

## 8 Steps to Email Marketing Success

Love it or hate it, email marketing has become a highly valued tool to develop and maintain long-term customer relationships. If you're involved in marketing, you're probably excited about the speed of sending emails, the potential for fast responses and the relative low-cost. But if you're in a rush, you might end up sending emails to people who have forgotten you, or didn't give you permission in the first place. So here are some tips that will help you achieve email marketing success

### 1. Get Permission

Permission means that people have requested email marketing from you. So before investing your time and money in an email marketing campaign, start getting permission from your customers. A little patience and some solid ground work will mean that your email campaign will result in fewer spam complaints, better deliverability and better open and click results.

### 2. Don't Rush

It's easy to see email marketing as a quick means to an end, but rushed campaigns hold hidden dangers. You need to think through the content, you need to plan your subject line (the most important factor in your open rate), you need to do a proper design and coding, you need to make sure your contact list is clean and opt-in.

### 3. Match your message to your contacts

In any organisation, you will have different levels of contacts. Some will be customers who buy from you regularly, some will be contacts who know you but don't buy, some will be prospects who don't know you at all. One sales message that is blasted to all quickly becomes spam.

### 4. Remind contacts of how they know you

Unless you're in touch with your contacts regularly, they will quickly forget who you are. So the occasional email newsletter that arrives out of the blue is likely to be sent to 'junk mail' than opened. A lot of email experts say that permission goes stale after only six months, so if you're not regularly contacting your list, then you'll need to send a 'remember me' message.

### 5. Think 'relationship' not 'one hit wonder'

The most successful email programmes are those that build a relationship with their list of contacts. Timing and relevancy are key factors in building positive relationships with contacts that may lead to business sooner or later.

## 6. Get your content right

Email provides some interesting communication challenges. Research shows that 60% of readers make it to the bottom of emails with images. Any design features may not be visible on portable devices, such as iPhones and Blackberrys, so consider if they are really necessary to support the email.

As with any other form of marketing copy, write it from the customer's point of view. What would they find useful to know? And there are certain things that are best avoided altogether:

Spam Filters look at a long list of criteria to decide whether or not an email is junk. These items are almost always on this list of criteria:

- Overuse of exclamation points!!!!
- USING ALL CAPS – IT'S LIKE YELLING IN EMAIL
- Incorrect HTML coding – a common mistake when converting a Word file to HTML
- Colouring fonts bright red, blue or green
- Using words like 'test', 'free', 'best' in the subject line
- Creating an HTML email that's nothing but one big image, with little or no text.

## 7. Test your email campaign

HTML emails look different depending on which email programme is used to view them. Just because it looks good in the preview window, or when you send a test to yourself, doesn't mean it'll present in exactly the same way for all your recipients. The devil is in the detail, so make sure your email is tested as thoroughly as possible before broadcasting.

## 8. Monitor results

One of the real benefits of emailing is that it is possible to measure results after every email campaign. It's possible to run the same campaign using two different subject headings to see which produces the greater number of opens and clicks. You can find out which client spam filters are rejecting your emails. Look for trends and make changes to campaigns to see if you can improve the results and achieve better conversions.