



8 Tips to get the best out of **EMAIL MARKETING**



Email, the most valuable marketing tool in your business arsenal

Originally seen as a cheaper staple of any marketing mix, for many businesses email marketing has grown to become one of the most valuable and effective marketing tools. This channel is still somewhat misunderstood, with perceptions behind its value and how it is treated within a marketing mix still underrated.

Unlike most other marketing communication channels, an effective email campaign can help your business reach thousands on a regular basis. It can drive brand awareness, reinforce competitive positioning, convert new customers and create more value from existing customers. Possibly the best part of this: it can also be automated, covering a number of tasks that would otherwise have taken many human hours.



If you're gonna do it, do it right!

Done right, email marketing can help generate large amounts of revenue for your business. Done wrong, all the time and resources that you dedicate to this channel can actually have a negative impact on your business, and relegate you to the deep dark pit of never-viewed spam.

Email marketing is a very cost effective way to reach your customers on a regular basis. This leads to many businesses treating this channel as 'cheap' and often opting for a mass/constant communication approach.

Without being strategic, or considering the value that it generates, they will fire email shot after email shot without thinking in detail about target audiences or the content the emails contain. This results in emails being sent out to customers without the proper structure and/or formula as opposed to a tactical form of communication to generate success.

We believe these sorts of businesses usually take the following approach: the formula is simple right? Slap a message and call to action in an email format, press send and profit? Wrong. Sure you can hit someone's inbox, but that

doesn't mean you'll get an open. If you get an open, sure you'll get a brand impression, but is it positive, and will this lead to someone reading the email? And even if you get read, you have a chance at getting your message across, but will you get a click (or an action)?

So the real challenge lies in creating value amongst the 200 billion emails getting sent every day. The trick to creating value for your business is to understand your customer and provide them with genuine value. The below are our 8 rules to email marketing.





1 CONTENT

Content is one of the latest buzzwords in the world of marketing, there is a reason for this - content is king (well, along with some other key factors). The content that you deliver in your emails is crucial, it presents the first opportunity for your customers to engage with your brand, and encourage them to take the desired action. If you constantly try and push repeated messaging in every email you send out, customers will lose interest. The most effective

email campaigns use mixed content, including brand messaging and propositions with content relevant to the target audience, not necessarily directly related to the brand. This methodology means that the customer knows that each time they receive an email, even if they're not thinking about your brand at that time, that there will be content relevant and interesting to them.

2 SIZE MATTERS

The size (length) of your emails is also very important. Long emails just don't get read, and if they do, customers will spend the time on the email, rather than clicking through to the action you want them to take. Long emails dilute effectiveness. The best thing to do is to incorporate a snippet of the engaging content, and then drive the target audience to click through to the website/landing page with the complete content.



3 TEMPLATE

Email templates are the perfect example of concentrated UI / UX and controlled conversion flows, delivered in a way that makes emails stand out/seem more appealing in a restrictive and noisy inbox.

Templates that are created to deliver content and drive conversions can be likened to salesmen. Sending a salesman out to talk to thousands of your

customers dressed in last night's trackpants, with a cheese-stain on his chest and a hangover will likely generate dreadful results (as you'd expect).

However, dressed as a reflection of your brand, with a clear hierarchy of messages and simple actions to take your customers through, will yield much better results.



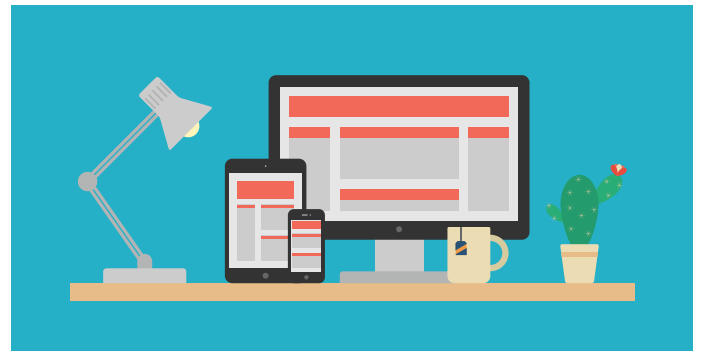
4 RESPONSIVE

According to those geniuses at Litmus, 53% of emails are opened via mobile or tablet. Standard HTML emails won't automatically resize to fit every device, which means that to get to/read the content involves a lot of pinching and multi-axis scrolling and panning. This is a barrier, specifically when it comes to marketing related emails.

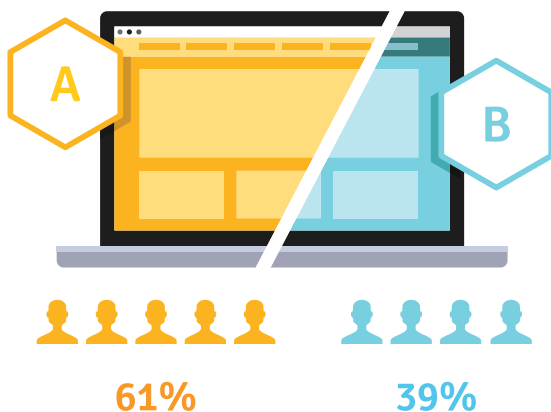
Delivering emails using a responsive template means that your content is delivered in the most consumable format for the device that it is being viewed on. This means better engagement and higher conversions.

Developing a responsive HTML email template can be complicated (if it is an extremely complex template) and often needs to be simplified to work

across the wide variety of clients, versions and devices. Because complicated often means costly, despite the statistics on mobile consumption, many business do not send responsive emails. This means that responsive emails have less competition for attention on mobile devices.



5 A/B TESTING



If you've got a large email base, A/B testing can yield great results in incremental improvements through testing slight variations and sending to randomised groups, you can find new and interesting insights to increase open and click performance over time.

Litmus recently published a case study on how A/B testing helped Atlassian and explained the ways in which it worked. Fascinating reading, if you're N3RDs like us!



6 SUBJECT LINE

Your subject line is the first point of contact, the first chance to make a real impression, and top of the funnel in the engagement process. It can either inspire or result in a click of the delete button before you've even had a chance to get your proposition across.

In this small snippet of copy, you need to stand out in a long list of unreads in your customers inbox. Most email campaigns come with a descriptor subject line like 'Company X August Newsletter', 'Latest Update from Company X'. While technically accurate, how does this tell your customers about the value in the email, which is what they are ultimately interested in. A subject line with a value, reason, benefit and where possible targeted

content, gain more traction than descriptive subject lines. For example 'How to generate more revenue from email marketing', or 'Best email marketing practises explained simply' describe the value behind what you are communicating.



7 TIME & FREQUENCY

Send email communications too frequently and you'll lose the attention of your customer base, send infrequently and engagement may not be high to start with and you will not be getting the full value out of this channel. The frequency of email communications will vary from business to business, however according to Campaign Monitor 2-3 times a month is optimal for marketing/promotional emails. Too many emails and your customers/target audience will unsubscribe or mark you as spam, and too few raises a risk they could forget who you are - this is of course a general guide and will vary from industry to industry.

In terms of when to send emails, we wouldn't recommend sending emails for B2B businesses from Friday afternoon through to Monday evening (generally speaking). For B2C businesses the rule is a little more flexible depending on your industry. Too late on a Friday and customers are focussed elsewhere, and Monday is usually a clearance day when a build up of emails tend to get deleted without reading them. Between Tuesday and Thursday is the email sweet spot, and you should aim to deliver about 11am, with the view to be read before the customer goes to lunch, or 2pm for a post lunch read.



8 AFTER THE EMAIL

Emails on their own are a powerful tool. Emails backed up with intelligent use of your analytics promises a more compelling experience. Who's clicking through and not converting, where and what are people clicking on most. Taking these learnings on board and using them for the next email you send will see improvements over time.

This coupled with a quick call from someone in your sales team pre-informed that the customer is interested but not quite there can help drive even more conversions.



About Square1

Square1 is an award-winning marketing communications agency.

By taking our clients back to the beginning, we help them identify their points of difference and define their corporate personality. We then translate that unique essence into strategic, creative, engaging and consistent communication across all platforms – web, print, video, exhibition, social, presentation, campaign... whatever canvas is right to achieve their objectives and to bring their brands to life!

In partnership, we encourage our clients to build and nurture strong, relevant brands that not just stand out, but stand for something.



Consult. Create. Communicate.