



SIMPLY SMART - EMAIL MARKETING TIPS
GET THEM TO OPEN YOUR EMAILS

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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT EMAIL DELIVERABILITY

You're spending a lot of time each week crafting emails to your subscribers, but none of that will do you any good if you don't have a decent delivery rate. If those emails land in your potential customers' spam folders, you don't have much of a chance of making a sale or building a relationship with them. Here are three tips that will help insure that your emails make it to your subscribers' inboxes.

USE A REPUTABLE AUTO RESPONDER SERVICE

Using a reputable auto responder service is the single best thing you can do to improve your chances of avoiding spam folders. Companies like Aweber, Mail Chimp and Get Response work hard at making sure they are white listed with the big Internet Service Providers and email providers like Gmail.

Most auto responder companies will list their delivery stats. In addition the good ones will make sure your emails are compliant and keep you out of hot water.

SET EXPECTATIONS AND KEEP THEM

Your chances of staying in the main inbox are high when your subscribers regularly open your email. The best way to insure that – outside of providing great content that your subscribers are looking for – is to set expectations from the beginning. Let your subscribers know early on when and how often they can expect an email from you.

You can even use “foreshadowing” in your messages. For example, toward the end of your current broadcast email, mention that they can look for another email from you next Tuesday.

Once you've set those expectations do what you can to meet them. Yes, things happen every once in a while. In general though, do your best to keep your promise and email when your readers expect it.

Doing this regularly will improve your open rates and thus your overall deliverability.

CLEAN UP YOUR LIST REGULARLY

Another good habit is to clean up your list regularly. If subscribers haven't been opening your emails for the past six month, chances are good they are no longer interested in what you have to offer.

Check your auto responder services manual or help files to see how you can go about deleting anyone that hasn't opened an email from you in the past six months. If that freaks you out, or you have a seasonal business, start by deleting anyone that hasn't looked at your emails in the past year.

Following these tips and keeping an eye on email deliverability in general will make sure your emails are being read by your subscribers and that's the point of email marketing, isn't it?

5 TIPS FOR CRAFTING COMPELLING SUBJECT LINES

The first thing you need to get right when it comes to email marketing is the subject line. If you can't get your subscribers to open your emails, it really doesn't matter how good the actual email is.

It's easy to spend a lot of time crafting a great message and then just slap a subject line on it at the end. Spend some time writing them and see what type of headline gets you good open rates. Here are five tips to get you started.

KEEP IT SHORT

You want your readers to see the entire subject line before they click it. You also want to make it easy for people to scan through their emails. Try to get your point across in 50 characters or less. Pay attention to how your subject lines look on your own devices.

Another great idea is to keep a swipe file of subject lines that grabbed your attention. Even if the emails are on a very different topic, you can adapt them for your own needs.

AVOID "SPAMMY" WORDS

Stay away from using any words we all associate with spam emails. Words like "sale", "discount", "coupon", "free", "limited time offer" and even "reminder" are over used and even if they don't trigger a spam filter and actually make it to your reader's inbox, chances are high they'll get ignored.

Instead, start by using the emails you're saving in your swipe file and then go back and see what subject lines got the best open rates. Try to analyze why they worked well for your market. Not everything will work well in every niche. Find the types of subject lines that get your readers to open your emails and tweak from there.

PERSONALIZE IT

While personalizing emails with someone's first name has been overused in some markets, it still works well for many of us. Give it try and see if it works for you. Don't overdo it, but use it when you really need them to open the email.

Depending on what data you collect when your readers sign up, you can personalize other things like their location for example. Seeing the name of your state or even city in an email subject line is sure to get your attention.

PIQUE THEIR CURIOSITY

We are all nosy and it's hard to ignore subject lines that sound intriguing or only tell part of the story. Using "... " at the end of your subject line will also work.

The idea here is simple. You want them to click and open the email to find out what the heck you're talking about or how the story ends.

Frankly the best tip when it comes to crafting compelling subject lines is to keep a swipe file of examples that got you to open the email.

EMAIL FREQUENCY

WHEN SHOULD YOU MAIL

Wouldn't it be nice if there was a number or a schedule you could follow? While it would be great if there was research that suggested that mailing exactly every 5 days gets you the best results every time, there is no such thing. And there's a very good reason for it.

Every market, every niche, every audience and every person is different. While you'll never make everyone on your list happy, there is a lot you can do to make just about any email frequency work.

Let's lay the ground work first. You don't want to have too much time in between emails, or your readers will forget you. Anything less than once a month is not a good idea. In most markets and for most business models you don't even want to mail less than twice a month.

On the other end of the spectrum, you don't want to go any higher than one email per day on average. Yes, you may have days when you have a good reason to send multiple emails, but on a weekly or bi-weekly average, you don't want to email more than once a day.

Start by looking at what you're doing now. Then figure out how often you want to mail. Do you grow a closer connection with your market by emailing more often? Do you want to drive more traffic back to your site by emailing them links frequently? Do you want to grow your income by making more frequent email offers?

Once you know where you're at and where you want to be, you can start to make a plan for getting from point A to point B. What you don't want to do is to go straight from emailing once every few months to daily emails. It'll get your readers clicking the spam button like crazy. Instead, start with monthly emails for a couple of months, then let your readers know you have more to share with them and start mailing weekly. Then a few months later, ramp it up to daily emails.

Or find a good reason why you're mailing them daily. For example, while you usually publish a weekly newsletter with the occasional promotional email in between, running a 15 or 30 day challenge for your readers is a great excuse to hit their inbox daily without seeming pushy or spammy.

Listen to your audience when you get feedback on email frequency but also realize that there will always be someone complaining. Look at data like open rates to get a better feel for what frequency is working best for you and your audience.

KEEP THEM WAITING FOR MORE

USING FORESHADOWING TO CREATE ANTICIPATION

There's a pretty neat strategy called foreshadowing that you can use in your email marketing to improve open rates. You may have seen this used on news programs and talk shows. Right before the commercial break, the hosts announces what's coming up next. The idea is that you're intrigued enough to sit through the commercial to see the next segment.

Another good example of foreshadowing is when magazines show images and headlines or short bullets of what's coming in next month's issue. Again, the point is to pique your interest and get you to either buy the next issue, or even better, get a subscription.

We can easily adapt this for email marketing and it works like a charm. Toward the end of your email transition from what you're talking about today to what's coming in the next email. Be vague on purpose, but grab their attention.

For example, if you're talking about why email marketing is important and the next email will be about crafting subject lines to get a higher open rate, you may write something like this: "Keep an eye out for Friday's email. We'll talk about THE most important thing when it comes to email marketing. If you don't get this right, nothing else matters."

To mix it up, mention what they can find in the next email in the P.S. of your message. If you publish a weekly newsletter, try adding a section on what's coming in the next issue similar to what you see in a magazine. Keep it simple and use images for best results.

You can even take it a step further and get your subscribers to open a previously sent email. This works particularly well if you're writing a series of emails on a related topic. Toward the beginning of your email you mention something you covered in the last email, then move into today's topic and then wrap it up with a little hint about what's coming next.

You don't have to use foreshadowing in every single email. Sprinkle it in here and there where it makes sense. It also gives you a chance to pick up on in the subject line of your next email. Try using something like "As promised..." Even readers who missed your last email might be curious enough to open this one.

Give it a try and see if you start to see higher open rates and more importantly get your subscribers more engaged.

GIVE THEM WHAT THEY WANT

AND HOW TO FIND OUT WHAT THAT IS

Effective marketing boils down to this: Find an audience, figure out what they need or want and then deliver it. Email is one of the best mediums to help you do just that. And it isn't always about selling them on a product. In fact, that isn't at all where you want to start.

First you want to build a relationship with your readers. You want them to get to know you. You want to help them out so they start to like you and trust you. Only then will you be able to make an offer and have them pull out their wallet and buy it.

Pay attention to your website stats. Programs like Google Analytics can give you a lot of information of where you're readers came from, what page they landed on and where they were on your site when they joined your list. That data along with demographical information will tell you a lot about your audience.

As you start to email your readers, they will reply and get back in touch with you. Pay attention to what they're saying. And don't forget to read between the lines. Let's say you're in the parenting niche and you noticed that some of your readers are asking for suggestions on being a more patient parent. They complain about being short temperate and freaking out about little things. The real issue may be lack of sleep because the baby or toddler isn't sleeping through the night.

Dig deep and see what you can learn about your market. Sometimes what they tell you they want isn't the real issue. On the flip side, it can be helpful to ask them for suggestions. Keep the questions open ended if you want a lot to work with.

Or consider having your readers fill out a simple little survey. It's quick and easy to do with Google forms. You get some good data and you get your readers to interact. Having them contribute builds a sense of community even via email.

Last but not least go back and look at the past emails you've sent. Pay attention to open rates, click through rates and unsubscribes. If a large percentage of readers opened the email, that's a good indication they were interested in the topic. If they clicked link to additional content, that's even better. If on the other hand you got a lot of unsubscribes, that might be an indication that either the topic was wrong or your language and overall message didn't click with your audience.

Use all the data and information you get back to learn more about your target audience and connect with them on a deeper level. The more you know about your subscribers, the more effective your email marketing will be.