



Email Marketing *Made Easy*

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What Every E-Mail Marketer Should Know Before Hitting “Send”

You probably know about how email marketing can lead to big profits. It's cheap to use, targeted, and easy to do. Just type in your message and hit send. Right? Well, it's a bit more complicated than that. Before you start, there are four things you should know about that can drastically affect the results you get.

Deliverability



This is the percentage of people on the list who actually received your email. If nobody gets your email, they won't open it, read it, or buy anything.

Why email bounces:

- ◆ a bad address (just like snail mail)
- ◆ an ISP with a bad reputation
- ◆ spammy content (make millions, free satellite TV, weight-loss pills)

Protect yourself by using a reputable company to deliver your email, cleaning your list regularly, and checking your content for content that can trigger a trip to the spam folder. Use double opt-in (asking first for the email address and then for verification) to stop spammers.

Open rate

The open rate is the number of people who open the email you sent. You can increase this by:

- ◆ using a from field from a real person (your name or company name), rather than something spammy (Acai Weight Loss)
- ◆ writing a great headline that promises value and solutions to problems
- ◆ making the first few sentences worth reading, since many people read email with a preview pane

Click through rate

This is the number of people who click through to the Web site with the rest of the sales pitch and the ordering information.

Click through is affected by:

- ◆ copy - building up the benefits, what people will get from your product, how you solve a problem
- ◆ the offer - what they actually get when they click, such as a free report, details about a conference, or a video
- ◆ formatting - whether the paragraphs are long or short, if you used bullets, where the line breaks are

Conversion rate

The conversion rate is the number (or percentage) of actual sales, leads, or opt-ins generated by the email. Remember to use a [landing page](#), not your home page, to make the rest of the sale. The email "pre-sells" the offer: why you're sending it, what you're offering, what it will do for them, why they need to click now, what they should do once they get to the landing page.

Email Marketing Gone Flat? 10 Ways to Fix It

The right, or wrong, elements can make a big difference in whether your marketing emails drive sales, or even get opened. Here are 10 things that can make the difference between a campaign that works, and one that flops.

1. Choose your list wisely

The list accounts for 40% of your return. If you send it to the "wrong" people, it will fail, no matter how great the subject line, the product, or the offer. Don't send everything to everyone, unless your list is very small or the people on it are very similar to each other.

2. Write a great subject line

The subject line works like the [headline in an ad](#). It has to grab the attention of the people receiving the email; otherwise they won't open it. Make a big promise, set up a contradiction, or ask a question.

3. Have an irresistible offer



This doesn't have to be a sale. It's simply what readers will get by responding. It's got to be something people want (badly) that solves a troubling problem. Make it appealing, at a price that makes it easy to buy. Don't make it cheap; make it great value for the money with bonuses, extra access, or greater speed.

4. Make a promise and paint a picture of the results

Create a vivid picture of what the customer gets. The customer has to be the hero (not you). Make the details all about how much money or time they'll save, the problem they'll solve, etc.

5. Call to action

If you don't ask for a response, you won't get one. Ask for the click, the sale, or the order straight out. Don't be shy about it. Make the link stand out and the "order now" buttons a bright color.

6. Personalize the text

Use the recipient's name. Everyone likes to see their name in print. I have several lenses (little web sites) on Squidoo. Each time I login, the site greets me by name and says something cheerful (Hey there, Jodi, good fortune awaits you at the end of the day). It's silly, and I *know* that it does the same thing to everybody else, but it still makes me smile.

7. Clear instructions on how to buy

Make it obvious what the reader has to do, and exactly how she should do it. Describe what will happen when she clicks or calls. Check to make sure everything is working properly (no broken links, missing information, or disconnected telephone extensions).

8. Limited offer

Give a compelling reason to act right away (a deadline, a limited number of registrations or appointments available, or extra bonuses).

9. Prove that your solution works

Don't just make claims; prove them. Include testimonials from satisfied customers showing how happy they are. Include a free "sample," such as pictures of exhibits you built, case studies of real-world projects, or before and after videos.

10. Use a landing page

A landing page is a single web page, or online sales letter created specifically for each campaign. The landing page [fills out the details of your offer](#), and makes the final sale. Never, ever send people to your home page.

Nine Questions You Should Ask Before You Start an Email Marketing Campaign

If you're an email rookie, online marketing can seem a bit daunting. There are lots of rules about subscribing and unsubscribing and government regulations about CAN-SPAM. Here are some rules to help you avoid rookie mistakes.

1. Do I need to get permission?

Taking names from a directory, an online listing, or a contact form is not permission. They didn't ask for you to contact them and send them marketing messages

2. Do I need permission if I only send text?

It doesn't matter whether the message you send (without permission) is plain text or includes images. If it is unwanted, it counts as spam.

3. Can I use names from emails I've been cc'd on?

No. The other people receiving the message have given permission to person or company who sent the message to contact them (but not you).

4. Can I send out messages to myself and bcc the contacts?

No. It's unprofessional. Sign up with AWeber, Constant Contact, or another reputable email service provider (ESP) to manage this.

5. Do I need an opt-in/opt-out form?

Yes. You must have an opt-in/opt-out. Use an email service provider (not your regular Outlook email) to do this. They'll add and remove names, automatically include the unsubscribe link, and make sure you follow the law.

6. What about CAN-SPAM?

- ◆ You'll need to include a physical address, and that opt-out link, in every marketing



email or newsletter you send.

- ◆ Use double opt-in (this means the person must ask to be added to your list, and then confirm the request). Your ESP can handle this automatically.
- ◆ Make it easy to opt-out. Just one click, and one visit to a single page should do it. All that should be required for removal is an email address.

7. Should I use plain text or fancy HTML with pictures and fonts?

Plain text is less likely to get caught in spam filters. However, plain text can't be tracked (to see how many people opened your message), while HTML can. The best bet is to send your message in both text and minimally formatted HTML. If you need to include images, send visitors to a landing page with your photographs, videos, or exhibit designs.

8. Can I tell who opened my email?

Yes (if you send an HTML version of your email). Again, your EDP will give you reports showing who opened the mailing, the time of day, the number of people, and whether they clicked on any of the links in the email.

9. Can I identify my subscribers if I'm building a list?

Yes. Your email marketing company will include statistics in your reports that show who opted in, their name, email address (and whatever other info you collect in your form).

5 Ways to Turbo Charge Your Email Marketing

Email is quick, easy, and fairly cheap. Done right, it's a great way to get more leads and more sales. Done wrong, you can annoy your customers or get labeled a spammer.

Here are five ways to get more from your efforts.



1. Tweak your landing page

Change the colors of the headlines, the type, or the buttons. Move the buttons around and experiment with the number of fields in your forms. Test different button text to see which gets the highest response.

2. Change the price

The way you state the cost can make a big difference in how people react (and how much they buy). Test different versions (\$500 upfront vs. two payments of \$250, or save \$20 vs. 10% off).

3. Pre-sell the offer

Describe why you're sending the email, what the reader will get, and why they'll want it (before they click through to the landing page). Tell them about the event, the service, or the report.

4. Make it urgent

Explain why they should click now (rather than waiting); you can only take X customers, space is limited; or the early-bird price ends soon.

5. Write better bullets

Put the benefit at the beginning "Get fit in 20 minutes a day." "Top 12 Affiliate Marketing Sites". Use numbers, ask questions, and be specific. Selling a guide for urban gardeners? Point out the "Garden Centers That Deliver" list on p. 48.

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About the Author

Email Marketing Made Easy was written by Jodi Kaplan. Jodi fixes “broken marketing.” Her clients are writers, graphic designers, and creatives who are great at generating ideas and doing their jobs — but need help turning their expertise, their skills, and their desires into dollars.

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Get more e-mail marketing tips. Sign up for Jodi's free 5-part [email marketing course](#).