

Email Marketing Best Practices

1. **Make sure you clearly communicate your policy regarding email addresses.** Many customers will not give their email address if they think there is any chance you will sell their email address. If this is not your policy, make sure they know their addresses are sacred. If this is your policy, then be aware that you will have fewer opt-ins and lower customer loyalty.
2. **Only send a few relevant emails specifically for a customer or customer segment.** Sending too many emails will convince customers to opt out; sending irrelevant emails will quickly lessen the open rate. Define a maximum number of emails for each customer per month and determine what content should be sent to which customers.
3. **Create customer segments based on products purchased or viewed, profile information, etc. Send each segment emails with relevant content.** Segmentation tied to specific emails, promotions or new products will yield the highest open rate and translate into sales.
4. **Tie all emails to trackable campaigns, analyze results.** Analyze each email blast and determine the ROI, click-through rates, why it worked or didn't work and what can be done to improve it. At the end of the campaign, you should know which links converted best for which customers and which ones did not.
5. **Send professional emails that represent your site and brand.** Unprofessional, untargeted, or confusing emails will quickly undermine your online store.
6. **Don't write the subject line as an afterthought.** As it is the key driver to open rates, it has to be of interest to the recipients and convince them to open it. It also cannot be deceiving or a "bait and switch". Your credibility (and click-through rates) will plummet, if it is.
7. **Most customers will be viewing your message through a preview panel, with images blocked, or on a mobile device.** Design the layout accordingly. Top-load additional information to further improve your click-through rates and use HTML colors and text at the top, instead of an image.
8. **The primary goal of most emails is not to convert a transaction from the email.** The goal is to funnel prospects to your website or for conversion there. Therefore, offer many different links within one email, for different reasons (e.g., links to features and benefits, articles, demos).
9. **If you succeeded in getting readers to click, make sure you send them to a place that makes it easy to convert.** Dropping them to the home page will be a waste. The page they land on needs to be an extension of the message in the email, and relevant to the link they clicked. There should also be a compelling reason to purchase that's easy to see and act upon.
10. **Track everything and tie it all together.** Every link on every email you send should be tied to a campaign, tracked through analytics, account data, wish lists, orders, etc. Optimizing campaigns is much more powerful once you have full visibility into **all** of this information.
11. **Abide by CAN-SPAM laws.**
12. **Test, test and re-test.** Beyond testing subject lines, testing day/time of the send, and your email format will all prove fruitful. Remember to only test one at a time, unless you are using a multi-variate tool.

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