



DATA-INSPIRED GUIDES TO SALES & MARKETING

EMAIL MARKETING

dun & bradstreet

Introduction

Our customers often ask us to share our thoughts on marketing best practices. We may be a little biased, but we believe great marketing starts with great data, which is why we created the Data-Inspired Guides to Sales & Marketing series.

Through this series, we'll share tips and tricks to help you optimize your marketing efforts with a foundation rooted in quality data. After all, we have been managing data for 175 years!

No matter what marketing role you play within your organization, it's important to have a deep understanding of today's modern marketing landscape and how data management impacts your objectives.

We hope you find this series helpful and look forward to learning from each other. Let's get data inspired!

Data-Inspired Email Marketing

87% of B2B marketers cite email as one of the top methods for driving leads into their sales funnel.¹ So you may think email marketing is a perfected practice but we receive daily requests for ways to improve results. The email game continues to change and new findings are always being revealed. Follow these tips to ensure your campaigns garner strong results and generate the optimal amount of leads.

Segment Your Audience

Sending a generic email out to a large list will only get you marked as junk and result in a ton of opt-outs. Segmentation and targeting are among the most difficult marketing tasks but they can yield the greatest rewards when done properly.²

Knowing your audience will also help you create targeted messaging that will help drive conversion.

Utilize Quality Data

You can spend hours creating engaging content and eye-catching images for your campaigns, but if you don't have clean, accurate data to build your lists, you will be left with a high bounce rate, low deliverability and a reduced ROI. That being said, you have to set realistic expectations when it comes to email deliverability.

Yes, it can be a discouraging to receive a large number of bounce backs, but it's important to know that the average bounce rate is anywhere between 2.1%-5%.³ That's why the data you use and the messaging you create is so vital.

Did you know

most B2B marketers develop contact databases over several years from a wide variety of sources? As a result **66% of files** have questionable email deliverability at best.⁴

Watch Your Image to Text Ratio

One surefire way to lower your open rates and compromise your effectiveness is to send image-only emails or a message that contains more images than text.

Sure, these elements can make an email look modern and sleek, but they should be used sparingly if you want high deliverability rates.

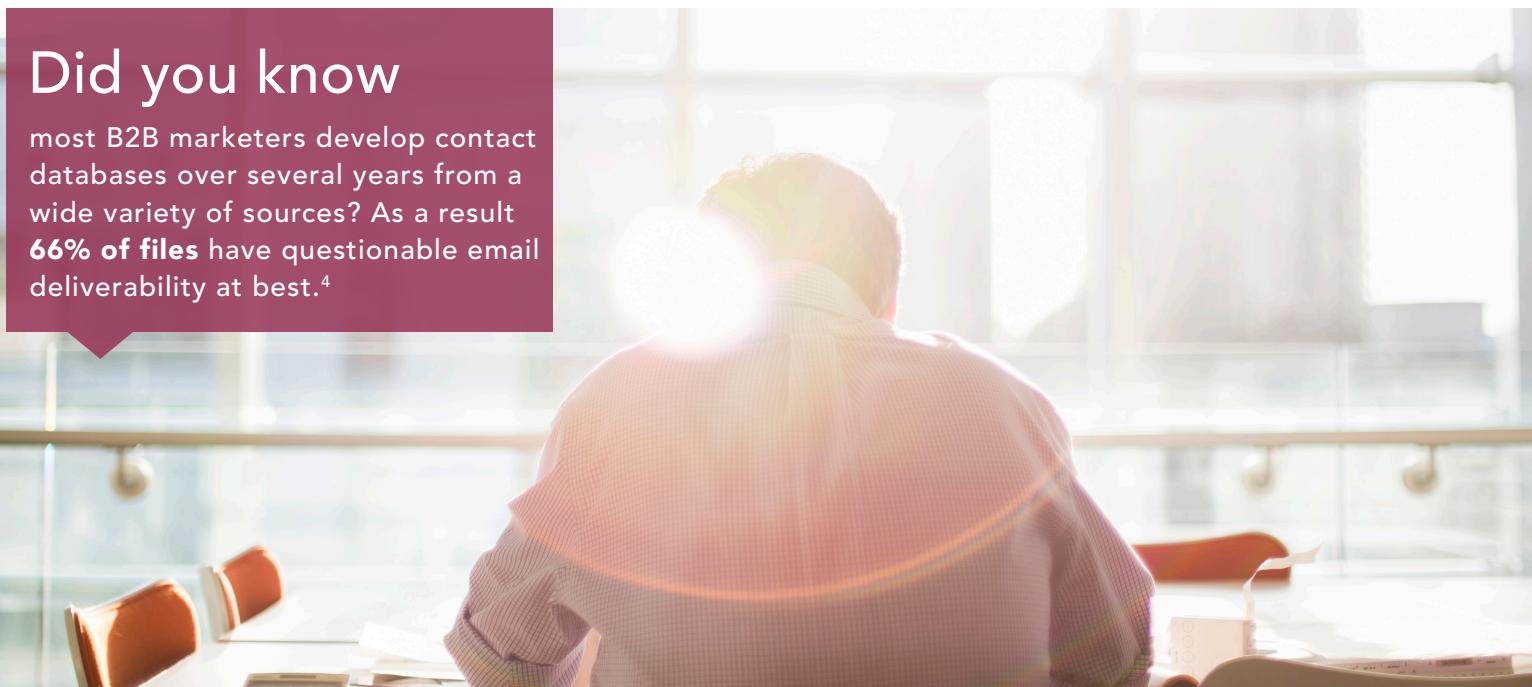
Check Those Links

Avoid using shortened links (such as Bitly) in the body of your email. You can always hyperlink text, but make sure the hyperlink you use is the full URL. Spam filters check your URLs so be sure to link to reputable, safe sites.



Quick Tip

Don't forget the unsubscribe link. Giving recipients the ability to opt out of your emails is a requirement of the CAN-SPAM act. Plus, weeding out those who aren't interested allows you to spend your time, and money, on an audience with a higher propensity to buy.





Don't let undeliverable emails negatively impact your bottom line.

Undeliverable emails can result in both hard and soft costs for a business: wasted marketing spend, poor resource allocation, missed campaign goals as well as damaged sender reputation and brand perception.⁴ With data management services like the ones provided by Dun & Bradstreet, there's no excuse for ignoring the accuracy and health of your marketing database.

Get to the Point

As marketers, we know better than anyone what it's like to be inundated with emails and offers. That's why it's so critical to create targeted, concise messages that speak directly to your audience. Don't waste their time with overly florid language and empty promises. Tell them exactly what you want them to know. Are you entering them into a nurture campaign with hopes of selling them your service? Tell them.

Just make sure you entice them to stay with relevant content, honest messaging and a way to contact you if they're interested in learning more than your email provides. And don't be afraid to get creative and inject some personality — as long as it's appropriate for the audience.

Cool It with the Aggressive Subject Lines

One of our team members recently received an email from a retail brand that had "DO NOT DELETE" in the subject line. Not only was she nervous that it was spam, but she also felt it was quite off-putting.

Sending emails with aggressive subject lines and phrases like, "Act Now!" compromises deliverability and your brand's reputation. Instead, focus on copy that will catch your buyer's eye in a positive way. Be forthcoming about what's in the email and save the numerous exclamation points for your next Twitter rant.

Ditch the Extra Code

Did you know that typing your email copy in Word and then pasting it into your email builder can result in additional characters and excess code on the back end of your campaign? If you do draft your email in a separate program, copy and paste it into Notepad (Windows) orTextEdit (Mac) to strip it of any excess code or display issues.

Don't Count Out the Plain Jane

We're referring to plain text, obviously. Include a plain text version of your message if you're going to send an HTML-based email with images and stylized fonts. That way, people who block images or have any issues with downloading them, will still be able to read your message.



Quick Tip

Test your email to make sure it displays properly in a variety of email clients. With mobile traffic on the rise, you should strongly consider using a responsive template, meaning one that looks good on monitors, cellphones and tablets. The better the reader's experience, the higher your conversion rates.

Opt for a Company-Hosted Address

Using an email address that is hosted by your company (i.e. @dnb.com) is the best way to go. Avoid addresses that end in @gmail.com and @yahoo.com for marketing communications being sent by your organization.

Not only will it bring comfort to your readers that they are opening an email from a reputable sender, but it will also improve your overall deliverability.

Measure Your Performance

It's time to hit the all powerful "send" button, but your job doesn't end there. Track your email's performance to determine the true results of your efforts and what you can do to improve your next campaign.

Using marketing automation platforms like Eloqua and Marketo allows you to track your campaign's progress from email clicks and open rates to content downloads and website visits.



Quick Tip

We can help! Dun & Bradstreet offers solutions that seamlessly connect your Eloqua or Marketo platform to a continuous source of cleansed and enriched data, resulting in better segmentation, higher conversion, and faster growth for your business. [Learn more here.](#)

Keep Up With Your Data

Data management shouldn't just occur before you hit send, you have to regularly maintain your database to achieve an optimal ROI. This commitment will allow you to fuel your efforts with reliable marketing data. On average, five million professionals changed jobs every month for the first six months of 2015.⁵ You can do the math on just how important it is to keep your lists updated.

Where do you begin? A [free Data HealthScan](#) from Dun & Bradstreet will help you identify the good, bad and the ugly when it comes to your current data.

Create a Comprehensive Strategy

Email is most effective as part of an integrated contact strategy. You need to find the right communication cadence for your audience and surround them with content in other channels, such as display re-targeting and social. Creating multiple nurture campaigns for different audiences is another key component, as not every customer is going to fit into the same bucket.

Establishing a strong partnership between marketing and sales is also crucial. Making sure your sales team is enabled, prepared and on top of follow-up activities is going to be the difference between converting a lead and losing them.

Ready to power up your marketing data strategy?

Learn the true state of B2B marketing data quality and how it impacts your marketing initiatives, including your email initiatives. Download The B2B Marketing Data Report.

[Read Here](#)



Sources:

1. Demand Gen Report & Marketo 2015
2. Email Marketing Survey, Ascend2 and Dun & Bradstreet, 2015
3. Marketo Email Marketing Benchmark Results, 2015
4. Dun & Bradstreet State of Marketing Data Benchmark Report, 2016
5. The US Department of Labor

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