

Email like a pro

How to build email campaigns that deliver results



If you're not already sending emails to your target customers, you're missing out on one of the most effective, affordable ways to build your business. Whether you need to increase sales, promote your company, launch new products, improve customer loyalty, attract new customers or convert Website leads, email is a versatile tool that can help you accomplish your company's goals.

To help you build campaigns that generate the greatest returns, we've compiled some tips, trends and best practices in the pages that follow. Before long, you'll be emailing like a pro — and building a loyal customer base that will want to buy from you time and again.

Dos and don'ts for your email campaigns

Engaging your customers via email is an effective digital tactic you can add to your online marketing mix. From promotions to customer service and more, you can quickly create and distribute virtually any kind of message — be it big news, useful insight, account reminders or a quick hello — and send it directly to the customers who want to hear from you most.

To ensure your email marketing is effective, follow the dos and don'ts below — so you find and reach your customers and make the most of your marketing budget.

Do be persistent. Prospects may require up to nine “touches” before making a buying decision. When you're communicating with new prospects and looking to increase sales conversions, repetition isn't optional. It's mandatory.

Don't forget your current customers.

To generate repeat sales, keep in touch on a regular basis so you'll improve customer loyalty and help keep your business top of mind.

Do up-sell and cross-sell your products.

Email provides a great opportunity for you to promote your other products or services

when customers are in the mood to buy. After customers complete their purchases, you can follow up with emails suggesting related items.

Don't think you're perfect. The best way to find out what your customer base wants is by asking for honest feedback from your customers. Make it easy for users to submit reviews on your Website, social networks and other channels.

Do drive Web users to purchase offline.

More than half of users in one survey had made a purchase offline after receiving an email promotion. Make it easy for customers to find you and see business hours and other essentials about your brand.

Don't waste time on tactics that don't work.

Focus your efforts on the tactics that produce the best results, and always put your customers' interests first. You'll grow your list much more quickly that way while also ensuring the best chances for your business' success.

Offering coupons

Coupons offer a perfect way to let your customers know how much your company appreciates their business. One way to do that during this economic downturn is to

give your customers a special promotional rate or discount. Sending special offers from time to time helps to promote repeat business and encourage customer loyalty.

Here's a simple and practical tip: Send a series of emails with your coupon offer to create “urgency.” For example, try designing a promotional email offering a “Five-Day Sale” that expires on a Friday. Follow up on Wednesday with a “Three Days Left” email message and then a “Don't Miss Out! Final Sale Day!” email on Friday. Announce the remaining number of days for the sale in your subject line, and include calls to action throughout your email.



Five ways to generate new email opt-ins

With Experian's email campaign builder, we make it easy not only to create emails, but also to build a customer database. The following five tips will help you grow your contact list once you've created your emails:

- 1 Make it easy to sign up.** Customers won't join your list if they have to fill out a lengthy form to do so. Make the process quick and easy for them by asking for as little information as possible.
- 2 Create an easy-to-find, inviting sign-up link.** Get clever with an eye-catching icon or button that encourages customers to click and sign up. Feature it prominently on your home page, either as part of the top banner or just below, so users are sure to see it as soon as they visit your site.
- 3 Share your emails.** Post your email content on social networks like Facebook and Twitter, and ask subscribers to do the same. Offer a small incentive or discount that will get them talking and also encourage purchases. You'll extend the reach of your messages and generate additional sign-ups, potentially boosting your bottom line.
- 4 Use multiple channels.** Promote email sign-ups in your print catalogs, directory ads, direct-mail pieces, and account registration and ecommerce forms. Even a simple check box with a blank field to write in an email address on bills, rebate cards, subscription renewals and other everyday materials can help to grow your list considerably.
- 5 Describe what's in it for them.** Your sign-up boxes should clearly convey the benefits of joining your list. Tell customers what to expect when signing up, such as access to exclusive offers, periodic discounts and the latest industry news.



Boost your email ROI with permission-based marketing

Purchased email lists offer a convenient way to market to prospects who otherwise wouldn't know about your company. However, if you purchase an email list, you risk violating the CAN-SPAM Act of 2003, which prohibits sending emails to people who haven't opted in to receive your messages.

With purchased lists, you run other risks as well:

- You don't know if the email addresses are valid. Consequently, you could wind up with large numbers of bounce-backs from closed or inactive accounts.
- Your emails could be labeled as spam. If users haven't opted in, your emails might not reach them, or they might banish them to their spam folders.
- You'll put your business's reputation on the line. If prospects decide you're spamming them, your brand's image will suffer.

These risks aren't worth taking. Instead, focus on growing your list organically — by giving prospects a way to opt in via social media, your company's Website and "forward to a friend" features. Offer ways for them to give permission for you to contact them so that you're only contacting prospects who have said they want to hear from you. That way, they'll be much more receptive to your offers.

Take your email marketing to the next level

Maybe you've dabbled in email marketing,

knowing that it has the potential to produce rapid, significant results. If so, you might have realized by now that in order to grow your list and see the biggest returns, you'll need to step up your email marketing efforts beyond just the basics.

If you're ready to incorporate a few advanced techniques in your email marketing plans, try the three tips below — and be willing to tweak your approach based on customers' tastes and interests:

Analyze your email campaigns. This is one of the best favors you can do for your marketing campaigns, because you don't want to waste your time, money and resources on approaches that don't work. Examine what the data says about your customers and their preferences, taking note of content that produces the most clicks — whether it's tip lists and graphs or certain calls to action. Also look for correlations between the days and times you send your emails and the number of clicks you receive.

Segment your list. Split your email list into groups based on age, gender, education level or past buying behavior. Then, test subtle tweaks on each group to determine which approaches work best, such as different subject lines or color schemes. By testing different versions, you'll be able to fine-tune your campaign and give customers exactly what they want going forward.

Elevate your content. Try customer surveys and polls that ask thought-provoking questions, and then highlight the results in a future newsletter. Create case studies based on customer interviews. For instance, write about a customer who saved time and

money by using your product or service. Stay organized by creating a content calendar for several months at a time so that you'll never be scrambling at the last minute to fill your email newsletter — and you'll be creating the best content every time.

Making the most of Experian's email campaign builder

Experian's email marketing tool offers a unique, effective and affordable way to reach your customers via email. What makes this tool so effective for your business?

- **It's direct.** Each email is addressed to the person you want to target and is delivered to the address where that customer can be found.
- **It's personal.** Interact one-on-one with customers and prospects. Unlike other media, email can be personalized and customized to specific customers on your list.
- **It's instant.** Emails arrive in seconds and responses begin coming back within minutes. Your results can be analyzed in days, not weeks or months.
- **It's targeted.** Once you begin sending out emails to customers and prospects who want to hear from you, engagement and sales should increase.
- **It's inexpensive.** Compared to other marketing vehicles, email is one of the most cost-effective tactics available. Our email marketing packages let you save on paper, printing and postage costs.

Turn your customers into evangelists. Developing promotions that encourage your best customers to endorse your products is a great way to promote your brand to the right people. ***Our email marketing tool*** can help start you in the right direction to engage your company's evangelists.



Need more email addresses?

Direct mail is a great way to build your email database. A multipronged approach used to reach and entice customers and prospects can help boost your response rates. Remember, connecting with your customers regularly keeps your company top of mind.

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