

Topic | E-Marketing

Tutorial 25

Email Marketing

This tutorial will provide you with guidelines, tips and tricks to succeed in email marketing.

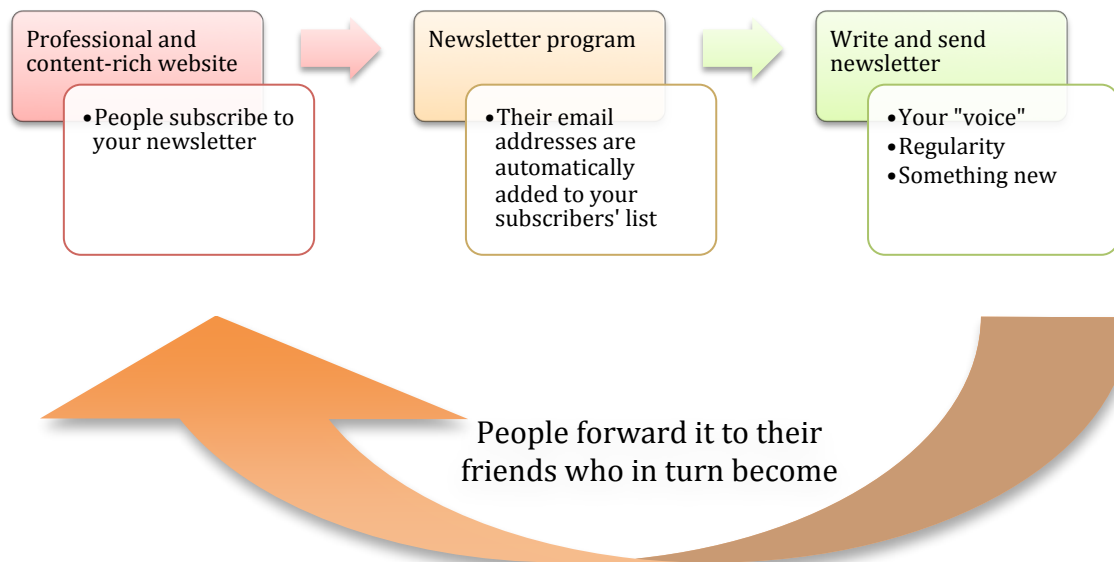
Reading time: 15 minutes

Prerequisite: None



1. What is email marketing?

Email remains the most used tool of the Internet. It is therefore a very powerful medium to start or continue to develop a relationship with your target market and existing clients and to keep your brand top of mind. The illustration below explains in three steps how email marketing works:



Since it is so cost efficient and accessible, it is not unusual for office workers to receive from 40 to 60 emails a day. **Your newsletter will therefore need to stand out in their inboxes by being perceived as an unrivalled piece of information.** Following the golden rules below will ensure successful email campaigns.

2. Email marketing guidelines

a) Who to email

- Ask people who contact you on the phone if they would like to be added to your mailing list.
- Look outside your own business and set up cluster email marketing campaigns with your region's tourism partners.
- You are by law only allowed to send broadcasted (as opposed to individual) emails to **people who implicitly agreed to receive your newsletter** or other form of email marketing. If you do not do so, people can mark your email address as spam and you risk not being able to send any future email campaigns to any recipient. This is because your email address could be blocked by Internet Service Providers (ISP) who thinks you are spamming. The table below explains which email addresses are ok to use and which aren't (variations exist – please comply with your email marketing software guidelines):

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Owner opted in from your site (newsletter subscription). ✓ Owner purchased from you within 2 years ✓ Owner handed you their business card knowing you would contact them. ✓ Owner completed an offline form and indicated they wanted to be emailed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ You obtained the email addresses from a third party (incl. purchased a list). ✗ You copied their address from the Internet. ✗ You haven't been in contact over two years.
---	---

b) What to write

- Put yourself in the shoes of your target client: only send relevant information that will teach them something new:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Give your newsletter a personality and a unique voice. ✓ Let your reader feel there is a human behind the email. ✓ Provide educational content, testimonials, and stories. Research proved they are very successful in newsletters. ✓ Use colours, brand your newsletter with your logo. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Don't write the newsletter like an ad for your business. ✗ Don't write the newsletter just for the sake of sending something out. ✗ Don't write a novel. 3 to 4 short paragraphs are a better option.
---	---

- HTML format with photos and embedded hyperlinks is generally preferred to plain, email-like, text format. However, your target market might be more responsive to plain-text email. If you are unsure do a test over a few months and decide based on the opening and response rate (provided you are using a dedicated email marketing program).
- Think of your newsletter as a webpage:

Email Marketing

- ✓ Title = subject line: Favour creative subject lines (e.g. Two baby wallabies born overnight) over dull and sedative titles (e.g. June newsletter – Broome Wildlife Retreat)
- ✓ Headings: Use headings to keep the reader focused.
- ✓ Hyperlinks: Use them to direct your readers to your website or another website where they will be able to learn something new.
- ✓ Content: Bold your keyphrases, use bullet points, and don't forget the call-to-action and the deadline.
- ✓ Images: Use images showcasing your products, experiences and guests participating.
- ✓ Keywords: Use keyword-rich vocabulary.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Content: ✓ Images: ✓ Keywords: 	<p>Use images showcasing your products, experiences and guests participating.</p> <p>Use keyword-rich vocabulary.</p>
--	---

- Keep in mind that customers are bombarded with email marketing messages numerous times a day.
- Your newsletter **design should convey professionalism and be consistent.**
- Invite staff to participate and write the content of the newsletter.
- Always include an “unsubscribe” or opt-out link.
- Forwarding to friends is useful and encourages new subscribers.

c) *When to send*

- Aim for regularity and consistency:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Monthly or bi-monthly newsletters are manageable for small businesses. ✓ Seasonal newsletters are also popular ✓ Use a different format (e.g. news flash) to communicate a different message or a limited offer. ✓ Write down every newsletter idea when they arise. A “newsletter ideas book” is a good way to keep track of everything you want to say. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Avoid sending out newsletters when you have nothing to say. A boring newsletter might negatively affect your next newsletter’s opening rate.
--	--

- Think about what time of the day is best for your clients to receive your message. Sending the email on a Friday evening will only ensure sure your newsletter is at the bottom of their inboxes on a Monday morning. Newsletters sent on Monday and Tuesdays usually get the highest opening rate.

d) *How to do it?*

- Avoid sending newsletters from your email program, as they are not designed for this purpose. Ensure you utilise a dedicated email marketing program. It will ensure that:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Your emails look professional when opened by any email client (Outlook, Hotmail, Gmail, Mail for Mac). ✓ Your pictures open and won't be replaced by a big red X. ✓ You will be able to automate the use of personal data (e.g. Dear John) in your email. ✓ Your emails are not marked as spam or junk mail (providing your content is not spammy). ✓ Your emails are sent by a dedicated email broadcasting server. ✓ You will have access to crucial statistics (opening rate, click on attachment and hyperlink, etc). ✓ You will save hours of work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Using your own email client (such as Outlook or other) will only result in your newsletter appearing unprofessional. ✗ Your newsletter could be marked as spam as it wasn't sent by a dedicated email broadcasting server.
--	---

- Ask your web professional or peers for recommendations as the majority of email marketing programs are rebranded by web companies. You can also Google "email newsletter tools".
- Track the success of your campaign using your newsletter tool report facility. Aim for an opening rate close to 30%.

Segment your database or email list. For instance, if you are an accommodation business and you cater both to couples and families with kids you need to segment your subscribers list into 1) couples and 2) families with kids. If you don't the couples will receive information that isn't relevant to them (e.g. discounted family passes to theme park) and will instantly unsubscribe.

3. Cost and return on investment

Email marketing is very cost effective.

Depending on the program you use, you will either have the choice to pay a monthly subscription fee (AUD30 – AUD60) or a flat fee per broadcast (AUD10-AUD25):

- Choose a monthly subscription if you are sending 3 email campaigns a month or more (rare).
- Opt for the flat fee (per newsletter) if you aim to send less than 3 a month.

On top of the subscription or flat fee you will be required to pay a “per recipient” fee. This generally varies between 2 cents to 10 cents, depending on your provider.

IF YOU ARE SENDING AN EMAIL TO 500 RECIPIENTS, YOU CAN EXPECT YOUR CAMPAIGN TO COST YOU ON AVERAGE AUD40 (AUD15 FLAT FEE + 5 CENTS PER RECIPIENT). THAT IS MONEY WELL SPENT FOR YOUR BRAND TO STAY “TOP OF MIND” AND ENCOURAGE BOOKINGS!

4. Last but not least!

- Do not forget to include a call-to-action or two in your newsletter. A link to a special offers page on your website or a discount code for your product when you book within 48h often goes a long way and encourages conversions.
- Test, test and re: test:
 - Send out a test newsletter to different email accounts (Outlook, Hotmail, Yahoo, Gmail) before you send out the real one. If you don't have any of these accounts, set them up (visit www.hotmail.com, www.gmail.com, www.yahoo.com and follow the steps to set up a free email account). If the newsletters do not display properly in each email account or if they land in the junk mail inbox (generally because of some words in it that would be considered as spam) you will be able to rectify in time.
 - Test different subject lines, styles, and “tone” of the newsletter during the first few months at least. Your opening and response rate statistics will indicate which one is best.
- Track the number of enquiries you receive after your newsletter was sent out. How many phone and how many email enquiries? Did you see an increase of visits to your website in your website statistics program? Make a note of it and aim to beat it with your next mailing!

5. Key learning outcomes

- It is important to capture the email addresses of your potential or past guests and to keep the communication going
- Make sure you use the right tools that will ensure your email newsletter will be

delivered in a professional format

- Content is key – focus on developing newsletter that adds value and not just standard information. People receive hundreds of emails per week and have become very selective in their reading.
- Segment your database and don't send the same message to different target markets.

6. Related material

a) *Related tutorials*

- Email best practices

b) *Related websites*

- Email marketing services:
http://email.about.com/od/emailmarketingservices/Email_Marketing_Services.htm
- Email marketing tips and tricks:
http://email.about.com/od/emailmarketingtips/Email_Marketing_Tips_Tricks_and_Secrets.htm
- Anti spam legislation:
www.dbcde.gov.au/communications_and_technology/policy_and_legislation/spam/anti-spam_legislation