

10 Strategies For Effective Email Marketing Campaigns



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Most people do not send effective email messages. I know. I spend a lot of time analyzing email messages for our clients, and measuring and tracking their effectiveness.

Whether you send large email newsletters or just use email to communicate with friends, colleagues and customers, following these twelve strategies will make your email more effective. So, here's my list, compiled and crafted from years of experience and quantitative analysis of tens of millions of messages we've sent out for our clients:

1. One Main Message Per Email:

The most effective email messages have one main idea or concept. I spent a summer as an intern at the White House, helping to read and answer the mail. The writing staff taught that the strongest messages were ones that didn't distract people with extraneous information. Before you start writing a message, write down what you're trying to communicate. Or at least think about your message before you start writing.

The most effective messages are ones that are crisp, clear and concise.

2. Keep it Short:

If you're like me, the phone rings off the hook, people walk over to your desk to ask you a question, and other people are instant messaging you. And then your cell phone starts ringing. It's enough to make anyone a bit crazy and give you Attention Deficit Disorder. Our collective attention spans are very short. People simply have too many distractions to wade through a really long email.

You might think they need all of the information. But when people are faced with dense blocks of text, many people's eyes glaze over. And then they ignore the entire message. And thus, the most effective email messages are short. Two or three short sentences in length. Perhaps a couple of bullet points. And perhaps the short message is followed by supporting material, an attachment, or a link to more information on a website. Enough said. I'll try to keep this section short.

3. Keep it Relevant:

I believe that attention is the most important asset of any business or organization. What do I mean by this? If your messages are relevant, your recipients will pay attention to what you are trying to say. If you send email that isn't relevant - they will quickly stop paying attention to your messages.

It's easy to get into a mentality where you want to send everything to everyone. And with email newsletters or mass broadcasts, it's not that expensive to do. However, once someone feels your messages aren't that important, they will simply stop reading them.

4. Reply Early & Reply Often:

With the huge volume of spam, it's tough to know if your message got through. Right now, four out of every five emails sent over the Internet today is spam. With so much junk, it's easy for your message to get lost, trapped in a junk mail filter, or simply piled up in someone's ever-expanding inbox. So you start to worry when you haven't heard back from someone that you emailed a couple of days ago. "Hmmm" you say. Did that person get my message? Should I send it again? If I do, will that bug them? Am I being too pushy?

So when you're on the other side of the email message, it's really important to reply early and reply often. What you're doing is letting them know you (a) received the message and (b) that you care.

5. From Line:

The single most important part of an email message is the From line. If the person you're sending to doesn't recognize your name, your message will be at best skipped over. At worst, it will be simply deleted without opening. Most email programs show a friendly display name instead of the plain email address.

The From line of your email (friendly display name) should have your full name and organization in it. The culprit is that many people have only their first names listed in the friendly From display line. Most of the time the messages aren't too racy, but with email programs that automatically fill in

an email address when you start to type a first name, it's easy to email the wrong person something that could be seriously career limiting.

6. Subject Line:

After the From line, the subject line is the second most important part of an effective email. If you forget to include a subject line, your message is much more likely to go into a junk mail folder, or just not be opened.

Email marketing professionals live and die by subject lines. A good subject line will sum up what the message is all about, but still entice someone to open the message, read it, and take action. Including the company name in the subject line can increase open rates by up to 32 percent to 60 percent over a subject line without branding. (Jupiter Research)

7. Personalize Each Message:

Except when being called into the principal's office, everyone likes being called by their name. In this impersonal world of email messages, people like to know that you know who they are, and that you care about them as a person.

Nothing is worse than a highly demanding email that is sent without being addressed to someone by name and is out of context. I'm much more willing to help someone who personalizes the message to me, and gives me a non-threatening reason why this needs to really be done by tomorrow.

8. Always include your contact information:

I can't tell you how many times I've not returned a call promptly because I didn't have someone's contact information readily available. In this age of iPhones, Blackberries, and cellphones, it's rare that I have a phone number memorized. So many people rush through their phone number, making it virtually impossible to write down the number without having to go back and listen to their message a couple of extra times.

Ideally, you should always give your phone number, say it slowly, and repeat it twice so that someone can write it down and then make sure it's correct. Effective emails always include a signature line with contact information. You should include your contact information in every new message or every message you reply to.

9. Strong Call to Action:

In direct marketing or email correspondence, most of the time you want someone to take a specific action when they receive your message. The most effective email messages always have a strong call to action, telling the recipient what you want them to do.

Email is a low context medium. It doesn't transmit behavioral clues like voice inflection that might otherwise indicate what you want a person to do. So it's important to be direct and ask what you want the other person to do. It sounds basic, but it's a key to effective email.

10. Paste Links & Get on the Same Page:

How many times have you felt that the person receiving your email just isn't on the same page as you? A lot of times it's literally true. You might be thinking that they are looking at one page on a website, when in fact they are looking at something completely different.

I know I've been frustrated by this in the past. Simple pasting a link into an email is the best strategy. Again, it seems simple, but it can mean the difference between confusion and clarity. Sending someone the exact link to the website page you are discussing gets everyone on the same page.