

50 More Top Tips For Email Success

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1. **Make Your Point Quickly** -- Most people putting together an email newsletter try to show off their expertise within a subject, but putting in too much information can dilute the quality of your best points. Figure out your most important point you, and make sure your content supports that point. You can make other relevant points next time.
2. **Does Your Landing Page Help?** -- Despite paying considerable time and attention to email campaigns, some companies unwittingly undermine themselves with poorly designed landing pages (and hidden calls to action) that confuse an otherwise eager customer. Make sure your landing page supports your email campaign clearly and simply.
3. **Monitor Customer Feedback** -- Being able to demonstrate that you have an actively monitored feedback mailbox (such as postmaster@companyname) is an important tool in distinguishing legitimate email marketing practices from spam. Any customer concerned enough to contact would be furious if their message bounces back.
4. **Look Beyond Your Industry** -- You've probably got a good handle on the types of campaigns your competitors and friends are running, but sometimes you can get new ideas or approaches from completely outside your industry or usual circles. If you're doing B2B marketing, check out the nonprofit world's email campaigns -- you never know where inspiration can strike.
5. **Know Your Audience** -- As much as we'd like to think that every customer is enthralled with everything we offer them, the fact is that different customers have different needs, and at different times. Trying to reach everyone with the same message, without considering different customers' needs, means you're likely to miss with most of them.
6. **Are You Ready for a Deluge?** -- This may a problem most marketers would like to have, but are your customer service and support teams ready for a tremendous response to your offer? Can you arrange additional help if you need it? Don't make a great offer your company can't respond to.
7. **Read Your Copy Out Loud** -- Before you launch an email campaign, take a couple of moments to read your copy out loud, preferably to someone who hasn't seen it before. Because you know what you meant to say, you can easily skim over mistakes or unclear phrasing if you only read your copy in your head.
8. **Streamline the Signup Process** -- During your registration process, avoid asking so many questions that the customer gets overwhelmed and abandons the signup page. Asking basic information such as the customer's name, email address, postal code and how they found you will make a good first impression.
9. **Be Authentic** -- Your newsletter or email content should read and sound like it comes from a person, not from a committee. Even a B2B message should try to avoid corporate or industry buzzwords, jargon or similar cross-functional leveraged verbiage that confuses readers. Be authentic -- you'll stand out from the corporate crowd.

10. **Understand What's Important** -- The most common goals of any marketing campaign are increasing revenue or customer satisfaction, or identifying promising leads. Understand your goals before your first message gets drafted, and the rest of the campaign will become easier to define, support and measure.
11. **Ask for Address-Book Inclusion** -- An important step in improving your delivery rate is asking existing customers to add your sending address to their email address book, which adds that address to the white-list of messages that always get delivered by their ISP. Then be sure to use that address for future campaigns.
12. **Understand Global Regulations** -- If your email campaign is going to cross international borders, make sure your messages comply with the appropriate anti-spam or personal data privacy laws and regulations in all jurisdictions. You may have to segment your list, but don't assume following your home country's laws will be enough.
13. **Promote the Benefits of Sharing** -- Got a great offer? Make it better by giving your customers a discount for passing your message to a friend. The value of getting an additional order would be well worth offering an additional 10 percent or 20 percent discount on your original message.
14. **Does Your Template Need a Facelift?** -- Wondering why messages and offers that have worked for the past couple of years are trailing off? One of the reasons could be an outdated design for your email template. Web and email design evolves rapidly, and savvy marketers have to make sure their companies are keeping pace.
15. **Wake Up the Zombies** -- A certain percentage of the people on your list will be inactive (however you define that). They may not have purchased in six months or a year, but they haven't unsubscribed either. Perhaps testing an enticing "we want you back" offer will remind these customers they once found you valuable and lead to new orders.
16. **Highlight Cross-Selling Promotions** -- Another way to drive up email campaign conversions is to pair similar items that customers often buy together and offer an attractive package. Offering a peanut-butter customer discount on the jelly and the bread could lead to higher conversion rates and sales.
17. **Avoid Multiple Exclamation Points in Subject Lines** -- While exclamation points signal excitement in a sentence, adding two or three doesn't automatically make your message twice or three times as exciting -- instead it makes you look more like an amateur eBay seller, or may trigger the customer's spam filters. Sell your offer with words, not punctuation.
18. **Don't Waste Your Top Line** -- Too many companies waste the first line of their messages with requests to be added to a customer's address book or with a link to an HTML version. While those can be useful, they should appear further down in your message -- well after you've outlined your benefits and call to action.
19. **Test Your Internal Spam Filters** -- A relatively easy way to see if a message is likely to get bounced is to work with your internal IT staff and test a campaign against the spam filters in your email gateways. If your message won't get through, you can adjust it to try to determine why your content is being flagged.

20. **Simple Succeeds** -- One of the common temptations when creating email campaigns is cluttering each message with extra graphics and links that may not be related directly to the current offer. But consider each link to be another potential red flag by a spam filter, and pare your content to convey your message as succinctly as possible.
21. **Non-Spam Disclaimers Backfire** -- Some companies think a good way to avoid being characterized as spam is to put in a disclaimer reminding the customer that they agreed to receive the message, therefore it isn't spam. But if you have to insist loudly that your message is legitimate, most spam filters won't agree.
22. **Avoid the Magic Spam Words** -- Using words in the subject line such as "debt," "mortgage," "avoid foreclosure," and a variety of other unseemly words and suggestions, are surefire ways to get your message blocked. Your spam folder can be a good place to check for subject-line words that are likely to get your message flagged.
23. **Stop Contacting Your Un-Subscribers** -- If someone opts out of your messages, drop them from your lists as soon as you can. U.S. laws give companies as many as 10 days after receiving an unsubscribe notice, but taking that long can annoy the recipient and can also harm your brand reputation.
24. **Check Your Outbound Provider Settings** -- Before you launch a campaign, check with your email hosting provider for any outbound limits that could harm your efforts. For example, if your provider limits you to sending 1,000 messages a day, trying to reach a list of 5,000 customers at once isn't going to work.
25. **Avoid Brand-New IP Addresses** -- Because the IP addresses of spammers get blocked routinely, they are usually launching spam from brand-new accounts. Which means that if you're using a new address for a legitimate campaign, it could look like spam to filters that are looking for mail coming from brand-new IP addresses.
26. **Renting Permission Lists Is a Bad Idea** -- Lots of companies are seduced by the promise of a list packed customers eager to receive commercial email, but such lists are a bad idea because the customers won't recognize messages from a company they haven't dealt with before, and will consider your messages spam.
27. **Surveys Build Subscribers** -- If you're distributing an email newsletter, periodically asking your readers to define their most pressing challenges or questions -- and offering advice in future issues -- is a great way to get story ideas and establish your credibility as an expert in your field.
28. **Tier Your Offers** -- Depending on your industry, using smaller offers can be a good way to build credibility that lets you sell more expensive products or services over time. A newsletter reader may buy an inexpensive report or two, which in turn can lead to their investing more in attending a conference or online seminar.
29. **Coupons Drive Conversions** -- Coupons can be an important tool in getting customers to respond to your email marketing campaigns. An email-only offer or discount is a helpful way to remind repeat customers of their importance, and provides customers with a tangible benefit for opening your message.

30. **Confirmations Help** -- If someone registers for your email offers or newsletter, let them know on the registration page that you'll be sending them a confirmation email, and make sure it arrives when their registration is fresh on their mind. Too long a delay might give them a chance to forget or to change their mind.
31. **Try to Solicit Testimonials** -- A proven technique for improving sales is collecting testimonials from satisfied customers. Most people who share positive opinions about your product or service (perhaps in response to surveys) will allow you to include their name (or initials) and comments on a testimonial page.
32. **Don't Overlook Your Auto-Responder** -- Your automated responses to customer emails should say more than "thanks for writing," You can edit your responder to highlight current promotions or provide other information that extends your brand identity and helps cement a relationship for the next campaign.
33. **Repeat Your Address Book Request** -- Ask to be added to customers' address book not only in your messages, but also on your sign-up confirmation and offer landing pages. Getting into customers' inbox is so critical that asking for address-book inclusion more than once is worth the effort.
34. **Consider Your ALT Tags** -- ALT tags are HTML code that appears on screen when an image doesn't load, or when a customer hovers his or her mouse over an image. Since many Web mail clients block images by default, using descriptive ALT tags to summarize your offer can help boost sales, even if the image isn't loaded.
35. **Avoiding the 'Do Not Reply' Trap** -- Using an unmonitored 'do not reply' account in your sending address isn't a great idea for several reasons. Doing so can send a big-business-like "don't bother us" message that undermines your campaign.
36. **Court Your Best Customers** -- Most companies send enticing offers to new customers or to bring inactive customers back into the fold. Both are important, but don't risk alienating your best customers by sending them offers that are less attractive than your efforts to court new people.
37. **Purge Your Undeliverables** -- Having a large number of outdated or otherwise invalid addresses on a list might seem like a minor problem, since bounced emails don't appear to have a direct cost. But having a high percentage (which varies among ISPs) of bounced emails can have your whole campaign blocked as spam.
38. **Consider Customers' Attention Spans** -- Because customers are reading your message online, your sentences have to be shorter than those you might use in a printed offering. Too much text can send them to the next message in their inbox, so make your point quickly, and make sure the benefits to the customer are obvious.
39. **The Death of Email is Overstated** -- Lots of Web pundits say social media tools like Facebook and Twitter are becoming more important to consumers than email. Yet email remains the most popular online activity among consumers in nearly all age brackets and locations, and email is going to be with us for a long time to come.
40. **Ask Your Unsubscribers Why** -- As part of your autoresponder or landing page message confirming that you've removed someone from your lists, consider adding a question or two asking why they're leaving. Most won't respond, but if someone does, they might provide insights can help you retain other customers.

41. **Grab the New People Quickly** -- Customers are mostly likely to place a repeat order or take advantage of other offers in the first 60 days of placing the first order, so make sure your content or offers are compelling enough to make them glad they're sticking with you, and not casting curious eyes at your competitors.
42. **Deliver on the Landing Page** -- Surprisingly, a number of companies sending promotional emails are linking back to their home pages, not to a page dedicated to the specific campaign or offer. The customer should be able to flow smoothly from the email to the landing page and, hopefully, to the order.
43. **Extend Social Media Offers** -- Another way to test and extend the reach of social media tools in your email campaigns is to embed links to your profiles on Facebook, MySpace, Twitter or similar sites with offers that are specific to each site. Testing the results can yield insights into how your customers are using social media.
44. **Building a List** -- The most effective marketing list is one you build and maintain yourself, and the best way to build a list is make compelling offers -- generous discounts, subscriber-only content -- to help cement a relationship between you and your customers. Don't just sell them stuff -- solve their problems, and they'll connect.
45. **Include the Transactional Emails** -- Confirmation emails that follow routine transactions such as password resets or order status inquiries can also include promotional messages or links. You don't want to overwhelm the original reason for the message, but a link sending customers to additional offers can be effective.
46. **Customize Your Webmail Formatting** -- Different customers using different Webmail clients are going to have different experiences, but you can segment your lists and your campaigns to reduce potential headaches. Hotmail, Gmail and Yahoo mail will format the same message differently, so don't send the same message to each.
47. **Customers Love Lists** -- Ever wonder why magazines and Web sites run so many articles based on numbered lists? They're easy to read, and customers find them compelling. Similarly, a campaign based around a numbered list -- such as your five best deals for a holiday -- can pull customers and drive sales.
48. **One-Click Sweepstakes Are Powerful** -- Customers love sweepstakes, but if your landing page prompts them to re-enter personal information that's probably already in your database, most won't bother. Instead, embed their information into the response link so all your landing page has to do is thank them for entering and wish them luck.
49. **Active Voice, Present Tense** -- Since you're trying to convey your message concisely, don't let your copy sound like it was written by a marketing committee. Use the present tense -- "this product saves money" instead of "this product will save you money" to make your point quickly, clearly and memorably.
50. **Review and Reflect** -- As quarters or fiscal years end, it can be a good opportunity to review recent email campaigns for lessons or other areas of improvement. What worked well? What could've been improved? While these reviews are important after each campaign, taking time to examine a series of campaigns can provide a bigger picture.