

The Practical Guide to Email Marketing

Strategies and Tactics for Inbox Success

by Jordan Ayan

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Introduction

In just a few short years, email marketing has become a main ingredient in most modern marketing plans. The reason for this is simple: the ROI for email marketing is \$57.25 for every dollar spent, according to a study by the Direct Marketing Association. That's double the ROI of other online marketing tactics.

Marketers are not expected to slow their spending on email marketing anytime soon. According to Jupiter Research, email marketing spending will grow to \$1.1 billion by 2010 from \$885 million in 2005, increasing at a compounded annual rate of 4.5 percent.

Where will marketers spend their email dollars?

- Retention email makes up the greatest share of the email market, reaching \$577 million by 2010.
- Acquisition email, which includes newsletters, appends and co-registrations, will grow 4 percent annually to \$518 million by 2010.
- B2C email marketing will grow 5 percent annually to \$897 million by 2010.
- B2B email marketing will grow 2.4 percent annually to \$206 million by 2010.

Email marketing has been growing for several reasons. Most important, the tools have been getting better and best practices have been established.

This book is a compilation of best practices applicable to email marketers just starting out as well as those who need a refresher. The advice takes you from the initial steps of setting an email marketing strategy, to creative tips and to getting the most out of your email through effective testing.

These best practices are the same insights we have been sharing with our customers for years. Now we are sharing them with you.

Of course, if you'd like to know more about becoming a member of the SubscriberMail family of customers, we'd be happy to talk with you about that as well. Please visit our website at www.subscribermail.com for more information about our company.

7 Email Strategies

Whether you are new to email marketing or have been refining your email strategies for years, there are seven initiatives that are essential for your continued email marketing success.

1. Increase Your Segmentation Efforts

Email marketing data offers incredible segmentation power and the ability to take advantage of small audience segments that might otherwise be financially or technically difficult to reach. If you haven't started segmenting your list and sending more targeted messages based on recipient data or behaviors, start today. Most of the research in the email industry indicates that segmentation yields significant gains in email conversions. Some typical strategies for segmentation include:

Geography—This is an easy, fairly obvious segmentation strategy. For example, your customer in Florida is unlikely to be interested in a snowmobile. And your customer in Minnesota probably isn't interested in a jet ski—in the winter, anyway. Geography can also be a powerful indicator of buying patterns and other influences on the purchase cycle. Take the high tech industry, for example. In high tech pockets like Silicon Valley early adopters are far more common.

Demographics—This is another easy one, and can make a lot of sense. For example, we know men and women can interpret information quite

differently. Younger vs. older audiences take in information in different ways as well.

Job title and function—Are you emailing potential users with no—or all the—buying power? An owner or CFO may want to know about ROI. A middle manager may just want to make his or her job easier. And an engineer or programmer wants to find better ways to work. And so on.

Purchasing frequency—Less frequent purchasers may require a time-sensitive offer to encourage them to act. Or maybe you want to reward frequent buyers with exclusive privileges via email.

Monetary spending—Adjust resources so you're dedicating your efforts toward customers who spend the most money with your company.

If you have been segmenting your email audiences, don't stop. Try to find new ways to segment and look at segmentation based on historical email activity, perhaps treating people who are frequent "clickers" or "openers" differently.

2. Rethink and Refine Your Opt-in Campaigns

Perform a check-up on your opt-in processes. Review everything from the data fields you're collecting to the confirmation email you are sending afterwards. Small changes can mean big gains in new audiences, as well as setting the proper expectations for subscribers.

- Can you increase opt-ins by reducing unneeded data collection?
- Are you prominently directing Web visitors to sign up for email? Can you place this on more pages, or in locations that are more visible?
- Do you clearly define significant and relevant benefits for subscribers signing up for your email? Does the email you send confirming the opt-in restate the benefits?
- Do you set expectations and ask subscribers to "add this address to your safe list" in the opt-in process?

The language you use, the support graphics, and the staging techniques you employ can make a huge difference—between being totally ignored and creating an evolving, dynamic relationship that can enhance database precision, enrich dialogue, and help you showcase a larger scope of services. Furthermore, if you're not using strict opt-in policies, start now. As recipients continue to tire

of unwanted email, you'll continue to see declining response rates if you are not using an opt-in-only process.

3. Clean Your Lists and Try to Maintain Them

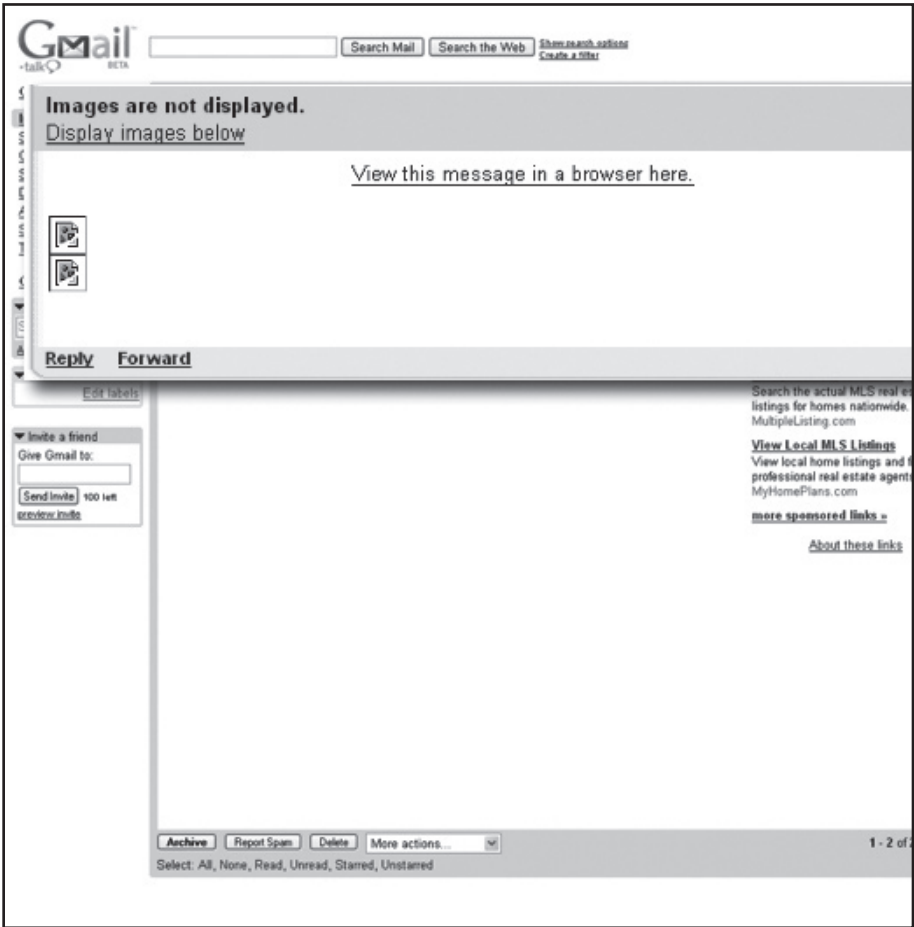
Perform a thorough cleaning of your email lists. This does not necessarily mean blindly deleting a bunch of names, but rather using segmentation strategies to treat historically inactive recipients differently than people who are actively opening and clicking on your email messages. Here are some suggestions for periodically cleaning house:

- Take a close look at your lists and list segments. Are there some list segments you are never using? If so, clean them out.
- Review lists of people who have not responded to messages in the past few months and contact them in a different way than the rest of your list. If they still do not respond, consider removing them. Remember, today's email success is about quality and not quantity.
- Review any new list segments you may want to make. Are there any ways to segment and strengthen messages to various groups? If so, segment them now and start communicating more effectively to those groups.

4. Design for Disabled Images and Preview Panes

Audiences are increasingly looking at your messages without images turned on. (It may not be their choice, but rather the default of their email client.) Make sure your messages are still readable and compelling without images. This may mean designing messages using fewer images, or including a short list of articles at the top of your newsletter. This technique works well for people who are viewing your message through a preview pane as well. Making sure enough content is placed in the upper right hand of the message to give recipients something to act upon will be important to success rates.

Without designing your messages with this in mind, your campaigns may end up looking like this to recipients:

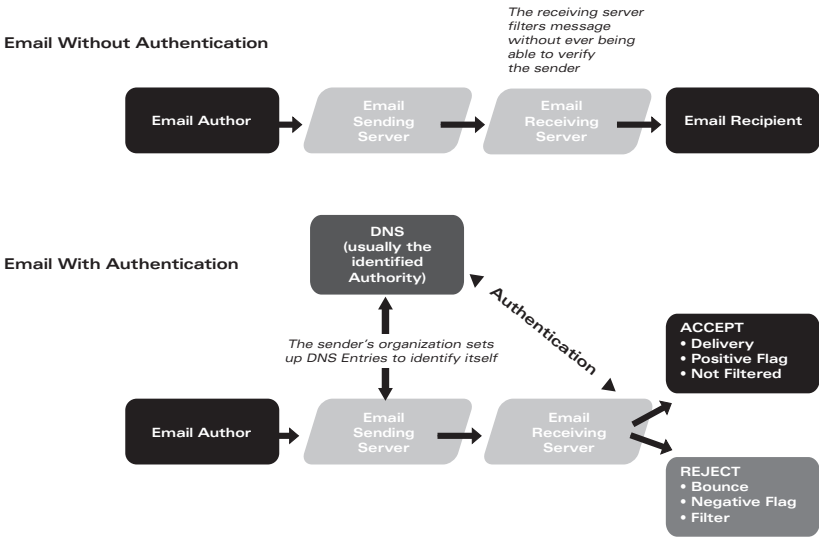


Specific examples on how to optimize email creative are covered in the “Guidelines for Effective Email Creative” chapter of this book.

5. Institute Authentication Standards

Email authentication has reached critical mass, and will continue to grow in importance for email delivery. If you haven't already, make sure you set up SPF records, Sender ID records, and mail using Domain Keys Identified Mail (DKIM) authentication whenever possible. Proper use of these authentication methods will help your deliverability and will contribute to building a positive reputation for your domain.

Your IT department and/or email service provider should be able to provide specific steps on how to set up these authentication methods. They can also verify which authentication methods are set up already if you're not sure. The chart below shows a very simplistic and conceptual view of email with and without authentication.



6. Expand Your Email Testing Efforts

One of the best ways to refine your email strategy is through testing. If you're a beginner at this, the simplest form of testing is splitting your email list into A and B segments, and sending each segment a message where one element, and only one element, is varied: subject line, copy, image, layout, offer, call to action, etc. Then analyze the results to determine which variation was more successful in increasing response, and optimize future messages accordingly.

Whenever you're testing, remember the six steps for email testing success:

1. Ask a question
2. Form a theory
3. Create the test
4. Segment the list
5. Measure and analyze results
6. Make changes

If you're already a testing pro, or have performed some tests in previous years, keep refining what you have learned to continually improve your campaign performance. As with many of the other initiatives we've outlined, small and continual gains can provide major dividends. For more information about email testing, see the chapter "Email Testing: A Checklist for Success." If you've run out of testing ideas, call SubscriberMail and we'll be happy to work with you to develop some new ideas!

7. Rethink Tired Campaigns

Marketers are increasingly seeing the power that email marketing can have when used properly as part of the marketing mix. We encourage you to go beyond the status quo with your over-arching email efforts and aggressively build your campaigns to deliver better results and new opportunities.

Rethink campaigns that have run for awhile, and look at analytics to uncover new avenues of content or functionality that your audiences may respond to. Email offers a unique platform to quickly and cost-effectively change campaigns for the better. Take advantage of these unique abilities to maximize your efforts.

The Opt-in Process: 10 Steps to Success

1. Understand What Constitutes an “Opt-in”

As email has grown from a communication vehicle to marketing superpower, the industry has fought to keep up with best practices. While marketers would like to believe recipients are all overjoyed to receive email from them, that's not always the case. To this end, the Email Sender & Provider Coalition (ESPC), an association of email industry leaders, has composed its Email Marketing Best Practices Guide. Among other clarifications, the ESPC defines “opt-in” as “the point of email address collection at which a person has affirmatively requested to be included on an email list to receive commercial email.” Furthermore, the ESPC establishes that commercial email should not be sent without:

- 1) Prior affirmative consent of the individual, as defined by the CAN-SPAM Act of 2003; or
- 2) Prior consent of the individual as defined by the European Commission Privacy and Electronic Communications Directive.

As defined by CAN-SPAM, “affirmative consent” means that:

- (1) the recipient expressly consented to receive the message, either in response to a clear and conspicuous request for such consent or at the recipient's own initiative; and
- (2) if the message is from a party other than the party to which the recipient communicated such consent, the recipient was given clear

and conspicuous notice [of this] at the time the consent was communicated.

The ESPC maintains that even with a prior business relationship, the opt-in best practice is to:

- 1) notify the person of the sender's intent to communicate with him or her at the point of address collection or in the first communication to the person, and then
- 2) upgrade permission to opt-in status, preferably confirmed (defined later in this chapter) as soon as possible.

2. Establish Your Privacy Policy

Before beginning to collect opt-ins, establish a privacy policy if you don't already have one. If you have a policy, review it and be sure it covers collecting email addresses. Let recipients know if you plan to share their email addresses with a third party, and how the shared information will be used. If your policy states that you won't share email addresses, live with your commitment.

Make sure your privacy policy is easily accessible on your website, and that you provide links to it at every step of the opt-in process. Be sure to keep your policy updated and reviewed by legal counsel when necessary. The Direct Marketing Association provides a tool on their website to help you generate a privacy policy. Visit www.the-dma.org for more information.

3. Create the Opt-in Page

Your opt-in page is very important because it is the place where consumers will decide if they will or will not give you their email addresses to receive email from you. It also sets the tone for future email communication. When done correctly, it can drive future email activity; and when done poorly, it will result in lower email activity. To these ends, the most important thing to do when constructing your opt-in page is to focus on building value and setting expectations.

Build the value of opting-in by focusing on what's in it for them, not for you.

- "Be the first to know"
- "Free, timely market updates"

- “Special offers” or “special discounts”
- “Save money with weekly coupons”
- “Strategies to improve your...”

Set the proper expectations up front by explaining on the opt-in page:

- the types of messages recipients will receive
- message content
- frequency of messages
- if they’ll receive third-party offers

Other considerations to take when building your opt-in page include:

- Will you use a short or long sign-up form? A short form will garner more sign-ups, but a longer form will collect more information.
- Will subscribers need to create a password to opt in? A password could give subscribers access to an account, but you are likely to lose subscribers who do not want to create a password just to receive email from you.
- Will you provide options for subscribers to choose what types of messages they receive? Asking subscribers to select their interests allows you to send targeted messages, but requires more work to create separate lists and content.

Don’t make these important decisions blindly. Test your opt-in page for higher conversion and/or more qualified opt-ins. Aspects to test include:

- Incentive to sign up vs. no incentive
- Long vs. short opt-in form
- Copy (value statements)
- Sign-up options vs. global opt-in
- Create password vs. no password
- Placement of opt-in box on website

4. Know What Information to Collect

When deciding what information to collect initially on the opt-in page, keep in mind your email marketing strategy. If you haven’t established what your strategy will be, spend some time thinking about it.

- What’s your segmentation strategy? Will you send targeted mailings based on demographic information such as gender, age, and location?

- What's your personalization strategy? Will you send personalized content such as "Dear First Name"? Personalization could also include sending targeted content based on location or other demographics as identified above.
- What's your marketing strategy? Will you send strictly monthly messages on your time frame, or will you send customized messages based on a recipient's birthday or anniversary?

Knowing the answers to these questions up front will help determine what information should be collected on the opt-in page. The best practice is to collect only the information that is necessary. For example, collecting postal information if you never plan to send direct mail is a useless step that could lose you opt-ins.

Consider collecting additional information that is not imperative to the opt-in process *after* the opt-in has been collected. This could also be collected in periodic follow-up surveys.

5. Create the Opt-in Confirmation Page

Drive future email activity by setting expectations on your opt-in confirmation page. This page should include the following important aspects:

- Text that asks subscribers to add your "from address" to their safe list or address book. Consider providing a link to a page with specific directions on how to do this for each of the major email clients. This is the point at which you should ask subscribers to do this, as they are at their most active stage of involvement with you, having just signed up for email from you. Being added to their safe list ensures your messages will always be delivered to their inbox.
- An image of your welcome email so recipients will recognize the message in their inbox when they receive it. Be sure to specifically point out the confirmation link if using double opt-in, with directions to click on the link to confirm their subscription.

6. Send the Welcome Message

The welcome message is another step in the opt-in process where you have the opportunity to reinforce value and expectations to drive email activity. It should

be sent immediately after the opt-in and be a branded HTML message that accurately and positively represents your organization. Your welcome message should include these key elements:

- Copy that restates the value of their opt-in, the type of messages they can expect to receive, and how often they should expect to receive messages.
- Copy that again asks subscribers to add your “from address” to their safe list or address book.
- An image of the newsletter they will receive so they will recognize it in their inbox.
- A link to your privacy policy, to again reassure subscribers of how their information will be used.
- A confirmation link, if using a double opt-in process, with a strong call to action that directs subscribers to click to confirm their subscription.

7. Drive Traffic to the Opt-in Page

Once you have your opt-in page, confirmation page and welcome message set, you can now focus on driving visitors to the opt-in page. You should have a strong call to action on your home page in a prominent location that directs visitors to the opt-in page. A popular way to construct this email sign-up box is with a form field where visitors can fill in their email address directly on the home page, then be directed to a second page (your opt-in page) to collect additional information. This sign-up box or call to action should include strong copy on the value to the potential subscriber of receiving your company’s email. Additionally, your sign-up box and benefits should be prominently displayed on every page of your website.

You may want to consider using an incentive to drive opt-ins, such as a cash giveaway, drawing for a coveted prize or valuable coupon to be used toward their next purchase. You will certainly increase the number of opt-ins collected with an incentive vs. no incentive; however, you may also see a lower quality of opt-ins as people sign up for the prize rather than your email. On the down side, these people may not turn into active recipients and may thereby lower your response rates. On the up side, you now have the opportunity to turn people into active recipients who otherwise may not have chosen to receive email from your organization.

8. Collect Opt-ins from Other Points

Your opt-in page should be your main focus for collecting opt-ins, but it shouldn't be your only opportunity to collect opt-ins. There are many other contact points with consumers where you could solicit an email address. Here are some good examples:

- **Contact form:** Add a checkbox asking for an email sign-up on other web forms on your website. For example, a contact form for more information, a webinar registration form, a whitepaper download form, etc.
- **Product opportunity:** The checkout process on your ecommerce site is a great time to ask purchasers to sign up for email from your organization. These are your most active web visitors who have already shown an interest in your company.
- **Co-registration:** Look into co-registration opportunities that would make sense for your business model. Be sure that your main focus remains on collecting qualified opt-ins, rather than grow a list of email addresses for people who may have no need for your product or service.
- **Transactional messages:** Transactional messages present another opportunity to include a call to action that prompts users to opt in to receive promotional email messages from your company. Again, these are people who have already shown an interest in your company.
- **Brick and mortar:** If your company or organization has a brick-and-mortar business front, use this opportunity to collect email addresses from prospects either with a sign-up box on a counter or by asking directly for them. Again, be sure that the value of the opt-in is clear to prospects.

When adding a checkbox to a contact form, the checkout process or a co-registration process, you have the option to make this checkbox either pre-selected or unselected. It is a best practice to never have this checkbox pre-selected. Furthermore, it also makes good business sense. Using a pre-selected checkbox will add uninterested people to your list, and they'll end up skewing your results by opting out or generally never responding to your message. And it could be worse: they could end up reporting your messages as spam since they will not have recalled signing up for your email.

9. Evaluate Using Double Opt-in

Double opt-in—or confirmed opt-in as it’s also known—is the process whereby following an opt-in request, a confirmation email is sent. This email requires the person to confirm the opt-in before he or she will receive any future email messages. The person must respond, usually by clicking on a double confirmation link, in order to be considered confirmed.

Using a double opt-in process ensures you are sending to only your most qualified, most interested, and most active recipients. The potential downside is that you will almost never have as many confirmed double opt-ins as you have single opt-ins. However, lists that are confirmed through this double opt-in process consistently produce much higher open rates and click-through rates, and offer lower complaint rates.

If you decide the double opt-in process makes the most sense for your business model, you can increase the number of subscribers who confirm by following up with non-confirms two to five days from the initial opt-in. These are people who may have forgotten to act on your initial welcome message, but with a reminder message may confirm. Depending on your email service provider, this could potentially be set up as an automatically recurring message. This would ensure the highest rates of double confirming while removing the work of sending additional messages.

10. Deliver on Your Promises

After you’ve diligently set expectations about the emails you will be sending (on the opt-in page, confirmation page and welcome message), be sure that you then deliver on those promises. If you’ve promised weekly tips, be sure that the message type you’re sending is a “tips” email and that you are sending them weekly.

Additionally, be sure that you don’t deliver something that was not promised. For example,

- A different type of email than what they opted in for
- Weekly emails if you stated emails would be monthly
- Third-party emails if this was not explicit during the opt-in process

If your strategy shifts and you want to deliver something other than what was promised during the opt-in process, send an email asking subscribers to opt-in to this different type of email or send an email letting subscribers know of the change and giving them a chance to opt out.

A smooth opt-in process from start to finish will ensure that you are collecting subscribers who know what they are signing up for and who will be active recipients when they receive the content they are expecting. Delivering on promises made during the opt-in process and refining your strategy to send targeted mailings will keep your attrition rate low.

Email Segmentation Strategies

The product or service that one customer can't live without is one that another has no use for. The key selling point for one prospect is a weak point for another. Simply put, people care about what's relevant to them, and don't want to weed through what's not. So why send irrelevant content? Send only information that matters to recipients, and watch your response rates rise.

The key is to determine what content is relevant, and then divide your list into groups of people interested in the same information. Don't know what that is? Ask them. We'll discuss ideas on how to easily collect this information from your subscribers at the end of this chapter.

Divide and Conquer

Once you know what content your subscribers find relevant to them, divide your list into segments that make sense to your company or business model. You are probably already used to segmentation in your traditional marketing efforts, but many organizations overlook segmentation in their email initiatives.

Customize to Maximize

When you've segmented your list according to what works for your business model, maximize action and conversion by sending customized messages to

your different audiences. Customize the message content, customize the offer, the subject line, the time of day you send, etc.—all in a way that is directly relevant to the audience you’re sending to.

Using dynamic content to send targeted information—Dynamic content can make sending targeted content to recipients easy. Dynamic content allows you to create a single email message that delivers multiple versions based on recipients’ demographic profiles or other data. The possibilities are limited only by the data you have for your subscribers and the content you have that is relevant to that data. Messages can be customized to replace groups of text or images based on variables such as:

- a recipient’s personal data (state, status, etc.)
- past purchase history
- past email activity
- website activity
- any other data you have about your email recipients

The possibilities for customizing messages with dynamic content tools are almost endless. For example, an electronics retailer could use dynamic content to deliver an email newsletter with an opening paragraph about computers on sale or a paragraph about new MP3 players. The actual paragraph that was delivered would depend on the recipient. Here are some more real-world examples of how marketers are using this powerful technology:

- Customizing updates by state, province or other geographical characteristics
- Substituting entire paragraphs of text or graphics based on demographic data
- Creating cross-sell offers based on previous purchases
- Alerting customers of consumable products (items or components that need to be replaced on a regular schedule) or recurring services (which need to be performed at specific intervals, such as oil changes and tune-ups)

Taking personalization past first name—Personalization is a simple execution that inserts data elements or content held in your database into an email message. At its most basic, personalization inserts a salutation such as “Dear First Name.” We encourage you to think beyond first names. Personalization allows you to insert any text for which you have a data field. Here are some other examples for using personalization:

- User-specific information, such as customer number
- Contact information for a salesperson in the recipient's region
- Location information for the store closest to the recipient

In its most sophisticated uses, personalization can even enable you to customize images based on personal data.

Measure and Modify

This should be nothing new since you're already tracking your email campaigns for response and conversion rates. Certainly your overall response rate should rise when you send relevant messages to carefully selected audiences. If a particular segment isn't responding as well as the others, review and make adjustments to improve response. If you don't see a significant overall increase in response rates when you send to segmented lists, continue to explore possible hypotheses, test them and only when all else fails, save resources by sending only one email.

Easily Elicit the Information You Need

At signup—Collect information and ask your subscribers what is most useful to them while they're signing up to receive emails from you. This can be handled several ways.

1. Make the info required in order to sign up. This is advisable only if the information is absolutely necessary. Otherwise, you risk losing signups.
2. Include the additional fields but make them optional. However, be careful not to add too many fields to the page or the mere length of the form may scare people away.
3. After they've signed up, ask them to provide additional information on a separate page to avoid losing signups.

Re-register—If you've been publishing for a while, periodically ask subscribers to re-register. Advise them that you want to make sure their info is up to date. This is also a good way to make sure your list is fresh.

Survey—Send an email and ask subscribers to complete a short survey. To increase response, offer a premium or fun prize.

When you incorporate segmentation into your email marketing strategy, you should see significant gains from sending relevant, targeted content to specific audiences. Specifically, you should notice an increase in opens, click-throughs, conversions, and ROI. You should also see a decrease in list attrition since you are sending content that readers are genuinely interested in receiving. With tools like personalization and dynamic content readily available, segmentation becomes a strategy that is simple to execute. Combine simplicity with significant gains, and segmentation becomes a strategy you can't afford to ignore.

Guidelines for Effective Email Creative

The growing complexity of today's email market has created a deeper need to carefully consider the creative aspects of your email messages. While the need for quality and effective design has always existed from a pure marketing standpoint, challenges that are unique to the email space require a different look at creative from the perspective of accomplishing specific goals via email. This chapter introduces several critical parameters that should be given creative consideration, and provides tactics to optimize creative for maximum results.

The Facts

Research that analyzes how people view emails indicates marketers have three seconds to catch readers' interest. That's a limited amount of time to make an impression, inspire readers to keep reading, and get them to complete your desired action. Compound that data with additional research that suggests readers keep at most eight brands in their inbox at one time, and it's clear that the need for great creative is paramount to your email marketing success.

Define the Goal of the Message

Most email messages have at least one of the following goals:

- Drive readers to a desired action
- Set a mood/tone/expectation

- Create a perception
- Reinforce a brand/identity/awareness

Before optimizing your email creative, you need to define the goal of your program. This definition will drive the aspects that require optimization.

Keep it Relevant

The key to engaging readers is providing relevant content. There is a plethora of opportunities to tie content to calendared events. A grand theme isn't necessary—even small tie-ins can create recognition and build relevancy in the eyes of your readers. An example of this is Google's variations of their logo, which is sometimes changed daily. It's a small action, but widely recognized by users. The following ideas scratch the surface of possibilities.

- New Year's—*Reset expectations—what should recipients do or expect from you in the new year?*
- Valentine's Day—*gifts/kindness*
- St. Patrick's Day—*luck/fortune/beer*
- Super Bowl, or other major sporting events
- Major news stories
- Entertainment events—*Oscars/red carpet*

Creative Consistency Across Different Email Clients

Looking good does not always act good. The creative that looks perfect in your email client may look far from perfect in another recipient's email client. When designing your creative, you need to consider how the design could render in various email clients. For example, Hotmail will display a common tag you might use for a bullet point—•—as foreign characters. (Instead, you'll need to use the tag.) Clients will display table formatting, style formatting, background formatting, etc. in different ways. Specifically, Microsoft Outlook 2007 does not support background images and does not support background colors in table cells that contain nested tables. In general, be sure you test your design on a number of email clients, especially the major ones.

Dimensions

Another consideration is the width of your email messages. Depending on

screen resolutions, the email message that fits nicely on your screen may require horizontal scrolling on someone else's screen. Besides the annoyance factor, if any of your important content is hidden by the scroll, your readers may miss it and not read further. If you keep the width to 600 pixels or smaller, the vast majority of readers will see your full message within their screen.

Although it is possible to use a variable width instead of a fixed width to accommodate all resolutions, variable widths do not hold items static within the message. Text and images will slide back and forth across the screen to accommodate screen size. Variable width email messages are not recommended.

Images

Images are obviously an important aspect of your design as they draw interest and help communicate your message. So the bigger the better, right? Not necessarily. There are several factors to consider when using large images. One is load time. Large images take more time to download than smaller images. While a growing number of Internet users connect to the Internet with broadband, you will certainly annoy and possibly lose the interest of someone with a slower connection who has to wait for your images to download. One way around this is to slice a large image into smaller images.

Another aspect to consider is how your email message will look to someone who has images disabled in their email client. If you don't have any text "above the fold" and your reader has images disabled, all they will see when they first open or preview your message is a large gray box. For readers to even view your message, you are relying on them to take an action and enable images to be downloaded. If readers don't have a compelling reason to do so, they may very easily discard your message without reading it. Consider interspersing text with images and using <alt> tags. To be sure your message accomplishes its goal in all situations, preview your message with images off so you know exactly how other people will see it, and make any necessary design changes.

Preview Panes

A recent MarketingSherpa study found that over 95 percent of B2B email recipients are using an email client that is capable of using preview panes, and 69 percent are actually using preview panes. The percentage for B2C recipients was lower with only 38 percent using a client that was preview pane capable and 27 percent using preview panes. However, new versions of

Windows Live Hotmail and Yahoo! Mail feature preview panes. This means a much higher percentage of B2C recipients will soon be able to use preview panes if they wish. MarketingSherpa's same study found that when given a choice to use a preview pane, 69 percent of respondents chose to do so. This means that paying extra attention to your preview pane design will become increasingly important to the success of your email campaigns. Make sure any important headlines are text. If your message is image heavy, replicate the key points as text at the top of your email. If sending an email newsletter, consider listing the article titles or key points at the top of your message. All these steps should entice readers and give them reasons to open your message.

Rich Media

Advances in online media technology have enabled you to do some pretty cool things on the web. For instance, Flash-embedded video and audio. But do these technologies transfer to the email marketing world? In some cases, they might. The most important step in determining whether to use rich media in email is to take a close look at your audience. Will they be able to view Flash? And if they are, are they more likely to respond to Flash? If the answer to both these questions is yes, then it certainly makes sense to test. However, you'll find that being able to view Flash and other rich media consistently in different email clients is not common. Flash is not supported in many email clients. Specifically, Microsoft Outlook 2007 does not support Flash or video. Even with email clients that do support rich media, your audience may not yet be ready to receive this new technology via email, and using it could affect response rates. Another factor to consider is the ability to track activity generated by rich media.

Links and Call-Out Areas That Are Clickable

One of the most important areas of your email message creative is your call to action, which in most cases is clicking on a link for further information, to register for an event, or to make a purchase. Your call to action needs to not only be prominent, but also look as if it is clickable. You can get fancy with text links so that they barely look different from plain text, but if someone doesn't know they can click to get more information, you've just lost a possible sale. Format your links so there's no doubt they are clickable. You may even want to spell it out: "Click here for more information." If you are using images for links, make sure the image looks like a clickable image

as well. For example, use a red box or orange oval with text inside that reads “More information” or “Order now.”

To generate more activity within your email and to track readers’ interest, provide a variety of actionable items by creating shorter blocks of content with prompts to click for further information. This allows you to present various information in an easy-to-scan format. Since 95 percent of readers will scan for articles that interest them, this is a great way to present information. Avoid longer articles that force readers to scroll through your message to get to different areas of interest. Seeing link activity also allows you to see what articles readers were interested in, and you can then send targeted follow-up messages to those readers.

To track web activity past the click, add URL parameters to your links. This is done by placing a small piece of code at the end of your link. For example, *www.yourwebsite.com/productpage.html?sre=email*. This code can be acquired or recommended by your web analytics software application or service. In combination with web analytics software, this allows you to track revenue generated or other specific actions.

Technical Aspects to Consider

If you are not the designer or technically inclined, you might skip this section. Make sure anyone designing your email knows these rules.

Cascading style sheets (CSS) allow you to easily manipulate design without generating extra code. Here are some things to keep in mind when using style sheets in code to display properly in email clients.

- We strongly recommend ALWAYS using INLINE styles as this is the only Gmail-supported CSS.
- If you are not using inline styles, the style sheet must be placed after the <body> tag in your HTML code.
- If you are not using inline styles, any class declarations that start with a period should be indented at least one space.
- CSS background images are not supported in all email clients.
- Using CSS to specify width or height is not supported in all email clients.
- CSS margins are not supported in all email clients.

- CSS float and position declarations DO NOT work in Microsoft Outlook 2007.
- Use `<td class>` tags when possible to avoid excessive `` tags.
- Place `
` inside the `` tag to avoid irregular spacing.

Additionally, form fields may not be universally accepted or properly displayed by email clients. Specifically, forms are not supported in Microsoft Outlook 2007. It is best to not use form fields at all. Instead, direct readers to a page on your website to collect information using forms.

Image maps also may not be universally accepted or properly displayed by email clients. Specifically, they are not supported in Yahoo! Mail. It is best to wrap your `<a href>` around the `` tag. Or, if you do not want the entire image to be clickable, you should cut the graphic into slices and wrap your `<a href>` around the `` tag of the slice you want to be clickable. This means that, first, you will need to place the slices into table cells.

Landing Page Considerations

Getting readers to click on links in your email is your first goal. Your second goal is to convert those clicks into a desired action. Increase your conversions with a well-designed landing page. Although this is not a chapter about landing pages, we'll list a few things to keep in mind when designing your landing page.

Match the message and elements of your landing page with your email message. For best results, repeat the headline from your email message at the top of your landing page. This gives visitors a feeling of familiarity and comfort. It tells them that they have arrived at the right place.

Create a single path to your offer. Your landing page needs to be designed to prevent visitors from wandering away from the path you want them to take. Therefore, eliminate unneeded elements, such as links to other resources, navigation bars, etc. Keep visitors focused on completing the desired action.

Viral opportunities

A recent survey by Sharpe Partners found that almost 90 percent of adult Internet users share content with others via email. And the respondents are

forwarding frequently—three out of five said they shared content at least once a week and 25 percent reported doing so even more frequently. Encourage your readers to do the same by providing a clearly visible “Forward to a friend” button in your email. The most common placement for this is the top right corner. If your emails are business-to-business in nature, use “Forward to a colleague.” This also allows you to track how many people are forwarding your email, and to know who your top supporters are.

Optimizing email creative is both an art and a science. It should also be a never-ending process. Our best recommendation for optimizing the creative for your email messages is to take a close look at your messages, and try to implement a few of the areas noted. After you’ve made some changes, track the results and optimize a few more areas. It’s better to make progress in small, manageable steps than to wait and plan for a long-term change that never comes to fruition. If examined on a regular basis, email creative can be a major contributor to the growth and success of your email marketing efforts.

Email Metrics: Identifying Insights to Success

The basics of email metrics are not complex, but important. Email metrics can provide tremendous insight, but can potentially mislead efforts if not studied correctly. Remember that statistics can say anything. Make sure you understand what the data is showing.

The Basics: Four Measurable Actions in an Email Message

Opens

Reporting opens would seem like a simple task. If someone opens your message, an “open” is recorded and counted. Not necessarily so. An “open” can really only be defined by how it is measured. A small, invisible image is placed on every message sent. That image references a specific source—the message it was placed in. When that image is accessed or downloaded, an open is recorded for that message.

In terms of what that means to your open rate, there are some substantial if’s. If the person viewing your message has images disabled, the open is not recorded. If the person breezed through their inbox, set up in preview pane view, and passed over your message with images enabled, an open is recorded—though the person may not have more than glanced at your message. In any case, an open can never guarantee that the message was actually read.

Opens are generally reported as two stats: total and unique. Total opens count every time that the tracking image was downloaded by all recipients. Unique Opens only count the first instance the image was downloaded per recipient.

Clicks

Clicks show a specific activity on a link and are therefore a much more accurate and telling measure of your message. When someone clicks on a link in your message, that link is first directed to a page that records the click, then instantly redirected to the link location. This brief intervention occurs so quickly that usually the recipient doesn't even know it has happened.

Clicks are far better metrics to watch than opens because they show a specific interest and a related activity. A click confirms that some additional activity has taken place as well, most often a visit to a Web page. To further evaluate click activity, you can use that first click as the starting point in analyzing web traffic. You can see where that person who clicked went in your Web site, how long they stayed, where they ended up, and more.

Clicks are generally reported as two stats: total and unique. Total clicks count every time each link was clicked by all recipients. Unique clicks only count the first instance each link was clicked per recipient. Most email service providers can provide specific link activity for each individual recipient.

Bounces

Bounces represent some kind of transactional failure with the email address you tried to send a message to. That failure can be either temporary—which results in a soft bounce—or permanent—which results in a hard bounce. Bounces can indicate inactivity and list maintenance needs. A soft bounce can indicate that the recipient's email server is busy, or that their mailbox is full. A hard bounce can indicate that the email address does not exist any longer or that the domain does not exist. In some cases, the email address was simply mistyped and correcting the address can solve the problem. In all cases, bounces should be reviewed to assess list health and hygiene.

It's important to note that sometimes people will refer to “delivered” messages as the number of sent messages minus the number of bounced addresses. This is not what “delivery” means as it is defined by the email marketing industry. A bounce indicates that the message was delivered, but was not accepted.

Unsubscribes

The unsubscribe link is required for CAN-SPAM compliance, but can also give you valuable insight for successful marketing. Unsubscribes can indicate that someone is no longer interested in your organization or offering, and that your marketing budget is better spent on other, interested people. Understanding why someone unsubscribed can indicate that your email efforts just need to be slightly revised or redirected. Maybe you are not sending them the content that a) they

expected they would be getting when they opted in or b) did not find interesting. In order to take this data and put it to use, your email service provider should be able to offer a field for recipients to tell you why they are unsubscribing.

7 Insights for Email Metrics Success

1. Look at trends, not blips

While you can review “blips” to give you a red or green flag that something has gone well or poorly, you should not rethink and revise your entire campaign based on something that happens one time. Looking instead at longer-term trends can give you a better understanding of how recipients feel about the overall experience (campaign), not just a specific message. Compiling data to review trends involves more work but is worth the extra effort in that it enables you to make better long-term decisions.

2. Use email metrics to your benefit

One of the strengths of email marketing is the results you immediately get after sending a message. Use that to maximize the performance of your email campaign by conducting a variety of tests on different aspects of your email messages, such as:

- Subject lines
- Content
- Calls to action
- Landing pages

For more information on how to conduct email tests, read the chapter “Email Testing: A Checklist for Success.”

3. Don't get stuck on opens

Open rates have received a lot of attention in the media, and so their importance has been artificially inflated. The reality is, open rates are becoming less reliable, and therefore less important. As mentioned earlier, preview panes can give false positives. Recipients with images disabled can give false negatives. It's important to understand your opens, but don't base your success or failure on them.

4. Pay attention to clicks as a measure of activity, not just links clicked

Most email messages contain many clickable areas, including company logo, links back to the Web site, specific calls to action, etc. Rather than looking at

each link clicked as a separate activity, try to categorize your links into types of actions. For example, categories could be:

- Company information
- Product information
- Calls to action

This makes analysis more insightful and allows you to ensure your messages have the right balance of activity.

5. Identify segmentation opportunities

Breaking an audience into distinct, more manageable segments that are likely to behave in a similar manner has long been a fundamental principle of marketing. Email metrics allow you to segment audiences based on open and/or click activity. This segmentation power allows you to send very targeted follow-up communications to these audiences.

6. Don't forget opt-in metrics

While monitoring list attrition, don't forget to watch your list growth as well. If you are losing more addresses than you are gaining, it's time to step up your opt-in processes. You can also monitor the quality of your different opt-in mechanisms by targeting these groups separately and comparing message metrics across these groups.

7. Tie email metrics into your overall marketing strategies

You don't have to limit the insight you gain from email metrics to your email activities only. Think of them in a broader sense as they may relate to your other marketing efforts. For instance, you may need to communicate differently to people who are not opening your email messages. Try sending them a printed piece instead. For those who are active email recipients, maybe you can take them off your printed promotions and save some of your direct mail budget.

Email Testing: A Checklist for Success

Because of the immediacy of email data, testing should become an integral part of your ongoing email marketing efforts. Knowing what to test, how to test it and what to glean from the results will make your email initiatives perform to their fullest.

Use this book as a guide to your email testing efforts. If you follow each of these steps within your email testing process, your campaigns will most likely be much more effective and rewarding.

Use this checklist to explore all of the key areas of testing that will drive your success.

Key Things to Remember When Testing

- Testing in email is crucial
- Start testing today—you don't need to have the master plan
- Establish a test protocol
- Be creative and thorough in your testing areas
- Test beyond the click and look at conversions
- Test and review frequency and timing
- Make sure you test accurately and reliably with lists
- Always have one change action as a result of a test
- Never stop testing

Step #1—Ask a Question

Start the testing process by asking a question. What are you hoping for? Determine a specific goal to accomplish rather than attempt multiple goals with one blanket approach. A series of small steps can be easy to test and analyze.

- ☐ I'd like to have more people open my messages
- ☐ I'd like to have more people click through to my Web site
- ☐ I'd like to re-engage with historically inactive people
- ☐ I'd like to have people click on a specific area, topic or action

Step #2—Form a Theory

Use your marketing experience and best practice knowledge to determine what aspects may make a difference in achieving the goal you've defined.

- ☐ I think people may be bored with my current subject lines
- ☐ I think that the placement of the specific content may drive more people to action
- ☐ I think that people may not understand this is from my organization, and therefore will not interact
- ☐ I think my calls to action need to be stronger

Step #3—Create the Test

Set up your test, following best practices. Remember, you don't need to prove the obvious.

To optimize opens, I'm going to test: (one per test)

- ☐ From name
- ☐ Best day to send
- ☐ Subject line
- ☐ Best time to send

To optimize click-throughs, I'm going to test: (one per test)

- ☐ Creative/layout
- ☐ Subject lines
- ☐ Copy
- ☐ From name
- ☐ Calls to action

To optimize conversions, I'm going to test: (one per test)

- ☐ Landing pages
- ☐ Calls to action
- ☐ Creative/layout
- ☐ Subject lines

- ☐ Copy
- ☐ From name

Step #4—Segment the List

Choose the best list or segment to test, and split it (for that specific test).

- ☐ I'm confident this list is the most appropriate to prove or disprove my theory
- ☐ My list is only large enough to do an A/B split
- ☐ My list is large enough that I can break it into a larger control and other smaller test segments
- ☐ My list is large enough that I can sample a percentage of my list to test

Step #5—Measure and Analyze Results

Measure and analyze results to gain insight and prove or disprove theory. Accurately compile stats (to conversions). What does it all mean? Look beyond the numbers. Even small percentage differences can mean large gains in response rates.

- ☐ My opens increased ____%
- ☐ My click-throughs changed ____%
- ☐ My conversions changed ____%
- ☐ Traffic to my Web site increased ____%
- ☐ My click-throughs were more focused on specific area, topic or action
- ☐ My click-throughs were spread out across areas, topics or actions
- ☐ Sales calls increased ____%

Step #6—Make Changes

Commit to making at least one change in each campaign.

- ☐ I need to change my from name
- ☐ I need to change my subject line
 - Specific words
 - Subject line format
- ☐ I need to add content
- ☐ I need to decrease content and simplify
- ☐ I need to increase clickable areas or links
- ☐ I need to highlight actionable items more
- ☐ I need to change copy
- ☐ I need to modify layout

The Strategic Checklist for Email Success

Another key to email success is developing, reviewing and refining a comprehensive strategy. We have defined a checklist of strategic imperatives based on our experience in working with some of the world's leading organizations to develop and deliver successful email initiatives. This checklist can serve as a guide in identifying and determining the strategic areas that will help your email campaigns succeed today as well as into the future. Use this checklist as the cornerstone of your email efforts. If you can address each of these areas with detail and certainty, your email campaigns will most likely be effective and rewarding to you and your audiences.

Brand Affinity

More than ever, your brand is important to your audiences. In this age of information overload, people create perceptions of organizations in a split second, and expectations are driven higher with each touch-point. Every aspect of your email marketing campaigns needs to be audited against your brand personality.

Strategies for ensuring your brand is represented and strengthened through your email campaigns.

Message Design: Are your messages accurately reflecting your brand? The design and appearance of your email messages create a lasting impression to your audience.

Relevant Content: Does the content and the tone of the message you communicate through your email campaigns complement and strengthen your core brand messages?

Landing Pages: Can you and do you control the branding of your landing pages and the destinations to which you are sending responders? The places they will go to need to reflect your brand as much as the email message itself.

Opt-in Processes: Do your opt-in pages and processes accurately present your brand? Remember, first impressions count, and opt-in pages often set impressions and expectations.

Welcome Messages: Do your welcome messages accurately present your brand? Just like opt-in pages, first impressions count, and welcome messages often set impressions and expectations.

Strategic Partners: Can you and are you aligning yourself with valuable partners in order to expand your reach? Try to identify other organizations that can help.

Segmentation

Remember breaking an audience into distinct, more manageable segments that are likely to behave in a similar manner has long been a fundamental principle of marketing. Email provides for some incredible segmentation power, as well as the ability to truly take advantage of small audience segments that might otherwise be too costly to communicate with.

Segmentation strategies to help you better target, communicate with and create actionable items for various groups within your lists.

Demographics: Are you using every piece of data you have on a person to its fullest? Beyond first name, state, or other basic data, what opportunities can be uncovered by focusing on demographic segmenting?

ClickStream Activity: Are you segmenting based on what a person does after they click on a link? Web site activity can often provide some great segmentation opportunities.

Conversion/Purchase Activity: Can you segment lists based on purchase or conversion history? Try to integrate any conversion data into your

segmentation processes. Remember, conversions don't always need to be purchases.

Gathering Additional Information: Do you have strategies for gathering more data about each of your recipients? After you gain credibility, try asking for a few small bits of information within your email messages.

Email Activity: Are you utilizing email activity to segment? Try segmenting on email opening, click-throughs or repeating behaviors.

Variable Content: Are you providing different segments with different content? Variable content will provide more relevancy and stronger actionable items.

Polling/Survey: Are you taking short polls or surveys with your email recipients? Quick polls often get good responses and let your recipients interact with you.

Compliance

With so many changing areas of technical and marketing compliance, you need to revisit your email initiatives and audit them for compliance.

Compliance strategies that will ensure you are ahead of the curve on legal and best practice issues.

CAN-SPAM: Are you aware of CAN-SPAM regulations and confident you have all of the pieces in place?

Sender ID and SPF Records: Have you published SenderID and SPF records and tested them?

Unsubscribe Processes: Are you confident your unsubscribe processes are consistent, accurate and immediate? Are you confident unsubscribe data is getting distributed to the necessary data repositories for consistency?

Bounce Management: Are you confident your bounce processes are consistent, accurate and immediate? Are you confident bounce data is getting handled properly by applying rules to specific bounces?

Privacy Policy: Have you reviewed your privacy policy for accuracy? Are you confident it is up to date? Has it been audited by legal counsel?

Metrics

Email marketing creates many specific data points that can be used to gain insight. Understanding what you are capturing and putting that data to its best use can result in continuous success and provide knowledge about your audiences.

Strategies for utilizing metrics to gain insight and drive further success.

ClickStream: Can you and are you looking “beyond the click” at metrics within your Web site or email click destinations? Oftentimes, considerable insight can be gained when you can see where a recipient went after they clicked on a link in an email.

Conversions: Can you and are you looking “beyond the click” at conversions within your Web site or email click destinations? Conversions could be actual purchases, contact forms, or anything that is a “valuable action” for your organization.

The Basics (opens, clicks): Can you look at open patterns and click-through details? Are you comparing messages?

Long-term Trends: Can you and are you looking at message “cycles” over longer periods of time? Often, looking at longer-term trends can give you a different perspective than looking at specific and individual message results.

Testing

Because of the immediacy of email data, testing should become an integral part of your email efforts. Knowing what to test, how to test it and what to glean from the results will make your email initiatives perform to their fullest. Consider strategies for gaining insight and optimizing performance of email messages and campaigns. Email is a perfect medium for testing many aspects and gaining results quickly and accurately.

Subject Line: Do you test your subject lines for optimal open rates and activity? Oftentimes, specific variations of subject lines clearly outperform others.

Creative: Do you test different styles of messages with various offers and graphic treatments?

Content: Do you test messages with different content and content types to gain insight on what your recipients are responding to?

Landing Pages: Do you create and direct your audience to different landing pages and review what destinations performed the best? Creatively testing where the click takes them and what that looks and acts like can give you considerable insight.

Segmentation: Can you and do you segment your audiences in creative ways and review any differences in performance or behaviors? Creative segmentation often leads to breakthrough communications.

The Seven Dirty Words You Can't Say in Subject Lines;

plus 100 other words and phrases you might
also want to avoid

If you've ever heard George Carlin's famous "Seven Dirty Words You Can't Say On TV," you know that you can safely avoid using all seven in your subject lines—they will definitely get you blocked. Here is a list of 100 more that you should avoid using as well.

100% free	as seen on Oprah	compare
50% off	as seen on TV	consolidate
act now	avoid	contains \$\$\$
all words that relate to sex or pornography	be your own boss	contains word "ad"
all words that relate to cures or medication	buy	credit
amazing	call now	dear friend
anything that looks like you are YELLING	cash bonus	discount
apply now	cialis	don't delete
as seen	click here	double your
	collect	double your income

e.x.t.r.a. punctuation	hidden	only
earn	home based	open
earn \$	hot	opportunity promised you
earn extra cash	information you requested	refinance
easy terms	instant	removes
eliminate debt	levitra	reverses
extra income	life insurance	satisfaction
fast cash	limited time	search engine listings
financial freedom	loans	serious cash
For Only	lose	starting with a dollar amount
for you	lose weight	stop or stops
FREE	lower your mortgage rate	teen
Free	lowest insurance rates	undisclosed recipient
free access	make money	valium
free gift	medicine	viagra
free info	mortgage	vicodin
free instant	multi-level marketing	winner
free offer	not spam	work from home
free samples!	now only	xanax
friend	numerals at the end	your family
g a p p y t e x t	offer	your own
get	online degree	you're a winner
get out of debt	online marketing	
hello	online pharmacy	
herbal		

Glossary

Above-the-fold: The top part of an email or web page that can be seen without scrolling. This is generally more desirable placement for important content because of its visibility.

API: Application programming interface that allows an outside system to have a well-defined protocol by which it can access another system's functionality.

Append: The practice in which a marketer leverages offline data to match profiles with a user's email address.

Authentication: A methodology designed to verify the identity of an email sender.

Blacklist: List of IP addresses that have been identified by the blacklist owner as sending Spam and are used to block mail from organizations or individuals sending from these IP addresses. Blacklists are often used by organizations and Internet Service Providers as part of their filtering process to block all incoming mail from a particular IP address (or block of addresses).

CAN-SPAM: A Federal law, which became effective January 1, 2004, that establishes requirements for those who send email with the primary purpose of advertising or promoting a commercial product or service.

Click-through: When a reader of an email message takes action and clicks on a link in the email.

Conversion: When a reader of an email message completes the desired action, such as making a purchase or completing a contact form.

Conversion rate: The number of email recipients that completed the desired action of an email message compared to the total list size, represented as a percentage. To determine the conversion rate, divide the number of recipients who completed the desired action by the number of emails sent (and multiply this number by 100 to express the result as a percentage).

Creative: The design, copy and content of an email message. Email creative can include a variety of different formats such as HTML, text, images, etc.

Demographics: Data about the size and characteristics of an audience.

Domain Keys Identified Mail (DKIM): Email authentication method for validating the identity that is associated with an email message, as well as the integrity of the message itself.

Double opt-in: The process of collecting permission to send email whereby a submitted email address is not immediately added to a mailing list. Instead, a confirmation email is sent to the submitted address asking the user to take an additional action to confirm that they want to receive email communications from the sender. If the user does nothing, the submitted address will not be sent email by the sender. The user will only be sent email if they take the required action defined in the confirmation email.

Email list manager: Controller of email lists or database entity.

Email marketing campaign: Coordinated email marketing messages delivered at intervals in order to achieve a specific objective or goal.

Email newsletter: An email message sent to subscribers with relevant information on a specific topic. Often used to capture Web site visitors' email addresses, they can also be used to keep in touch with existing customers or as a means of distributing new product information.

Frequency: The intervals at which email marketing efforts are repeated: weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, bimonthly, etc.

From name: The name by which the sender of an email is known. This is the name that will be displayed in the email recipient's inbox by most (but not all) email clients.

From address: The email address from which an email is actually sent. This address will be displayed in the email recipients' inbox by email clients that do not display the from name.

Geo targeting: The ability to target users by geography such as city, state, country and postal code.

Hard bounce: An email address that is rejected by the receiving server for a permanent reason (example: "email address does not exist"). Hard bounces are no longer valid email addresses and should be removed from email lists.

Hard bounce rate: The percentage of email addresses that hard bounce as compared to the total list size. To determine the hard bounce rate, divide the number of hard bounces by the number of emails sent (multiply this number by 100 to express the result as a percentage).

List segmentation: Dividing a list into smaller pieces for the purpose of targeting recipients with specific characteristics or demographics.

Multi-part email: An email that is sent with different versions - usually HTML and text. The recipient's email client settings determine which version is delivered. (This is sometimes called multi-part MIME.)

Open: When a message recipient views an HTML message with images enabled.

Opt-in code: Code posted on the Web page of a company's Web site that allows a subscriber to sign up for email from the company and be automatically added to that company's email list.

Opt-in email marketing: The process of collecting permission to email users whereby the user must take an action to receive email communications, such as visiting the sender's Web site and completing a sign-up form. Also known as permission-based email marketing.

Preview pane: The top part of an email that can be seen in some email clients (if enabled) without opening the email. Depending on the recipient's email client, this could be a horizontal or vertical preview pane. This is generally more desirable placement for important content because of its visibility.

Soft bounce: An email address that is undeliverable for a variety of reasons that are not permanent (example: "this user's mailbox is full). An email address that soft bounces is still a valid email address to which the sender should continue trying to mail.

Soft bounce rate: The percentage of email addresses that soft bounce as compared to the total list size. To determine the soft bounce rate, divide the number of soft bounces by the number of emails sent (multiply this number by 100 to express the result as a percentage).

Sender ID: Email authentication method that validates the origin of an email message by verifying the IP address of the sender against the alleged owner of the sending domain.

SPF (Sender Policy Framework): Email authentication method that validates the origin of an email message by verifying the sender's DNS records.

Total clicks: The total number of clicks on any links in an email message.

Total click-through rate: The total number of clicks on any links in an email message as compared to the total list size. To determine the total click-through rate, divide the number of total click-throughs by the number of emails sent (multiply this number by 100 to express the result as a percentage).

Total opens: The total number of times an HTML email message was viewed with images enabled, including recipients who may have opened it multiple times (and also including multiple viewings in preview windows).

Total open rate: The total number of times an HTML email message was viewed with images enabled, as compared to the total list size. To determine the total open rate, divide the number of total opens by the number of emails sent (multiply this number by 100 to express the result as a percentage).

Unique clicks: The number of individuals who clicked on at least one link.

Unique click-through rate: The number of individuals who clicked on at least one link as compared to the total list size, represented as a percentage. To determine the unique click-through rate, divide the number of unique clicks by the number of emails sent (multiply this number by 100 to express the result as a percentage).

Unique opens: The number of individuals who viewed an HTML email message with images enabled. Each individual is only counted once, even if they viewed the message multiple times.

Unique open rate: The number of individuals who viewed an HTML email message with images enabled, as compared to the total list size. To determine the unique open rate, divide the number of unique opens by the number of emails sent (multiply this number by 100 to express the result as a percentage).

Unsubscribe: Someone who has asked to not receive email communications from the sender anymore. Senders are required by CAN-SPAM to remove these email addresses from their email list within 10 business days of the unsubscribe request, and can no longer communicate via email with these unsubscribers.

Unsubscribe rate: The percentage of email addresses that requested to stop receiving email communications as compared to the total list size. To determine the unsubscribe rate, divide the number of unsubscribes by the number of emails sent (multiply this number by 100 to express the result as a percentage).

Welcome message: This message is sent after a user opts-in to receive email from the sender, preferably immediately after the sign-up. It is sometimes also called a confirmation message. Its purpose is to confirm receipt of the sign-up and set expectations for future emails the recipient will receive from the sender.



If email is the internet's killer application, then email marketing is its accomplice. No single marketing tool has offered marketers a better opportunity to target, deliver and measure the effectiveness of a message than the email marketing message.

Jordan Ayan is the CEO of one of the leading email marketing firms in the country. The firm's clients include organizations such as The Chicago Bulls and Blackhawks, The American Marketing Association, Brunswick Bowling, Toshiba, Western Digital, Harley-Davidson dealers and a broad variety of others both big and small. Since the firm's inception, they have helped clients focus on email marketing best practices and campaigns that deliver results. In this book, Jordan shares what the SubscriberMail team has found works and what doesn't.

Jordan is a frequent keynote speaker at conferences on the topics of email marketing, marketing technology and innovation. He has written two other books. *Aha!—10 Ways to Free Your Creative Spirit and Find Your Great Ideas*, and *Ignite your Creative Spark*. Both books focus on creativity and innovation.

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