

LEARNING MADE EASY



Email Marketing

for
dummies
A Wiley Brand



- Determine your email messaging
- Decide when and how often to send emails
- Drive revenue with multiple messages

GETTING STARTED SERIES

DUMMIES CUSTOM SOLUTIONS

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Adding Email to Your Marketing Mix

Reaching out to customers can seem like a daunting task, especially when you want to reach several of them at once, but email marketing can make it easy. As one of the fastest and most efficient ways of talking with your audience, email marketing allows you to connect with several customers at once and customize the experience based on their level of engagement.

Read on to discover how to use email as a key part of your overall marketing strategy.

Determining What Your Email Messages Should Say

Email is a great marketing tool, but you can't simply communicate any email message multiple times and expect the messages to result in sales. Make your email messages as concise as possible; people usually scan emails rather than take the

time to read every word. Clear and concise messages are by far the best choice for email content, but your messages should include the following content at a minimum:

» **Your value proposition:** A *value proposition* is a statement that tells consumers why your products or services are worth paying for. A good value proposition shows consumers that your products or services solve a problem or fulfill a want or need better than anyone else can. Here are some examples of value propositions:

- “Don’t put Rover in a cage for the holidays. Our pet-sitting services make your vacations worry-free and allow your pets to enjoy the holidays too — in the comfort of their own home.”
- “Want it tomorrow? Our free shipping is the fastest available.”
- “Our home equity loans can help you pay off high interest debt, and our service is more personal than the big banks.”

» **Information to support your value proposition:** Value propositions rarely entice someone to make an immediate purchase all by themselves. Most of the time you need to support your value proposition with additional information to convince buyers to take action. You can include this supportive information along with your value proposition in one email message, or you might need multiple support messages delivered over periods of time. Examples include:

- Content assets that help support your messaging
- Testimonials and facts
- Directions to your office, store, or website
- Incentives to help someone justify taking action
- Images and other design elements to reinforce the text

» **One or more calls to action:** A *call to action* is a statement that asks someone to take a specific type of action in a specific way. Calling for action is important because people tend to delete emails after they read them if they aren’t told what to do next. For example, just because your phone number appears at the bottom of an email doesn’t mean that people will automatically pick up the phone and dial the number. You’ll get better results if you ask your audience to phone you for a specific reason; of course, provide the phone number. However, an effective call to action doesn’t necessarily entail asking

for an immediate purchase decision. Sometimes your prospective customers have to take many steps to end up with a store receipt in hand. Examples of calls to action could include:

- "Call now and ask for a free consultation."
- "Click this link to add this item to your shopping cart."
- "Click this link to download the informational video."
- "Save this message to your inbox today."
- "Print this ecard and bring it with you for a free cup of coffee."



TIP

Determining the most effective wording for your emails usually entails some testing combined with educated assumptions based on how your customer perceives your business and your products or services.

Here are some questions to ask yourself to help determine what your email messages should say. As you answer each question, think in terms of what your customers find beneficial about your business instead of simply stating your own interests:

- »» What are the features of your products or services?
- »» How will the features of what you sell benefit your consumers?
- »» How are you different from your competition?
- »» Why are your differences worth paying for?

Summarize your answers to the previous four questions in a paragraph. Try to use two lines of text or ten words or fewer. You're well on your way to crafting an email message.



TIP

If you aren't sure how your customers would answer these questions, rewrite the questions and ask a few of your customers to respond. You might be surprised by their answers!

Targeting your email messages

When you're excited about your business, thinking of almost everyone as a potential prospect is easy. You might indeed identify a large audience that needs your products or services, but plenty of people won't buy from you for one reason or another.

At the same time, pockets of opportunity for communicating your messages might exist that you haven't thought of. You can make your email messages more effective by targeting prospects and customers who are most likely to make a purchase decision and excluding people who are probably never going to buy. Here are some questions you can ask yourself to help determine to whom you should send your email messages:

- » Who is most likely to need your products or services?
- » Who already buys other products or services that are similar or identical to yours? For example, if your company makes roller skates, you may want to find out everything you can about the people who buy roller skates and roller blades from your competitors.
- » Who buys other products or services that could be perceived as substitutes for yours? For example, if your company makes roller skates, you may want to find out everything you can about the people who buy skateboards and roller scooters.
- » Who buys products or services that compliment yours? For example, if your company makes roller skates, you may want to find out everything you can about the people who buy helmets and knee pads for recreational activities.
- » Who has already purchased from you and when will they be ready to buy again? How many messages does it take to get someone to repeat his business with you versus attracting a new customer?

Deciding When and How Often to Send

Consumers tend to perceive email that arrives too often as spam, so you need to figure out the frequency rate and timing of your emails. *Frequency* refers to the number of emails you send and the period of time in between each email you send. Typical frequencies include:

- » Once
- » Daily
- » Weekly
- » Every other week
- » Monthly



MIND YOUR SPAM

Spam is more than just that famous can of cooked meat. It is also the term used to describe unsolicited or undesired emails and “spamming” people can result in legal issues, so it’s important to be aware of any anti-spam laws before emailing your customers. Anti-Spam laws vary by country, so it’s important to be aware of the laws for any areas where you plan to send your emails. Also, make sure to follow the best practices outlined in these laws. Using these best practices is one way to reduce spam complaints and ensure that your emails reach their targets. The broad strokes of the law can be found online, but it’s often best to consult an attorney to make sure you comply fully with regulations.

Balancing the frequency of every email message with the needs and expectations of your audience is more of an art than a science.



REMEMBER

Consumers are willing to receive emails with almost any frequency as long as the content of the message remains relevant and valuable to them. Keep your content relevant to your consumers and they will most likely remain happy with your frequency.

For example, a stockbroker could probably get away with sending an email twice per day to his subscribers if the message contains a single line of text announcing the current price of important stocks. The same stock broker would probably run into trouble, however, if he used the same mailing frequency to send a promotional email asking his customers to invest in various stocks because not everyone is likely to make investment decisions with that frequency.

Even though proper frequency depends on relevant content, you should recognize the factors that most consumers use to judge the frequency of your emails. Consumers generally judge your email frequency depending on the following:

- » The total number of emails
- » The length of each email
- » How often you ask them to take action
- » The relevance of the information you provide
- » The timing

Determining how many emails to send

Determining the proper number of emails to send is a fine balance. Send too many email messages and you overwhelm your audience with too many emails. Conversely, send too few and you can overwhelm your audience with too much content in each one.

Estimating the total number of messages your audience expects usually depends on two factors:

- » **The number of times your audience engages in a buying cycle:** If your prospects or customers purchase your products or services once per week, sending 52 emails per year is probably a good place to start with your frequency. If your prospects or customers take months or even years to make purchase decisions, you can base the number of emails you send on the number of times that they are likely to talk about their purchases with their peers. For example, if you sell once-in-a-lifetime vacations, you might create an affinity club for past vacationers and keep your customers talking about their experience by sending invitations to members-only social reunions four times per year.
- » **The amount of information your audience needs to make a purchase decision:** Some purchase decisions are easy for consumers to make, but others require much more consideration. If your audience requires a lot of information to justify a decision, the number of emails that you send should increase so you don't overwhelm your audience with too much content in a few emails. Instead, send several emails with a bit of content in each one. You can satisfy those who need all the information at once by providing a link to all your content hosted on a website.

Although paying attention to the needs of your audience is always the best policy, sometimes your email content dictates the appropriate number of messages to send. For example, the total number of emails you send might depend on:

- » **The amount of change in your content:** If your emails always have the same basic message, you don't need to send as many as if your content were always fresh and new.
- » **The theme of your content:** If your email includes frequency in the theme, you can match the number of emails you send to that theme. For example, if your subscribers sign up for a daily weather update, you need to send 365 emails for the year, but delivering a quarterly financial report requires only 4 emails per year.

Choosing the best day and time for delivery

Your audience is more likely to respond positively to your emails if you send them when folks are most likely to have time to read and take action on them. For example, if a large percentage of your email list contains people's work email addresses, you might want to avoid sending your emails early on Monday mornings when the people on your list are likely to walk into a full inbox and prioritize your email to the bottom of their list.

You can determine the best days and times to send your emails when you do the following:

1. Test for the best day.

Divide your list into equal parts and send the same email on different days to determine which day receives the best response. For example, if you have 1,000 email addresses, you can send 200 on each day of the week. Whichever day receives the best response can be your sending day going forward.

2. Test for the best time of day.

After you test for the best day, you can then test for the best time of day. Divide your list and send the same email at different times on the same day.

3. Set up a master calendar for each list.

If you send more than one email format, use a spreadsheet or a calendar so you can view your emails by frequency and format.

Sending Multiple Messages to Drive Revenue

Communicating with prospective customers is always somewhat of a numbers game because even your best prospects and repeat customers aren't ready to make an immediate purchase every time you contact them. A successfully delivered marketing message usually reaches people who fall in one of three categories:

» **Immediate purchasers:** The smallest group represents immediate purchasers. Building a marketing strategy based on a single message, or *one-time touch*, to go after cold prospects in hopes of immediate purchases usually results in a loss or a small return on investment (ROI). Sometimes immediate purchases happen just because you delivered your message at the right place and at the right time. A single message that results in an immediate purchase usually means that the prospect has already done some research or is otherwise familiar with you or the products and services you sell.



» **Interested prospects:** A second group represents prospects who show interest but aren't ready to make a purchase immediately. Interested prospects are unlikely to return for these reasons:

- Need time for more research or to compare products
- Waiting for money to become available
- No trust built yet for you or your business
- A similar recent purchase

Prospects who show interest but aren't yet ready to buy are unlikely to remember a single message and turn to your business several weeks, months, or years later when they become ready to make an immediate purchase. Instead, they might end up becoming the immediate purchaser in response to someone else's message.

» **Uninterested people:** The rest represents people who aren't interested at all in your message. There will always be people who are not at all interested in your products or services for one reason or another. Even the best marketing strategies can't keep you from spending a portion of your time and money needlessly contacting people who will never buy from you.

You can turn interested prospects into immediate purchasers by following up on your messages. Periodic follow-up messages can also help to turn your immediate purchasers into repeat purchasers.

Saving time with email follow-up

Another way that email helps to drive revenue is by making follow-up more time efficient. For example, sending a monthly email newsletter takes the same amount of time and effort whether you send it to 100, 1,000, or 10,000 people.

Adding prospective customers to your email database over time can amount to a lot of additional follow-up and repeat messages that you would otherwise be unable to handle by using more traditional forms of communication. And, email can be automated and personalized on-the-fly to make the communications more valuable than running generic ads for the masses.

The table below shows the advantages of adding an email follow-up to your advertising campaign versus using advertising alone over the course of a year. The column on the left shows the number of advertising impressions made by placing 12 monthly ads in a publication, each providing 2,000 unique readers a month. The center column shows the total monthly contacts made through email follow-up, and the column on the right provides a cumulative total of contacts made. This information is based on sending a monthly email only to those who decide to join the email list after seeing the ads, equating to about 2% of ad viewers.

TABLE 1-1

Advertising Follow-Up Efficiency with Email

	Advertising Impressions	Follow-Up Emails Sent	Total Contacts Made
January	2,000	40	2,040
February	2,000	80	4,120
March	2,000	20	6,240
April	2,000	160	8,400
May	2,000	200	10,600
June	2,000	240	12,840
July	2,000	280	15,120
August	2,000	320	17,440
September	2,000	360	19,800
October	2,000	400	22,200
November	2,000	440	24,640
December	2,000	480	27,120
Totals	24,000	3,120	27,120

Whether your business needs to advertise to 20 people per month or 20 million people per month, following up with just 2 percent of your prospects through email results in a more than 10 percent increase in the number of impressions you make on those people. In looking at an example like this, it's also important to consider the time saving advantages of email follow-ups. Here, making 3,120 phone calls a year or sending that many postcards is much more time intensive than sending emails, especially if you're the one stuffing all those envelopes! It's also important to note that the 3,120 additional email contacts are probably much cheaper than the cost of the print materials needed to reach that same number.



TIP

If advertising isn't a part of your marketing strategy, compare your initial contact methods with an email strategy. For example, if you attend networking events and meet 20 new prospects per month, make sure you ask those 20 people for their email addresses so you can follow up efficiently.

Branding Your Message Across All Media

In marketing, you're likely to employ several tools, types of media, and messages over a period of days, weeks, months, and years to communicate everything necessary to attract and retain enough customers. Keeping the design elements and personality of your messages similar or identical over time — *branding* — reinforces each of your messages and makes each successive message more memorable to your audience.



REMEMBER

Consumers are more likely to respond positively to your email messages when they can identify your brand and when the content of each message feels familiar to them. Plan all your marketing messages as if they were one unit to ensure that each message contains design elements that become familiar to your audience when multiple messages are delivered.

Here are some branding ideas to help you give all your marketing messages a familiar look and feel:

» Make your logo identifiable and readable in all types of print and digital formats, with color schemes that look good online and in print.

In general, your logo and colors should look consistent everywhere, including on:

- Your website
- Social media sites
- Online directory listings
- Email sign-up forms
- Mobile websites
- Business cards
- Emails

» Include your company name in all your marketing.

Incorporate your name in:

- Email "From" lines
- Email addresses
- Your email signature
- Online directories
- Your blog

» **Format your messages consistently across all media.**

When repeating messages in multiple types of media, make sure the following elements are formatted consistently in your emails:

- Fonts
- Layouts
- Images
- Headlines
- Contact information
- Calls to action

Taking the time to create a successful email marketing strategy with strong, consistent messaging and appropriate timing can help set you apart from the competition. Use the tips we've shared here and start building your email strategy today.

To get more tips on how you can expand your marketing efforts, visit dummies.biz and check out our ***Getting Started* marketing series**. This series includes ebooks highlighting the basics behind several popular marketing methods and a guide to help you bring these tactics together into an integrated marketing campaign.

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