

Email Marketing Guide

Minor Project Synopsis

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0.1 Email Marketing Guide for Successful Campaigns



0.1.1 Introduction

Among the obstacles a small business or online seller has to face is finding a cost-efficient way to market their brand to a wider audience. That's where email marketing comes in. Whether it's your grand opening or your company is already well-established, an effective email marketing plan is key to promoting and growing your business, increasing revenue, and selling more stuff.

Mailchimp makes it easy to design beautiful, personalized email campaigns and automations so you can build and strengthen your relationships with potential and existing customers. And with your online store connected, you'll collect helpful e-commerce data for your customers—like order history, how much they spent, and whether they're first-time or repeating customers—so you can send targeted campaigns that direct traffic back to your store and generate more sales. Whether it's your grand opening or your company is already well-established, an effective email marketing plan is key to promoting and growing your business, increasing revenue, and selling more stuff.

0.1.2 Create an email marketing plan

Running a business isn't easy, and we know you've got a lot on your plate. 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. We promise the payoff for the time you set aside to create your email marketing plan will be worth it.

0.1.3 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. This might sound like an easy task—after all, one of your most important jobs as a small business owner is understanding your brand’s demographic inside and out. But Mailchimp lets you dig a little deeper to identify segments of people within your audience so you can send them personalized emails that help increase engagement and generate greater ROI.

As soon as they’re added to your list, subscribers start providing a lot of useful information about their interests and buying behavior. With our signup forms, you can customize fields to collect everything from age and gender to interests and subscription preferences. Maybe you have customers who are only interested in receiving emails when there’s a sale on a specific group of products, or subscribers who would prefer biweekly updates to weekly ones.

0.1.4 Signup sources

Some of the most valuable data your signup form has to offer is how and where subscribers sign up for your list. Here are some tips to help you build an email list. If you’re an 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.

For example, if you see that the majority of your signups are being generated from forms you’ve shared on Facebook and Twitter, then you might want to focus on connecting with your customers—and potential customers—through social media. You can even create segments to target people who joined your list through a specific method, whether it’s an integration like Facebook, an app like Mailchimp Subscribe, an e-commerce integration, or a hosted form. And if there’s a specific

page on your website you want to track signups from, you can add a hidden field to your embedded form and place it on multiple pages.

0.1.5 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 campaigns to your recipients—and the more relevant the campaign, the better the results.

Groups are an easy way to organize your list into categories so that you only need to maintain a single list in your account. Let's say you have an e-commerce store and use your Mailchimp account to communicate with sales representatives, retail locations that sell some of your products, and customers. The logical step might seem to be creating separate lists to track these three audiences, but adding them to groups on one list is a similar concept that can save you money. You can then build segments for these groups and send campaigns that are relevant to them.

There are times when you'll want to send to your entire list, but taking advantage of Mailchimp's segmentation tools can significantly increase the click-through rates and e-commerce orders your campaigns generate. Create custom segments from data you've collected for your subscribers—like e-commerce activity and email engagement—or, if you're new to segments, use one of our pre-built segments to make targeting people on your list even easier. And with our predicted demographic tool, you can zero in on who is opening your emails—their gender and age range—and let that guide how you segment and what content you send.

0.1.6 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? You'll want to send emails with purpose, that really speak to your subscribers, so always keep in mind what they signed up for. It might be helpful to outline some general content types you can include in your campaigns, so you can refer to it when designing your emails. When it's time for you to send a campaign, you can choose a few pieces of content you'd like to showcase based on who you're sending to. Before you start creating

content from scratch, think about what you already have that your customers might find interesting, like a popular Instagram and Facebook post or an article written about your company.

0.1.7 Tips for creating and gathering content

It can be tough coming up with compelling content your subscribers love on a regular basis, and the pressure to do so can be fierce. But keeping these tips for creating and gathering content in mind when you're creating a campaign will help you find the best way to talk with your readers.

Treat your subscribers like VIPs

People who subscribe to your list are so interested in what you have to say that they're willing to invite you into their inbox. This is a privilege. Honor it by letting them be the first to know about new products and sales. Or, go one step further like the company Oui Shave that asks its best customers to participate in product surveys and rewards them by making them beta testers for new products.

Keep it useful

It's good to think about which emails in your inbox you open and which ones you delete immediately when you're creating your own campaigns. What makes you want to open an email? Our guess is a piece of information you don't already have. Make sure you're sending subscribers new information that's useful to them.

But it's not just what's inside your email that you have to think about; it's also your subject line. Most people quickly scan an email before they decide whether they want to open it, so you'll want your subject line to make it clear that a campaign is worth your subscribers' time.

Our best tip is to keep your subject lines descriptive and straightforward, but testing different variations is a good way to find a winner.

Keep it short

Most people are bombarded with emails every day, so keep yours to the point to make it easy for your subscribers to scan them quickly if they need to

Get inspired

Apps like Pocket, Evernote, and Pinterest are great for saving and organizing content you'd like to use in your campaigns. Check out Really Good Emails, too. They feature the most beautiful, elegant, and thoughtful emails companies like you are sending.

0.1.8 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 or news website might choose to send daily updates to their subscribers, while other users like Bee's Wrap only send twice a month so subscribers stay excited about their emails.

We suggest sending an email at least once a month to keep your subscribers engaged, but don't feel you need to commit to this immediately. And be sure to look ahead and plan accordingly if you think your sending frequency will change for special events and holidays—you don't want to surprise customers if you typically send once a month but suddenly start sending a stream of emails leading up to a Black Friday sales event.

0.1.9 Make a schedule

Not everyone has a regular schedule for sending campaigns, but it can be helpful, especially if you need to collaborate with a team or wear a lot of hats as a small business owner. 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, and your sending frequency, but here's an example of a schedule

you might set up for yourself: Day 1: Jot down content topics, art ideas, and other basic elements for your upcoming campaign.

Day 2: Write out what you'd like to say about each topic and pull any photos or artwork you'd like to use into a folder.

Day 3: Log in to Mailchimp and create your campaign. Be sure to proofread for any errors and grammar, and send a few test campaigns to make sure everything is just right.

Day 4: Send your campaign.

Here are some more email marketing campaign tips to get you started.

0.2 There are times when you'll want to send to your entire list, but taking advantage of Mailchimp's segmentation tools can significantly increase the click-through rates and e-commerce orders your campaigns generate.

0.3 Design your emails

0.3.1 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.

Make your campaigns as easy to read as possible by dividing text into sections, choosing legible fonts within the 14-16px range that will be rendered across email clients, and adding an obvious call to action. Above all, you want everything in your campaigns to be clear and to the point.

Check out our Email Design Guide for more tips.

0.3.2 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. We even have our own template language so you can create email templates that are editable in the template editor or campaign builder, and we recommend making your layouts 600 pixels or 640 pixels wide to ensure they're displayed properly across email clients.

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0.5 Test your campaigns

Once you've designed your campaign, your gut instinct will probably be to click 'Send' immediately. Resist the temptation. Take it slow. We know you want to get your message out there, but taking a little time to test your design to make

sure it looks good in as many different email clients and devices as possible will make it much more effective.

0.5.1 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. There are some similarities in how certain email clients render HTML email, but we recommend testing any email clients that have a strong presence on your list.

With our Litmus-powered Inbox Preview tool, you get a chance to see how your campaign will look across more than 40 different email clients before you send.

0.5.2 Send test emails to friends and coworkers

It sometimes helps to get a second pair of eyes on a campaign before you send it. 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.

0.5.3 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 lets you experiment with different versions of a campaign to see how the changes you make impact your results.

Choose a variable you want to test—like subject line, from name, content, or send time—then select how you want the winner to be chosen, and we'll generate combinations that will send to different sets of subscribers.

A/B testing is also a good way to confirm or rethink a hypothesis you already have. When RetroSupply decided to run a test to see whether long-form content with images or short-form content with a buy button generated more sales, they were surprised to find that the former tripled their revenue.

Our data science team has even found that when e-commerce businesses use A/B or multivariate testing with revenue as their test metric, they typically earn

Email delivery and avoiding spam filters Mailchimp delivers email pretty darn fast, but there are a number of factors that can impact how much time it takes for your campaign to be delivered to your list, like the reputation of the sending server, the campaign's content, and the receiving servers. As an email service provider, Mailchimp follows best practices and helps users stay compliant with anti-spam laws so that we maintain a great sending reputation. But good list management and the content you send also impact how fast your campaigns get delivered, so it's important to make sure your content is compliant with our Terms of Use and consistent with your brand, and that you maintain a healthy list. These practices can also help keep your campaigns from triggering email spam filters and firewalls when they reach receiving servers, which transfer your campaigns from Mailchimp to your recipients' inboxes.

0.6 Measure your performance

You've created, tested, and sent your first campaign. High five! Now's when we get to talk about the value of your email marketing efforts and how it can be measured. The data collected in your Mailchimp reports will help you refine your marketing strategy going forward.

0.6.1 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 rates compare to other companies in your industry—otherwise you're looking at your statistics in a vacuum. Our data science team has calculated some average email marketing statistics—open rate, click rate, unsubscribe rate, abuse rate, soft bounces, hard bounces—based on industry and company size so you can see how your company's statistics compare.

Once you know where you stand in terms of campaign performance for your industry, you can start taking steps to improve opens and clicks with tools like

A/B Testing. Low open rates, for example, could indicate that your subject lines aren't enticing people to open your campaigns. Follow our tips for writing an effective subject line to come up with a few variations, then run an A/B test to see which one gets the most opens.

You might also need to narrow down your audience by sending a campaign to a targeted segment, or change how often you send. And to improve your click rates, consider using more descriptive link text. "Click here" tells your subscribers nothing about where a link in your campaign will take them.

0.6.2 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. Your reports will show you how much money your campaigns and automations make, as well as total orders and their average revenue.

Use your campaign reports to identify trends and create segments to find customers who purchased a specific product or spent a certain amount of money, then visit those customers' subscriber profiles to see their full order history.

0.6.3 Website traffic

The campaigns you send can help you direct more traffic to your website or online store. 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.

If you use Google Analytics, you can add tracking to your campaigns to pass Google data to your campaign reports, or use conversion tracking in Google Analytics to track subscribers who click a link in your campaign all the way through to a purchase.

Our Connected Sites feature allows you to track subscriber activity from your campaigns to your website. You can create segments from this data, trigger an automation, and even set up a product retargeting email that gives you the power

to send a message to a customer who has navigated to or away from a page on your website.