**Email Marketing:**

* Email marketing is the use of email to promote a company's products and services or to connect with the customers.
* When it's done well, email marketing is an effective sales driver.
* When it's done wrong, email marketing can come across as spam that annoys customers.

**Why Email Marketing is Important:**

Email is a paperless way for you to keep recorded accounts of the correspondence between you and your business contacts. Email conversations and the attachments that accompany them take up less space in your email account than they would in paper form in your office filing cabinets.

**What is email marketing, and where did it begin?**

The first email, sent by Ray Tomlinson in [1971](http://www.computinghistory.org.uk/det/6116/First-e-mail-sent-by-Ray-Tomlinson/) or [1978](https://www.smartinsights.com/email-marketing/email-communications-strategy/email-marketing-evolution/) depending on your source, marked the beginning of the modern communication era. The message was nothing special, a series of numbers and letters that looked more like a password than a message, but its significance was profound.

The email was sent from one computer to another, traveling through a network of machines not unlike the internet we know today. Tomlinson also introduced the "@" symbol in email addresses to the world.

Gary Thuerk, a Marketing Manager at Digital Equipment Corp, sent the first commercial email years later, where the message reached a list of email addresses. And voila, [email marketing](https://mailchimp.com/marketing-glossary/email-marketing/) was born. There were only a few hundred people on the list, but that was enough for Thuerk to claim the mantle, "Father of [Spam](https://mailchimp.com/marketing-glossary/#spam)."

Today, we're inundated with [email marketing campaigns](https://mailchimp.com/features/email/), and yes, some of it still feels spammy, but there's no denying the impact a well-crafted message can have on your customers—not to mention [CRM](https://mailchimp.com/crm/what-is-crm/) and lead nurturing.

Email marketing helps you connect with your [audience](https://mailchimp.com/resources/grow-your-email-marketing-audience/) to promote your [brand](https://mailchimp.com/resources/the-basics-of-branding/) and increase sales. You can do a lot of things with emails, like sell products, share some news, improve your [cart abandonment rate](https://mailchimp.com/features/abandoned-cart/) or tell a story.

With Mailchimp’s campaign builder, it’s easy to find the right [email templates](https://mailchimp.com/features/email-templates/) for any message—whether you’re welcoming new subscribers, notifying customers of a sale, or wishing someone a happy birthday.

## Does email marketing work?

When you want to communicate something about your brand or sell your stuff, email marketing is one of the most cost-effective ways to do so.

In fact, [a 2015 study by the DMA found that for every $1 spent](https://dma.org.uk/uploads/ckeditor/National-client-email-2015.pdf), email has an average $38 [return on investment (ROI)](https://mailchimp.com/marketing-glossary/roi/). When shoppers are ready to buy something, they often look for emails from their favorite stores.

Still, people receive more and more email all the time, and it can be challenging to stand out in full inboxes. That’s why Mailchimp gives you the tools you need to shine (plus, we’ve got a lot of [tried](https://mailchimp.com/resources/avoid-spam-filters/) and true tips on [sending outstanding emails](https://mailchimp.com/resources/email-marketing-field-guide/)) and develop effective email marketing campaigns. Check out our [email marketing statistics](https://mailchimp.com/resources/email-marketing-benchmarks/) by industry for more on why email marketing works.

## How do I get an email list?

You’ll see the highest [ROI](https://mailchimp.com/marketing-glossary/roi/) when you build and maintain an engaged subscriber list, made up of people who want to receive your messages (and who opted in on purpose). Although building a clean list can take more work at the outset of your email marketing strategy, Mailchimp lists have built-in tools to help you along the way.

There are lots of ways to find people who’ll look forward to getting your emails, but we’ve rounded up a few that work best.

To [build an email list](https://mailchimp.com/resources/how-to-build-your-email-list/):

* Create a signup form on your [website](https://mailchimp.com/features/website-builder/). When people come to your website for the first time and like what they see, they’ll want a way to stay in-the-know about your brand. Create a [form for newsletter signups](https://mailchimp.com/features/custom-forms/) and install a pop-up to collect customer data from your visitors.
* Use a good old-fashioned signup sheet. Whether it’s at your brick and mortar store, or an event that you’re hosting or attending, when you’re surrounded by people who are into what you do, provide a place for them to sign up and learn more.
* Drive signups through [social media](https://mailchimp.com/marketing-glossary/social-media-marketing/). If you don’t have a substantial email list (or you’d just like to see it grow), but you’ve got an engaged social media following, tap into that resource. Share your signup form on your social channels.

To add more subscribers to an existing list:

* Host a contest or offer a discount. We’re big fans of giving people an incentive to sign up for your email list—and we know that contests work. Try offering a prize for some lucky new subscriber or a discount code for a first purchase.
* Make your emails easy to share.When you create beautiful, compelling emails, with a lot of valuable information people will want to share them. Mailchimp gives you features (like share buttons and social media post builders) that let the word about your emails spread quickly.
* Build a [landing page](https://mailchimp.com/features/landing-pages/) through Mailchimp. Landing pages offer one more way to grow your email list. Using your best imagery and content, landing pages give people a clear call to action and drive email signups way, way up.

## Email marketing tips to get you started

### 1. Create an email marketing plan.

To make the planning part easier, we’ve highlighted some best practices you’ll want to consider when devising a strategy for your email marketing.

**Define your audience**

No matter what you sell, you need to have a clear idea of who your audience is in order to effectively communicate with them. Mailchimp lets you dig a little deeper to [segment](https://mailchimp.com/features/segmentation/) users within your audience so you can send them [personalized](https://mailchimp.com/marketing-glossary/personalized-marketing/) and targeted emails that help increase engagement, build trustful relationships and generate greater ROI.

**Signup sources**

Some of the most valuable data your signup form has to offer is how and where subscribers sign up for your list. If you’re an [e-commerce](https://mailchimp.com/marketing-glossary/e-commerce/) business with your store connected to Mailchimp, knowing where your customers joined your list can give you a better idea of how to communicate with them and where you might want to focus your marketing efforts going forward.

**Segments and groups**

Once you’ve identified smaller collections of people within your larger audience, you’ll be able to create groups and segments to send more relevant and personalized emails to your recipients—and the more relevant the campaign, the better the results. There are times when you’ll want to send to your entire list, but by segmenting users and taking advantage of Mailchimp’s segmentation tools can significantly increase the click-through rates and e-commerce orders your campaigns generate.

**Decide what to write**

Now that you know who you’re writing to, it’s time to think about your content. What do you want to say to your audience? What is your [content marketing](https://mailchimp.com/marketing-glossary/content-marketing/) strategy? You’ll want to send emails with purpose, that really speak to your subscribers, so always keep in mind what they signed up for.

**Establish your sending frequency and goals**

There’s nothing set in stone about how often you should email your customers, but if you send too often, your subscribers are likely to tune out what you have to say or unsubscribe altogether. Some users that run a [blog](https://mailchimp.com/resources/blogging-for-local-search-results/) or news website might choose to send daily updates to their subscribers, while other users only send twice a month so subscribers stay excited about their emails. Choose to send your email campaign at your own pace, and check the unsubscribe rates and the click through rates to adjust the frequency if needed.

**Make a schedule**

One way to make sure you’re staying on track is to create a content calendar to schedule your campaigns, blog posts, social media posts, and more.

Your email marketing schedule will depend on your industry, the types of content you send (content marketing strategy), and your sending frequency.

### 2. Design your emails

**Design tips**

When designing email campaigns, focus on your message and keep your design straightforward. We suggest laying out all the elements for your campaign in a hierarchy, putting your most important information or the main takeaway toward the top so people can quickly scan your email if they’re short on time.

**Code your own templates**

Looking to have more control over your email design? You have the option to code your own HTML template and import it to Mailchimp.

### 3. Test your emails

**Test in different email clients and ISPs**

All email clients are created differently, which means that the campaign you designed in Mailchimp might look slightly different in your subscribers’ inboxes. Be sure to check the emails on mobile devices as well as they can look different in responsive designs.

**Send test emails to friends and coworkers**

If you have any friends or coworkers who can check your email for typos and give you some feedback on the layout, you can send them a test email so they can preview the campaign directly in their inbox.

**Find the best version with A/B Testing campaigns**

Not sure which subject line will get the most opens and clicks? Think there might be a certain time of day your customers are most likely to make a purchase through your campaign? [Running an A/B test](https://mailchimp.com/features/ab-testing/) lets you experiment with different versions of your emails to see how the changes you make impact your results.

### 4. What you can do with marketing automation

Unlike regular campaigns, an [automation](https://mailchimp.com/features/automations/) is a targeted email or series of emails that you can set and forget. From a [welcome email](https://mailchimp.com/features/automated-welcome-email/) series to [follow up emails after a purchase](https://mailchimp.com/features/automated-follow-up-emails/) to rewarding your customers with a special incentive, automation helps you streamline your communications with customers so you have more time to focus on creating content and increasing [return on investment (ROI)](https://mailchimp.com/marketing-glossary/roi/). Plus, you can design, send, and track [order notifications](https://mailchimp.com/features/transactional-email/) to update customers on purchases they made from your store.

### 5. Measure your performance

The [marketing analytics](https://mailchimp.com/marketing-glossary/marketing-analytics/) data collected in your [Mailchimp reports](https://mailchimp.com/features/reports-and-analytics/) will help you refine your marketing strategy going forward.

**Opens and clicks**

These are the most obvious statistics for measuring campaign engagement, as they indicate how well your subject lines and campaign content resonates with a particular list. But it’s important to consider how your open and click through rates compare to other companies in your industry—otherwise you’re looking at your statistics in a vacuum.

**E-commerce data**

If you’ve connected your store to Mailchimp and turned on e-commerce link tracking for your campaigns, you can view purchase data for your subscribers in campaign reports, subscriber profiles, and on the account dashboard.

**Website traffic**

The campaigns you send can help you direct more traffic to your [website or online store](https://mailchimp.com/features/website-builder/). And there are a few integrations you can sync with Mailchimp so you can track any trends in website traffic or e-commerce activity after you send a campaign.

Check out how Mailchimp's [free email marketing tools](https://mailchimp.com/resources/free-email-marketing-tools-vs-mailchimp/) compare to the competition.