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A Guide to Email Marketing



In this guide, updated in February 2020, you will discover:

- Why you should use email marketing
- How to build an email database
- How to write and send emails
- The do's and don'ts of emailing
- A summary of regulations governing permission, privacy and spam

Email marketing is the use of email to develop relationships with clients and prospective customers in order to promote your company's products and services.

Facts on Email Marketing:

Did you know?

- There are 4 billion email accounts with over 250 billion emails sent every day
- 92% of online adults use email, with 61% using it every day
- For every £1 spent, email marketing generates up to £40 in return on investment
- 90% of email gets delivered to the intended recipient's inbox (whereas only 2% of your Facebook fans see your posts in their News Feed)
- Employees spend 13 of their working hours each week in their email inbox
- Six in ten employees rate email as "very important" for doing their job
- 53% of emails are opened on mobile devices
- Personalised emails deliver 6x higher transaction rates
- Email is 40 times more effective at acquiring new customers than Facebook or Twitter
- The average order value of an email is at least three times higher than that of social media
- Email is the most preferred channel for customers opting to receive marketing communications

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Smart Solutions Delivered With Integrity



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So, whilst social media is basking in the digital limelight right now, email marketing -particularly personalised and targeted emailing -remains one of the most important ways of nurturing relationships and generating sales.

In many ways, email is the glue that cements all other aspects of your online marketing via websites, social media and blogging.

Why Should You Use Email Marketing?

Email marketing is one area where small businesses are not at a disadvantage compared to their larger competitors.

In fact, email marketing may be particularly advantageous for small businesses as you are better able to personalise and target your messaging which are both proven to significantly increase your return on investment.

Here are 8 further reasons why you should be carrying out email marketing:

- 1. Emailing is low-cost** – Email beats any other form of above or below the line marketing. There are no print or postage costs. There are no fees to pay to advertise on social media or in the local press. Even the automation to power your email campaigns can be free of charge.
- 2. Your emails are easy to create** – If you have a compelling headline, a concise message and a clear call to action you are good to go. Plain text emails can work equally as well as HTML emails. By all means, jazz up your email by adding logos and images. It is easy to do. But be careful not to overdo it. Substance is more important than style!
- 3. Emailing can be automated** – For free or for a fee, email campaigns can be sent out automatically by software such as Mailchimp or Infusionsoft in the frequency and at the times that you choose. Email sequences and auto responders can be set up to enable you to keep in contact with your customers even outside of normal business hours.
- 4. Email success is easy to track** - Email marketing software enables you to track open, click-through and conversion rates, making it simple to measure the success of a campaign and to spot ways to improve future campaigns.
- 5. Email campaigns can be targeted and personalised** – Another benefit of using email service providers is that you can easily set up campaigns to only send emails to targets who meet certain criteria. This approach significantly increases engagement and conversion rates.



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- 6. Emails are easy to link to other online assets** - Email marketing can turn a prospect into a customer with a tempting call to action and a link straight to the checkout on your ecommerce site or a click to call to a sales hotline at your company.
- 7. Your emails can easily be shared by your customers** - At the click of a button your brilliant offer can be forwarded to other interested parties, and if you build in a subscribe link, you can even build your email database at the same time.
- 8. Immediate results and instant learning** – The beauty of email is that your message is instantly delivered and within minutes of emails being sent you can start to see results. If you are looking to drive quick increases in business, for example via a 24-hour sale, email is a great way to create urgency. And if you are not sure which messaging to use you can split test (or A/B test) to see which campaign brings you the best results.

How to Build an Email Database

In order to carry out effective email marketing, you need a database of customers and prospective customers to whom you can send your email messages.

Building your email list should be one of your top priorities.

Be warned: There are no short-cuts. Don't be tempted to buy in lists from other businesses or to send emails to recipients without their permission.

You are looking to build a list of relevant people who will want to receive information from you and who are likely to do more business with you as a result of the emails that you send.

So, how do you go about building that list?

Here are 10 steps to follow:

- 1. Sign up with an email service provider** - An ESP will provide you with all the tools, templates and services you need to get subscribers, test your campaigns, and manage the day-to-day requirements of your list. Start out with [Mailchimp](#). It is free.
- 2. Create an opt-in form to collect email sign-ups through your website and social media business pages.** There are 2 golden rules to consider here. These are:

Rule 1. The less information you ask for, the more opt-ins you get. Simply request name and email address.

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Rule 2. Give something of value in return for your subscriber's email mail address. This could be a free eBook, access to a webinar, or the promise of discounts or deals exclusively for your subscribers.

- 3. Ask for email details on all customer enquiries** -When your website visitors or telephone callers request data such as price quotations, product information or company details always ask for an email, confirm their request by email and ask them to opt in to further communications.
- 4. Use your social media pages to promote offers** that require an email address submission and add social sharing buttons to encourage new subscribers to share those offers.
- 5. Write to all existing customers and ask them to subscribe.** Just because you have a customer's email address it does not necessarily give you permission to use it for marketing purposes. Send an email explaining that you will write to your customers from time to time with valuable information and offers and provide an opt-in to sign them up.
- 6. Ensure the emails you send to existing subscribers are high quality.** And encourage your current email subscribers to share and forward your emails by including social sharing buttons and an "Email to a Friend" button in your marketing emails. At the bottom of your emails, include a "Subscribe" call to action link so that those receiving the forwarded emails can easily opt-in, too.
- 7. Point of sale registration.** If you have a retail store or an ecommerce site, make email acquisition part of the checkout process.
- 8. Send a welcome email offering a discount off the next purchase** - An email can be sent to confirm the email address and can include a discount code or coupon. This validates the email address and encourages customers to shop again.
- 9. Run competitions on your website and social media pages** with the price of entry being name and email address. Send confirmation emails to validate entry and to confirm winners.
- 10. Collect email addresses at offline events** like trade shows and import them into your database. Be sure to send these contacts a welcome email that confirms their opt-in to your list.

By following these 10 steps you will build a permission-based email list.

It will be unique to your business and it will create a win-win situation for your company and your customers.

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Your company will be able to build profitable relationships with customers who in return will receive offers for products and services that are meaningful and relevant to them.

Finally, please be aware that list building is a never-ending exercise.

Your email marketing database degrades over time. To keep extending your email marketing reach you must continually add fresh contacts to your list.

How to Write and Send Emails

Armed with a healthy email list you can now start to run email campaigns.

Sending Emails

It is useful to create automated sequences that take a new subscriber on a journey from prospect to customer to repeat customer.

An example might be:

1. **Welcome email** at the point of opt-in. If a lead magnet was used to entice your subscriber to sign up this welcome email should contain the link to access the opt-in offer.
2. **Follow-up email** to explain a little more about your company and the value you deliver.
3. **Awareness-building email** to inform customers about a product or service and why it should be of interest to them.
4. **Promotional email** to encourage a prospect to make a first purchase.
5. **Thank you email** with a clear next step such as to leave a review.
6. **Follow-up email** introducing related products and services.
7. **Promotional email** to encourage a prospect to make further purchases.
8. **Thank you email** with a clear next step such as a request to recommend a friend and receive a further benefit.
9. **Follow-up email** asking for additional customer details such as preferences to maximise further email engagement.

It is good practice to personalise all emails and to give your customers the ability to reply to the emails that you send as well as to opt out.



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This will help to ensure that your emails make it into the intended recipient's inbox avoiding being treated as Junk by the dreaded spam filters.

Other ways of ensuring deliverability include:

- Asking your email subscribers to add you to their "safe senders list"
- Asking your email subscribers to add you to their "contacts list"
- Sending your email from a named person e.g. "joebloggs@company.co.uk" and not "sales@company.co.uk" or info@company.co.uk
- Removing the prefix "on behalf of" from the automated email sender name

Let's turn now to how you write emails that get read, build relationships and sell.

Writing Emails

First and foremost be the real authentic you.

Aim to use simple, direct and appealing language and keep it concise.

Don't use email simply to push sales messages on your recipients. If you do, you will soon get repetitive and boring. Worse still, your customers will be hitting the "unsubscribe" button.

Email etiquette demands that you inform, educate, entertain, encourage and then sell.

Keep in mind the 80:20 rule. 80% of what you write should be valuable content for your reader and just 20% overt selling messages.

Before composing your emails, envisage being face to face with the customer or prospect you are about to write to.

Answer these questions?

- What does he/she want or need right now?
- How can I help him/her get it?
- Why should he/she choose my company over another?

Now follow these ten tips and your email will have power.

1. **Grab attention with a short and punchy headline.** The ones that work best invoke curiosity, arouse emotions, state cold-hard truths, carry hope, outline a benefit or pose an insightful question
2. **Personalise with the correct name** and use this name throughout the email
3. **Use a one-to-one conversational style**
4. **Provide a benefit** or answer a question in the first line of your email

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5. **Use action words throughout your email**
6. **Have a single call to action**
7. **Invite a response** or outline a clear next step
8. **Create urgency (without being pushy!).** Include an expiry date and an incentive for a quick response
9. **Use an actionable “P.S.”** This works well for skimmers who read the opening paragraph and skip straight to the end
10. **REMEMBER:** The message is all about the customer and the benefits that you offer to him/her and not about you and your products and services

You may not feel totally confident in your writing skills. In which case, employ the services of a professional copy writer.

If you are composing emails yourself, take care to avoid jargon and stale clichés.

Remember to keep your copy simple and to make it easy to read.

Once you've written your piece it is a good idea to have a trusted colleague proofread it to ensure that your message comes across as you intend.

Also, check for readability using the online [Flesch Kincaid Test](#).

Again, if you are in any doubt about your writing style, use a professional copy writer.

Do's and Don'ts of Email Marketing

Here is a list of “do's” for your email marketing campaigns:

DO

1. **Personalise your emails** - You only have two to three seconds to hook your reader's attention. Try including the recipient's name in your headline as well as in your salutation.
2. **Make messages interactive** - Your audience needs to be listened to. If someone responds to your email, then do answer them. People like to share ideas, concerns and questions. If you ignore them, don't expect them to remain (potential) customers for long.
3. **Optimise for mobile** - Over 50% of all email is opened on a mobile device. Your emails must be optimised for mobile, including creating buttons and links big enough to click. The human finger is approximately 26×26 pixels, so links should be at least that size or bigger.
4. **Include a call to action** - Be clear what you want the recipient to do and ask them to do it. Make it easy for people to respond.

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5. Make unsubscribing easy - Every email you send must have a clear unsubscribe option. Offering selective opt out options may lower your overall unsubscribe rate by allowing people to stay on some email lists while removing themselves from others.

And now a list of email marketing “don’ts”:

DON'T

Spam. It's unprofessional and illegal - In the UK The Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003 cover the sending of email marketing. This legislation says that organisations must only send marketing emails to individuals if they have agreed to receive them, except where there is a clearly defined customer relationship.

Buy or sell lists - While buying email lists might seem like a quick and easy way to expand your reach, the people you email have not asked for you to communicate with them and this could have negative impacts on your company and your campaigns. Similarly, never sell your email address list. You don't want to breach your customers' trust or break the law.

Don't over saturate your customers with too much information or email them too often. Make sure your email is brief, straightforward and to-the-point. Plan your objectives and select customers with care.

Do not create deceptive subject lines - These are commonly called “click-bait”. Email marketing depends on building strong relationships with your consumers, so don't make false promises or exaggerate your subject lines. Your content must reflect the subject line and add real value.

Put lots of links in the body of your email - While it may seem like including lots of links throughout your message will help boost engagement, the reality is that this tends to confuse. Having a one clear call to action with a single link to your website or social media page drives up response rates.

Regulations Governing Email

In the UK the **Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations of 2003** specifically regulates email marketing for commercial purposes.

The **General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679** provides additional data protection and privacy safeguards. It is intended to give control to individuals over their personal data.

When an individual subscribes to your email list you become the data controller, must store the data given securely, process it strictly in accordance with permission given by the subscriber when they actively signed up and delete their data when requested by them or when they unsubscribe from your list.



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Advice on Complying with Regulations

If you are following the general advice in this guide you will be well on the way to operating compliantly.

Here's a final checklist to make doubly sure that you are sending legitimate emails and not SPAM (Stop pornography and abusive marketing – sometimes also short for “stupid pointless advertising messages”):

1. Ensure you have permission to email the people on your list
 2. Don't use misleading header information designed to trick people into opening your email campaigns
 3. Include your business address and contact details
 4. Provide a prominent unsubscribe link so that recipients can opt-out of future campaigns
 5. Don't re-use opted out data unless the customer actively opts back in / re-subscribes
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About the Author

Chris Dunn is passionate about the power of digital transformation and customer experience to create brand value, customer loyalty and competitive advantage.

His career stretches back 35 years during which time he has developed fast growing, profitable businesses serving B2B and B2C markets in the UK and internationally.

His company Chris Dunn Consulting Services Limited provides business coaching and management consultancy to companies to help them drive change management and business development.

Chris is a long-standing mentor on the Cambridge Venture Project run by the Cambridge Judge Business School.

He writes a regular blog to pass on business advice as well as posting handy hints and tips through regular posts on LinkedIn and Facebook.



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