

Email marketing guide

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A clients guide to email marketing

Intro

A quick guide to email marketing

It is important to keep in regular contact with past and present customers, the main reason being they are more likely to purchase from you again. A cost effective way of communicating with your customers is by using email marketing. Using email instead of traditional post has many benefits :

- ▶ Time saving
- ▶ Cost savings - no stamps, stationery, envelopes...
- ▶ Measurable results - stats included
- ▶ Branding, colours and fonts to match your website or existing brand
- ▶ Near instant delivery, and a fast response by your recipients
- ▶ Regular campaigns promote brand loyalty

Why not use this application to inform your customers about...

- ▶ A new product or service you're offering
- ▶ Highlight upcoming events or new publications
- ▶ Special offers or deals on a product or service
- ▶ Inform customers about developments relevant to your business

Whatever you have to say, it makes sense to say it via email.

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COLLECTING EMAIL ADDRESSES

Before you can send emails it's crucial to build a database of customers/clients email addresses. But don't forget, you must make sure that you have their authorisation to contact them via email. It's a good idea to have an email collection form on your web site where interested parties can sign up to your newsletter.

If you operate an online shop ask the question at the checkout stage - 'is it alright to keep in touch with you via email'?

FREQUENCY/TIMING

Now that you have your email database in place you have to decide when, and how often to send emails. Make sure you're consistent. Don't just send emails whenever you have time, make sure you keep in contact regularly - once every week, month or quarter - be consistent. Don't over send emails. Some businesses send too many, i.e. several per week but a customer will soon get bored and start to delete your emails on arrival.

Decide what is the best day (and time) to send your emails, this varies between sector. For example if your business targets busy professionals avoid Monday mornings as they are most likely busy after the weekend. If your business is consumer driven send your messages later in the week, just before the weekend.

Analyse your stats and see which works best for you.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Don't over complicate your emails. Your recipient may have several marketing emails waiting in their inbox. How can we make yours stand out? Decide on the message you're trying to convey and deliver it in a simple easy to follow style. Use images along with text to make the email more attractive. Use links so that your customers can access your website easily. Think about how you can best attract your customers. Inform them of special offers, discounts or new products available.

BRANDING

It's important to make sure that anything your customer sees (web site, packaging, stationery, leaflets) mirrors your existing brand, and the same can be said for marketing emails. Customers will be able to recognise your emails more easily if you use the same logo, colours, fonts and images each time you contact them.

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TESTING

Before a campaign is deployed it is important that the following information is checked thoroughly :

- ▶ Code, make sure the template design is working as it should do
- ▶ All Images have ALT description tags (e.g. "Featured product, Sony colour TV")
- ▶ Links have description titles (e.g. "Click here to visit our website")
- ▶ All the links work
- ▶ Pricing and product information and descriptions are correct
- ▶ Campaigns are linked to Google Analytics and Twitter (where required)
- ▶ SPAM filters are checked to make sure the campaign arrives in the recipients inbox

All this is done on your behalf, you don't need to do a thing. Before a campaign is deployed you will be sent a draft version to make sure you're happy with the finished design.

ARE YOU PREPARED?

So your campaign is ready to roll. Have you considered what the demand to your goods or services will be when recipients read your email? If you're offering a special deal on a particular product have you considered your stock levels?

If you're offering a new/special product or service will you be inundated with enquiries? That may be great for a medium to large business but what if you're self employed? How will you cope with the extra demand? It could be a good idea to break your email database up into two halves and send on alternate occasions.

LEGAL

It's important to make sure your email marketing campaigns comply with the necessary privacy/anti-spam laws. My marketing software and your email database are completely integrated. The whole system is fully automated so you won't have to manually remove recipient details from your database. If a customer chooses to opt out of your future campaigns they only have to click on one link to unsubscribe themselves. This ensures you won't contact them again by mistake.

RESULTS

You will be able to analyse the performance of your campaign as soon as the message is sent. Interactive graphs will show you how many emails were delivered, how many were opened, what percentage clicked a link, and which link they clicked on...

The software will also inform you of 'bounces' which is the term used to describe an email that did not reach its destination. Also, The number of unsubscribes will be listed (and noted so they can't be re-contacted again in the future). You will be able to make comparisons between your stats and industry averages so that you can clearly see how your campaigns are performing.

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