ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Email Marketing Tip: The Truth About The Word "Free"

Until now, I don't understand why some online experts say the word "Free" is a taboo in email marketing. To some extent, the word FREE is not the primary reason why your mails are rejected and deleted. Yes, there are still a number of corporations that use a spam-filter and will delete mails containing this popular and highly-debated term and if you ask me, I still don't know why.

There was a survey conducted and it reveals the controversial word "free" can, sometimes, provide a powerful boost to your open rates. People are waiting to see it in your subject lines. It can arouse anyone's attention.

You know what, the word "free" yields greater results when used correctly. It's safer if you write this word in body and not in the subject lines. Moreover, it can help you navigate the complicated world of those spam filters once you use the spam content checker of your email application. This type of feature allows you to test your message for any possible problems before the distribution.

EDITED ARTICLE

Email Marketing Tip: Freeing The Word "Free"

A lot of people still don't get it – why do some online experts continue to treat this seemingly harmless word like some sort of an outcast in email marketing? To some degree, the word "free" can be the primary reason why emails are rejected and deleted. If we can blame someone on why the usage of the word is almost viewed as taboo, it would be none other than the obnoxious spammers and, to a somewhat lesser extent, the good ol' spam filters. But why include the latter?

You see, spam filters are designed to "fish out" suspicious emails and how they do it relies on certain word combinations that can be found within the email. Subject lines are an easy target. Once they spot a line that (for them) looks like something that takes the form of spam, they will immediately take action – they might edit the offending line, send it to a spam folder, or worse, delete the entire message. Sounds good if the email is indeed spam but devastating if otherwise.

Now, the word "free" is often abused by spammers. That is why spam filters have this word included in their "target list." Sounds fair enough, but what about those emails that do use the word but are nevertheless relevant? Some of them get "accused" wrongly. I happen to keep some emails (containing the word "free" in the subject lines) coming from reputable companies such as Sony, Apple, and Native Instruments that end up filling the spam folder. This is not good. If emails were human beings, they would certainly be creating a backlash against this trend.

But let me remind you: "Free" isn't a bad word. It is merely a tool in the same vein as a kitchen knife – you can use it to (surprise) kill people or you can use it to chop your food with great ease. In other words, the word's value only conforms upon the user. If you do want to use the word, do it responsibly. To be on the safe side, use the word on the body of the message itself instead of placing it on the subject line. Subject lines aren't a safe place for the "free" word nowadays. It is best to leave it on the content where the hungry wolves (read: spam filters) aren't preying on.