

THE ULTIMATE EMAIL MARKETING CHECKLIST



How to Start, Manage, Maintain & Profit from Email Marketing

Powered by
Women in Ecommerce

EMAIL MARKETING

Did you know... for every \$1 spent on email marketing you can expect a return of \$38...And contrary to what some social media specialists will tell you, consistent email marketing generally outperforms consistent social media marketing.

19 reasons email marketing works:

1. **Cheap.** There's no doubt about it, sending email is inexpensive. You might pay for a 3rd party service to deliver your email and you may even hire a writer to create your emails for you, but overall, the costs involved with email are pretty small. And when you consider #2 on this list, any costs really pay for themselves. Or they should, if you're doing it right.
2. **ROI is huge.** According to The Direct Marketing Association, email marketing had an average return of \$43.52 for each dollar spent (2011).
3. **Just about everyone has an email address.** Yeah, a lot of people have Facebook accounts, but email still wins. You could email your best friends, parents and sister, but you most likely can't Facebook (*verb*) all of them. Same goes with a lot of people on your mailing lists.
4. **Direct.** Unlike other marketing methods, email reaches your subscribers directly and is addressed to them specifically, unlike the general broadcasting we do on social media and in other mediums.
5. **Personal and customizable.** Email is also very personal and can be customized with names and other information subscribers voluntarily provide like they're geographic location, their interests, their goals and more.

6. **Targeting.** It's easy to create multiple lists and fine-tune your targeting. You can segment customers based on the types of products they're interested and subscribers based on the information that attracts them most. Where else do you have so much control?
7. **Retain your visitor.** When someone visits your website for the first time, the chances of them coming back are almost ZERO. NIL. NADA. By asking them to leave their email address, you get the chance to ask them to come back over and over again.
8. **Build and cultivate relationships.** Email is an opportunity for your business to build your brand and gain the trust of your subscribers. Do your email marketing right and your subscribers will feel like they know you and can count on you for sound advice and great products.
9. **Commercial.** People expect commercial messages via email, making it much easier to sell via email than through web content or social media, for example. In fact, according to Marketing Land, 77% of us prefer to get commercial message through email.
10. **It's mobile.** While everyone is shouting that mobile apps and sites is where the money is at, never forget that email is one of those handy things available and readily used through mobile technology. According to a recent Mobile Movement study sponsored by Google, 82% of smartphone users check and send email on their mobile device.
11. **Fast to create.** Whipping up an email can be as fast (or as slow...but don't let it be) as you want. No need to spend days creating an advertisement. Just write and go.
12. **Quick results.** Email gets out there instantly and can start working for your business within minutes because it hits those inboxes quickly and people check email frequently.

13. **Easy to collect data.** You can find out information about open rates, click throughs, sales conversions and demographic data of your subscribers. When you can measure your marketing, you can easily improve it.
14. **Drives traffic to your other marketing channels.** If you're engaging in blogging, social media or other efforts, your email list is an easy source of traffic. If you've just posted a great blog post or a jaw-dropping image on Pinterest, all you have to do is email your list and you've got people seeing it.
15. **Customers.** Once someone buys something, you need a way to reach them so you can grow your relationship and sell more products to them. Email makes it easy to do this because you can segment your customers from the rest of your database.
16. **Preferential Treatment:** If you want to give special perks to your customers or certain subscribers, it's easy to do with email. Give them advanced notice of new products, give them special discount offers and more.
17. **More focus.** Social media is a great place to tap into large audiences, but whenever you post, you are competing with a bunch of unrelated noise and it's not always easy to get attention. The same may go for an email inbox, but once your email is opened, the focus is on you.
18. **Follow-up.** The best results come from following up. You can make follow up blog posts, ads or social media updates, but the chances of getting all your messages seen are much more likely with email.
19. **Advertising that people asked for.** This is one of the most amazing things about email. It is permission-based advertising. Instead of bombarding people with ads they have no interest in, they actually come to your website and ask you to send commercial information.

An email list is an asset you own and that is why email marketing works. You don't share it with the people who own the social media channels you participate in. You can use it over and over again. The important thing to keep in mind is if you grow it and nurture it, you will get results from it.

Effective email marketing begins with that first email. Include the following elements in that first email to a. Pique their interest and b. Stays out of recipient "spam" folder/box and c. Lowers your unsubscribe rate.

Effective email marketing should:

- ___ Deliver what was promised
- ___ Provide valuable information
- ___ Requests a response/ call-to-action , urging the reader to take action - make sure you give them a reason to take action
- ___ Contains a "cliffhanger" leaving the recipient wanting more
- ___ Includes "whitelist" instructions so the recipient will receive future emails

Before sending your first email it is important to profile your audience.

Here is a list of things you can include in their profile (their avatar):

- Age
- Gender
- Location - Where they live
- Education level completed
- Career
- Income level
- Marital status
- Parents
- Animal parents
- Own or rent a home
- Hobbies

- What they do with expendable income
- Problems and challenges
- How they've tried to solve those problems
- Fears, hopes, goals
- Where they hang-out

Brainstorm Benefits of your email. Answer the following: *Why should they open it. What's in it for them.*

YOUR INITIAL EMAILS:

Your initial emails are the perfect time for new subscribers to get to know you. They should include the following:

- ___ Define Your goals What do you want your reader to do when she/he received your email?
- ___ Has a compelling subject line
- ___ Explains "WHY" you do what you do and why you're passionate about helping them
- ___ Tells a personal story your new subscribers can relate to
- ___ Gives examples of how you have helped other people
- ___ Includes benefits
- ___ Engages the recipient
- ___ Positions you as an expert and trusted advisor
- ___ Invitation to your free community or to follow you on your social media platforms
- ___ Provides links to additional resources and helpful information
- ___ Has a continuing theme
- ___ Tells a relevant story

- ___ Creates a need/desire for your product or service
- ___ Sells something
- ___ Provides valuable information that improves your subscribers lives

LET'S BEGIN WITH THE SUBJECT LINE

The first thing you need to get right when it comes to email marketing is the subject line. If you can't get your subscribers to open your emails, it really doesn't matter how good the actual email is.

It's easy to spend a lot of time crafting a great message and then just slap a subject line on it at the end. Spend some time writing them and see what type of headline gets you good open rates.

___ Keep It Short

You want your readers to see the entire subject line before they click it. You also want to make it easy for people to scan through their emails. Try to get your point across in 50 characters or less. Pay attention to how your subject lines look on your own devices.

Another great idea is to keep a swipe file of subject lines that grabbed your attention. Even if the emails are on a very different topic, you can adapt them for your own needs.

___ Avoid "Spammy" Words

Stay away from using any words we all associate with spam emails. Words like "sale", "discount", "coupon", "free", "limited time offer" and even "reminder" are over used and even if they don't trigger a spam filter and actually make it to your reader's inbox, chances are high they'll get ignored.

Instead, start by using the emails you're saving in your swipe file and then go back and see what subject lines got the best open rates. Try to analyze why they worked well for your market. Not everything will work well in every niche. Find the types of subject lines that get your readers to open your emails and tweak from there.

___ **Personalize It**

While personalizing emails with someone's first name has been overused in some markets, it still works well for many of us. Give it try and see if it works for you. Don't overdo it, but use it when you really need them to open the email.

Depending on what data you collect when your readers sign up, you can personalize other things like their location for example. Seeing the name of your state or even city in an email subject line is sure to get your attention.

___ **Pique Their Curiosity**

We are all nosy and it's hard to ignore subject lines that sound intriguing or only tell part of the story. Using "... " at the end of your subject line will also work.

The idea here is simple. You want them to click and open the email to find out what the heck you're talking about or how the story ends.

___ keep a swipe file of examples of emails you received that got you to open the email.

OTHER THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND:

___ Proof your content - delete unnecessary content

___ Check your links

___ Read your email out loud

___ Check your spam score

___ Send yourself a test message

EMAIL FREQUENCY - WHEN SHOULD YOU MAIL

Wouldn't it be nice if there was a number or a schedule you could follow? While it would be great if there was research that suggested that mailing exactly every 5 days gets you the best results every time, there is no such thing. And there's a very good reason for it.

Every market, every niche, every audience and every person is different. While you'll never make everyone on your list happy, there is a lot you can do to make just about any email frequency work.

Let's lay the groundwork first. You don't want to have too much time in between emails, or your readers will forget you. Anything less than once a month is not a good idea. In most markets and for most business models you don't even want to mail less than twice a month.

On the other end of the spectrum, you don't want to go any higher than one email per day on average. Yes, you may have days when you have a good reason to send multiple emails, but on a weekly or bi-weekly average, you don't want to email more than once a day.

Start by looking at what you're doing now. Then figure out how often you want to mail. Do you grow a closer connection with your market by emailing more often? Do you want to drive more traffic back to your site by emailing them links frequently? Do you want to grow your income by making more frequent email offers?

Once you know where you're at and where you want to be, you can start to make a plan for getting from point A to point B. What you don't want to do is to go straight from emailing once every few months to daily emails. It'll get your readers clicking the spam button like crazy. Instead, start with monthly emails for a couple of months, then let your readers know you have more to share with them and start mailing weekly. Then a few months later, ramp it up to daily emails.

Or find a good reason why you're mailing them daily. For example, while you usually publish a weekly newsletter with the occasional promotional email in between, running a 15 or 30 day challenge for your readers is a great excuse to hit their inbox daily without seeming pushy or spammy.

Listen to your audience when you get feedback on email frequency but also realize that there will always be someone complaining. Look at data like open rates to get a better feel for what frequency is working best for you and your audience.

KEEP THEM WAITING FOR MORE - USING FORESHADOWING TO CREATE ANTICIPATION

There's a pretty neat strategy called foreshadowing that you can use in your email marketing to improve open rates. You may have seen this used on news programs and talk shows. Right before the commercial break, the hosts announces what's coming up next. The idea is that you're intrigued enough to sit through the commercial to see the next segment.

Another good example of foreshadowing is when magazines show images and headlines or short bullets of what's coming in next month's issue. Again, the point is to pique your interest and get you to either buy the next issue, or even better, get a subscription.

We can easily adapt this for email marketing and it works like a charm. Toward the end of your email transition from what you're talking about today to what's coming in the next email. Be vague on purpose, but grab their attention.

For example, if you're talking about why email marketing is important and the next email will be about crafting subject lines to get a higher open rate, you may write something like this: "Keep an eye out for Friday's email. We'll talk about THE most important thing when it comes to email marketing. If you don't get this right, nothing else matters."

To mix it up, mention what they can find in the next email in the P.S. of your message. If you publish a weekly newsletter, try adding a section on what's coming in the next issue similar to what you see in a magazine. Keep it simple and use images for best results.

You can even take it a step further and get your subscribers to open a previously sent email. This works particularly well if you're writing a series of emails on a related topic. Toward the beginning of your email you mention something you covered in the last email, then move into today's topic and then wrap it up with a little hint about what's coming next.

You don't have to use foreshadowing in every single email. Sprinkle it in here and there where it makes sense. It also gives you a chance to pick up on in the subject line of your next email. Try using something like "As promised..." Even readers who missed your last email might be curious enough to open this one.

Give it a try and see if you start to see higher open rates and more importantly get your subscribers more engaged.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT EMAIL DELIVERABILITY

You're spending a lot of time each week crafting emails to your subscribers, but none of that will do you any good if you don't have a decent delivery rate. If those emails land in your potential customers' spam folders, you don't have much of a chance of making a sale or building a relationship with them. Here are three tips that will help insure that your emails make it to your subscribers' inboxes.

AUTOMATE YOUR EMAIL MARKETING

_____ Use A Reputable Auto Responder Service

Using a reputable auto responder service is the single best thing you can do to improve your chances of avoiding spam folders. Companies like Aweber, Mailjet and Get Response work hard at making sure they are white listed with the big Internet Service Providers and email providers like Gmail.

A good autoresponder will manage your email list, and schedule and deliver messages. You can pre-load a series of messages, so all new subscribers automatically receive all the messages you loaded, according to the schedule you set out.

You probably know that email is a tremendous asset for any online business or really any business today. It's a direct way to reach consumers and it boasts a huge ROI (return on investment).

Your list is an asset that you wholly own and control, instead of being at the mercy of Facebook, Twitter or some other corporation. In short, email is something you have to pay attention to.

The only problem is, paying attention takes time, energy and resources. That can be a challenge if you're flying solo as a small business owner, but there is good news. There are ways to automate and make your email marketing simpler and easier.

Here are just a few ideas for you...

_____ Topic Research

The first stumbling block many writers hit is figuring what to write about. If you don't have the ideas, it's hard to progress in any meaningful way. To help you with this, have an assistant or writer to generate a list of monthly ideas. Give them a general subject area and have them search for hot topics, products you might promote and new angles to explore.

_____ Writing Done for You

Contract with a writer to expand on the topic ideas. Ask them to deliver a month, or more, of email content, so you can make a comprehensive email marketing campaign. Plan ahead so you can have the writer add relevant links and a call to action into each email message.

_____ Automated Delivery

Use an autoresponder service to manage your email list, and to schedule and deliver messages. You can pre-load a series of messages, so all new subscribers automatically receive all the messages you loaded, according to the schedule you set out.

This means that when Subscriber A signs up on Tuesday, they will get Email 1 on the first day, Email 2 at the interval you specify, and so on. Then when Subscriber B signs up on Friday, they will also get Email 1, Email 2 and the rest of the series, again, according to the schedule you create.

Using an autoresponder series has a number of benefits including:

Every subscriber will get every message you send out. When you simply broadcast a newsletter every week, many of the great messages you previously sent out will be missed by new subscribers as they come on.

You have full control over the message your subscriber receives throughout the series, which can help your conversions tremendously. You can start with providing information on a particular topic, introducing a product to help them and then following up to get them to buy. Each subscriber will receive that full series of messages and then you can continue to progress to topics and promotions that will help your subscribers even further.

Of course, you do have to be careful to ensure your autoresponder series includes evergreen topics and you should check it regularly to ensure that links and information are up to date.

Loading Your Autoresponder

Here's where to really put your virtual assistant to work. There are many things your assistant can do to help you keep your email marketing hands-free including:

- ____ Proofreading messages and checking links.
- ____ Adding your affiliate and product links.
- ____ Formatting email for HTML, if needed.
- ____ Loading and scheduling messages.
- ____ Checking stats and providing you with a report summary.
- ____ Reviewing autoresponder series regularly to ensure they're up to date.

The more you can automate your email marketing, the more you can focus on improving your results, developing products and growing your business.

Most auto-responder companies will list their delivery stats. In addition the good ones will make sure your emails are compliant and keep you out of hot water.

SET EXPECTATIONS AND KEEP THEM

Your chances of staying in the main inbox are high when your subscribers regularly open your email. The best way to insure that – outside of providing great content that your subscribers are looking for – is to set expectations from the beginning. Let your subscribers know early on when and how often they can expect an email from you.

You can even use “foreshadowing” in your messages. For example, toward the end of your current broadcast email, mention that they can look for another email from you next Tuesday.

Once you've set those expectations do what you can to meet them. Yes, things happen every once in a while. In general though, do your best to keep your promise and email when your readers expect it.

Doing this regularly will improve your open rates and thus your overall deliverability.

Clean Up Your List Regularly

Another good habit is to clean up your list regularly. If subscribers haven't been opening your emails for the past six months, chances are good they are no longer interested in what you have to offer.

Check your auto-responder services manual or help files to see how you can go about deleting anyone that hasn't opened an email from you in the past six months. If that freaks you out, or you have a seasonal business, start by deleting anyone that hasn't looked at your emails in the past year.

Following these tips and keeping an eye on email deliverability in general will make sure your emails are being read by your subscribers and that's the point of email marketing, isn't it?

GIVE THEM WHAT THEY WANT - AND HOW TO FIND OUT WHAT THAT IS

Effective marketing boils down to this: Find an audience, figure out what they need or want and then deliver it. Email is one of the best mediums to help you do just that. And it isn't always about selling them on a product. In fact, that isn't at all where you want to start.

First you want to build a relationship with your readers. You want them to get to know you. You want to help them out so they start to like you and trust you. Only then will you be able to make an offer and have them pull out their wallet and buy it.

Pay attention to your website stats. Programs like Google Analytics can give you a lot of information of where you're readers came from, what page they landed on and where they were on your site when they joined your list. That data along with demographical information will tell you a lot about your audience.

As you start to email your readers, they will reply and get back in touch with you. Pay attention to what they're saying. And don't forget to read between the lines. Let's say you're in the parenting niche and you noticed that some of your readers are asking for suggestions on being a more patient parent. They complain about being short temperate and freaking out about little things. The real issue may be lack of sleep because the baby or toddler isn't sleeping through the night.

Dig deep and see what you can learn about your market. Sometimes what they tell you they want isn't the real issue. On the flip side, it can be helpful to ask them for suggestions. Keep the questions open ended if you want a lot to work with.

Or consider having your readers fill out a simple little survey. It's quick and easy to do with Google forms. You get some good data and you get your readers to interact. Having them contribute builds a sense of community even via email.

Last but not least, go back and look at the past emails you've sent. Pay attention to open rates, click through rates and unsubscribes. If a large percentage of readers opened the email, that's a good indication they were interested in the topic. If they clicked link to additional content, that's even better. If on the other hand you got a lot of unsubscribes, that might be an indication that either the topic was wrong or your language and overall message didn't click with your audience.

Use all the data and information you get back to learn more about your target audience and connect with them on a deeper level. The more you know about your subscribers, the more effective your email marketing will be.

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