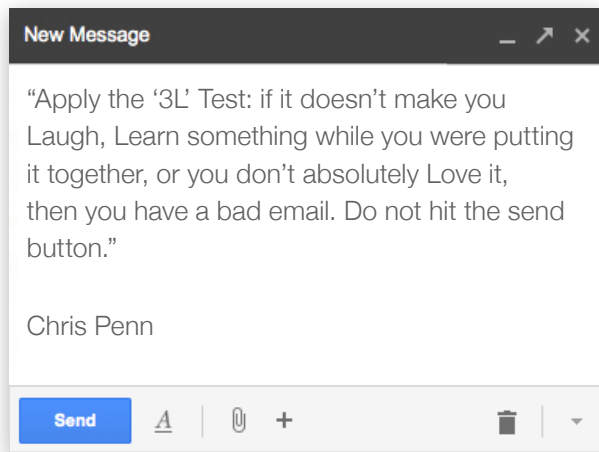
Test different content and copy within your email. You're trying to get the prospect to take action. Remember the context of your email. It's likely that your recipients are in the preliminary stages of the sales cycle, and they aren't willing or ready to buy. Consider your wording, such as "take a test drive of our product" vs. "buy today!" Have a communication plan in place to nurture early-stage buyers along the sales cycles.

2. Show how you can help

Don't just send out a generic email that touts the features of your product. Instead, understand your audience's needs and address them. Read on for more information on the importance of audience segmentation, data-driven insights, and relevant content.

3. Ask yourself, "would I click on this?" If your answer is no, start over.

Most importantly, consider this test as you develop your email campaign:

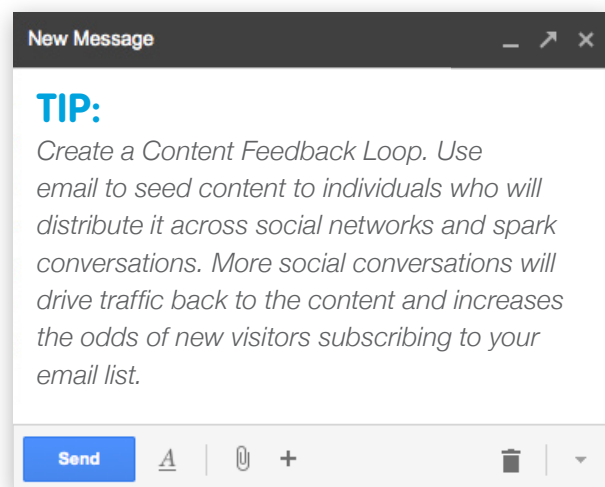


How to Measure Email Marketing

There are plenty of metrics that help judge the success of your email campaigns, but which KPIs are critical to your overall business objectives?

Of all the marketing channels, email has the highest ROI per dollar spent, with an average of \$39.56 per dollar invested, according to the Direct Marketing Association. Whatever your end goal is, whether it's lead generation, closed deals, or revenue, you should align every method and action to your business goal.

Email also has diagnostic (or vanity) metrics. There are open rates, click-through rates, click-to-action rates, forwards, social shares – and plenty of others that may be useful, though they do not directly indicate if you've grown your business. While it's worthwhile to include these in any performance report, your campaign should be built around your primary success metric. Begin with the end in mind.



The Future of Email Marketing

In the rapidly-changing world of marketing, in which the relationship between brands and consumers has evolved considerably over the last decade, email marketing has remained a steady connection between the two groups. But what is in store for the future of email marketing, and how will technology shape that future?




Expert email marketers have realized the opportunity in marketing automation. Quality marketing automation software allows you to send just the relevant, in-demand content to buyers at different stages of the sales cycle. Save your dollars on wasted impressions and clicks from advertisements, and deliver the right message to the right audience at the right time.

Email is a critical component of your integrated marketing campaigns. You can pull in prospects with social media, but email marketing provides the push mechanism to broadcast your content. If you leave email out, then you're missing out on vast opportunities to fuel your business. Successful marketers will find new ways of integrating communication across marketing channels to provide a consistent (and better) customer experience.



Salesforce.com announced that it has recently acquired ExactTarget, a leading cloud marketing platform. Salesforce.com's acquisition of ExactTarget will further its mission of being the world's leading CRM platform—one that enables companies to transform how they connect with their customers across sales, service, and marketing. By combining ExactTarget's leading digital marketing capabilities with Salesforce.com's leading sales, service and social marketing solutions, Salesforce will create a world-class marketing platform across email, social, mobile and the web.

Have questions? Contact us:

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