The ePresence Guide to Email Marketing

Why Email Marketing Matters

Despite the rise of social media and confusion around what counts as unsolicited spam email, email marketing is still the most effective way to nurture business leads and boost customer loyalty.

It works. This has been our experience in ePresence and the reason we feel you should make email marketing one of your top priorities; here's why.

01 **99% of consumers check their email daily.**

There is no other channel where you can capture your customers' undivided attention so frequently and consistently.

You own and control your mailing list. **02**

Any of your social media accounts (along with all your fans and posts) could be suspended or deleted at any time and without notice.

03 **Email converts better.**

People who buy products marketed through email spend 138% more than those who do not receive email offers. Email marketing has a return on investment (ROI) of 4,400%.

That's huge!

Are you wondering if social media converts even better? I'm afraid to say it doesn't. The average order value of an email is at least three times higher than that of social media.

There you have it. Three simple reasons that email is the #1 communication channel and the best way to sell online.99% of consumers check their email daily.

How Well Do You Know Your Customers?

You Have Customer Knowledge At Your Fingertips

I am sure that you will agree that all business is built on relationships. In fact, the better you understand your customers, the better your chances of creating a mutually-rewarding, ongoing relationship with each other.

Aim to build email marketing campaigns on your clear understanding of your customers and their needs, as well as what you have to offer them.

Thanks to the power of digital analytics, now you can get to know who your customers are, what they enjoy, and what demographic group they fit into as easily as they can learn about your business.

It Is Easier – And Cheaper – To Keep A Customer Than To Find A New One

The more you know about your customers, the better able you are to meet their needs. That means that they are much more likely to remain as loyal customers. Added bonus, you won't have to spend extra money and effort trying to find new ones.

What's more, a satisfied customer is your best type of advertisement and will willingly help you build your business through referrals to their friends and colleagues.

Be Consistent And Regular

A sustained email marketing campaign is the perfect way to educate your customers about your goods, services, policies, and community involvement.
Be sure to map out a strategy for the types of information you plan to share with them and make sure that it is helpful, informative, or enlightening.

Remember To Listen

Every successful email marketing campaign shares a fundamental common denominator – the ability of the recipient to respond to the message.

By including at least one, and preferably several, ways in which your customer can reach you (by email, phone, or in-person), you invite comment, criticism, and congratulations. All are valuable ways to learn more about your customers and respond to their needs.

Your Email Marketing Campaign Must Fit With Your Overall Marketing Plan

Email marketing is a versatile tool. Different types of email best serve different kinds of objectives.

For example, if you are looking for immediate sales, then an email highlighting a price reduction or introducing a new product could work best. On the other hand, if you are looking to establish yourself as an expert in your field, then an informative email with case histories can build your credibility in your area of expertise.

Things To Think About

- Can you identify satisfied customers who may be willing to be quoted in your email marketing campaign?

- What would a communications calendar about your business look like? What are your key dates and events?

- How can you ensure that your business will respond to all customer feedback in a timely fashion?

Make Every Contact Count

Collecting Contact Information Is Easy. Just Ask For It.

Email marketing can help you establish and build relationships that will help you grow your business. But, there are two rules you need to follow when it comes to communicating by email.

1. You can't communicate if you don't make contact.

2. Not all contacts are equal. The more information you gather about each contact, the better your chances of delivering the right message to the right person.

How To Start Collecting Contact Information

Start by asking.

Yes, it really is as simple as asking. Most people will be glad to supply basic contact information. Avoid asking for too much personal information to start with, or they may reconsider. A name and an email address are enough to add a contact on your list.

When speaking to contacts in person or by phone, you can also ask for a street address and a phone number. Additionally, you can capture contact information from a business card or electronic communication.

Always Get Permission Before Emailing

When you send someone an email marketing communication, and that person has not permitted you to do so, you are technically spamming them. There are strict GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) guidelines designed to prevent spamming.

Keep in mind that sending spam could harm your reputation.

To avoid becoming a Spammer, always get permission to send your messages to the people on your list for the purpose you are sending it.

● You can ask for explicit permission – which means the person understands that you will be sending an email message their way.

● Alternatively, you can go with implicit permission which means that you have an existing business relationship with the person and that they are open to hearing from you.

The most effective way to get people to give you their contact information and permission is to motivate them to do so. Entice your customers with an offer they can't get anywhere else. It doesn't have to be much, but it must have value to the person receiving it. A discount on certain products is a powerful motivator, but something as simple as an informative and free downloadable white paper is also a good incentive.

Things To Think About

● Are you and your staff asking for contact information at every encounter? Why not? Can you identify and overcome the roadblocks?

● Have you ever sent an email with a marketing message to someone who might not want to have received it? Did you know it would be considered spam?

● What low cost but compelling offer could you make to incentivise customers to join your mailing list?

Why Would Your Customers Read Your Email?

Make It Relevant

Relevance Builds Trust. Trust Builds Business.

The very best way to get your customers to keep coming back, again and again, is to get them to trust you. One way to earn their trust is to communicate with them honestly, regularly, and in a way, they can relate to. Give them that, and you will not only have satisfied customers, but you will also have dedicated brand advocates.

Show That You Care About Them, Not Just The Money They Are Willing To Spend.

When information is useful, it is more likely to be remembered and acted upon. Remember, customers, want to hear about things they care about. Not just what you want them to know about your business.

Example 1 - Announcing A Sale

- Don't just talk about the money off (though that's certainly important)

- Do also add information about how the product or service can benefit the customer.

- Why? A 20% discount on cleaning air ducts is attractive, but tips for improving the air quality of one's home is useful to the customer.

Example 2 - Announcing A New Product

- Don't just talk about the new product.

- Do also add information about how the new product or service can benefit the customer.

- Why? A new range of the latest vegan lipsticks is impressive, but tips for living a vegan lifestyle is useful to the customer.

This kind of messaging encourages trust and demonstrates that you are interested in the welfare of your customers and what they are interested in. It shows that you are not just interested in how much they spend with you. It's all about building trust.

Your Customers Are your Experts - Talk To Them
Not sure what to include in your emails,?

First of all, don't overlook the obvious. While you may think specific topics are dated, you will be surprised how many of your customers may not know – or may have forgotten – individual pieces of information. Never assume people know what you know.

One of the best sources of content ideas is your customer. Many of them will be happy to suggest topics, lend advice, or even be interviewed for your email campaign.

Things To Think About

- Can you name three things you think your customers would be interested in knowing about your service or products? What kind of story can you tell about each one?

- Can you name four customers you can seek advice from regarding your email campaign?

- If you were to survey your customers on what they would like to see in an email from you, how would you do it?

- What topics have been popular in the past? Could you do a follow-up?

How To Increase Your Email Open Rate?

Do you worry about cutting through all the emails your customers receive?

You could be thinking that, for all the potential benefits an email marketing campaign may have, there are just too many emails floating around out there. Indeed, many emails are simply discarded without being opened at all. Your email does not have to be one of them. Here are some simple ways you can encourage your customers to open, read, and act on your emails.

Make Sure They Know It's From You

If there was ever a time to ditch the clever headline in favour of the straightforward approach, it is now.

Start with the 'from' line of your email. This should always be a well-known name from your business, your name, your company name, your product name or whatever name it is that your customers will most readily recognise.

Do not use such common, but ill-advised addresses like sales@ or service@. These are unfriendly and won't do a thing to build your relationship with your customers. Generic email addresses like these have also been proven to decrease the open rate of emails.

Make Sure The Customer Will Know It's Interesting

Is there anything more frustrating than opening an email and discovering that you just don't care what it's about?

Avoid wasting your time and causing frustration for your customers. Your subject line should be descriptive but not deceptive.

Instead of a generic phrase like "What's New This Month," try, "10 Reasons…" or "New Survey Reveals…" or "8 Ways to…" as more compelling titles.

Keep Those Emails Coming.

No one likes to be bothered unnecessarily, but there is something to be said for establishing a regular schedule of communication and sticking to it. If your emails are engaging and pertinent, your customers will look forward to receiving them – and will be disappointed when they don't. Sporadic emails can give the impression of an unprofessional and disorganised business. Build your campaign regularity in a way that you can sustain to avoid giving the wrong impression.

Looks Matter Too

No matter how essential or well-written your email is, if the design is cluttered, too busy, or just plain disorganised, the message will never get read.

Remember that readers decide whether to read an email or not in the first few seconds when previewing the first few lines. Be sure to use strong headlines and include words and phrases that appeal to their interests.

Things To Think About

● What emails that you receive are you most likely to open and read? Which are you most likely to delete without reading? What does each group have in common?

● Put yourself in their shoes. What would you like to read in an email from your business if you were the customer?

● Can you commit to regularly scheduled emails? Do you need help maintaining a regular schedule of communications?

Writing Valuable Email Communications

Good Content Comes From Within

When it comes to ramping up an email marketing campaign, one of the biggest challenges small businesses and nonprofit organisations face is regularly coming up with useful content to send out to permission-based mailing list subscribers.

Here are some of our tools and ideas for creating compelling content that will provide value for your email recipients and keep them opening your messages each time they arrive in the inbox.

Share Your Secrets

As a business owner or organisation leader, you have a wealth of secrets to success that have brought you to where you are. Everyone loves to be in the know, so share some of those insights with your subscribers.

A few examples of the kind of secrets that could serve as valuable content are:

Example 1:

Restaurants or other food service businesses could share a few favourite recipes with their fans. The head chef could share recipes of items on the menu or provide exclusive dishes to readers. Even general cooking tips such as remedies for an over-salted recipe can keep an audience coming back for more.

Example 2:

Craft stores could provide do-it-yourself guides to some of the finished products they offer. Crafty customers will love the new challenges and will come into the store to purchase the materials they need.

Example 3:

Alcohol retailers can list drink mixes or offer wine pairings for special meals, particularly around Christmas. Cocktail recipes could work well too.

Example 4:

Consultants can use their newsletters to share advice with fellow business owners on best practices for growing a business or growing a mailing list.

In these examples, the main content of the message will feature content the reader can use in his or her own life or business. However, that does not mean that your entire email has to be devoid of a sales pitch. You can add a sell piece with a coupon block that can offer a percentage off the products and service mentioned in the newsletter.

Writing Valuable Email Communications

Share Knowledge

Those in other consumer-oriented businesses might be thinking, what kind of tips can I offer?

There are plenty of opportunities for you to provide knowledge-boosting content to your subscriber base.

Example 1:

Accountants can share their knowledge with customers. Finances and taxes are always a big concern for people, so share ways to get financially organised and better prepared to deal with tax returns at the end of the year.

Example 2:

A fashion boutique could offer up unique gift ideas for that hard-to-shop-for customer. Think outside the box (pun intended) for gift ideas, particularly around holidays dates like Christmas.

Example 3:

Spas can offer readers home relaxation tips or ways they can keep that professional manicure looking good.

Example 4:

Home furnishing stores can provide customers with excellent tips on how to decorate their home better or how to find great value items to make their house look great on any budget.

Example 5:

A pet shop could offer tips on pet health, hygiene for dogs, and dieting ideas for the overweight pups, and list special events to get people and their pets into the store.

THE TAKEAWAY

Think about your business and ask yourself what benefits you provide to your customers and clients. Then use your email marketing to highlight those benefits to your customers in a helpful and informative manner.

Turn Questions Into Content

Customer questions posed to you through email, over the phone, on social media, or through any other channel are a perfect base for creating content. The chances are good that more than one person has the same question, so your answer can benefit many customers.

Take the question and answer and turn it into an article for your newsletter. For business-to-business organisations, monitoring social media sites, particularly Twitter and LinkedIn, for industry-related problems and trends, can provide similar content.

Take a question posed to a group and answer it in your newsletter. Doing so can demonstrate your expertise in your industry. If you are going to use the person's name or any other identifying information, get his or her permission before publishing the question in a public forum such as your email campaign.

Content from third-party sources

Not everything you offer in your email communications has to be original content.

Sharing third-party expertise that can benefit your audience is a great way to deliver value without having to write it all yourself. When using third-party content, make sure to correctly attribute the original author and link back to the source.

Don't just repost another article. Instead, explain why you like it and what you hope your readers gain from it.

There are three kinds of third-party content to choose from:

- Collectable Content
- Pre-written Content
- Ghostwritten Content

Collectable Content

Gather a handful of articles from the web that are related to your industry and the interests of your customers. In your newsletter, provide a brief description of each item followed by the link to the piece. This is a fast and easy way to put your newsletter together with quality content. All you have to do is share your opinion. It is that simple.

Quick ways to find content when you need it:
- Save articles from your favourite email newsletters and blog posts in a folder in your email inbox. This way you won't have to look far for content.
- Google News (http://news.google.com). Enter a relevant search term such as 'small business marketing' and let the news database pull up articles related to small business marketing posted within the last few days. Then choose the most relevant.
- Automate this process using Google Alerts. Enter a search term into Google News, scroll to the bottom of the web page, sign up for instant, daily, or weekly alerts.
- Social media sites can provide great suggestions for articles. If you see someone tweet or post an article, save that URL in a document and refer back to it later.

Note: Before linking to a website, keep in mind that some online publications may have a reprint policy that includes links. You can check the T&Cs on the website or pop the author a message. Generally, though, in this age of interconnectedness, it should be more than alright to link to an article you have found, just as long as you don't claim to have written it yourself.

Pre-Written Content

There are many articles written by experts that are available for you to reprint (for free) in your email newsletter. The web is filled with these types of articles. You just have to know where to look for them. Two recommended sites are:

- www.ezinearticles.com
- www.ideamarketers.com

When you use an article from these sites, you will need to publish it in its entirety and include the author's name. At the end of these articles, the author always includes a paragraph promoting his or her business along with a link. Usually, these links are harmless and just lead to the author's web page for products or services. Be sure to check out these links before publishing the article so that you'll know what content your audience will see.

Ghostwritten Content

Your third option is to hire someone else to write your articles for you. It is not as expensive as you may think. Best of all, with ghostwriting you retain all rights to the article and you can put your name at the top as the author. Just give the ghostwriter a subject, word count, example of similar articles which you like, and a firm deadline.

Are you wondering where to find quality writers?

Here are a couple of places to start your search:
- https://www.upwork.com/
- https://www.guru.com/

Keep in mind that you will want to consider in advance what themes and ideas you want the articles to cover. This way, the content will be of higher quality and will truly stand the test of time.

Share Your Email Content Through Social Media

Hitting Send on your email communication does not signal the end of your content's lifecycle.

You can continue to use it across multiple social media channels to reach more customers, members, and prospects by linking to it on Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, or whatever social media site(s) you use.

Conversely, you can use social media to promote upcoming email content and drive subscribers. A day or two before your email is scheduled to go out, tease what the email is going to be about and direct fans, friends, and followers to sign up if they want to get this valuable information.

Example: Don't miss out! Join our mailing list today to get the latest recipe tips from head chef Gordon Oliver.

There are many ways that a business can generate compelling content that will keep customers and members opening and interacting with their email campaigns. Once you have a handful of ideas, you will find the process is easier than you thought and you may even have more ideas than you have space to use them. Always a good problem to have.

Email Automation

Email marketing is still one of the most economical and effective channels for marketing your business today, but it's evolving. To drive better open rates, new leads and subscribers, and increase revenue, consider email automation.

Newsletters and one-off email marketing campaigns are beneficial and should remain as part of your marketing strategy. The next step is to start using automated email campaigns that are triggered by a customer's actions.
Why automation? Because these automatic emails are timely, personalised and relevant to the reader. As a result, they are opened and clicked more frequently and drive visits and revenue for your business.

It's Easier To Keep In Touch With Your Customers Consistently

Be it a simple, 'Thank you for subscribing,' 'Welcome on board' or a heartfelt 'Happy Birthday', email is the easiest and most effective way to let your customers know you value them.
Email automation ensures that everything you have to say or offer to your customers reaches them automatically and immediately. Yet it still sounds and feels personal. Using email automation thus drives significant results and takes your email marketing efforts to the next level.

Email automation opens up a world full of benefits for your business. Personalised, relevant and consistent communication with email automation is a great way to nurture fruitful customer relationships.

Email Marketing Trends

Things To Think About

Optimisation For Smartphone Screens

Shifting to mobile-friendly email designs isn't a cutting-edge proposition, and the tools to do so have been around for years.

Statistics points to an increasingly apparent move from computers to smartphones when it comes to viewing emails and other online activities.

● People read more than 60% of all emails on their smart devices.

● Almost 80% of mobile users have purchased something online through their phones.

It is essential to adopt a mobile-first approach. If you want to increase open and click rates and raise revenues, you will want to do everything to get more eyes on your emails. Optimisation for smartphone screens is the way to do it.

Inclusion Of Animation And Video Assets

The simple addition of the word 'video' to your email title can push your open rate up by almost 20%. On top of this, click-through rates increase by about 65% when you include video assets in your marketing emails.

Tell Your Story

Focus on brand storytelling.

Why is storytelling such an effective way to maintain human interest? It may have to do with the fact that 95% of cognition happens in the subconscious. Due to this phenomenon, a story is thought to activate sections of the brain that deal with intense sensations such as emotion, sound, sight, and taste.

In 2020, consumers can display a near-obsessive need for genuine connections and authenticity if you want to keep up with the times, learn how to communicate with your subscribers through brand storytelling.

Even when companies are faceless, they have a history and a mission. Weave these facts into a narrative that subscribers can piece together. This tactic will make it easier for people to retain details of your marketing campaigns and strengthen any emotional bonds you may already have with your audience.

Successful Campaigns

At a basic level, if you dissect a successful marketing campaign, it contains four clear elements which allow it to excel.

Personalised Email

As we discussed earlier, knowing your customer is key to successful email marketing. As such, you should have enough information about them to be able to address them by their first name in any emails they receive from your business.

Making an email relatable to the customer by solving a problem or offering advice and tips creates a personal connection between them and your brand. A link like this creates an association for the customer. They will remember how your brand made them feel positive or gave them a feeling of wellbeing, happiness and overall trust.

Clear Headers

Not many people realise that ahead of the main content in any email that you send is a section called the Header. An email header contains specific details regarding the source of the email. This includes, who sent the email, what servers it came through. The header can also tell you what browser the sender used to write the email.

To avoid getting lost in the world of HTML, look for an emailing service that looks after headers on your behalf.

Clear Call To Action (CTA)

Without a call to action (CTA), your email is a little redundant. It is a bit like having a shop and never inviting anyone in.

A CTA is a phrase that encourages your customer to take action. For example, it might say 'Buy Now', 'Sign Up Today' or 'Get Great Deals Here'.

Emails can contain one or more CTA's. One method is to wait until the very end and add the CTA as a button. Another is to include CTA links throughout the email content. Avoid having too many in one email. A maximum of three should be plenty.

A Clean Mailing List.

There will be unsubscribers, don't take it personally.
From a customer sentiment and a GDPR point of view, your mailing list must be kept up to date. Regularly remove anyone who has unsubscribed and ensure you only add people who have given their permission.

Measure

It doesn't matter how optimised your emails are if you can't see the results of your efforts. The results of all of your marketing efforts should be measurable; otherwise, you could just be throwing your money down the drain.

Before sending out an email campaign, you should have a clear goal in mind. Once it is sent, you should be able to measure whether an email is helping you hit your goals. So before sending your next email, pause for a few minutes and ask yourself, "What is the goal of my email marketing?"

Is it to grow a subscriber database? Generate more leads? To convert more existing leads into customers? Whatever you decide your goal is (and you can have more than one), the next thing you need to do is figure out which metrics you will need to track to determine how you're progressing toward that goal.

Here are the most common metrics:

Clickthrough Rate

The percentage of email recipients who clicked on one or more links contained in a given email.

Conversion Rate

The percentage of email recipients who clicked on a link within an email and completed the desired action, such as filling out a lead generation form or purchasing a product.

Bounce Rate

The percentage of your total emails sent that could not be successfully delivered to the recipient's inbox.

List Growth Rate

The rate at which your email list is growing.

Email Sharing/Forwarding Rate

The percentage of email recipients who clicked on a "share this" button to post email content to a social network, or who clicked on a "forward to a friend" button.

Overall ROI

The overall return on investment for your email campaigns. In other words, the total revenue divided by total spend.

Open Rate

The percentage of email recipients who open a given email.

Unsubscribe Rate

The percentage of email recipients unsubscribe from your send list after opening a given email.

Conclusion

What better way to connect with your customers than with useful and informative email content delivered directly to their inbox? Consumers are information hungry and will welcome your shared expertise and insights into the things that interest them the most.

80% of marketers agree that email marketing is more effective than most other platforms, including radio, billboards, website ads and social media. When considered in terms of the expenditure versus results, we know from experience that email marketing is one of the very best ways to engage your target demographic, and we can help you to make the most of this tool.

Whether you are entirely new to email marketing and considering it for the first time or you have some experience and would like to improve the effectiveness of your efforts - contact the team at ePresence to see how we can assist.