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Email Marketing

The Internet Marketing Academy



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Email Marketing
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* Figures taken from London Business School's Masters in Management 2010 employment report

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Preface

Introduction To Email Marketing

Email now plays a big part in everyone's lives especially that of business. As a business tool is enables you to communicate with your staff, your suppliers and your customers. So just how can you use email effectively to market your business to new and existing clients? This textbook will teach you the basics of how to market using email.

Sean McPheat, a serial entrepreneur and internet marketing authority is the author of this publication. Sean owns many successful online businesses ranging from an International Training business through to dozens of mini sites selling different products and services online. Sean is the founder of the Internet Marketing Academy which aims to improve the standards of internet marketing around the globe. Sean has been featured on CNN, BBC, ITV, on numerous radio stations and has contributed to many newspapers. He's been featured in over 250 different publications.

Sean is a high in demand consultant and speaker on topics related to internet marketing and making money online and estimates show that he has created over £20,000,000 of leads and £6,000,000 of sales all through the internet. That does not include all of the millions that he has helped his clients to make!



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1 Introduction to Email Marketing

For hundreds of years, businesses have found ways of being able to advertise their company and products through many types of media. Advertising is a term used to describe the ways that an institution attempts to persuade people to buy a good or service that it offers. The institution can be anything from a non-profit organization that needs to raise funds to a business that sells grocery items. These institutions, whatever their ultimate goal is, use advertising as way to get themselves recognized and as a way to get people involved. These people they are advertising to are potential customers.

So how do businesses advertise? The short answer is that they do marketing campaigns, but there is so much more to it than that. There are many different marketing campaigns a business can perform, and how a business chooses the type of campaign it carries out is highly dependent on the era and media available in that period of history. If you flip through a magazine, you're likely met with a load of advertisements covering parts of a page, or even an entire page. The same is true for the daily newspaper you might pick up on your way to work each morning.

We continue to see this type of magazine/newspaper advertising to this day, but think about the other forms of advertising we encounter. More importantly, think of the *media* through which we are able to see these advertisements. When we watch television, the programs we watch are interrupted by commercial breaks for products, services, movie trailers and a great deal of other things. Films we see in the movie theater have previews for other movies, and there may even be product placement in the new summer blockbuster hit of the year. In the days when telephone land-lines were the norm, telemarketers would call to interrupt during dinner. Even our mailboxes get filled with advertisements from a vast array of businesses offering discounts for a large pizza and the like. These days, another type of mailbox is a key component to the types of marketing that businesses engage in:

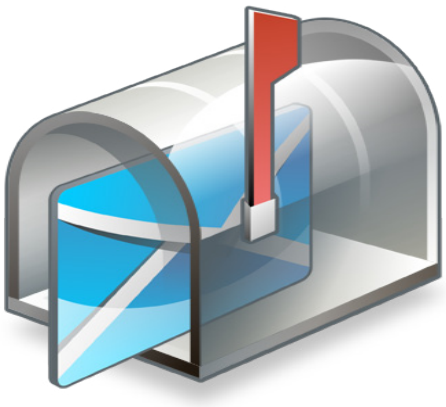
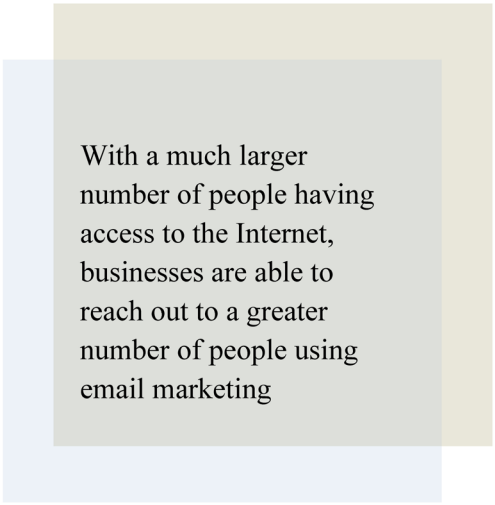


Figure 1 - The Email Inbox

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Unlike with direct mail to P.O boxes and mailboxes outside of homes and apartments, businesses do not have to waste million of pounds of paper to get their advertisements to potential customers. More importantly, with a much larger number of people having access to the Internet, businesses are able to reach out to a greater number of people using email marketing. Businesses know, too, that email has become one of the primary means of communication. Of course, any good marketing campaign utilizes more than one form of media to advertise.

The following ebook will focus exclusively on email marketing and the strategies used to implement it. First, we will cover some basics of email marketing and provide a broad overview of what to expect throughout the ebook.

1.1 What is Email Marketing?

When considering a definition for email marketing, there are a number of ways to define it from the broad to the specific. Essentially, email marketing is the act of sending out emails to customers, both current and prospective. Here are some key components to what a successful email marketing campaign does:

- Direct Email - Emails are sent directly to current and potential customers
- Retention Email - Frequent and regular emails are sent to current customers
- Email Placed Ads - Marketing ads are placed within emails sent by others



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You can think of these components as analogous to marketing by mail. Emails sent directly to current and potential customers are like flyers and envelopes that fill a mailbox. Frequent and regular emails are like printed newsletters sent to regular and loyal customers. Marketing ads within emails are like marketing ads within a newspaper or magazine.

Let's look further at each of these components.

1.1.1 Direct Emails

Receiving direct emails is like receiving a flyer from a local business. In both instances, the business may be providing an announcement for something, like a special deal going on for a limited time or a coupon for one of their products or services. The difference between the two is that with email, you are not confined to receiving mail solely from local businesses. The Internet is a place where the market and competition has become global, and everybody wants to compete for you.

It might sound a bit intimidating, but in recent years, businesses have become better when it comes to marketing to the right demographics, especially with email marketing. They have also become better at *how* they market using emails. Laws against SPAM and customer sensitivity have become key elements to how businesses handle their email marketing practices. These are two of the most important elements to consider when implementing your email marketing strategy.

The distinctive element of direct email, as opposed to retention emails, is that direct email is a call to action on the part of the customer. Let's say you receive an email from a business. You may or may not have heard of them, and you may have never signed up for any of their email lists. Businesses can obtain these lists by buying them, but we will get to that in a later chapter. Either way, the business sees you as a potential customer and wants to entice you with a good deal. You may even have done business with them before and they want to do business once more, offering something else you might be interested in or, better yet, a better deal than before.

The distinctive element of direct email is that it is a call to action on the part of the customer.

The purpose of direct emails is to be promotional. They might offer you a product or service, or they ask you to sign up for something. Potential customers are more likely to get these types of emails.

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1.1.2 Retention Emails

While still promotional in nature, retention emails attempt to retain customer loyalty by offering the customer something.

As we stated before, retention emails are the equivalent of printed newsletters. While still promotional in nature, retention emails attempt to retain customer loyalty by offering the customer something. This could range anywhere from coupons to up-to-date news on the latest products. These types of emails are sent out on a regular basis. It could be a weekly or monthly basis, but usually the business tries to send out emails weekly (or even more frequently) to retain customer interest.

Why are these emails so frequent? Like we said before, the Internet is a global marketplace and competition place. Consumers have loads of information to look at and choose from. Additionally, the attention span of consumers is short, and you have to hold on to that attention span. One study reported that 55% of subscribers to promotional emails and newsletters delete the material without even looking at them. As we will discuss further in the book, a successful email marketing campaign will have a moderate use of retention emails as well as good content use within an email.

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1.1.3 Email Placed Ads

Another way to advertise via email is to get some advertisement space within another email. Many times, businesses that send out retention emails (newsletters) reserve space for other businesses to place their advertisements.

This can be beneficial for you as a business, especially if you have studied the demographic that you are marketing to and the potential customers you could gain. Knowing what other types of businesses your potential customers go to and listen to is a great advantage because it allows you to strategically place your ads in emails likely to get clicks. It is also a benefit for the business with which you have an ad placed because they will know that their emails are being read and they can also do a bit of analytics work to determine where their customers are clicking.

1.2 Does Email Marketing Work?

Simply put, yes, email marketing works. Of course, there is the stigma of SPAM that keeps people wondering whether or not email marketing is still effective. Email marketing, just like other forms of Internet marketing like social media marketing, is fast paced and must be adapted to. Despite sometimes being lumped in with the category of SPAM, email marketing should still be used as part of an Internet marketing strategy. Here are a few statistics to show that email marketing does, in fact, work:

- In a survey by Ecoconsultancy in 2011, 72% of respondents said that email's ROI (Return On Investment) was good or excellent. Organic SEO (Search Engine Optimization) was the only Internet marketing component that did better.
- According to the Direct Marketing Association, email marketing in 2010 was expected to generate $42.08 in ROI for each dollar spent. This outperforms other channels of direct marketing, such as printed catalogs or newsletters.
- According to a 2010 report by Foresee Results, the second biggest influence to retail website visits was through emails. The biggest influence was brand familiarity.
- In a survey of more than 8,000 local US business owners by MerchantCircle, email marketing was one of the Top 3 effective marketing strategies cited by 35.8% of respondents. Social media and search engine marketing scored higher.
- Forbes Media conducted the Ad Effectiveness Survey in February/March 2009, revealing that emails and e-newsletters are considered the second most effective tool for conversion generation, right behind SEO.
- A survey from the Society of Digital Agencies reveals that 70% of brand marketers will plan to invest in email marketing for the year 2011.
- Surveyor Campaigner held a survey in 2010 that said 61% of marketers will raise their email marketing levels in 2011, while 33% of marketers will remain at consistent levels in 2011.
- In 2010, the 9th Annual Merchant Survey asked certain merchants what initiatives they will focus on for improving the performance of their websites. With 79%, the top answer cited was "send more targeted email."
- Several surveys in 2009 found that merchants are more likely to increase their budgets on email marketing and targeting.
- Veronis Suhler Stevenson has an annual Communications Industry Forecast that, in 2009, said the total amount spent on email will be $27.8 billion in 2013, up from $11.9 billion in the year 2009.

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As you can see here, many companies put quite an investment in their email marketing campaigns. They are willing to spend the money because they have seen the return on their investment.

The initial question we ask is "Does Email Marketing Work?" But to understand it even further, what we should ask ourselves is *how* email marketing works. There are a few major reasons that it works so well:

- You can target audiences
- Your marketing is driven by data (demographics, targeted audiences, email composition, etc.)
- You can directly sell
- You are able to build relationships, trust, and loyalty
- Your marketing and sales are supported through other channels

Email software and services these days allow businesses to target specific demographics for better efficiency when sending out emails. Additionally, there are even more advanced techniques that can personalize emails for specific people, which helps build an intimate business relationship with the customer as well as loyalty for the brand.

Your email marketing campaigns can also be monitored once you have sent out emails to customers, both current and potential. The data can be analyzed in a number of ways, including web analytics, downloads, search inquiries, and visits to promotional events and offline stores.

1.3 Is there a Catch to Email Marketing?

Email marketing is not as simple as sending out a single, standard email to thousands of people on an email list. It involves planning and designing on your part, and it also involves getting customers to read and take action. It is impossible to get everyone to read your emails, but you can improve the chances of customers reading them.

1.3.1 Spam: The Big No-No in Email Marketing

Getting customers to react and respond to you involves gaining their trust. If it comes down to one important piece of advice, it is this: Above all -

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Never Send Spam

The term "Spam" comes from a Monty Python's Flying Circus skit, where customers are only able to buy food containing lots of the canned meat known as Spam. All the while, a group of Vikings sing about the virtues of Spam.

Responsible email marketing is permission-based. Before you even send out an email to a customer, you must have his/her permission. If not, you can become subject to accusations of spam. Spam is an unsolicited and/or bulk commercial email sent to thousands of people at once. If you are accused of spam, these things can happen:

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- Your email account/s can be closed
- Your website can be shut off
- Your reputation can be damaged

Email marketing can only work if your emails are permission-based. That "permission" is defined as part of the EU (European Union) Directive 2009/136 on Privacy and Electronic Communication in Europe and the CAN-SPAM (Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography and Marketing) Act in the United States. We will discuss this more in a Chapter 3 when we talk about how to build up email lists.

The provisions of Directive 2009/136 and CAN-SPAM are updated frequently, and the kinks are still being worked out. Some of the newest updates consider SMS messages to be a form of commercial messaging and must adhere to the same standards as emails. One's individual's politics and beliefs may differ from what these laws entail, but no matter what, it is important and essential to adhere to these laws. After all, the penalty for breaking one of these provisions can result in hefty fines (up to $16,000.00 in the US). This can add up very quickly if multiple penalties occur.

1.3.2 Be Educated

In this introduction, we have shown the basics of email marketing. What we hope to teach is that there is precision in the way email marketing is handled. A good marketer will know the proper methods to campaign efficiently and effectively, and this ebook will teach you how to do that..

Email marketing is just like tending a garden. You must give both plants and customers exactly what they need and analyze what they need. Over time, your techniques will improve and you will yield better results. But first, you must learn the basics.

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2 Using Email Marketing Software

2.1 Introduction

To manage your email marketing campaigns, you will want to purchase and use an email marketing software. When using email marketing software, a couple of other marketing strategies are still in place. Online, you should have all other essentials for the best possible exposure of your business as well as your product. A company website, blogs, and social media should also be a part of your marketing strategy, and they should work in conjunction with each other and with your email marketing strategy as well. We will discuss this further when we talk about the opt-in process.

Setting up your email marketing program should also be an offline process as well. You are going to be able to obtain customers through multiple forms of media, and doing it offline is no exception. In the following sections of this chapter, we will discuss how to build your customer base through lists and the opt-in process. Though not entirely preliminary steps, these next few sections will be the basis from which your email marketing strategy will come into being.

2.2 Choosing an Email Service Provider

ESPs (email service providers) are companies that provide email services, such as email marketing and bulk email services.

The most important part of starting up your email marketing program is to obtain software specifically for sending out emails. There are hundreds of pieces of software available for purchase, each offering different tools for obtaining customers and sending out emails. Some even provide tools to analyze certain data to track customer behavior. The providers of these pieces of software are known as email service providers (ESP). Here is a list of some popular ESPs.

- Constant Contact
- EmailDirect
- GetResponse
- Xert Communications
- Contactology
- Emma
- iPost
- YesMail

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- Net Atlantic
- ContactLab
- Sendloop
- Elite Email
- Vidi Emi
- CommuniGator
- Boomerang
- Sailthru
- eConnect Email
- ExpertSender
- Cyberimpact
- Mayoris AG
- L-Soft

ESPs (email service providers) are companies that provide email services, such as email marketing and bulk email services.

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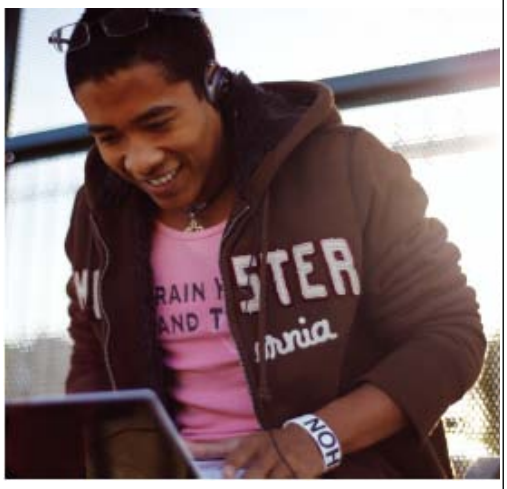
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Working with an ESP is a crucial step to getting bulk email sent to current and potential customers. Even if your email list has as few as a hundred email addresses, InternetService Providers (ISPs) are not apt to allow such a massive flow of emails to be sent. ISPs watch out for high volume activity like sending bulk email, so doing an email marketing campaign on an ISP will warrant suspicious activity. Your organization can get blacklisted, meaning the organization email system will become frozen until it gets back on the ISP's good sender list, also called the whitelist.

Having an ESP on your side is beneficial because you can have massive amount of emails sent without getting blacklisted. The ESP is usually ISP friendly and can work on a much larger scale and give you lists that can be segmented and categorized.

So let's take a look at what you need in an ESP.

2.3 What to Look for in an ESP

Each ESP has something different to offer. To be a successful company, you are going to want something that offers the most service for what you pay. You may have to pay just a little more for the more advanced services, but this decision is based on your business's budget, priorities, and strategy. Here are a few things to consider when looking at an ESP to use.

- IP Address: Private or Shared? – IP addresses are like phone numbers: it is the indication of the email's origin. Ask yourself if it is worth it to be sharing an IP address with another organization. It would be like sharing a phone number with someone else, and this is probably something you do not want to have. After all, if one organization sends out emails that get too many spam complaints, the ESP could be blacklisted and you will have to share the repercussions of another organization's mistake. Ensure that your ESP can provide you with a private IP address.
- Customer Support/Training – The people that run the email marketing software are going to have to learn how to use the software. Since each piece of email marketing software is different, there is no guarantee that your employees will know from the start how to run the software. Be sure to sign up with an ESP that provides support and training for your organization.
- Robust Infrastructure – You should have an ESP that has fast Internet connections through multiple sources as well. You should also sign up with an ESP that has hardware redundancy, a term for engineering that ensures a fail-safe or backup. The reason you should have an ESP with hardware redundancy is because some ESPs have click-tracking tools that let the user's click go to the ESP first and get redirected to your website. If a server fails, the user cannot get to your website since it must go through the server first. Ask the ESP what its infrastructure consists of.
- Good Reporting – Some ESPs offer reports that show how successful your emails are, such as deliverability success, click-through rates, and open-rates. The reports should also be user friendly.
- SPAM Compliance – The ESP you choose should offer compliance to SPAM, the laws we discussed briefly in the introductory chapter. This is a good indication that the ESP you are potentially considering is responsible and wants to ensure that is does not get blacklisted. Be sure to choose one that requires your organization to comply with the law and makes it easy to do so.

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- List Segmenting – This is a very important feature that you should have when signing up for an ESP. List segmenting is the key component to running a successful email marketing campaign because it allows targeting. You can target certain demographics and categorize email addresses to customize content specific to their wants and needs. This will be discussed in greater detail in another chapter.
- A/B Testing – This is a term that refers to testing which emails work and which ones do not. It is important to test out different versions of an email message to see how well it does. A/B testing allows you to try out different styles and techniques for things like your subject line, email content, etc. The purpose of this is to see which version does the best and most of the time, this process is done by sending two versions of an email to a divided email list. In conjunction with reports on success rates, this will be an essential element to your email marketing campaign.
- Free Trial – Some ESPs offer a free trial to test drive the software and service. Try out any free trials of ESPs first before deciding on investing in an ESP.
- No Term Contract – The shorter the term of the contract, the better. You should have a no term contract to allow you to switch ESPs if you are unsatisfied with the software and service of the current ESP. If you do not have a no term contract, the commitment length should be no longer than a month.
- Pricing Plans – Finally, your ESP should offer a reasonable price for the service that they offer. Don't be afraid to shop around and get recommendations on which ESP to use. Some offer a pricing plan that is on a monthly basis and is determined by the maximum amount of emails you could potentially send. Others require a monthly payment based on the number of email addresses on your built up list. Be sure to sign up with an ESP that fits your budget as well as your organization's needs.

The benefits of using an ESP are very apparent, and they offer different tools and services. Best of all, they do a lot of heavy lifting by ensuring you are able to send out bulk emails. Still, the tools available are what will help your email marketing strategy be successful and efficient.

Be aware that if you want accurate reports for efficient marketing, you may have to spend a little more money to get these elite features. Ask yourself if these features are going to be worth if for your organization. Do you have the budget for those features? Are they necessary for the type of organization and the demographics you are looking to obtain?

Data analysis is a valuable tool, especially if you have a diverse crowd. Large organizations use these features because their customer base is so vast, especially if the products they sell are diverse. A bookstore might offer personalized emails to different kinds of customers based on their interests. An email might be sent to them saying "if you like this, why not buy that?" But a smaller business that specializes in one kind of item might not be so personalized. Analysis reports come in varying degrees based on how much and what exactly they are able to analyze. Think of how big your organization is and if these features will be essential or just a nice add-on. We will also discuss these reports in further detail in a later chapter.

2.4 Customer Relationship Management Software

Another piece of software to consider using in conjunction with your email marketing software is to have customer relationship management (CRM) software. CRM is a method of marketing, online or offline, that is tailored to individual customers. More importantly, it is a method that is tailored to returning customers.

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Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is a method of marketing, online or offline, that is tailored to individual, returning customers.

Businesses want to spend their money wisely by increasing their ROI (return on investment). It is already tough enough securing new customers, especially with email marketing. CRM, however, focuses on current customers because they know these customers are already loyal to the company. CRM implements a strategy specific to those returning customers by offering specific incentives. If the customer has a high enough trust in and loyalty to the company, they will likely take the incentive and yield a better ROI. When done with enough customers, the total ROI can be tremendous.

CRM software can be used separately or synchronized with your existing email software. By working with the lists of email addresses you have, it can handle customer requests, new orders, and manage contacts. Here is a brief list of some brands of CRM software. These types of CRM software are also open source, so there is little to no payment involved.

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Now that we have discussed the types of software you can use to start up your email marketing campaign, we will visit them in a later chapter to talk about *how* to use them for full optimization and efficiency. Next, we will look at building up email address lists and how to use these lists to optimize your email marketing strategy.

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3 Building Email Lists by Quantity

3.1 Introduction

Now that you have email marketing software and have signed up for an ESP, it is time to start building up your list of email addresses. Permission is a must, and this is the basis on which you will gain valuable customer trust and build relationships. It is important to keep in mind the provisions of the spam laws in your region to prevent receiving any penalties or, even worse, getting blacklisted and risk getting kicked off the ESP. We will outline these provisions in more detail in this chapter. As we discuss how to build up your email list, we will consistently remind you how to prevent these things from happening.

To get people to subscribe to you and to gain their permission, you should try and give your potential customers as many opt-in points as possible while complying with spam laws.

Building up an email list is simple in concept, but much more involved in practice. Following the guidelines of your region's spam laws makes the process a bit more tedious but pays off when done correctly and efficiently.

One of the best ways to be able to get people to sign up for your emails and get permission for emails to get sent to them is to make yourself visible, which should be pretty standard procedure by now. However, to get people to subscribe to you and to gain their permission, you should try and give your potential customers as many opportunities as possible to do so through every medium you market through. These opportunities are called opt-in points, and they are key to gaining new customers. They are also one of the most important parts of the provisions of spam laws.

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3.2 Directive on Privacy and Electronic Communication

Signed into law in 2003, Directive 2002/58 on Privacy and Electronic Communication was the one of the first laws that put regulations and restrictions on commercial emails. Otherwise known as the E-Privacy Directive, it has provisions outlining the specifics of how emails must be constructed and distributed. It was recently amended and put into regulation on May 26th, 2011 to include rules on cookies. Here is a general list of the current provisions.

- **Data Retention** – Data from traffic and users that has been compiled by website owners and service providers must be erased when no longer needed. Data may be retained for billing purposes, and may also be retained with consent from a user.
- **Spam** – Email addresses are not allowed to be used for marketing purposes. The only time unsolicited email can be sent to a recipient is if they have provided consent via opt-in points. Information on email addresses can be retained if an email subscriber has given consent and been given the opportunity to opt-out of the subscription.
- **SMS Messages** – SMS messages (text messages) also fall under the category of spam if they are solicited without the consent of a user. Therefore, the only time a mobile phone user can receive these messages is through consent.
- **Cookies** – Cookies are pieces of data that an Internet browser retains from web pages. Being the newest provision of the directive, cookies which gather personal information about a user cannot be obtained without the consent of a user. However, the specificity of which cookies fall under this is hazy. The reason for this is because the act allows for future amendments to be made depending on the development of cookies in the future.

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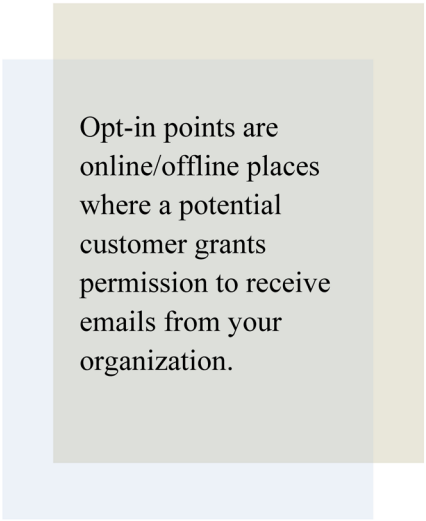
In addition to this law, the United States has also enacted a law that was first signed by George W. Bush in 2003. Some of the provisions of this law include, but are not limited to, :

- Do not use fraudulent data transmission such as misleading headers/titles
- Adding contact information to emails
- Use of Opt-ins and Opt-Out
- Clear Language that says an email is an advertisement

The provisions of the E-Privacy Directive are updated frequently, and the kinks are still being worked out. Violations of the directive can include fines and penalties. This can add up very quickly if multiple penalties occur. And if you are sending out multiple, frequent emails, you can see how your fines could quickly add up to hundreds of thousands of dollars.

3.3 Building a List with Opt-in Points

As we stated in the first chapter, the responsible email marketing is based on the premise that who you send emails to has given you permission. So how do you obtain permission to send emails to customers? Opt-in points are your answer.



3.3.1 What are Opt-in Points?

Simply put, opt-in points are places where a potential customer grants permission to receive emails from your organization. Notice that we did not use the word online before the word “places” in the previous sentence.

Most of your opt-in points are likely going to be on the Internet. Your website, social media profiles, and blogs might each have an opt-in point for people to gain access to your emails. One of your blog posts might offer the reader to sign up for more up-to-date information. Maybe your website has a form for visitors to sign up when they buy a product. However you create it, the opt-in is a place that says “We have a something to offer you; would you like to receive it?” When the customer opts-in by providing you with their email address, you can then use their email address to send the information you offered.

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There are other places where a potential customer can opt-in for emails and frequent e-newletters, coupons, sales notifications and more. If you have an offline, brick-and-mortar store, you can offer a customer that is buying a product the chance to opt-in to your emails by signing up for them. This is a common practice for stores that sells a diverse selection of items, like bookstores. These opt-in points are also tied in to things like obtaning a membership to the store.

Other potential opt-in places could include seminars where someone from your organization is speaking. Promotional events are another opt-in place as well. In both cases, an offer to receive emails can be given to people attending the event. You may be reaching out to a smaller crowd offline, but if your content is rich enough, people will take the offer.

As you can see, opt-in points can exist just about anywhere. Utilizing opt-in places wherever your presence takes you is a good practice. You shouldn't make a promotional event solely to get people to sign up for your emails, but if you are having the event in the first place, it's never a bad idea to make that one of your opt-in places.

3.3.2 How to Place Opt-In Points

With opt-in points, you should place them modestly throughout all your marketing channels. Some examples include

- Putting them on popular pages of your website
- Putting one in the signature of your email
- Placing them on printed ads such as coupons and promotional flyers
- Placing one on the landing page of a pay-per-click ad and marketing ads
- Placing them on purchase confirmation emails, or even printed receipts
- Putting them on the pages of your social media profiles

You can be pretty creative when it comes to placing opt-in points. Of course, simple visibility is not all it takes to get people to sign up for your email subscription or give you permission for email. You must offer some kind of incentive to get people to sign up. Some examples of offered incentives include

- Coupons or discounts
- Relevant, information-rich white papers or ebooks
- Contests
- Videos or podcasts
- Webinars
- Exclusive content

What you offer is entirely up to you, and like before, you can be very creative in what incentives you have to offer. Remember, though, that you should offer something relevant to your customers; something that has value to them. Contests and prizes might be appropriate, for example, for a radio station. They would not be appropriate for a funeral home.

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Also, when you are placing your opt-in points, you should be inviting. Instead of simply saying "Sign up for our newsletter," try including one of your incentives to entice the customer. "Sign up and you will get exclusive content!" or "Sign up today and start earning rewards!" might be more likely to catch the eyes of potential customers. You want to catch the eyes of your potential customer, but at the same time, you also do not want to over-do it. Putting 50 exclamation points in a subject line will automatically send your email to the trash. It is all about moderation.

On a final note, one more thing you should do when providing an opt-in point for a customer is to clearly state that you're offering an email subscription. You want the customer to explicitly say "I would like to receive emails from you" by making that choice on a form. Let's say that you have a check box on a lead form that lets a customer opt-in for an email subscription. You, as the organization, should leave the box unchecked and allow the customer to check it, if he so chooses.

3.3.3 Double Opt-In

Double opt-ins are a way to double-check that the person giving you permission to receive emails is fully aware that he is subscribing to your email list. Double opt-ins also let you know that the person knows exactly what he wants, and that he wants your email subscription.

Double opt-ins normally come in the form of emails sent directly to the subscriber moments after he gave you permission to be on your email list. This email comes from you (or the ESP) and may ask the user to click on a link to complete the submission process and confirm exactly what he will be receiving. Once he has completed this task, the permission transaction is complete.

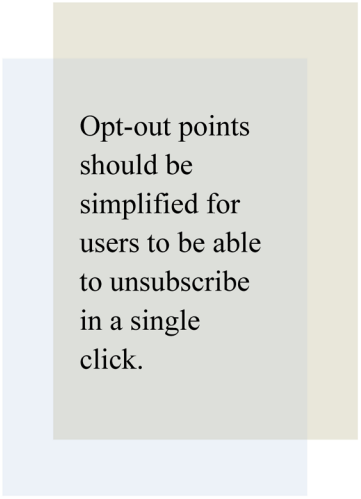
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This type of confirmation has pros and cons. The cons are that response rates of these emails are low and can take longer to get the customer to sign up. Some subscribers may also find it difficult to understand. However, the pros make up for these cons because the customers who do complete the permission transaction are much more likely to read to your emails. There are also more likely to engage in the content of your emails. In short, the users giving the permission are much more involved.

3.3.4 Offering an Opt-Out



Opt-out points are another necessary component you must provide for your subscribers. Though it is a good practice to make opt-out an easy process for the subscriber, it is also part of the E-Prviacy Directive and must be followed accordingly.

According to the E-Privacy Directive, your emails must have clear instructions on how to opt-out of an email subscription. They must also provide a clear opportunity to opt out at any point. Doing this ensures that not only are you E-Privacy Directive compliant, but that you also value your customer's time.

The most professional tactic to use for offering an opt-out point is to allow the user the ability to opt-out with the least amount of clicks. You should really have the amount of clicks down to one, and most ESPs will be able to place a one click link for users to unsubscribe to an organization's emails.

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Offering an opt-out option is not only E-Privacy Directive compliant, but also shows that you value your customer's time.

The last thing to remember about offering opt-out points is to remember that the email address must be taken off of your list by the end of 10 business days from the moment the user unsubscribes. The email should be taken off as soon as possible, but 10 business days is the maximum amount of time an organization should have. ESPs will be able to do this process automatically and be able to permanently remove those email addresses.

3.4 Using List Brokers to Build a List

List brokers are companies that specifically collect email contacts and sell them to other companies. Using list brokers is a good way to get a list built up without having to do most of the legwork. Of course, there are a couple of things to be aware of before using list brokers to build up your email contact list.

Legitimate list brokers follow the region's spam compliancy law provisions and gain their contact information through user permission. Still, it is never a bad idea to ask the broker questions on how the permission was obtained. You can also ask the broker what kind of email addresses were obtained and what kinds of information are available. Do not be afraid to ask too many questions.

Here are a few essential questions you should ask before using a list obtained by a list broker

- How and where were these email addresses obtained?
- When was each grant of permission confirmed?
- How do you select and determine interests?

The last bulleted point refers to one of the problems with a list broker. You may not be receiving a list of targeted prospects. For example, if the list was built using general interest categories like "sports" and "fine arts," that is not as targeted list as one that had customers specify exactly what type of sports and fine arts they are interested in. Better yet, they would indicate the type of sports they like to watch, the types they play, the types they go to live games for, etc., etc. The more detailed the interest information you have from the list broker, the more likely the emails on the list are likely to be valuable to you.

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Legitimate list brokers will have gained permission from their email contacts under E-Privacy Directive provisions.

Generally speaking, using a list broker is not the most dependable way to gain contact information and permission. Ultimately, you may not know for sure if permission was gained legally. The one definite disadvantage to using a list broker is that the user who has granted permission is receiving emails from someone they may have never heard of. This makes you subject to spam complaints, and this is the last thing you want when you send out your emails.

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3.5 How NOT to Build Your Email Contact List

What we have been attempting to stress in this chapter is that permission is the key component to building up a quality email list. It is also the most important factor in ensuring that you are not sending out what some people might consider SPAM.

There are instances where a person might accuse you of SPAM even when you have complied with all of your regions SPAM provisions. It is likely that eventually, someone out there may think that you are sending him SPAM. There are, however, a few practices that are almost guaranteed to earn you some SPAM complaints. You should explicitly avoid the following:

- Do not purchase an email list from companies offering you to keep it as a data file. Any company selling you these most likely did not receive permission from the email address users. These files are also likely bought and sold to many different organizations, all sending their emails to the same people. Imagine all the SPAM one of those users is receiving. You do not want to lumped in with these Spammers.
- Do not collect email addresses from directories or websites. Collecting email addresses this way gives you no permission in any form.
- Generally, do not do business with an email collection service. They likely do what we describe in the bullet point above. The one exception is if the collection service gains explicit permission that is documented, such as a list broker.
- Do not use another business' email list to send your own emails. They never gave you permission in the first place, so why risk looking like a Spammer?
- Do not rent email lists. Most companies that rent out email lists do not obtain permission, so do not risk it.

One tricky situation you may come across is an instance where you have inherited an email list. This list may have come from a company that you bought out. The customers from the bought-out company may know about the purchase, but it is still a good idea to let them know directly. This initial email is essential because you can make or break a deal with each customer. Be clear about why you are emailing them, and give them a chance to opt-in. Offer incentives and make sure the content is valuable and relevant.

3.6 Minimizing SPAM Complaints

The average email user's perception about SPAM is that if they cannot understand it, then it is SPAM. You could be following every provision of your regions spam compliancy law down to the finest detail, which helps you from a legal standpoint. But if your users do not understand the email or believe that it looks like SPAM, you can get a SPAM complaint against you. This can ruin your reputation with your ESP and, more importantly, your company. Having too many complaints can take you out of the online competition.

3.6.1 What Do Users Consider Spam

Getting a spam complaint at some point is very likely. If you can minimize these mistakes so that even when they do occur, then even when they do occur, they will not necessarily do a great deal of damage. Common reasons a user might hit the spam button are listed below:

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- They cannot verify its source. If a user cannot determine where an email came from, he may consider it spam. More importantly, if he cannot determine whether or not the source is legitimate, he may consider it spam. Consumers look at the "From" line of an email in their inbox to determine the source, so it is important to get this information right in the beginning. If they do not know where it came from just by looking at that line, they will most likely delete it without even reading it.
- They think the emails are too frequent. The frequency of your email subscription may be too much or too little for certain people. You can never tell who this is bound to affect, but some users tend to perceive overly frequent emails as spam. They may feel, too, that the content is irrelevant or too repetitive.
- They simply do not want emails. This is especially true if the type of email they receive is the result of direct marketing. If they did not grant permission in the first place, they may be inclined to hit the spam button. Of course, even if they grant permission to receive your newsletter, they might no longer be interested in it and will prevent anymore emails from coming by hitting the spam button.

Even if the user does not think your emails are spam, they may still hit the spam button because one of the following occurs:

- The user could have accidentally hit the spam button on your email (it does happen)
- The user may not trust the email's unsubscribe link
- The unsubscribe link is confusing

3.6.2 Legitimate Emails and Practices

You only have so much control and influence over your customers, but following the provisions of your region's spam compliancy laws is the essential guideline to making your emails look legitimate and less like spam. Crafting an email that looks legitimate in the customer's eyes is just one way of preventing a spam complaint, but you may also become more involved with the customer and build the relationship by sending different kinds of emails. You can also practice some other ideas for the email subscription process that will make you more trustworthy build a better customer relationship. Once the customer becomes more involved, he is much less likely to send a spam complaint. Here are a few kinds of email ideas you can consider sending to a customer that are legitimate and worth reading.

- Thank You – After a user subscribes to your email list, sending a thank you letter immediately following sign-up is a gesture that appears a little more personal and makes the user feel welcome. This can also be a good spot to put a double opt-in point.
- Reminder Paragraphs – Inserting blocks of text at the top of an email to remind users how they granted permission is a good practice to follow. It is a good reminder for the customer because sometimes, users sign online forms hastily and end up forgetting how they were put on a subscription in the first place. You might have a block of text that reads "You are receiving this email as part of an email subscription you signed up for on [date or website location]."
- Reminder Emails – Occasionally, your subscriber may want to change his subscription settings because his interests may have changed. Send out a reminder email with the same reminder block of text describing how he got onto your email subscription. Also remind him how he can change his settings and provide links to do it. Remember to make your links as simple as possible. One click is ideal.
- Brand Your Emails – If your company has a logo or colors that it is known for, use them in the body of the email. Remember not to use anything too flashy, and use colors that are easy on the eyes.

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- Make your Emails Familiar – This goes along with branding as well, but you should also make certain phrases that are memorable in the body of the email as well as the "from" line.
- Make Valuable Email Content – Just as the rest of your Internet marketing strategy employs content marketing (social media profiles, blogs, website), so should your emails. Make valuable content that is relevant and interests your customers.
- Emails to Tthose who Unsubscribe – For those who wish to unsubscribe from your email list, send out one last email asking them why they chose to unsubscribe. You can make this a survey or have the customer respond with more descriptive information.
- Describe What Your Subscription Entails – Just like the previous sections described, you should be as clear and precise as possible. This description will likely come at the sign-up form where a user will decide whether or not he wants to sign up. Tell him how periodic your emails are and whether or not you will send promotional deals.
- Send Emails with User Expectations in Mind – Remember that if the user has not given you explicit permission, you cannot send him anymore emails than he expects. For example, if you send a service quote to a customer buying one of your products, that is all you should send him.
- Allow for Individual Preference – This is especially true if your organization is diverse in product offerings. One promotional deal for a customer may not necessarily apply to another. Allow every customer to have the ability to select their interests in products and special deals. Provide links in your emails to allow them to change their preferences whenever they would like to.

A few of these bullet points will be discussed in greater detail in a chapter about crafting emails. Keep all of them in mind when considering what to send.

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4 Building Email Lists by Quality

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, we discussed the ways through which you could build up an email list by increasing the number of subscribers. We will now turn the focus to making an email list that has the quality of members high in customer loyalty.

> Though you want to obtain new customers as well, tailoring your email marketing to current, loyal customers will drive continual sales and perhaps even make a loyal customer out of a newer one.

The fortunate thing about marketing, and email marketing in particular, is that you do not necessarily have to have a large list of email addresses to be considered a success. Successful lists contain the email addresses of loyal and repeat customers. These email lists may also contain referral sources or interested prospects from those who know your organization. Obtaining new customer is very good for your business, but repeat customers are the ones that continue to drive sales. Not to mention, this is the type of customer you want to turn new customers into.

We will focus this chapter on how to tailor your email marketing strategy towards current customers. The strategies of Chapter 3 will still apply, especially when it comes to gaining permission from users.

4.2 List Segmenting/Categorization

When you send out an email to your customers, are they all going to have the same reaction and take the same course of action that it calls for? If you send out the same email, then the answer is no.

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When you install email marketing software from an ESP, it should have a feature to allow you to categorize and segment email addresses.

No two customers are alike. The email marketing strategy of your organization should focus on tailoring emails and offers to customers based on their preferences and what is relevant to each of them. This customization can occur in varying degrees based on the type of business running the marketing strategy. Still, ideally your emails should be more tailored to each individual rather than one standardized letter.

Segmenting your list and categorizing your email addresses is the best way to perform this customization. When you install email marketing software from an ESP, it should have a feature to allow you to categorize and segment email addresses. Here are a few features to look for when considering a piece of software to use for this purpose

- Easy viewing
- Simple organization
- List sorting into categories that allow targeted emails
- Database for unsubscribed email addresses
- List query for finding information

Most ESP email marketing software offers these features, so when it comes to deciding, you can get whatever is easiest to use while offering the best incentive. Best of all, ESPs keep it simple, and simplicity is sometimes the best course of action when targeting certain demographics.

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If you are using email marketing software for the first time, keep it simple by having an ESP with all your features and lists in one database.

There are, however, pieces of email marketing software with more advanced features that let you target demographics with even greater specificity. These are more expensive, and if you consider getting software with these features, ask yourself if it would provide enough ROI to justify the amount you spend on it.

Some businesses use a different database for storing their email lists, but you should have an ESP that contains a database of your email lists. This will keep things much simpler by having your lists and your tools all in one place.

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Above all, do not be afraid to shop around for an ESP with the features you need. As we stated in Chapter 2, most ESPs offer a free trial and you can switch at any time if there is no long term agreement.

4.2.1 Categorizing with Customer Information

As we have stated many times before, sending an email to customers requires their permission. Of course, getting their permission also means that you are gaining permission from them to gather their information. This starts out small in the beginning, at the time of subscription sign-up. Over time, though, you can gain more information about them, which will help you in the long run to build a quality email list and build better customer relationships.

Receiving information from a customer starts out at the sign-up process, but over time, you can gain more detailed information for greater customer personalization (with their permission of course).

For new customers, you want to keep the amount of information you ask for to a minimum. This is usually just an email address and the all important grant of permission to receive emails. Potential customers are wary of receiving emails from someone new, so keeping this amount of information down to a minimum is the initial first step to gaining a customer's trust.

After this initial sign-up and perhaps a few emails, you

can gather even more information about the customer. Gathering this information is valuable in that it helps you build a quality list to help personalize it. This is beneficial for you as well as the customer. It helps you have more specific and categorized lists, and the customer reaps the benefits of sharing his information. Some of the different types of information you can ask for are listed here:

- The Essentials – This is the information a potential customer already expects you to know, such as an email address and first name. You may also be able to ask for a ZIP code if it truly applies to your customers. This information is usually asked for up-front, but can be reserved for later.

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- Personal Information – This is the more detailed information about a customer that you may not automatically know online. This information can be used to send more specific and relevant offers, and it includes things like gender, age, preferences, or marital status.
- Behavioral Information – This information refers to the actions a customer takes. This could include how a customer uses coupons, partakes in special offers, or the types of purchases the customer makes. This is very useful for personalizing a customer's shopping experience.

Now that we have discussed the types of information available, the question turns to how we can gather this information. As we said before, asking for a bare minimum at sign-up is essential because a customer is wary of a new business to deal with. The customer must be comfortable before he gives away more information, so this should be kept in mind when deciding on when to ask him.

After the customer becomes used to the bare essentials of your emails, you can ask him for more information through the following means

- Sending a survey
- Asking for information through your normal emails
- Providing links on your website to gather information
- Asking for information through other marketing means, such as mail or social media

4.2.2 Asking for Information

Remember how we said that no two customers are alike? Getting information from your customers requires that you ask them questions. There are a few ways to go about out as we described in the previous section, but we will focus on what kinds of questions to ask and how to incentivize the customer to share their information.

> Category-specific questions are better to ask because they allow you to categorize your users beforehand and make it easier for the customer to answer.

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There are two types of questions to ask when gathering customer information: open-ended questions and category-specific questions. The latter are better to ask because you already have predetermined categories to help segment your customers. Additionally, the question is much easier to answer than an open-ended question. Open-ended questions leave the possibility of an infinite amount of answers that you simply cannot sift through.

One type of question you could ask is

"Why do you shop with us?"

This is the type of question you might see for a retail grocery store. Below it, you should have multiple answers that cover any general, possible answer. The answers could include

a) To save money
b) The variety of products
c) The excellent customer service
d) Cleanliness
e) Easy to find products

Each organization will have to come up with questions and answers specific to the type of business they run. Asking questions like these help the business prioritize their special qualities, and by helping them improve, the customers are also helping themselves. This information also helps the company know what interests specific customers so they know what kind of offers or coupons to send them.

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Of course, you are going to want to offer some kind of incentive for taking part in a survey that asks questions like these. After all, your customer's time is valuable and you want to reward him for sharing his information. Some ideas for incentives include

- Offering priority deals and offers
- Coupons
- Exclusive members-only content
- Information on upcoming events or promotions

This list is not all inclusive, and you can get very creative with the types of incentives you offer. Remember, though, that what you do offer must be relevant to the user. If the user shops at your store because of the money-saving advantage, you should give him coupons and information on special deals.

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5 Crafting an Email

5.1 Introduction

Customers are scanners of information, so crafting an effective email that entices them to want more is crucial to keeping your email marketing strategy effective.

So far, we have gone through many steps that are preliminary to creating an effective email marketing strategy. But one of the most important components to your entire email marketing strategy is the email itself. From the smallest details like font to the greater scope like content, the email message you send out is going to be the most crucial element to getting customers involved in your email marketing strategy. You must choose a layout that is appropriate and create valuable content that interests the customer.

Customers are scanners of information. Getting a customer to actually sign up for your emails is just one hurdle to getting him interested, so creating an email message that keeps the customer wanting more is an important next step. You must create a brand and reassure the customer that your email is coming from somewhere trustworthy.

In this chapter, we will cover the basics of crafting an effective email. We will cover the smallest details as well as the greater scope of your strategy. We will also periodically remind you of the E-Privacy provisions to keep in mind when making your email messages.

5.2 Getting Unread Email Noticed

When a customer opens his email account, you are likely not the only entity sending him email. He is also likely to have multiple messages waiting in his inbox that have not yet been read, so he is initially going to have to sift through it all to see what is important to keep and what is disposable enough to move to his trash. Obviously, you do not want to be the latter, so making an email that catches the customer's eye in the first place is important.

The first thing a customer sees about a message is the email header. The email header contains condensed, but pertinent information including:

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- The "From" Line – This is the line of text which tells the receiver who the email comes from. Some ESPs allow you to have this line state the organization's name rather than the email address from which it is sent. This helps in identification for the customer.
- The "From" Address – The "From" address is essentially the same as the "From" line in that it displays the same information. It is the email address from which the email comes from, but most email programs show this as the "From" line.
- The "Subject" Line – This is the line that entices the reader to open up your email, giving a hint about what to expect in the message. Effective subject lines prompt audiences to take action immediately.
- Portions of the Email Shown through Email Programs – This is the content of your message that shows up in some email programs. Usually it's the first line or two of the content. Not all email programs have them, so it is important to focus on creating eye-catching subject and from lines to initially get the attention of your readers. Still, if your content is valuable, this email program attribute can do nothing but help.

Below, we will discuss how to make the "Subject" and "From" lines much more eye-catching.

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5.2.1 "From" Lines

The "From" line creates familiarity the company and trust between the company and the customer.

Though it may sound like a simple task, making your "From" lines of emails effective is an involved process that helps build trust between you and a customer and promotes familiarity with your customer. ESPs allow you to fill out information that can be plugged into the "From" line. More importantly, it is quite beneficial when you go on specific campaigns and want to change what the "From" line reads. There are a few things to consider putting in your "From" line.

- *Your organization's name* – Putting a name in the "From" line of an email is all about recognition. For larger organizations, putting this name in the "From" line is important because it is what is most recognizable. However, you should also consider how your organization's name is displayed. Are customers likely to recognize the initials of your organization's name, or do they recognize the actual name more? Whichever people recognize more should be put in the "From" line.
- *The name of the company founder/president* – This is more appropriate for smaller businesses that do transactions on a much smaller scale than large organizations. The connections a founder/president of a company conducts are much more intimate, so putting a personal name in the "From" line is acceptable and perhaps more appropriate than the business name.
- *Your name and the organization's name* – Let's say you work for a large company and have done business with a client. The client will definitely know your company's name, but adding your name adds a little bit of personal intimacy because it conveys that it has come from a person and not just from an email list.
- *Your organization's location* – This is more appropriate for larger organizations that have branches in multiple geographic locations around a nation or the globe.
- *Your website's domain name* – Some organizations are more well-known for their online presence, especially in an increasingly online world. Use the domain name if you have a larger online presence, but include the organization name as well for customers to be more familiar with your brand.
- *Email address* – Some organization decide to have their email address in the "From" line. This allows customers to know who to contact if they have any further questions. Your company, though, should have multiple email addresses specific to, for example, a certain department that sounds out certain kinds of emails. The email address in the "From" line should be clear and include the department name as well as the business name.

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When considering what to put in the "From" line, keep in mind the current E-Privacy Directive provisions require you acknowledge who you are clearly to the recipient. Recognition is not only a good marketing practice, it is a law.

5.2.2 "Subject" Lines

The "Subject" line is what will entice customers to read an email and take action. The "Subject" line will get readers to open an email and read the content of an email. Coming up with an eye-catching "Subject" line can be effective, especially since you have a limited amount of room to say what you need to say. Here are a few guidelines to follow when coming up with an effective "Subject" line:

"Subject" lines call for action and entice the customer with condense messages and a sense of urgency.

- *Get your point across* – You might be tempted to write a lot of information in the "Subject" line highlighting the benefits of reading the email However, you have a limited amount of characters (between 30 and 50) to say what you need to say, so you must state something general but valuable. The highlights of your statement should be in the email itself, so be sure to state the broad claim or importance of your email. Are you having a sale? Is there a promotional event going on soon? Do you have an update on a blog? Is there a new product coming to your store? Simplicity is ideal, so state what you want to say and leave it at that.
- *Sense of urgency* – Going along with the previous bullet point, you want to let the recipient know that what you are stating in the "Subject" line is valuable and worth knowing. A simple statement of fact is sufficient, but it is not always enough to get a person to read your email. Make sure they *want* to read it by intoning a sense of urgency with keywords and phrases. Instead of simply stating that a sale is going on, say that it is going on now and that it will only last through today or through the weekend. You can also incentive the "Subject" line by stating something secondary, like a promotional event where there is only one more chance to register for it.
- *Test your "Subject" lines* – You may have to perform some trial and error with "Subject" lines when initially sending out emails. Here is one of the benefits of having organized, categorized email lists. What you can do is come up with multiple variations of a "Subject" line and send them out to different segments of a list. Tools for analysis will allow you to analyze the data and see which ones are more effective. We will get into analysis in the next chapter.

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The "Subject" line, unfortunately, is one of the aspects of an email that you must tread carefully on to prevent spam complaints. Spammers use a certain style that is distinguishable from more professional emails, so this style should be avoided at all costs. Listed below are practices that you should NOT engage in:

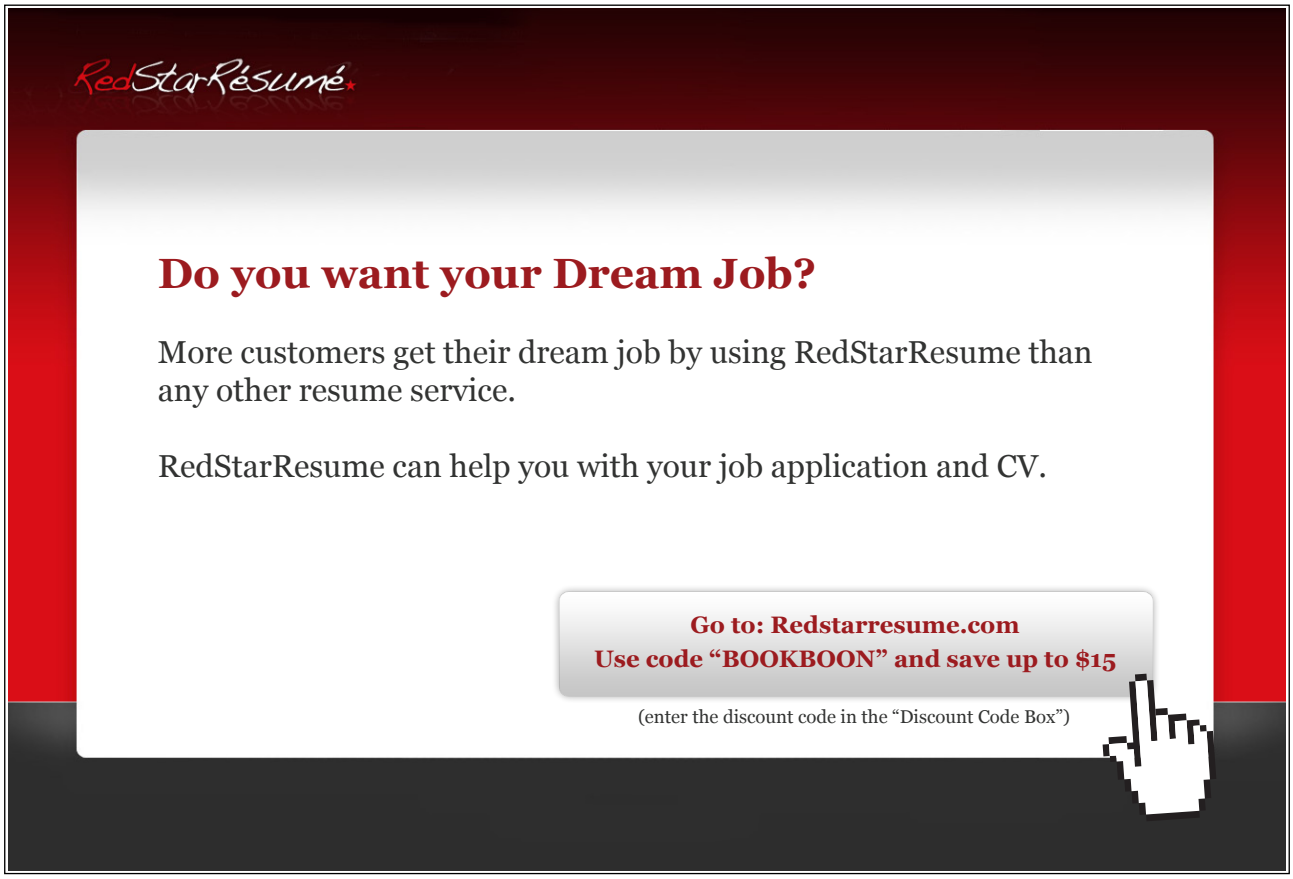
- Do not use excessive amounts of punctuation, especially exclamation points
- Do not use obscure signs like $ or *
- Do not put the recipient's name in the "Subject" line
- Avoid ALL CAPS (it gives the appearance of yelling)
- Do not use Re: followed by text (the only exception is if it's an actual response)
- Do not use vague "Subject" lines
- Do not have a blank "Subject" line

CAN-SPAM provisions in the US are targeted at this type of style, so it is important not to use it. This type of style misleads the customer, which is one of the provisions that the law targets. Avoid these actions to prevent receiving spam complaints.

5.3 Email Content

Following the tips and guidelines of "From" and "Subject" lines should get your customers further into your email. Once the customer has opened up an email, they have become significantly more involved in your organization.

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There is still more for you to do, though. Enticing the customer with valuable and relevant claims is important, but keeping them interested is even more so. In this section, we will discuss how to make your email content valuable and relevant to the customer.

5.3.1 Branding

Branding is the use of graphic and artistic elements to give your organization a unique and consistent look. Branding also extends to writing, especially when it comes to content driven marketing. Your writing is seen in blogs, websites, social media profiles, and email. Though a more subtle form of branding, writing is a form of branding that should complement the visual branding components. The important aspects to branding are that it provides the customer with:



- Familiarity
- Authenticity
- Consistency
- Personality
- Distinction

Brands also come in the form of logos and colors. They are designed with the ideals of the organization in mind and are used across all marketing media. Your emails are no different and should utilize branding when trying to reach out to new and current customers. Here are a few guidelines to keep in mind when using your brand, especially in email:

- Brand Reflects Organization Personality – Your logo and writing should be complementary to each other and accurately reflect the personality of the organization. Is your organization serious or humorous? Exclusive or inclusive? Professional or casual?
- Use Logos – You should use logos through all media, and you should also include them in all of your emails. Put your logo at the top-left corner of a page where readers are most likely to see it. Using the logo consistently creates familiarity with your customer.

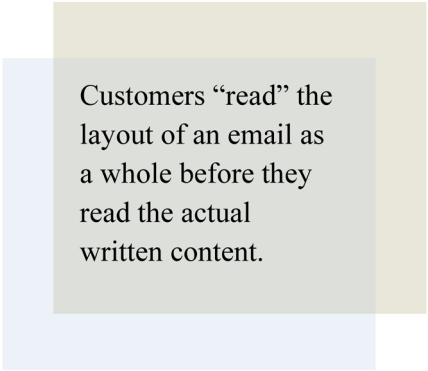
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- Use Logo/Organization Colors – Using colors that match your logo, or that are consistent with your organization, is key to making consistent content as well as unique visual content. Use these in your email for elements like borders or backgrounds. Fonts can also be a different color, but it is best to use darker fonts rather than lighter fonts. Additionally, make sure the colors of your website are also consistent with the colors of the email. Users may hesitate if they see an inconsistency in graphic design between the two.
- Keep Written and Visual Elements Consistent – As stated before, branding extends to the visual and written elements of an organization. Be sure that your writing reflects the visual tone and use language that is appropriate. Another factor to consider is font. Make sure the style of font you use goes well in tone and appearance with the rest of the visual elements you have selected.

You may run across an instance where you have different email formats sent out for different situations. When you send out emails to people, you want them to know the difference between a newsletter and a promotional offer. Having two formats too similar or different from each other can create confusion, so you want to have both formats only modestly different from each other.

One thing to consider is having your organization logo in the upper-left corner of both email formats while differentiating the layouts. Colors can be slightly modified between the two, while images and written content can take on a different format.

5.3.2 Layout



When customers open an email, they don’t immediately start reading the text that contains the information you are trying to convey. They look at the entire email as a whole, “reading” the layout from left to right, top to bottom. The top left corner of your email is where the majority of people will view the email first, so put the most important pieces of information there. The bottom right corner, however, is not as important. The visual experience of the customer is what will entice the reader to keep looking and maybe even start reading the message.

Here are a few extra guidelines to take into consideration when laying out your email

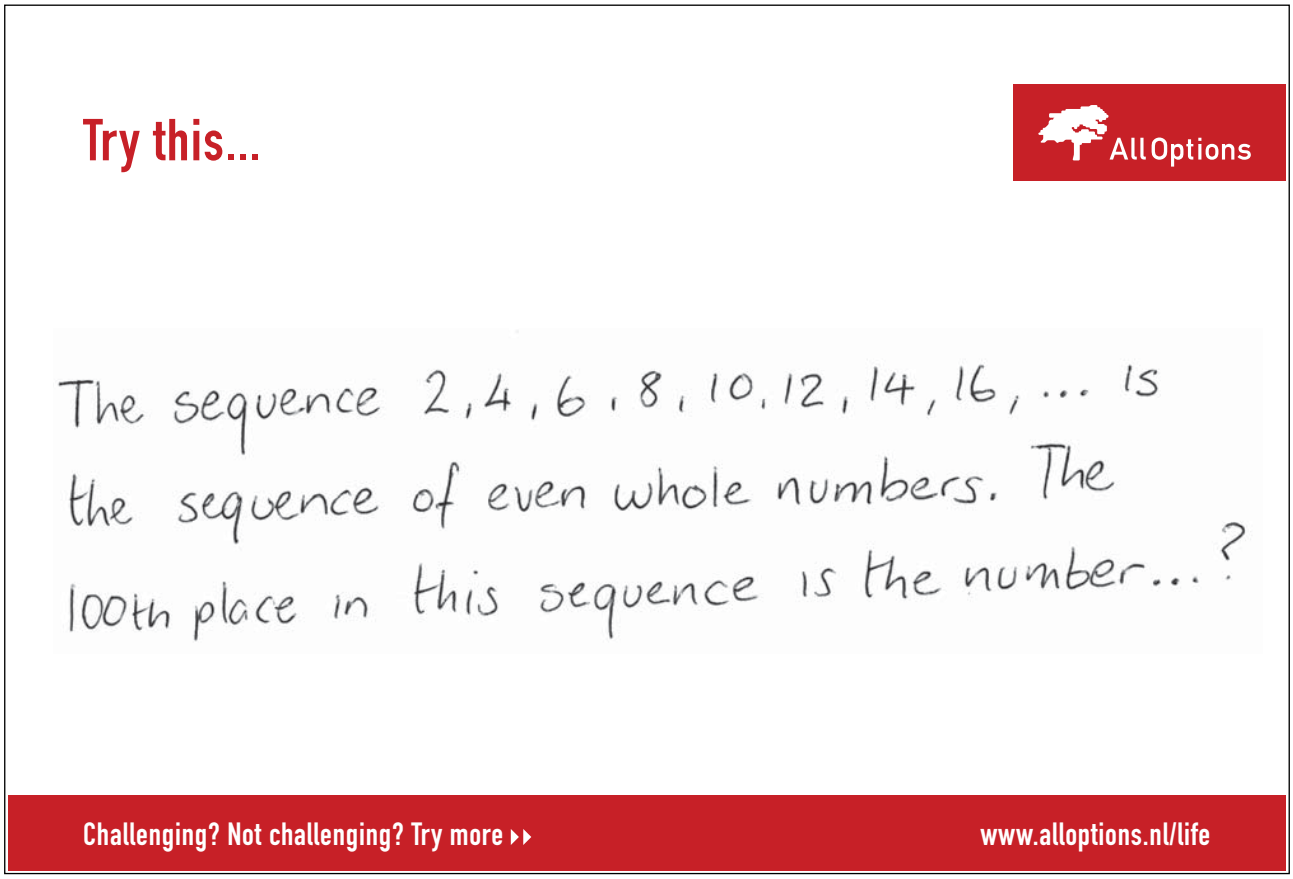
- *Show Branding* – If your audience is familiar with your organization and its brand, putting a logo or your organization name in the top left corner takes priority over anything else.

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- *Headline* – The headlines should appear as close to the top of the email as possible. Ideally, they should also be near the top left corner of the email.
- *Call to Action* – The "Subject" line should already display what the call to action of this particular email is, but the call to action should also be displayed near the headline in the top left corner as well. The call to action should contain more information about the special offer since you are not limited in space like with the "subject" line.
- *Visual Anchors* – Visual anchors are simple images or graphics that help emphasize important components in an email, such as a link to your website or to special coupons. Images or graphics like an arrow can be used to point the user to a desired location on the email. These should be placed closer to the top of an email.
- *Images* – Images are a nice element to add to an email, but be careful about how big the image is. You do not want it to be so large that it covers half the page and makes the customer miss important blocks of text.

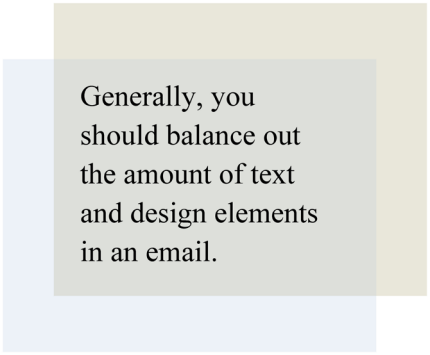
You should also be careful how you display the image in an email as well. Browsers should be able to read and display appropriate file formats like JPGs, GIFs, and PNGs. You can convert images not in these formats using an image editor. Also, limit the file size of the image by making the dimensions smaller and reducing the resolution to 72 dots per inch (dpi). And lastly, never embed images in an email. This will make the message big and take more time to load. Instead, store your images on a server and use an HTML line of code called an image reference to display the image.

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5.3.3 Text



Of course, we cannot forget about the importance of an email's text. Not only should it be essential to this part of your marketing strategy, it is also part of your region's SPAM compliancy law provisions in the sense that you must convey certain types of information. This, of course, includes things like stating your location, the fact that you are advertising, etc. It also requires that the information you state is not misleading.

Generally, you should balance out the amount of text and design elements in an email. Too much text is intimidating to read while too many images are annoying. Focus on these areas of text:

- *Headlines* – Entice the reader to read on. Create the sense of urgency like you did with the "Subject" line. Also keep branding in mind and think about your word choice and what you want to convey.
- *Paragraphs* – This is where you will lay out the finer details of your email. Whether it is a special offer or a frequent newsletter, it should convey further what your "Subject" line and headline claimed first. Make sure, however, that your paragraphs are not too long and that you do not have too many of them.
- *Links* – Your email should contain links for customers to be able to click to take that call of action you asked for. Make them clear to read and distinguished from the rest of the text. This is usually done by displaying the link with a blue font and underlined.

Fonts are another important component to the text of an email. Regardless of what the words say, the font of text can give the words a meaning through the tone it conveys. You are free to use whatever font you feel is necessary, but try to keep the amount of different fonts you use to a minimum. Headlines can have a different font than the body of the text, but generally speaking, using too many fonts can feel overwhelming for the reader. Also use a font that conveys the appropriate tone of your company. Remember that branding is still in play.

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5.3.4 Linking

Links should be provided in an email to get the customer involved beyond the email, with social media and your website.

One of the most important parts of the layout of an email is to provide links for your calls to action. The reason you should include links is because you want the customer to become more involved by going to your organization's website or social media profile. The links you provide should be clear and precise. This helps your email comply with CAN-SPAM provisions, entices your customer, and simplifies your customer's understanding of your call to action.

You can use HTML to encode a link in your email and display it however you want. This comes in the form of the <a href> tag and encodes a link so that all the customer has to do is click to get to the website you're directing him to. Usually, the link displays the URL, but you can manipulate what is displayed with the help of the <a href> tag. While the actual URL will be within the tag, you can type in whatever text you want between <a href> and . This makes the link appear as the text you typed in.

This is especially useful because some URLs end up being extremely long and you want to condense it for easier viewing. Your displayed link text, just like the body text, should also be clear and precise. It should give the reader exactly what it says it will and should not be misleading. Some examples include:

- "Click here for more details"
- "Read my blog for the latest updates"
- "Email us at organization@domain.com"
- "Retweet this"
- " 'Like' us on Facebook"

Your displayed link text should also be distinguished from the body of your text. Most of the time, links are underlined and blue. They also display a different color when they have already been visited by the user, like purple.

You can also use links to direct readers to other things like a file or certain parts of the email. Additionally, you can use images instead of text to link a user to something in the email or on the Internet. Whichever you choose, be sure that it is appropriate and clearly stated.

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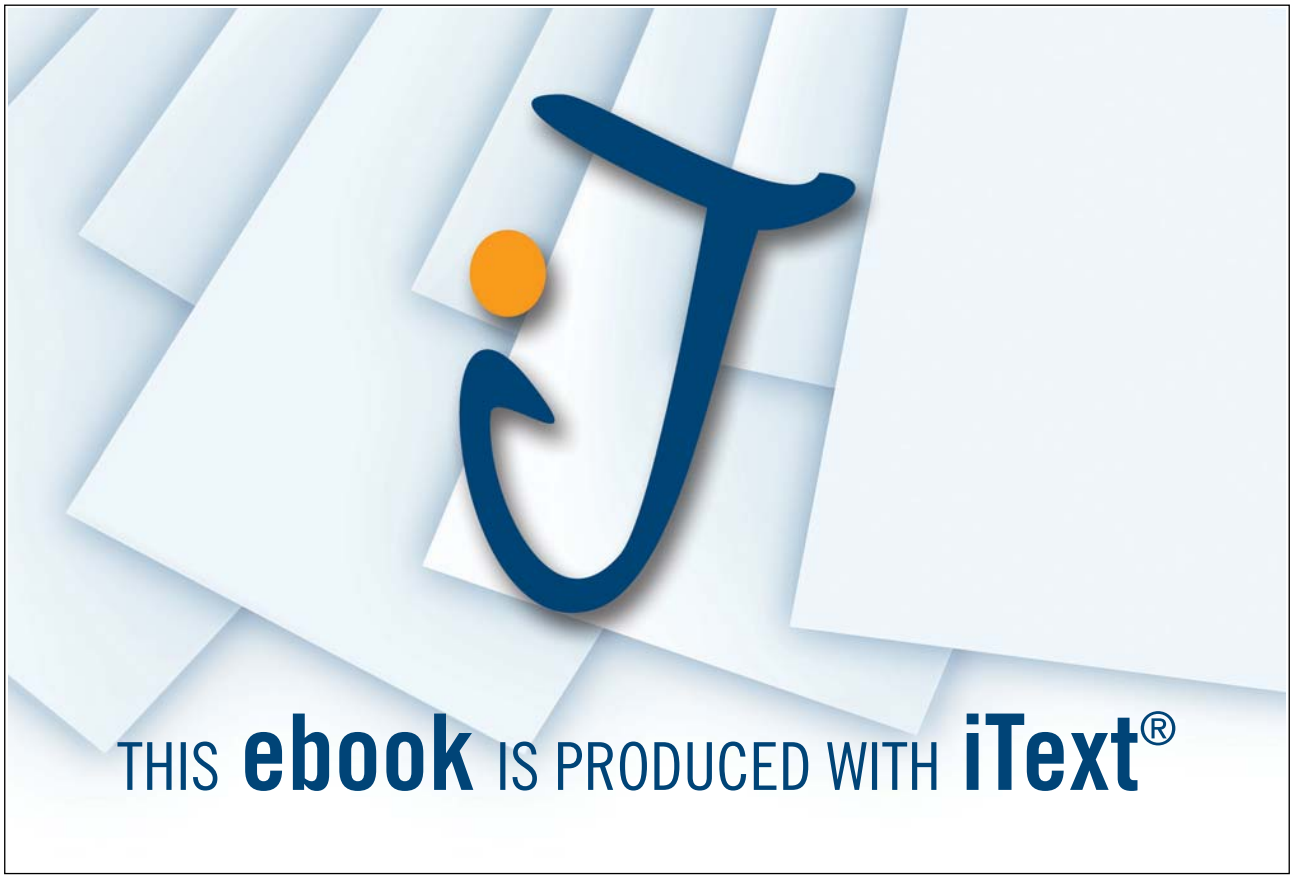
6 Analyzing and Tracking Your Email Marketing Strategy

6.1 Introduction

Tracking and analyzing the performance of emails is very easy with the help of tools featured in ESPs.

Tracking how well your emails perform is one of the greatest benefits of an email marketing strategy. Tracking how well an email does is very simple and ESPs provide the necessary tools for you to be able to do all of that.

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In this chapter, we will discuss the various ways to track and analyze your email marketing strategy's performance and take a look at the different types of reports you can view and use.

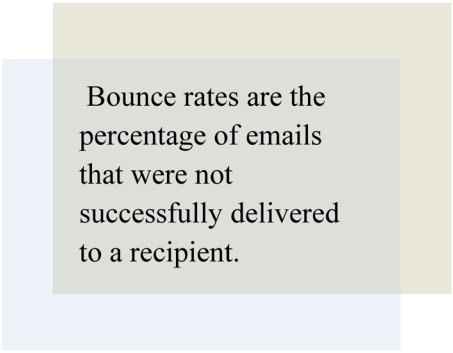
6.2 Types of Tracking Reports

Depending on the ESP you use, you have a great deal of data and to track and analyze. The kinds of data your can track include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Email bounce rates
- Who opened emails
- What links were clicked
- Customers that unsubscribe
- Email forwards

Let's take a closer look at the most commonly used types of tracking reports. As we go through the types of reports, they will become more and more specific.

6.2.1 Bounce Rates/Non-Bounce Rates



Bounce rate refers to the amount of emails that were not received by recipients. It is the equivalent of having a mailed letter sent back to the sender. This number is expressed as a percentage of total emails sent and requires a simple calculation.

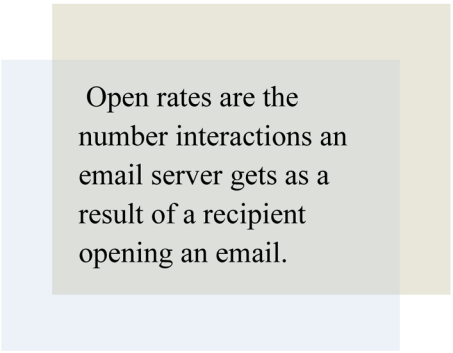
Calculating the bounce rate means taking the number of bounced emails (which a tracking report will tell you) and dividing that by the total number of emails you sent to a particular category on your list. You will get a small number (less than one) expressed in decimal form. To get the percent number, move the decimal to the right two places. As an example, if you get 0.25 from your division equation, moving the decimal over two spots gives you 25%.

Bounces can happen for a number of reasons, like firewalls or a full inbox. Most of the time, though, it is out of your control and there is little you can do to fix it. However, you can check for certain things like misspelled email addresses to see if the problem is in your hands and is fixable.

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Non-Bounce rates, on the other hand, are the percentage of emails that did get sent through, regardless of whether or not the recipient opened them. This is a very useful number because it is used to let you know detailed information that wewill discuss in the next few sections. Calculating the non-bounce rate is also simple. If you already have the bounce rate, all you have to do is subtract the percentage number from 100 to get the non-bounce rate. Of course, an ESP will also display both of these numbers for you.

6.2.2 Open Rates

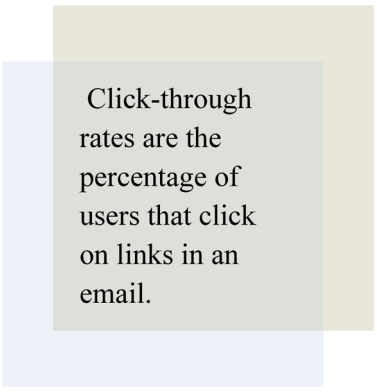


Open rates are the number of interactions your email server gets as a result of a recipient opening an email. This number only comes from the non-bounce rate and not the total number of emails you sent out. Your ESP will know when an email has opened because of one of the following:

- The images were displayed in an opened email
- A recipient clicked a link in an email

The reason these actions indicate an opened email is because images are stored on the ESP's server and accessed from the server when an email is opened. A link within an email is tracked because clicks are easily trackable. This is another reason why putting images and links into an email is important for your email marketing strategy.

6.2.3 Click-Through Rates



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Click-through rates are the percentage of users clicking on links in an email. This number is taken from the number of opened, non-bounced emails. As you can already see, these tracking data get more and more specific, building off of one another.

The click-through rate number will be displayed and calculated by your ESPs software tools. Some ESP software will allow you to view exactly which links were clicked in addition to the number of times each one was clicked.

> Companies can use click-through rates to personalize a customer's email preferences and offer recommendations.

Click-through rates are especially beneficial for customizing the interests of your customers. It extends beyond the email as well, being used on websites to track who clicks on what links. Since it is easy to track what exactly your customers click on, you can make well-educated assumptions about what they would prefer for you to send them in the future.

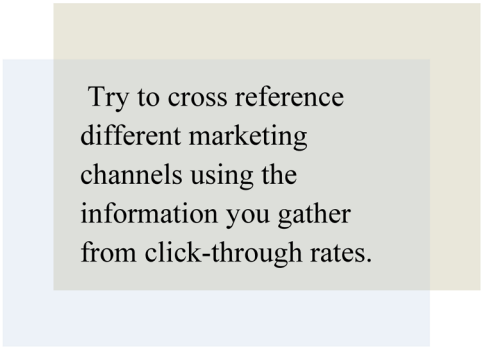
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Let's say that you are a store that allows people to buy music as either CDs or downloads. You can track the links a customer clicks on and customize their emails to include links on specific artists and similar music. First, however, you must place email subscribers into categories based on these clicks. From there, you can send them more recommendations by adding in links. Those links can be tracked even further to see if they are effective.

You can also use click-through rates to recommend other types data to the customer to get them more involved in your company's other marketing channels. For example, using the store we mentioned above, you can recommend a blogger who's overarching theme focuses on the music genre your customer is interested in. In your emails to the customer, you can tell him "If you like [music genre], check out this blog."



You can also use click-through rates as a means of testing out different versions of an email. Separate a list in two and send out a different version of the same email to each list. Analyze which list has more click-through rates and if necessary, make adjustments to the emails. Keep testing them out until you feel you have an optimal and effective email.

6.2.4 Additional Tracking Reports

In addition to the tracking data we have already mentioned, there are a few other points of data you can view and perhaps even use to improve the effectiveness of your email marketing strategy. You can see how many people unsubscribed and keep their data in a category of your email list. It is a good practice to keep this data because if the customer decides to subscribe to your email list once more, you do not have to do any additional research on their information. Remember, though, that you cannot send them any emails unless they grant permission again.

You can also use tracking reports to see if anyone has forwarded your email to other email addresses. If your email marketing strategy calls for you to get people to spread the word about your organization or something it has to say, this is a very useful type of data to track.

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6.3 Email Tracking Data – Offline

You might come across an instance where you want to track how well your emails are doing for certain components of your entire marketing strategy. In some cases, though, using click-through or open rates will do little to help you track your progress and success. Some situations where you will want to know if your emails are effective include:

- In-Store Purchases
- Phone Calls
- Event Attendance

Sometimes, an organization wants to know if their emails are enticing people to participate in actions such as these listed. Their participation cannot be tracked by software, so being able to track this kind of data involves some participation on the part of your email recipients. The best way to determine the effectiveness of your emails is to have your email recipients give you their email address when the make a purchase at a store or call your organization. For event attendance, you might give them some kind of special code that gets them into the event and can only be viewed from an email.

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