

The Complete Guide to Email Marketing

INTRODUCTION

Did you know there are 3x more email accounts than there are Facebook and Twitter accounts combined? That's a whopping 2.9 billion. Did you know Facebook and Twitter combined makeup just 0.2% of the number of emails sent each day? Let's say, on Facebook, if you post an update to your 10,000 fans, the probability is that only about 200 of them will even have a chance of seeing it in their News Feed. Alternatively, if you send an email campaign to 10,000 subscribers there are chances that at least 9,000 of them will receive it in their inbox.

E-mail is still a significantly more effective way to acquire customers than social media. According to a report by [Monetate](#), email marketing drives more conversions than any other marketing channel including social and search. According to another [report](#), "66% of online consumers made a purchase as a result of an email marketing message."

WHAT IS EMAIL MARKETING?

While email marketing is a term that you have been hearing, what exactly is email marketing might be your next question. Email marketing at its most basic level is the use of email to promote products and/or services. A better email marketing definition is the use of email to develop relationships with potential customers and/or clients.

Why do businesses need it?

It is a direct form of marketing that can be used to build trust with customers over time to turn them into repeat customers. It is also an effective way for brands and organizations to keep their customers informed about new sales or promotions that they are running. People always want to stay informed about a brand, and email marketing is one of the best ways to stay engaged with that audience.

EVOLUTION OF EMAIL MARKETING

Can you believe it's been 42 years ever since the first email was sent! Ray Tomlinson sent the first-ever email marking the history of email. In 1978, Gary Thuerk, a Marketing Manager at Digital Equipment Corp sent the first marketing email promoting DEC machines to 400 users via Arpanet. The commercial email or the first mass email resulted in \$13 million worth of sales for DEC machines with a few complaints though. This kicked off to become one of the most highly used marketing channels even to this day.

With the introduction of the Internet in 1991, it completely revolutionized the marketing realm by opening the doors to a new way of mass communication for marketers across the world. When Hotmail (then known as HoT-MaiL) was launched as the first free web-based email service, it gave marketers a whole new way to reach customers. The introduction of personal email addresses (that were free and available to all) transformed direct marketing. Up until the 1990s, B2C direct marketing was mostly done by post or the telephone and was very expensive. With the inception of email, marketers were given a sigh of relief through the cost-effective, and quick way to reach consumers.

The introduction of regulations for commercial emails has authenticated emails thereby discouraging spam mailers, who routinely disguised the origin of their email. [The Data Protection Act \(1998\)](#), the [CAN-SPAM Law in the US \(2003\)](#), the [Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations in Europe \(2003\)](#) and the [Sender Policy Framework \(SPF\)](#) in 2004 provided an email validation system to help prevent email spam by verifying a sender IP address.

In 2014, the recipient focused anti-spam strategy was started which is followed to the present day. Introductions such as Windows Live Sender Reputation Data (2008) which allows recipients to vote for whether an email is spam or not; Hotmail Sweep and Google's Priority Inbox (both 2010), that were created to help recipients de-clutter their inboxes, have caused email marketers to be more strategic to get their messages noticed.

With the recipients deciding to opt-out of emails; they being able to dictate what email they chose to receive and also given the power to block those they didn't want, marketers began to realize that they needed to look after their email reputation. During the process, they made emails both timely and relevant through the implementation of triggered email reacting to online user behavior. Though the first-ever behavioral email was sent in 2001, by 2010 it was reported that 48% of online marketers were using triggered emails.

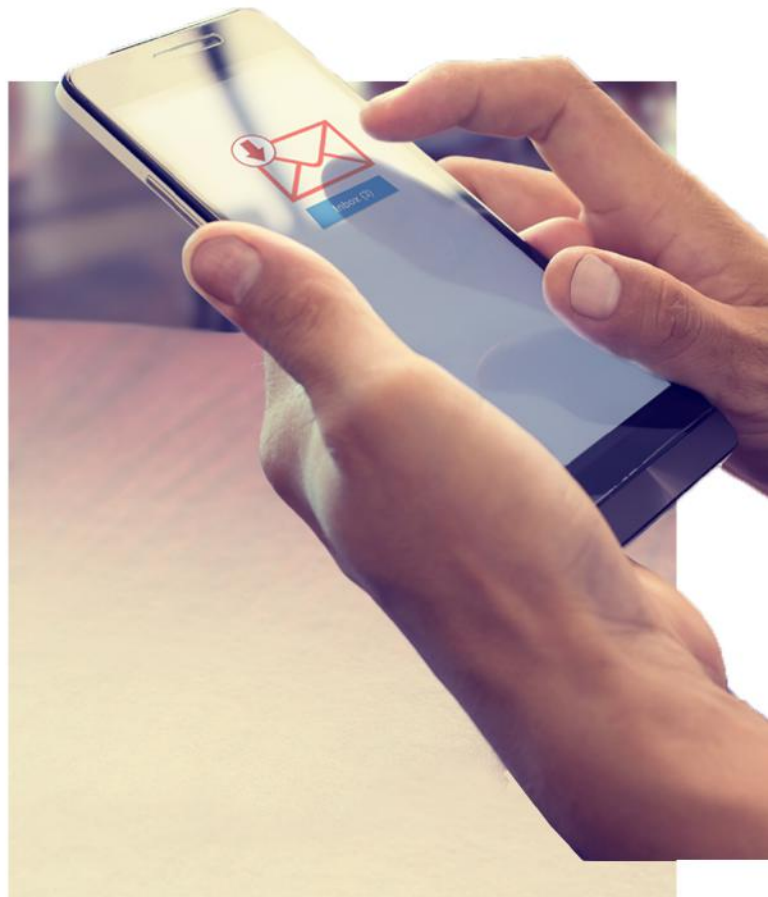
In addition to the above, the change in social culture has also played an integral role in how email marketing has evolved. The first smartphone enabling email access through mobile was launched in 1992 and in 2007, Apple released the first iPhone. In 2011, when Apple announced that it had sold over 100 million iPhones, it was reported that in the same year, email was used by 75% of British iPhone owners, making it the most popular internet activity on the phone. By 2012, it was reported that over 40% of marketing emails were opened on a mobile device.

Social media also had an impact on email marketing. Facebook, launched publicly in 2006, had over 100,000 business pages allowing companies to attract potential customers, by late 2007. Consumers can now interact with a brand through multiple channels; online, in-store, Twitter, Facebook, email. The explosion of digital through both social media and mobile has persuaded consumers to expect more. The importance of data collection and data management became essential, dramatically changing how most marketers position the email channel.

HOW TO GET STARTED WITH EMAIL MARKETING?

If you haven't started email marketing yet, there's no better time to jump in. But before that, one must try to understand why email marketing is a must-have in your digital marketing strategy. For that, let's take a deep dive into why email marketing is still one of the most important elements of the marketing strategy and how brands can use it responsibly and effectively.

Email marketing has changed a lot ever since the first email marketing tool was introduced. But what hasn't changed is its effectiveness. Studies show that email marketing continues to outperform other digital marketing channels including social media and paid search even today.





Here are 10 things you need to do when you're getting started with email marketing

1. Choose an email marketing service provider
2. Gather contacts for your email marketing list
3. Add your contacts into your email marketing account
4. Set up your welcome email
5. Create a reusable email template
6. Practice writing persuasive messages
7. Spend time on subject lines
8. Preview and test before you send
9. Send your email (at the best time)
10. Track your results

1. Choose an email marketing service provider

The very first step that you should take in the staircase of email marketing is choosing to work with an email marketing service provider. Choosing the right email marketing service can have a significant impact on the success of your marketing campaign. A good email marketing service enables you to create highly engaging email newsletters with an easy user interface. Apart from that, it makes it easy to manage your contacts, segment users into groups, and track the performance of your email marketing campaigns. Most importantly, the right email marketing service ensures that your emails do not end up in the spam folder.

2. Gather contacts for your email marketing list

After you've chosen the right email marketing service provider, you should start gathering contacts for your email marketing list. The challenge that lies ahead during this process is how to collect contacts for your email marketing list. Most businesses will have some existing contacts, hence, it is always a perfect start to take the lead with existing contacts. In online businesses, almost every time your customer buys something from you, they give you their email so you can send them their order details and also relevant information about other products/offers. You can start by adding them to your lists and send them relevant email campaigns. If you're building an email list completely from scratch, here are some simple ways to help you build your list.

- Simply ask
- Put a form on your website
- Send postcards via snail mail
- Offer freebies
- Link to a form in your signature
- Utilize social media

Ultimately, whatever you do, never buy it or copy it, just build it!

3. Add your contacts into your email marketing account

Once you have your email marketing account ready and an initial list to send to, all you have to do is add your contacts into your account. You can start by simply uploading a contact list from an existing spreadsheet or by importing contacts from a Gmail or Outlook account. You can segment your contacts into separate lists based on the preferences of your target audience and send out a targeted email based on their specific interests.

4. Set up your welcome email

In order to delight your subscribers and ensure your email marketing is effective, set up your welcome email as it is the first message your new email subscribers receive from you. First impression is always the best impression, so, your welcome email for new subscribers should create the best impression for them after joining your email list through a lead magnet or sign up form.

Start with a warm greeting by thanking your new subscriber for joining your email list. Also, provide an overview of what they can expect to receive from you in the future, and offer them something useful right away. If you have promised to deliver any incentive in your sign up page, your welcome email should deliver the incentive as promised. Once set up, your welcome email will send to all new contacts automatically.

5. Create a reusable email template

When you frequently send very similar emails, it is suggested to save these messages as message templates that can be reused every time for other emails. You can always create a reusable template with Gmail or Outlook or any other email marketing service that provides different customizable templates, to help you create the right look for your email marketing. Though you're not a designer, you can send beautifully-designed professional emails that look good on any device by customizing your template. Create the template using essential design elements like the brand logo, linking the image back to your website's homepage, adding in your brand colors, creating an email footer with your business name, contact information, and links to your active social media channels. Once all is set up, make a copy of your email and save it as a version of your master template. You'll now have a reusable template to use each and every time you are ready to create an email.



6. Practice writing persuasive messages

A persuasive message strategy can be a critical and vital step in business communication. When you write a persuasive message through email to your customer, it should always grab the reader's attention, secure their interest, stimulate their desire for your product or service, and motivate them to take action.

7. Spend time on subject lines

Did you know that 47% of email recipients open an email based on the subject line alone? Interesting, right! At the same time, 69% of email recipients report email as spam based solely on the subject line. Your subject lines have the power to make or break your email marketing campaigns. To make an impact, capture a brand identity and, and to give consumers a reason to read on, create a truly catchy subject line. Taking into consideration who your target audience is, spend almost twice as much time reviewing your subject line compared with reviewing the body of your email.

8. Preview and test before you send

To ensure your email displays as expected in your subscribers' inboxes, always test and preview your email campaign. The results don't need to be identical across all email clients, but they should be viewer-friendly. There are multiple ways you can test your emails, depending on your needs. Before you send a campaign, send a test-mail to yourself or a staff member before sending out to your entire list. You might have forgotten to add in an important link or made an embarrassing spelling mistake right in the subject line.

9. Send your email at the best time

The most important factor to consider when sending out an email is, timing. So, when is the best time to send newsletter emails? If that is your question, we surely have an answer for it. It's usually better to send out your email campaigns during the daytime and you should avoid sending out email blasts on Mondays. Why? People are already flooded with emails they've collected over the weekend. When they march into the office and find emails bombarding their inbox, more often than not, they tend to delete them. Weekends tend to have low open rates as those are the days when folks are relaxing or running errands. Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday have traditionally been preferred days to send email campaigns. MailChimp confirms that Tuesday and Thursday are the two most popular days and around 10 - 11 am is the optimal time of day to send newsletters.

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the subject line alone



10. Track your results

Never ever get deceived by the thought that email marketing ends with a send. It doesn't! If you want to see real results from your email marketing campaign, you need to track and measure success over time, so you can improve your email campaigns. Tracking the right email metrics can help you in fetching valuable information like who opened your email, who clicked on specific links, and what information was the most interesting to your readers. It can also help you understand which tactics work best for your business and which strategies are not working well and might need to be re-examined.

In order to ensure your email marketing is successful, you need to track certain metrics like the Delivery Rate, Open Rate, Click-Through-Rate, List Growth, Unsubscribe Rate, Complaint Rate, Bounce Rate, Forward/Share Rate, Conversion Rate, and Campaign ROI. Measuring these important email marketing metrics on a regular basis can help you interpret your results to create more inspiring email campaigns and deliver stronger leads to your sales team.

CONCLUSION

With the advent of social media and other online channels, email marketing still remains the most efficient and important tool in the arsenal of a marketer. Though some have abandoned email marketing in favor of newer digital marketing strategies, email marketing still continues to outperform social media. Patiently building your email list, creating visually appealing emails and perfecting how you use it and when you use it, makes email marketing your single best marketing channel ever. What are you waiting for? Go ahead and start building your email campaign now. Good Luck!



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