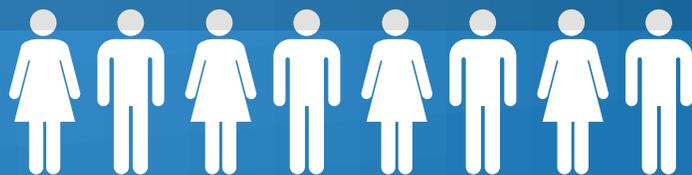
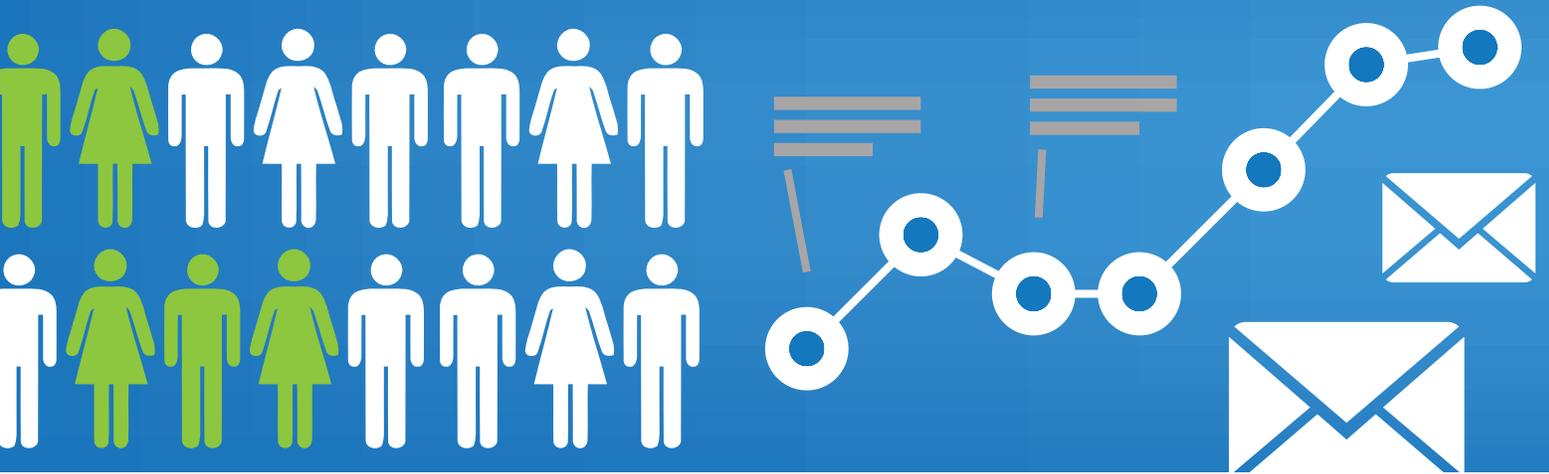


# EMAIL MARKETING FOR **DUMB BELLS**





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# EMAIL MARKETING FOR DUMB BELLS

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# EMAIL MARKETING FOR DUMB BELLS

Email marketing is seen as one of the more successful forms of online marketing. Indeed, the Direct Marketing Association states that email has a return on investment of \$40.56 for every dollar spent on it.

## PLAN

To get the best possible results from email marketing though, you need to plan how you are going to best use it. This guide will help you to do that.

## ANALYZE CURRENT EMAIL MARKETING STRATEGY

If you are already using email, you need to start by asking a few questions about the success of your current campaign.

Firstly, you need to look at your subscriber lists. Are these lists large and active (new people being added all the time)? Did everyone on your list voluntarily opt in?

That last point is vital if you don't want your emails to be considered spam.

Do you know what the return on investment is from your emails – is it anywhere near that overall average of \$40.56 per dollar invested? What is the value earned by each subscriber? Are your current subscribers the type of people who are actually going to buy your products?

Look at your existing emails from a visual point of view. Do they represent your company image? Do they use the same logos, graphics and colors as the rest of your marketing?

Finally, look at your staffing. How many of your staff are currently involved with creating and processing your emails. Do you really dedicate enough members of your marketing team to this job? If you were at least as successful as the average, would your staff allocation to email marketing be in proportion to your overall marketing budget?

## UNDERSTAND MARKETING STRATEGIES

There are a couple of strategies you can take to improve your email success rate.

## LIFECYCLE EMAIL MARKETING

There is much evidence that a one-size-fits-all email sent to everyone on your mailing list, as part of an over-all advertising campaign, is fairly ineffective. Customers

tend to turn off to generic promotional emails.

Lifecycle email marketing ensures that you target your emails at the most suitable people – who are at the appropriate stage of your marketing funnel.

## DRIP MARKETING

The key thing with a drip campaign is that a number of emails are delivered in a set succession over a period of time.

The recipient receives a regular logical series of your messages.

You can use automation so that you don't have to spend all of your time organizing the emailing. You can easily set up a series of relevant messages to go to people at different stages of the sales process (hence the tie-in with lifecycle email marketing).

Drip campaigns are regularly used by marketers to stay in touch with past customers, or alternatively, to work with new potential leads.

## UNDERSTAND DIFFERENT EMAIL TYPES

The most common types of email sent by businesses are:

- Promotional Emails – these are the most traditional marketing emails. They give particular offers to the recipients. If you have been clever, and segmented your mailing lists, you should be able to target promotional emails at particular subscribers' interests

- Informational Emails – these are often nuts and bolts emails. These are emails sent to provide relevant information to the subscriber – it might be something as simple as the number of loyalty points a customer has, or an email from an airline telling its customers about new flight times.

- Confirmation Emails – these emails are mainly system-based and let your subscribers know that you recognize that they have done something. For instance, when they sign up for your site, you send them a confirmation email, acknowledging the fact that you know they have signed up.

- Lifecycle Emails – these are the emails referred to earlier, that recognize that a person is at a particular stage of an email campaign. They would range from a number of opt-in emails, when someone signs up for your mailing list, to emails sent when a sale is made, to thank you emails for people who have purchased your product, to emails aimed at retaining your existing clients. You might even send emails to past customers every so often, in an effort to regain their custom.

- Transactional Emails – these are specific emails that are sent out at various stages once a sale has been made. These would include receipts for payment and any emails related to shipping or delivery.



## PLAN A SCHEDULE OF CONSISTENT, QUALITY CONTENT

### IDENTIFY GOALS

A vital part of your thinking when planning an email campaign (or reviewing an existing one), is identifying how email fits into your business goals. What are you aiming to achieve by using email as a marketing tool? Is your goal additional sales? Is the goal to keep in touch with your customers or subscribers? Your goals will determine what sort of email campaign to use.

### UNDERSTAND THE PERSPECTIVE OF YOUR EMAIL RECIPIENT

There is one thing to remember about the email recipient. Your message is travelling to their mailbox. It is up to them to decide how they will interact with it. They could choose to junk your email without even opening it if they wanted to.

Email is an example of inbound marketing. Your aim is to get the recipient to take an interest in you, follow a link in your email and come to your place (in this case probably your website).

The most important step you need to take is to get them to opt into your mailing list. Also, include instructions in

each email to help customers whitelist you, so you won't inadvertently be picked up by their spam detectors.

### PREPARATION

#### MAKE AN ATTRACTIVE OPT IN OFFER

The process starts with you offering something as an incentive for somebody to go on your mailing list – known as an opt-in offer.

The vital thing is that you can offer people a strong reason for wanting to give you permission to have their email address.

Websites have used many things as giveaways to encourage people to sign up. Some of the most common methods include:

- Free downloads
- Email series (for example newsletters with particular types of information in)
- Whitepapers
- Catalogues

Whatever you offer, make certain that you include a clear and obvious Call to Action.

There has to be quality content in your emails, otherwise people simply won't open them.

When you create your opt-in page, you need to decide the intended frequency of your emails, so that people don't get unexpected surprises. You need to create content so you can schedule emails for the stated times.

You should have segmented your mailing list according to the customer

needs. Make certain that you sequence your emails correctly for each segment of customers. The different types of emails referred to above need to be programmed to be sent out at the correct times, in the appropriate sequence. In many cases, certain events will trigger particular emails, e.g. the payment for a product you have sold will trigger the receipt email.

People will look more closely at your offer if it is specific – both in terms of what they get for free, and in terms of how you intend to contact them in the future. For example, people will take notice if you say “Sign up for our free eBook on how to convert sales. You will receive a newsletter updating this every Friday”.

### **PRESENT THE OFFER**

Having decided to use an incentive to build up your mailing list, present the offer to the public. Some possible methods include:

#### ***Subscription Forms***

Create some type of subscription form on your website. This is where you can make your offer to new visitors who come to your site.

Surprisingly, many websites have a small mailing list opt-in box hidden near the bottom of their website. You need to display it more prominently than that. It should appear above the fold, at least on the home page, and preferably on every landing page. Indeed, it makes sense that it appears in a standard place on a sidebar on every page, so you don't need to think about it each time you add a post or page.

#### ***Facebook Opt in***

Many businesses now find that their social media pages are some of the most visible parts of their inbound marketing campaigns. If you have a company Facebook page (or one of the other social media platforms, like Google +) include an email subscription opt-in form.

#### ***In the Checkout***

If a customer has got as far as your online checkout, they clearly like what you have to sell. Therefore, have an email opt-in form here. If they have just made a successful online purchase, they are likely to be happy to receive future email updates from you.

### **BUILD AND SEGMENT YOUR EMAIL LIST**

You should be targeting your emails at people at different stages of the sales lifecycle. To be able to do this, you need to be able to segment your list.

If you limit your mailing to particular segments, people are more likely to feel that you have sent them relevant emails and are not just spamming them. Segmentation will ensure that you have less opt-outs or even complaints.

There are a number of different ways you can split up your segments.

# “There is an ART in DESIGNING the PERFECT email. An email, designed to encourage a READER to FOLLOW a Call to Action ”

## *Sales Lifecycle Segmentation*

Firstly you could segment depending on where particular customers are in the sales lifecycle. For instance you might have particular emails that you send to existing customers. Another series of emails may simply be sent to leads who have not yet purchased anything from you. You might even send a particular email to people who haven't purchase anything for a set period of time, offering a new deal as an incentive to return.

## *Past Behavior Segmentation*

You might choose to target groups based on their past behaviors. You might have a series of emails you send out to encourage customers who engage regularly on your site. Some sites invite customers to send in photos of them using products they have bought from the site. You could have an email targeting and rewarding these customers.

## *Question Segmentation*

Thirdly, when you set up your opt-in form, it is possible that you asked people a series of questions. In particular, you could have asked them about a number of their preferences. It is these preferences that you use to set up different segments within your overall mailing list. You want to have segments that reflect different subscriber characteristics.

This is particularly useful if they have given their interests, and you can target emails that solely promote things based on those interests. Some of the basic demographics make obvious list segments too, e.g. sex and geographical location. People get really annoyed when they receive emails promoting interesting products, which it turns out are not available in their area or country.

If you are large enough to have multiple newsletters it is likely that people will have opted for different combinations of the newsletters (which may come out at different frequencies). In this case, the recipients of the various newsletters will be clear segments.

## CREATE THE EMAIL

There is an art in designing the perfect email. An email, designed to encourage a reader to follow a Call to Action, is very different from a standard personal or non-marketing related business email. You need to think about the layout, words and other content very carefully.

In one way, emails are harder to write than other forms of marketing. If you use the wrong words, there is a chance that



your email may never be seen at all – it might end up in an ISP’s spam queue.

At the very least, make certain that you avoid such cliché terms as “Free Offer”, “Best Price” and “Interest free terms”. Modern email systems are suspicious of attachments, so avoid using them – everything need to be included directly in your message.

Be aware that some people will have signed up to receive text emails, rather than HTML ones. You will need an alternative form for each email that makes sense, simply using text characters.

### DESIGNING A TEMPLATE – TIPS

Most people using the internet do not have much patience for things that do not display as intended. Particularly when they did not search for the item themselves. Your email has arrived in their inbox because you wanted to send it. The email reader will only linger long enough if they like what they see.

People use a variety of devices and not everyone reads their emails on a 21 inch monitor. A safe guide is to ensure that your emails are no wider than 600 pixels. Indeed, as email preview panes are often 500x500 that may be a more realistic maximum size for html email.

The mobile preview is smaller yet again, and people do not like to scroll. Therefore, the top-left 300 x 300 pixels is the most important part of your email. That is where you need to put any branding, navigation and, most importantly, Calls to Action.

Remember to have AltTxt words for each image – not everyone will have pictures visible and your email still needs to make sense.

### BRAND REPRESENTATION

It needs to be very clear who the email has come from. The email represents your webpage, and it quite likely will try to send traffic there, so it makes sense that the email should have a similar look and feel to your website. Use the same imagery, colors and logos in both places.

### CALLS TO ACTION

Your key Call to Action needs to be in that golden square at the top left. It needs to be clearly visible above the fold and in the preview screen on any device that could be used to view the email.

As with any other Call to Action, this one needs to be obvious and stand out. You want to ensure you don’t confuse the email reader and that they know what you would like them to be doing.



## RESPONSIVE DESIGN

As many people check their emails on mobile devices, you need to ensure that you have designed your email responsively. Use larger-than-normal text sizes that won't shrink to an unreadable size on a mobile device; at least 14pt for body text and 21pt for header text. Make certain that your Calls to Action are large and that a mobile user can easily take the action using his or her fingers. Multiple column layouts do not render well on mobile devices, so it makes sense to use a relatively simple single-column layout.

## TEST

Make sure you test your emails. A single word difference in your Call to Action button may make a huge difference. Similarly, test different layouts to see if they bring different results.

## PROOFREAD AND MAKE SURE CONTENT IS EASY TO READ

The emails you send need to be grammatically correct and free of spelling errors – or even worse, pricing errors. It would be highly embarrassing if you made offers at the wrong prices in your emails. Likewise, check that there are no broken links.

Someone else in your organization should read through and check that everything in the email is correct and clear.

## SET EXPECTATIONS AND FOLLOW THROUGH

When you made your initial offer, which people signed up for, you should have stated the frequency of your emails, with a general idea of what they would contain. It might be as simple as saying “Sign up for our weekly newsletter”.

In doing this, you have created certain expectations by your readers. It is important that you follow through on those expectations. Someone promised a weekly newsletter will not be impressed if they receive advertising emails on a daily basis. They will also lose interest if the newsletter only comes out every month or so.

## MEASURE

### MEASURE SUCCESS

Like everything else you do online, you need to determine whether your email campaigns have been successful. There are a number of things you can do to help you measure your success.

# “There are a NUMBER of THINGS you can do to help you MEASURE your SUCCESS.”

## *A/B Testing*

It is always best to test how effective a campaign is and learn from your mistakes. Remember your goal is to provide each of your subscribers with the most relevant selection of messages to meet their needs.

You can use A/B testing (or indeed multivariate testing if you are experienced at it) to test out a number of things including:

- Which is the best subject line to use?
- Will any difference in the visible “From” name make any difference to conversion success?
- How successful is your list segmentation? Are you targeting the correct group of subscribers for your message, or is there a better segment you should be using?
- Which “look” works best for your content? Are you being consistent in your branding? Does one branding approach work better than another branding approach?
- Does any particular Call to Action work better than other ones? Does any particular place for the Call to Action give better results? Do HTML buttons or text links work best for you?

- Does your series of emails give you a clear path from acquisition of a lead, to a targeted campaign, to actions by the recipients (opening emails, clicking on links, following through to your site, for instance) to actual conversion and receipt of payment?

- Are you sending out emails at the best frequency for your audience?

The steps you will generally follow for A/B testing are:

- 1.Decide what you want to measure
- 2.Decide what your message will be
- 3.Decide which segment you will be emailing to. Split your segment into two groups – Group A (a control group) and Group B (a test group)
- 4.Create two versions of your email showing differences in relation to the variable you are testing, for instance if testing your subject line you need to create two identical emails with different subject lines.
- 5.Test both versions of your email internally, to ensure everything works as intended
- 6.Send out your campaign to both Groups A and B

“From your **SUBJECT** line testing and your analytics, determine what does **BETTER** for you, emails with lots of information in the **SUBJECT** line, or **THOSE** with just a bit. ”

7. Set a cut-off time and measure the results. Analyze your results to see which group gave the best results – Group A or Group B

#### *Service Provider Analytics*

Virtually every service provider will provide you with analytics relating to your email campaigns. Three particularly important metrics are Open Rate, Click through Rate (CTR), and Unsubscribes.

The Open Rate gives you a good idea of what percentage of your email recipients actually bother to open their email. If this statistic is low, it indicates that you have yet to build up a reputation for providing quality material. You need to work on increasing the value that people perceive your messages as having.

If you have a low Click through Rate, you either need to better target your segments, or improve your copy.

If you have a high Unsubscribe rate, compared to your Opt In rate, you have serious problems and you need to clearly establish why people are deliberately taking themselves off your mailing list.

#### **WHAT TO MEASURE**

Which specific metrics will give you the best knowledge about the success or otherwise of your email campaign?

#### *Total opens*

This shows the number of times an email has actually been opened.

#### *Total open rate*

Calculate this by taking your Total Opens and dividing this number of the total of delivered emails (x 100) to get a percentage. For instance, if you send out 10,000 emails and they are opened 6,000 times, then your Total Open Rate is 60%.

#### *Unique opens*

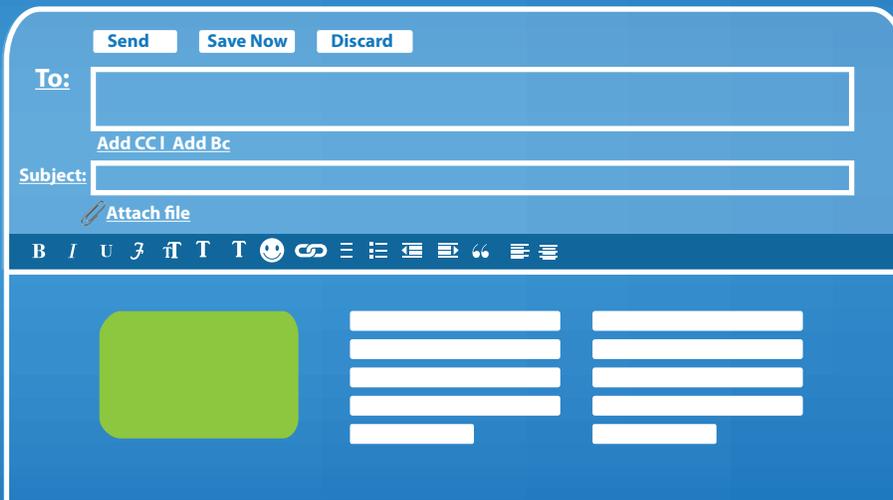
This shows the number of people who have opened an email, i.e. it is similar to Total Opens, but it ignores emails that get opened multiple times.

#### *Total clicks*

This shows the number of times people click through on your emails, e.g. if they click on an offer on a Call to Action in your email.

#### *Total click through rate*

Calculate this by taking your Total Clicks and dividing this number of the total of delivered emails (x 100) to get a percentage. For instance if you send out 10,000 emails and they are clicked on 4,000 times then your Total Click through Rate is 40%.



### *Unique clicks*

This shows the number of unique people who have clicked on a link in your email, i.e. it is Total Clicks excluding repeat clicks on a particular email.

### *Click to open rate*

Here, unique clicks are divided by unique opens, and then expressed as a percentage. This basically tells you: of the recipients who opened the email, how many clicked on it. It is common to use this statistic, purely looking at mobile use, to see how successful you have been at targeting those with mobile devices.

### *Conversions and revenue*

As with any other online marketing you want to be tracking your conversion rates, and determining how successful you have been at earning revenue

### **TAKEAWAYS FROM ANALYTICS**

There are some particular points you should focus on with your analytics:

#### *Find out what subjects are most popular*

Are there specific topics that interest people? Look at the open rate on your emails and look for trends. What topics lead to people actually open their emails? Which emails tend to go unread? Sometimes people think they're interested (or not interested) in reading

about certain topics, but when you analyze the data it shows otherwise. Write emails on subjects which interest people, even if they don't know it themselves.

#### *Find out what subject lines do best*

From your subject line testing and your analytics, determine what does better for you, emails with lots of information in the subject line, or those with just a bit. If you find a clear winner, make certain that all future emails have subject lines that follow the winning pattern.

#### *What email length is best*

Email lengths will vary depending on the type of message being delivered. A newsletter will obviously be longer than a simple receipt. It is probably sensible to mix the length of emails you send.

## HOW TO INCREASE DELIVERABILITY

### **SYNC UP EMAIL MARKETING WITH OTHER MARKETING CHANNELS**

There is no reason why email should stand alone when it comes to your marketing. It is one tool, among many you have at your disposal that you can use to get your message out to people. Every time you start a marketing campaign, make certain to email the (relevant) members on your mailing list.



## INCREASE SUCCESS WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

Those people that you have bonded with through the use of social media, for instance Facebook and Twitter, have a high likelihood of opening and responding to emails you send. They already have an affinity with you. This works particularly well if you include social media Share links in your emails. People are likely to share information that interests them in your emails, if all it takes is a click of a button for that share to be on Facebook, Twitter or any other social media site they use. Of course it helps if you provide at least one interesting, helpful and reliable section of information in each email that users find worthwhile sharing with their network.

### *Twitter*

Twitter is a good place to encounter new people who you can spread the news about your product or service. One use of your Twitter account can be recruiting people to your mailing list. Promote contents from your newsletter on Twitter. It is a great place to display your company culture.

Make certain that your tweets and retweets reflect who your business is. You are not going to get many sign-ups for

your business emails if most of your tweets are personal about your own interests.

The nature of Twitter means that you need to make it very clear if people are opting into your mailing list. People have to know what they have just signed up for.

### *Facebook*

Facebook enables you to create apps and buttons that work on your page. You have a whole new audience for your emails if you create an email sign-up button on your Facebook page. For this to be of value, of course, you need to have a valuable Facebook page, with regular new content that encourages interaction with its visitors. Some of that content can be promotions for your newsletter, of course.

## FTC LAWS TO BE AWARE OF

If your emailing has anything to do with American citizens, you need to take notice of FTC laws relating to email and spamming.

The key points are:

- Don't use false or misleading header information. All information in the header relating to where the email has come from should be truthful.

# “USE your EMAILS as simply one part of a marketing CAMPAIGN. Also UTILIZE your SOCIAL MEDIA to help you”

- Your subject line should relate to what is actually in your email
- If you are advertising, make it clear somehow that the message is an ad
- You need to include a valid physical address
- There needs to be a clear way the recipient can opt out of future messages
- If people do opt out, quickly remove them from your mailing lists
- Keep an eye on what anyone else acting on your behalf is doing ... you are still responsible for emails that come from you, whether you personally sending them or not.
- use them to help people progress through your sales funnel
- Use your emails as simply one part of a marketing campaign. Also utilize your social media to help you
- To make everything work easily, automate as much of the procedure as possible
- Avoid spamming people. Make certain everyone you email has opted to be on your list. Have an easy way for them to get off your list.

## LAST TIPS

A few points to remember as you undertake your email campaigns:

- Many people will be reading their emails on mobile devices. Make certain your emails are easy to read on such devices.
- Segment your customer list – target specific emails at specific customers
- Have emails created that are suitable for every stage in the conversion process

## CONCLUSION

Many firms find that email marketing is a very powerful marketing tool. It is often claimed that your mailing list is one of your greatest assets. To get the benefit of it, though, you need to think carefully how you use your emails. And as with most things you do with internet marketing, test regularly and keep a very close eye on your analytics.



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