

WIN THE INBOX: FIVE SUCCESSFUL EMAIL STRATEGIES

by Liz Fernandez

Email marketing is core to your company's marketing efforts. Data shows that in 2020, for every \$1 you spent on marketing emails, you could expect an average return of \$38. With such a great return on investment, email is definitely something that your marketing team should focus on. Here are five strategies for successful email marketing.

1. PROVIDE VALUE

Don't only push products in your emails; this is a fast way to get your emails deleted without the reader ever even opening them. Think about what gets you to click on emails in your inbox. Promotional emails can include compelling offers, demos and tips. However, you do not want to send these too frequently.

In addition to promotional emails, ensure you are providing your list with expertise and value. Blog posts, tips and tricks, contests, community events, case studies and white papers are all content that can provide value to your customers and gain their trust in your brand. Ensure you are diversifying your content and remaining helpful to your audience.

2. TIMING IS KEY

Are you paying attention to when you are sending your emails and how frequently? Start with no more than two to three emails per week. As you send emails, check your opt-out numbers and scale back even further if needed. More isn't always better.

For the office products industry, we have found that emails sent Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday between 10:00am and 1:00pm in your time zone perform the best. Emails can be sent on Thursdays and Fridays as well, but avoid product emails on Fridays—keep it lighthearted if you are going to send an email on a Friday. Not sure what is best for your customers? TEST! Make sure you are testing to find your company's sweet spot, as there is no "one size fits all."

3. MAKE IT WORK FOR MOBILE

In the B2B world, you may think your target market is sitting in front of their computer at work, so mobile is not as important. However, this is not the case. Mobile opens account for 46 per cent of all email opens. But did you know that 35 per cent of business

professionals check email on a mobile device? It isn't just personal email on phones these days.

Another newer aspect of mobile is dark mode, which utilizes a darker color palette for all screens and reduces the light emitted. Many users are opting for dark mode, as it reduces the emission of blue light and is said to reduce the strain on eyes and help preserve battery life. When you send yourself test emails, check them on a dark mode-enabled device to ensure they are compatible and displaying correctly. »



4. AUTOMATED CAMPAIGNS

Automated campaigns are your friend and another way to keep it simple. Whether you utilize wholesaler options or do it yourself, automated campaigns have predefined rules that trigger emails and personalize your message based on specific customer actions.

Welcome emails can be sent when a customer signs up to a mailing list. An abandoned shopping cart email can be a quick reminder that the customer placed something in their cart but never completed checkout. A re-engagement email with a discount code can be sent to customers that have not purchased recently. An email of items purchased previously can trigger re-orders. All of these emails can be automated to reach the right people with the right message at the right moment, thus scaling your marketing without adding headcount. Why wouldn't you do this?

5. MAKE YOUR LISTS WORK FOR YOU

Your email lists are valuable. Your email lists segmented are even more valuable. Marketers that use segmented campaigns note as much as a 760 percent increase in revenue.

Don't think that small businesses with small budgets can only utilize mass emails and newsletters. Did you know that there is an 18.7 percent decrease in open rates when the word "newsletter" is used in subject lines? Utilize your data to segment your lists and make your emails more relevant to the reader. Quick and easy ways to segment your lists include:

- Government only
- Supplies only
- Furniture only
- Have not ordered in six months or more
- Downloaded a specific whitepaper
- Leads from specific shows/events
- Never ordered breakroom (or other types of) supplies
- Specific categories/items



Once you have your lists, utilize them. If you have a list of customers that only order supplies, send them emails about furniture to let them know about that side of your business. If you have a list of customers that downloaded a white paper about safe workplace environments, send them more information on your facility tours/recommendations to let them know your team can come and provide value as they work on optimizing their office.

Something else to remember about lists is that the CAN-SPAM act has requirements you must follow. Ensure the recipients on your mailing lists have opted in as either customers or potential customers. Do not use paid lists for your marketing campaigns, as that will quickly get you in trouble and/or get your emails sent directly to the spam folder.

CONTINUE TO OPTIMIZE

As you utilize these email marketing strategies, ensure you are measuring your success and continuing to optimize your strategy through

analytics and A/B testing. Here are some common metrics and questions to look at:

- Open rates: what types of emails are performing the best?
- Rate of unsubscribes: what is causing opt-outs?
- Click-through rates: what are they and which links do customers actually click on?
- Who opened the email: can you organize targeted follow-ups via email or via your sales team?
- Bounces: are you updating your CRM?

Email marketing doesn't have to be complicated. Make it simple, provide your customers value and keep measuring and testing to optimize your strategies.

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