



Beginners Guide To Email Marketing

“10 Top Tips to Get You Started”

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Part of our
‘Ask the Expert!’
Range of guides.

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About Shine a Light Media Ltd.

To produce a successful email marketing programme you need to be continually sending users targeted and relevant information.

We work with clients to evaluate the best use of email marketing to meet their business objectives, budget and resources, to develop effective recommendations and strategies to take their programme forward.



Shine a Light Media can assist you in making the most of your campaigns through the following services:

Email Marketing Consultancy

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- ✓ **Small Business Starter Packages** - Using our extensive industry knowledge we have created a service packages that specifically benefit smaller organisations.
- ✓ **Email Marketing Programme Reviews** - We can analyse your existing strategy and campaigns against a range of key industry best practices, to provide recommendations on improvements or additions.

- ✓ **New Strategy Development** - We work with your team to ascertain key information about your business to develop a new strategy around your key objectives, needs and technology.
- ✓ **Pain Point Reviews** - If you're suffering from specific issues with your email marketing programme, we offer specialised reviews to provide recommendations against key best practices and rectify the problem.

 **Monthly Programme Management** - Whether you need help implementing a new campaign or assistance managing, analysing and optimising on an ongoing basis, from short to long term retainers, Shine a Light Media can assist with all your email marketing programme needs.

 **Bespoke In-house Training** - Increase your in-house email marketing knowledge with Shine a Light Media's bespoke courses, written for you and based around your specific needs.

Introduction

Despite the benefits of email marketing, many businesses are either still not using it or are not making the most of its power.

When starting your email journey it can be daunting. A maze of new terms, techniques, legalities and other considerations make email marketing a lot more involved than just pressing the send button.

That's why we've put together this guide, to give you 10 top tips to get you started (or to check your current campaigns against) and guide you through a few elements that are critical to starting your programme in the right way, paving the way for email marketing success in the future.



Who is this guide for?

This guide is for anyone just getting started with email marketing and wanting to know where to start or those who have already taken their first steps into running campaigns and want a little extra advice.

If you have ever asked yourself any of these questions, this guide will help to answer them:

- How do I get started with email marketing?
- Can I send email marketing campaigns from my normal email account?
- What is an ESP?
- How do I start building a database/build on the database I have already started collecting?
- I have lots of contacts in LinkedIn and previous clients; can I add them into my email marketing list?
- Once contacts are in my list do I have to worry about anything else other than sending my emails?
- What do I say in my emails?
- What elements do I need to include in my emails?
- How do I analyse the results from my sends?
- Where can I find more information about email marketing?

What will I learn?

If you're already using email marketing, this guide will provide you with useful tips to check your practices against and improve the results of your campaigns. For those who haven't started email marketing, you'll learn how to do it efficiently and effectively - the right way; sending relevant, interesting, engaging emails to subscribers that want to hear from you and have given you explicit permission to contact them.

What are the benefits of using email marketing for small businesses?

- ✓ A targeted, direct way to contact your subscribers (current/previous customers and prospects.)
- ✓ Build a relationship with your database
- ✓ Prompt sales from new customers
- ✓ Encourage repeat purchase
- ✓ Increase sales conversion
- ✓ Highlight your key products, services and offers
- ✓ Chance to up-sell/cross-sell other products or services
- ✓ Increase brand awareness and keep your brand fresh in your subscribers minds
- ✓ Drive targeted traffic to your website
- ✓ Gain feedback from your customers through campaign results and delivering surveys.
- ✓ Global reach
- ✓ Fast delivery allowing you to reach customers quickly with offers and information
- ✓ Personalise communications using the data collected in your database
- ✓ Trackable, measurable results from campaigns
- ✓ Economical marketing channel
- ✓ High ROI channel (in 2011, email marketing brought in \$40.56 for every \$1 spent, according to the Direct Marketing Association)
- ✓ Catch people on the move consuming email on their mobile devices
- ✓ Drive people offline to your shop

Email Marketing is NOT Spam

Many people are reluctant to start using email marketing because they associate it with spam. There is confusion between email marketing as a tool and how some people use it. While some people do use email marketing to spam, you'll find that most use it legally and ethically.

In order to use email marketing without annoying your users, you just need to make sure the content of your campaigns is **relevant, interesting and engaging**.

CHECK IT OUT!

Throughout this document we have referenced specific email marketing terminology.

Any terms shown with a + following them are explained a little further in the glossary at the back of this document.



Tip 1:

Choose an ESP that meets your needs

For anyone with a contact list over a few hundred people, it is not practical or possible to send your campaigns from your personal email account. From your standard Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo! or other email client, there are not only tight limits on the number of emails you can send per day, but you are also highly limited with your functionality.

When starting to use email marketing, you will need to have a proper system in place that has the ability to send 'mass' communications (by which we mean more than a few hundred contacts at a time) called an Email Service Provide (ESP)+.

There are a whole range of different ESPs on the market that fulfil different needs and come at different costs. For low volume senders (sending less than 20,000 emails per week), there are additional considerations that you should be aware of.

It is important to ensure you have key facts about any ESPs you are considering before signing the contract (most ESPs will require a minimum commitment from you such as 12 months).

Some ESPs such as Mailchimp offer free solutions for low volume senders or at very low prices with ESPs such as Aweber.

CHECK IT OUT!

For very low volume senders, some ESPs such as Mailchimp offer a **free account!***

* See website for full details.
Check T&Cs. Limited Functionality available

To help you choose, we have put together some key questions you should ask:

- How much does it cost? (You will usually be quoted based on the volume you intend to send or the number of contacts in your list)
- Is there a set up fee?
- What is the contract length?
- Is there unlimited image and data storage?
- Do you provide signup forms to feed directly into your database?
- Do you provide well managed and maintained shared IPs that are not on any blacklists+

- Ability to directly link sign up forms on your site to the ESP
- Segment your data based on email behaviour and information in your list
- Add dynamic content+ to your campaigns enabling you to automatically change pieces of content in your email depending on data in your list such as gender
- Test your email in various email clients to ensure it renders correctly before broadcast
- WYSIWYG ('What You See Is What You Get') editor+ allowing you to amend templates without knowledge of HTML code
- Cater for small volume/infrequent sends
- Import/Export data via a CSV file+ or API feed+
- Trigger emails automatically (such as after sign up to deliver a welcome email immediately)

DON'T FORGET!

Ask for a demo of ESPs.

Where free trials are available just jump in and have a play around!

That way you can see for yourself what they offer and whether it fits with your needs and budget.

▶ **Shared Vs Dedicated IPs**

The IPs+ that you are allocated by your ESP to send from depend on the volume and frequency of emails that you will be broadcasting.

In order to have dedicated IPs (IPs that only you send from) requires that you have enough volume being broadcast regularly in order to build a sender reputation+; this usually sits at around 20-40K per week minimum. For volumes lower than this, your ESP should assign your broadcasts to a managed and maintained set of shared IPs; a pool of IP addresses that the ESP keeps for low volume senders.

The benefits of shared IPs

- Able to gain a sender reputation through a collaborative effort with other senders.
- Senders with high engagement rates and good practices will increase the sender reputation for everyone.
- Many ESPs have strict rules for shared IP senders around standard industry best practices such as list hygiene.
- Shared IPs held by reputable ESPs are normally highly maintained and managed on a day to day basis.

The downfalls of shared IPs

- You don't know who else is sending on the same set of shared IPs as you.
- If a sender on the same set of IPs as you has low engagement rates and poor practices, this can decrease the overall sender reputation on the IPs for everyone.
- You may get caught up in deliverability problems caused by other senders on a day to day basis.



Tip 2:

Grow your list organically and make sure you're compliant

The best way to collect an interested, responsive list for your email marketing campaigns is to collect it organically, gaining an explicit opt in from the subscriber for them to receive communications. You can build your list organically through your own brand from sources such as:

- Your website
- Social media channels
- At events you attend/exhibit at
- Customer service phone calls
- Your shops

TOP TIP!

Try adding an incentive to encourage users to subscribe to your database such as:

- Competitions
- Free resources
- Webinar attendance

TRY THIS....

If you have postal addresses, but not a lot of email addresses, **try sending a postcard/letter to your customers in the post.**

Ask for their email address in exchange for a free gift, money off their next purchase or entry into a prize draw for example.

Simply ask the postcard recipients to visit a bespoke landing page on your website to register.

Outside of these, you may gain data through other sources such as:

- LinkedIn
- At networking events
- Other personal sources (such as sister companies for example)
- Previous clients

For these sources, it is likely that no explicit opt in to send marketing communications has been previously requested, so it is important to ensure that an opt in is gained in order to start communicating with these recipients via email marketing.

One way to do this involves sending these recipients an email requesting they click through and subscribe to receive your newsletter or other marketing campaigns; thereby explicitly opting them in to receive further communications from you. If they do not complete this action, you should not be including them in your email marketing campaigns.

▶ The Law

In the UK, email marketing is governed by the Privacy in Electronic Communications Regulations+. As a summary, these Regulations state:

RULE 1 - Applies to all marketing emails:

The sender must not conceal their identity

The sender must provide a valid address for opt-out requests

DON'T FORGET...

Always check out legal matters
with a qualified legal
professional if in doubt.

RULE 2 - Applies to unsolicited marketing emails sent to individual subscribers:

The sender cannot send marketing emails unless they have the recipient's prior consent to do so.

This second rule comes with a caveat - The opt-in rule is relaxed in the following circumstances:

- The recipients email address was collected “in the course of a sale or negotiation for a sale”
- The sender only broadcasts promotional messages relating to “similar products and services”
- When the address was collected, the recipient was given the opportunity to opt-out (free of charge) which they did not take. The opportunity to opt-out must be given with every subsequent message

▶ Different types of opt in



In order to be **legally compliant** and build a really **responsive organic internal list**, it is important to have a **strong opt in process**.

There are different types you can use, some with a stronger emphasis on getting an explicit opt in than others.

The table below explores these options in more detail.

Type of Opt In	Description	Our Permissioning Strength Rating
Double opt in	<p>The firmest type of opt in, double opt in follows on from the signup form with an immediate email sent to the subscriber asking them to click to confirm their email subscription. This allows email senders to:</p> <p>A. Check that the email address entered belongs to a real subscriber by immediately seeking an action</p> <p>B. Ensure that person has a genuine interest in your product or service and wants to hear from you</p>	
Non checked Single Opt in	The strongest type of on-form sign up consisting of an explicit sentence that asks users to tick a box to confirm they want to receive communications from the brand	
Pre checked Single Opt in	Follows along the same lines as above but has a box that is pre-checked. This means that if people do not uncheck the box, they will be subscribed automatically to receive emails.	
Opt out	This allows users to check a box to tell the brand that they do not want to receive communications. If this box is not ticked, the user will automatically start to receive emails.	
A sentence informing users that they will be subscribed to receive communications from the brand	Although users are perhaps registering for an account on your site for example, this method does not involve allowing the user to tell you that they do or don't want to receive communications and automatically adds the user to the list, unless they contact the company, click the link in emails received to unsubscribe or visit a specific account page for example.	

▶ 3rd Party Sources

When collecting data from third party sources such as buying/renting lists, we would urge caution, and even go so far as to recommend prioritising building your list organically before resorting to these options (particularly in the B2C+ space). The reasons we recommend not using purchased/rented lists include:

- The recipients on these lists are not necessarily familiar with your brand so results are massively reduced from those you will see with an organic list.

- They have not explicitly opted in to receive emails from you and so may lead to increased complaint rates and low engagement rates which can reduce the overall sending reputation of your overall set of shared IPs.
- A lot of ESPs have strict rules that will not allow this type of data to be added into their system.
- You do not explicitly know where this data was collected from, when it was collected and if it was legally opted in to receive third party mailings (mailings from other companies like yours that are buying/renting the list).
- You do not know how many other companies have previously used the list and how many emails have been sent to the recipients in what time period.

Although, if you ask the companies a lot of these questions, you may receive answers, in our experience, using lists such as these is never a good idea and can lead to serious deliverability problems and low engagement rates from your campaigns.

In regards to affiliate+ or co-reg+ data this is generally more responsive than other third party sources as users are actually registering for your site and receiving some information about your brand or offer. However, there can be issues with this type of data around quality and we would recommend that these data sources are highly monitored for increases in complaint rate+ and engagement+ levels to ascertain which co-reg sources are worthwhile, and which perhaps cause more harm than good to your overall strategy.

REMEMBER...

Email marketing databases are better thought about in terms of **'quality over quantity'**



Tip 3:

Have a solid signup process

We've all heard the expression 'First Impressions Count' and in email marketing that is certainly true. What's more important is to make sure that a good first impression is then followed up and through into the entire email marketing programme. It is also important to set expectations of what your subscriber can expect from your programme from the beginning.

The main steps in the signup process are:

► Registration Form

Your registration form is your first touchpoint with the user in terms of your email marketing programme. On your website, it should be located on your homepage as well as on other relevant pages. We've already touched on different types of signup in the previous section, but when building your form, make sure you also convey the following:

- *What's in it for me?*

Why should people sign up to receive your emails? What are the key benefits that they get special/worth signing up for?

- *What will I receive and when?*

What emails are people going to receive from you? How frequently will you contact them?

Are you going to be sending multiple types of emails?

E.g. monthly newsletter and weekly updates. Consider giving subscribers the choice of emails they want to receive and when (if your technology allows for this).

- *What do I need to do?*

What information do you need from users in order to send them emails? Do you just need their email address and name or a little more information?

REMEMBER!

Only collect the information you need at this point.

You can always follow up and ask further questions to collect more data as your relationship with the subscriber grows.

You should also develop a privacy statement that communicates to customers how you use their personal information. This should be clearly linked to on your website as well as on any email registration forms.

Overall, keep it simple, keep it clean and ensure that users can easily complete the form and explicitly opt in to your emails!

▶ Following Registration

After registering, most companies will direct users to another page on their site. We recommend that this page is utilised to clearly thank the user for subscribing as well as to:

- Let them know to look out for a confirmation email (if using double opt in)/welcome email from you in their inbox.
- If they find it in their spam/junk folder, encourage them to click the 'Not Junk' button in their email client to move the email to their inbox.
- Include a prompt for the user to add you to their personal whitelist (address book/safe sender list). This will help to bypass a lot of the email client's filters and ensure you always reach their inbox.
 - Include a link to a page on your site that gives specific instructions for whitelisting in the main email clients including Hotmail, Yahoo!, AOL and Gmail amongst others. You can find this information out directly from each email client, or find a list of instructions online. Ensure you include all of the main email clients.

▶ Welcome Email

Different from a double opt in email (that confirms the subscription), the welcome email follows up from the registration and is delivered once the subscription has been confirmed.

This email should back up the previous process and thank the user for registering as well as including elements such as:

- Welcome users to your brands email programme.
- A whitelisting prompt and link to a page on your site that details individual email client instructions.
- Reaffirm the benefits of the programme, types of email that will be received and their frequency (i.e. your newsletter sent once a month).

If you want to take your registration process further and continue to build the relationship with the subscriber in these early stages, we recommend following up your welcome email with a series of further emails over the first 30 days of the subscription called an on-boarding process+.



Tip 4:

Plan and send interesting, relevant content

In order to keep up a regular email marketing programme it is important to plan in advance what you want to communicate and when. By doing so, you can make sure that you fulfil the expectations you set for the subscriber on sign up, as well as ensuring key messages and events for your business receive coverage at the correct time during the year.

To maintain and build long-lasting relationships, you need to find a balance.

Combining a variety of content (a blend of editorial and promotional communications) will help you build a long-lasting relationship with your subscribers. People are genuinely interested in what you're doing, however they will lose interest if you're constantly trying to sell to them. It is also important to ascertain what frequency of emails works for both you, in terms of creating content, and how much email is too much/too little for your subscribers.

► Know what you want to send and when.

- It is important to start by deciding what you reasonably have time to create and broadcast. If you don't feel you have enough valuable content and time to create an email weekly, then choose to send bi-weekly or monthly for example. Don't over reach yourself in the beginning, do what you can cope with and build from there.
- If your company is retail based, you may also want to consider adding in triggered+, transactional+ emails to confirm a purchase or request a review, for example. A membership based website may also want to consider password reminder emails, for example. Think about what other types of email make sense for your business and ensure they are included in your plan.

DON'T FORGET...

If at any point in the future you do decide to increase the frequency or number of emails you send, don't forget to ask your subscribers if that is OK first!

► Create a content schedule to guide your campaigns.

- It is important to make your email content valuable and not to send for the sake of sending. By planning out your email campaigns 6-12 months in advance you have a rough outline already created for each message to guide you when it comes to writing the content. This will also ensure your campaigns do not come across as unconnected and disjointed, providing a valuable email programme for your subscribers.

- When creating your content schedule focus on key details such as types of content to include or key events to focus on (e.g. Christmas and special offers).
- ▶ **Find out what your subscribers want to hear about from you.**
 - If you're not sure what your subscribers want to hear from you, ask them! You could do this through the use of a preference center+ on your site or by sending your customers a short survey.
- ▶ **This is a great opportunity to update or add subscribers demographic and personal information, which can also be used to inform your campaigns.**
 - Once you have collected this data it is important to use it to inform your campaigns – what type of emails to send, what content to use, what images you choose etc.
- ▶ **Use segmentation to divide your database into sections and deliver different content to each to ensure it is relevant.**
 - You can not only use this to inform your email schedule and plan in terms of what content would be most popular, but also to segment your database into different interest groups to provide content that is **specific, relevant and interesting** to each group. You will receive a higher engagement rate and therefore conversion rates, by providing different groups of people with different content depending on who they are and what their interests, are rather than blanket blasting your whole list with the same information.
 - Also consider segmenting based on interaction with your emails (and website where possible such as logging in or completing another desired action). By segmenting in this way, you can target communications based on where subscribers are in their email lifecycle+.
- ▶ **Deliver what they expect to receive**
 - At the point of registration, as previously discussed, it is best practice to be upfront with the subscriber about what they will receive from you and when. Make sure you fulfil these expectations and follow up on your promises – this is the reason they chose to sign up in the first place remember!

TRY THIS...

Take advantage of technology and use dynamic content to automatically change sections of your emails dependent on data in your list.

For example, you could have different images or sections of wording in your email that are specific to a male or female recipient.

▶ **Mobile Considerations**

When planning your campaigns it is becoming more and more important to factor mobile devices+ into your strategy considerations.

In the case of email marketing, employing a responsive design email creative+ that dynamically resizes to make viewing of the creative optimal on a mobile device is the best option.

TOP TIP...

Keep an eye on the stats in your ESP to determine what percentage of your list is engaging with your emails on mobile devices



Tip 5:

Optimise your creatives

Once you have planned your content, there are various other elements that need to be considered when it comes to putting everything together in order to optimise your creatives+.

► Content

Although you may know what you want to say to your subscribers, you now have to write your emails, have a template designed and built in HTML and text formats. When writing your emails, consider these key points:

- Make it skimmable and easy to read quickly.
 - Write in short paragraphs
 - Use bullet points
- Treat different types of subscribers differently (using segmentation and dynamic content)
- Serve different sections of content depending on the subscriber profile, interests and behaviour (if data available) to provide value and relevance.

► Subject Line

Your subject line is the first chance chance to grab the recipients attention. Therefore, it is important to have a well crafted subject line. Our key tip here is to **test, test and test again** to ascertain which types of subject line work best for your audience.

- It is a legal requirement that your subject line is clear and reflects the content of your email.
- There are many studies that show shorter subject lines garner higher open rates, however, we recommend testing your subject lines to ensure you are making the most of each send.

► Optimise Preview Pane Area

When users open their emails to view the content, you will only see a portion of your email on the screen when it is not opened fully - this is the preview pane area+. Where images may be suppressed automatically (meaning they need to specifically click to turn them on) by different email clients, it is even more important to ensure this area is optimised to maximise conversions.

- Consider including a navigation pane that mirrors your website. This will allow subscribers to easily access your other products and services through every email.

- Ensure that your branding is clear and visible. (For example utilise the ALT tag+ on your logo image so that your brand name is still displayed with images suppressed.)
- Make use of the pre-header+ - this is the first line of text in your creative and is often pulled in by different email clients and displayed underneath the subject line in the inbox. Ensure you make the most of this space and use it to back up your subject line, encourage subscribers to open the emails.
- Main Call to Action (CTA)+- ensure that recipients of your emails can access your main CTA in the top half of your email within the copy (you could also use this as your pre-header text and link).
- Link to online and mobile versions - in case something goes wrong when viewing in an webmail+/desktop email client+, it is advisable to have a link to an online version and mobile optimised version (a narrower version of your email) so that anyone experiencing problems still have the option to consume the information in your email in a different way.
- Link to a preference center - if you have a preference center on your website, encourage subscribers to use it. This will ensure you have as much up to date information as possible to inform your campaign and strategy and provide targeted, relevant content.

► Design with image suppression in mind

The majority of email clients will block images by default (image suppression+) and the recipient will need to click a link to unblock the images and view the email in full. The only time this differs is with mobile devices such as the iPhone or when you are in the recipients address book/ on their safe sender list where images will be turned on by default. Images can also be turned on by default through a continued positive engagement with your emails (Hotmail for example will automatically start turning on images if you regularly interact with emails from that sender).

For this reason, it is important to design your email templates with image suppression in mind. This means ensuring that key messages and calls to action are not solely contained in images and are backed up/made a priority in your copy. You can also use image ALT tags so that when images are blocked, your ALT tag is shown instead and still allows you to convey a message.

► Legal Compliance

Legal compliance for email marketers doesn't stop when you get past the registration form. Within your creative there are two key elements that need to be included (usually found in the footer area of creatives):

- A clear, working unsubscribe link
- Your physical mailing address is to be displayed

TOP TIP...

Ensure your main
Call to Action (CTA)
is **clear and repeated**
throughout your creative.



Tip 6:

Always test to yourself before broadcasting

You've spent all that time creating your email and putting it together, why would you not spend an extra 5-10 minutes running through and checking all the elements are correct?

You should not only test the elements of the creative, but also that it displays (renders) correctly in different email clients; they will read your HTML creatives in different ways so it is important to check how your email looks in the top email clients before broadcasting (such as Hotmail, Yahoo!, AOL and Gmail - B2C providers).



To make things easy, we've put together this quick checklist to use each time you send an email to ensure your communications are mistake free!

Pre-Send Checklist

1. Check for spelling and grammar mistakes	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Ensure all links work	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Test all links go to a relevant landing page that allows for easy conversion	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Ensure creative renders properly in different email clients	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Includes a working unsubscribe link	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Postal address is displayed in the footer section (legal requirement)	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. If your email is personalised, check this personalisation is working correctly	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Ensure that all information added to your email is correct including any pricing and contact details	<input type="checkbox"/>



Tip 7:

Test and optimise your broadcasts

In order to ensure that you are making the most of your time, resources and campaigns, it is important to create a testing strategy to inform and optimise your creative choices.

Different from our last tip where your testing is internal, this requires live broadcasts to generate real results.

Some examples of elements you can test in your campaigns to ensure optimum results may include:

- Subject line
- From name
- Call to action wording, placement or colour.
- Creative layout
- Creative design
- Content
- Time of day
- Day of week

✓ A/B split testing

A test consisting of 2 versions is carried out on your database. For example, if you have a database of 20,000 recipients, try testing two subject lines (with everything else in the creative the same between the two tests), the first to 5000 and the second to 5000 the day before you would like to send your main mailing.

TOP TIP...

Only test one element at a time so that you can be sure what has influenced an increase or decrease in your desired result.

From the results of these two initial sends, based on opens, clicks and conversions you can determine which subject line is the 'winner' and subsequently roll it out to the remaining 10,000 recipients in your database.

✓ Multivariate testing

DON'T FORGET...

Once you have run tests on your campaigns, ensure you use the learnings in future campaigns.

Multivariate testing takes A/B testing one step further by allowing multiple different tests on one element. For example, testing your main call to action wording on your buttons in your email. With a list of 20,000 recipients again, you could divide your data into 4 segments of 5,000 recipients; 1 base group that will receive your normal call to action and 3 other groups that will all receive a different variation of this element. The results of this test will allow you to use the learnings in future campaigns.



Tip 8:

Follow up on your email campaigns

It is often a good idea to follow up particularly important or time sensitive campaigns with another email to those who haven't opened/clicked originally. This may be a few days later for example and use a different subject line to try and peak the subscribers interest enough to open the email.

If you are using this tactic, ensure that you do make a change to the subject line/content, perhaps referring to the fact that you noticed they didn't open/click on your previous email and you just wanted to make them aware of this important information or offer, so that they do not think you have just sent a duplicate email.

► Integrated Marketing

Another option is to follow up/precede your email campaign through other marketing channels such as by direct mail/phone/social media.

For example, if you are a restaurant holding a special theme night, you might send letters to your previous customers telling them about your event, followed up with an email the week after to remind them and prompt them to book a table (if they haven't already).

Another example might be for a hairdressers whereby an email is sent to remind the client to rebook their hair appointment after a certain period of time, followed by a letter if they do not go on to book.

GIVE IT A TRY...

Integrating your email campaigns with other marketing channels has been proven to increase results.

Why not give it a try and see how it works for your business?



Tip 9:

Keep it clean! Ensure you have good list hygiene practices

After you've pressed the send button, the fun doesn't stop in email marketing!

Upon receiving the email, the email clients will send back various messages called 'SMTP error codes'+. Each of these codes relates to something specific and tells the ESP what happened to the email address once it was received. One part of list hygiene is about sorting through these codes and dealing with them in various ways.

► Bounces and Failures

- **Hard Bounces**

A hard bounce is a report back from the receiving email client that reports an email address as non-existent or incorrect (often due to spelling mistakes in the email address).

We recommend removing any email addresses that hard bounce from your database after one bounce.

- **Soft Bounces**

A soft bounce is a report back from the receiving email client that says an email address is full or temporarily unavailable for some other reason.

We recommend removing any email addresses that soft bounce on your database after 3 consecutive bounces.

- **Other types of failures**

Sometimes your broadcasts may get caught up in what we call a 'Block'+. This means that for one reason or another, the receiving email client has refused to accept your message at that time.

There are many reasons that this can happen, usually down to sender reputation or content. Some ESPs will report emails that show as blocked as hard or soft bounces (depending on the code returned). However, these block reports are very different from hard and soft bounces and these subscribers should not be removed from your database. Check with your ESP as to how they handle mail blocks.

On receiving each of these codes it is important that list hygiene commences on your list – your ESP should handle this for you, but do ask them to check what rules they have in place and that you are happy with how your bounce management is being handled.

▶ Other elements of list hygiene

• Activity level of your data

When looking at the activity level of your data the first step you should take is to look at segmenting based on interaction with your emails. We recommend viewing your database in the following way:

- Active users - those who have opened/clicked on your emails in the last 3 months (for example),
- Passive users - those who have opened/clicked on your emails in the last 3-6 months (for example).
- Inactive users - those who haven't open/clicked on your emails for more than 3 months (for example).

Once you have segmented your database in this way, there is then room to start adding in activity data from your website such as purchase or behaviour data to provide even more value and relevance in the communications sent to each of these groups.

Email clients now look at engagement rates as a key decider in how they will treat your email (whether they will deliver it to the inbox/junk folder). By segmenting your data by activity, you can increase your engagement rates by delivering targeted relevant communications, to different groups of subscribers.

• Complaints

There are a few ways in which a recipient of an email may choose to complain:

- Clicking on the spam/junk button on your email
- Directly contacting their email client to register a complaint
- Through participation in services like Hotmail's Sender Reputation Data (SRD)+ programme

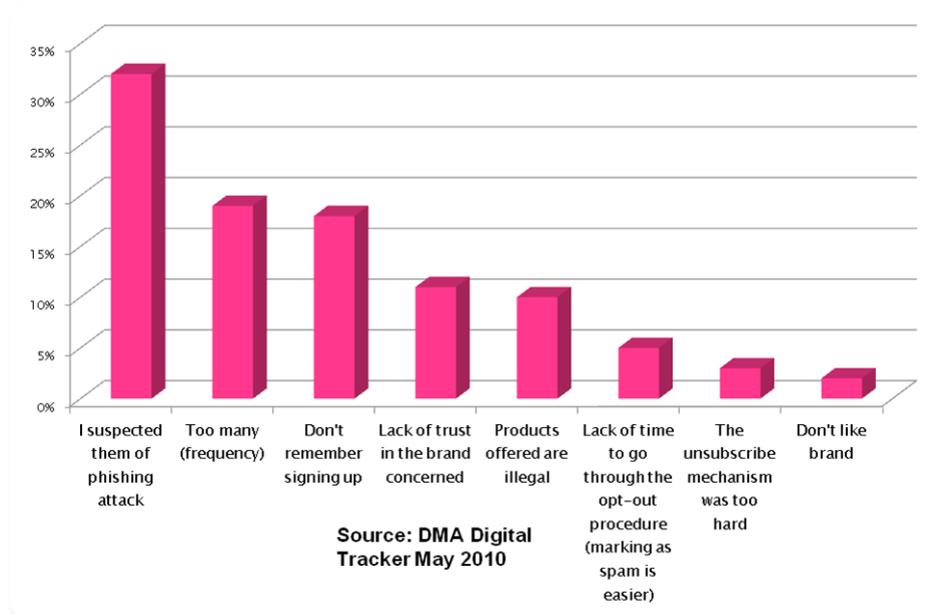
You find out about the complaints registered by subscribers clicking on the spam/junk button through 'Feedback Loops'+ provided by some email clients. This information is sent back to your ESP and processed to provide complaint statistics for your campaigns.

At this point you may be asking yourself "but im only sending to someone who registered to receive my emails! Why would they complain?".

TOP TIP...

Hotmail, Yahoo! and AOL do provide Feedback Loops. Some email clients such as Gmail don't.

Some of the top reasons that people complain about an email include:



Ensure you are continually monitoring your complaint rates and work to ensure your email programme addresses these key issues and provides relevant communications.

- **Unsubscribes**

It is much more preferable for a recipient to unsubscribe from your emails than register a complaint as this can seriously damage your deliverability. With this in mind, ensure that your unsubscribe link is clear and accessible with your creative and that requests are dealt with promptly and users are not sent any further emails.

DON'T FORGET...
Aim to deal with all unsubscribe requests within 24-72 hours.

- **Spam Traps**

There are two types of spam traps that you need to be aware of as they can also seriously damage your deliverability:

- **Recycled Spam Traps**

Recycled spam traps are email addresses that have been left dormant for anything from 4-12 months depending on the email client being used. These dormant addresses are reclaimed by the email client and used to identify senders who are not using email marketing best practice and segmenting their data based on the activity of the database.

- **Pristine Spam Traps**

Pristine spam traps are new email addresses that have never been registered for anything and are there to trap anyone scrapping the internet for email addresses and registering email addresses onto their list without explicit permission to do so.



Tip 10:

Review your results and look for trends

After every campaign you send, your ESP will provide you with a set of results that may include:

- ✓ Number of emails sent
- ✓ Delivery rate - the number of emails sent minus any bounces and failures
- ✓ Hard Bounces - The number and % rate of hard bounces you have received on your broadcast.
- ✓ Soft Bounces - The number and % rate of soft bounces you have received on your broadcast.
- ✓ Opens - The number of total and unique bounces
- ✓ Open Rate - The percentage of delivered emails that were opened
- ✓ Clicks - The total and unique number of times people clicked on links in your emails
- ✓ Click Rate - The percentage of opened emails that were clicked on (some ESPs will make this the % of delivered emails so check with them first)
- ✓ Complaints - The number and % of people that clicked the junk/spam button on your campaign
- ✓ Unsubscribes - The number and % of people that clicked to unsubscribe from your campaigns

It is important to look at your results whenever you broadcast an email to check for individual campaign trends such as:

- A particularly high open or click rate
- High complaint rate
- High click rates on specific links or topics
- High unsubscribe rate
- Low delivery rate

When looking at trends for your campaigns over time, for each type, consider extending your view of these by:

- Day of week
- Increasing unsubscribe rates
- Time of month
- Increasing complaint rates
- Decreasing delivery rates
- Types of email/subject lines performing best/worst

TOP TIP...

Wait at least 24 hours to get a true picture of a campaigns results

With some testing and analysis you may even find that the majority of conversions (sales for example) happen after this initial

Glossary

Affiliate - Affiliate marketing is a type of performance-based marketing in which a business rewards one or more affiliates for each visitor or customer brought by the affiliates own marketing efforts.

ALT Tags - HTML tag used to enter text that is displayed when an image cannot be rendered.

API Feed - An automatic feed between two systems.

B2C - Business to Consumer.

B2B - Business to Business.

Blacklist - A list of senders IPs or Domains that are denied access for any number of reasons. There are a number of different blacklists, each of varying prominence. Email clients use them as one way to help them determine whether or not to deliver your email.

Block - Email clients reject your email for a reason relating to your sender reputation or practices. Blocks are usually temporary but can be permanent.

Bounce - See Hard Bounce, Soft Bounce and Block.

Call to Action (CTA) - Text within your email that encourages the reader to complete a desired action such as to purchase, download or register.

CSV file - File format; Excel files can be saved in CSV format.

Creative - We call your email message when fully designed and built, a creative.

CPA - Cost per Acquisition/Sale

CPL - Cost per Lead

CPM - Cost per Thousand

Co-reg - Co-registration allows for multiple website sign ups on one page/through one process. Usually charged on a CPA/CPL basis.

Complaint - Most commonly, a subscriber pressing the spam/junk button in their email client. Can also be generated by a subscriber directly complaining to their ESP about a sender or in the case of hotmail, SRD data.

Complaint Rate - Your complaint rate is the % of complaints generated by a mailing.

Dynamic Content - Functionality that allows for different content to be shown to different segments of data depending within the same email template.

Dedicated IPs - IPs from which only you send your email broadcasts.

Deliverability - The number of emails sent that reach their intended recipients.

Desktop Email Client - A desktop program that allows you to view your emails.

Email Client - A program used to access your emails such as Hotmail, Yahoo! Gmail and AOL.

Email Lifecycle - The different stages that email subscribers move through as they age on your list. Acquisition Conversion, Retention, Reactivation.

Email Programme - Used to describe all of your email activity collectively.

Engagement - Interaction with your emails including standard metrics such as open, clicks and complaints, but also deeper statistics such as the number of people deleting your emails with/without reading first or forwarding your emails to a friend.

ESP - Email Service Provider. Provides the technology for you to send 'mass email communications'

Feedback Loop - A system you can register for in order to receive messages from different email clients when a subscriber complains about your email communications.

Hard Bounce - a report back from the receiving email client that reports an email address as non-existent or incorrect (often due to spelling mistakes in the email address).

Hotmail Sender Reputation Data (SRD) - A specially chosen panel of users who vote on whether or not a message should be categorised as junk based on if they expected to receive it. Panellists are only asked to comment on email that was addressed to them, and they are never asked to comment on email that was not addressed to them.

HTML - Hyper Text Mark-up Language. The type of computer coding used to build email campaigns.

IPs - The 'channels' through which your emails are sent. (IP addresses: "a numerical label assigned to each device participating in a network that uses the Internet Protocol for communication.")

MIME format – The term we use to describe the sending of HTML and text versions at the same time through your ESP. (Multipurpose Internet Mail Extensions (MIME) is an Internet standard that extends the format of email)

Mobile Device – Android devices, iPhones and iPads are all examples of mobile devices.

On-boarding Strategy – A documented, triggered strategy of communication with a subscriber within the first 30 days of the email relationship.

Organic database – A database built by the brand in-house through organic channels such as their website, trade shows etc.

Explicit Opt In – Explicit written permission to send the subscriber email marketing communications.

Preference center – An area of your website that allows subscribers to customise their email stream with you and update their information.

Pre-Header – The first line of text to appear in your email creative.

Preview Pane Area – The top section of your email that is shown in an email client preview pane.

Privacy in Electronic Communications Regulations – The UK Regulations that govern email marketing and other electronic means of communication.

Rendering – How an email displays.

Responsive Design Email Creative – A type of email design and build that dynamically changes your email template and contents depending on the type of device it is being viewed on (mobile device/desktop/webmail email client).

Sender Reputation – Like your online credit score, your sender reputation is a score of how trustworthy you are as sender. This is made up of a variety of elements including volume, authentication, spam traps and complaint rates.

Segmentation – Dividing your database into different groups based on commonalities.

Shared IPs – IPs that you broadcast your email campaigns from alongside other senders.

Soft Bounce – A report back from the receiving email client that says an email address is full or temporarily unavailable for some other reason.

Transactional Email – Emails that occur in the course of transacting with your brand such as password reminder emails as well as purchase and post purchase communications.

Third Party Sources of Data - Sources of collecting data that are not through your brand or website including purchased lists.

Unsubscribe - The mechanism by which subscribers can opt to stop receiving your email communications.

Webmail - Online access to your email through your email client.

Whitelisting - The Whitelisting method mentioned in this package is fully termed Personal Whitelisting. This involves the recipient of the email adding the sender to their address book/safe senders list in their email client.

WYSIWYG Creative Editor - 'What You See Is What You Get' editors allow you to visually amend your HTML email creative, generating the code for you.