

Top Ten E-Mail Tips

1) What is it that each email is suppose to do.

Sounds easy enough but a lot of emails go out with no objective, no strategy behind them. Just because it is a cheap way to push something out does not mean your prospects or customers appreciate you filling up their in box with things they either can not understand or could care less about. Your communication must say something so you have to define the overall objective. Is it to inform? Is it to direct to a website or portal? Is it to make an offer related to a specific product? define exactly what you want the email to do and then create the message that will produce the results you need. Remember your offers and content must solve something

2) Who is your email “from”

Whenever someone gets an email the first thing they see is “who is it from” . The true moment of truth comes when once your prospects see who the email is from they will immediately check the “subject line” and decide to delete, open or ignore. If your customers do not recognize your name or your company in the “fro” line your message stands a good chance to be deleted. The basis of your online relationship begins with who is communicating with who. This is followed by the “subject line and answers the why you are contacting them. You must make your message worthwhile to open. This is the basis of your ongoing customer relationship with the recipient.

3) The “subject Line” Why should I listen to you?

Defining your message into an effective “subject Line” is the difference between an effective email or a wasted effort. No one has figured out the exact combination of words that make an effective subject line for every email sent so do not feel that you will bat 1000 every time you communicate with your customers or prospects. The key is how you craft your subject line to fit your overall objective for the communication. It must be relevant, timely and meaningful to the recipient. It pays to test your message before sending it to make the necessary tweaks that may be needed for maximize effectiveness of your communication. Three key things to remember about the subject line

- Reusable subject lines work very well when the frequency of your emails is consistent. Examples of this would be statement reminders, free downloads, newsletters etc. Research shows that anticipation and recognition of a subject line keeps programs high over time. Try to not vary the subject line for scheduled emails.

- If you do not have a regularly scheduled timetable then you have to carefully craft your subject lines to each mailing

- Urgency is key. Always use action words when applicable. (coupons, new information, save)

- Free offers in the subject line are back (the word “ free” use to flag content driven filters to push the email into the junk folder) but now it is effective if the recipient knows who you are so do not be afraid to say it if yo have a great offer to your recipient

- Make it personal to your recipient. that means tie it into their last purchase or contact with you. this is them most effective use of subject lines but it is rarely used. Using someone’s first name still denotes the characteristic bad taste of spam and you shouldn’t try not to use it for any e- business communication.

4) Your Lists must be clean and kept that way

When it comes to lists remember that ISPs look for and filter old customer data and bad addresses. When they see that your lists are dirty and un-kept they decide what will go through to your recipient. So if you have a sloppy list you will most likely be blocked from communicating with your recipient at least in their in box. You should make a real effort to keep you lists clean because if you don’t they will bring down your send/open click- through numbers when you review the results.

5) Brand Your emails

When creating any email communication to a customer or prospect it is imperative that the communication showcases your company and its products throughout the communication. communication solutions tools e Top Ten E-mail Tips

How do I brand an email?

- Use HTML in your email. This will allow you to put your logo, pictures, hyperlinked text and more (like other product offerings) so that the visual experience of your communication is memorable and stimulating versus just plain text. Some recipients still like text and they can have the option of getting just text but when you can brand your emails with hyper links to your branded website that is getting the most out of your communication. A thorough well though email that includes branded marketing content is a very effective tool of the marketing toolbox.. A templated design using HTML will help with the brand emails consistency and looks. Test before you roll any marketing campaign with your email. Someone receiving an order confirmation reminder may not want to see an offer tied in with it.

6) Segment your list, Micro segment if you can

Why would people want to open up an email if it is not interesting to them. That is exactly what Jupiter research found out when they reported that 53% of email recipients unsubscribe when the offer or content is not interesting to them. By understanding who your recipients are and what they have communicated with you in the past about you chances of having a profitable communication with them are dramatically higher. Surveys are key components when you are not sure what your customers want to hear from you. Ask them and then you can see from their responses what will make for a successful dialogue.

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7) Do not forget Metrics.

Monitor your email results for review of effectiveness. How many clicks for this offer. How many clicks to your website, how many forwards over last month, year, etc. The best way to make sure that your communication is working is to monitor the activity after the initial open (within 48 hours) after that its history. Compare to previous results and if you can see a trend in sales tied into offerings with your email campaign you will know what is working and what is not.

8) Frequency

Just because email is economical does not mean you should send an over abundance to your customers. A regularly scheduled email program must have valuable content. If the content is regular and valuable frequency becomes secondary. You must set standards and expectations for every email. Remember that the recipient can hit "unsubscribe" at any time.

9) Partnerships build customers

Marketing through or with a partner is a great way to add quality customers to your list. Just make sure you choose the right partner that fits your audience. If the partners customer profiles do not match yours you are wasting time, effort and money. When you do find a partner that matches what you want to do it only helps your communication efficiencies. This goes both ways. Any customer profiles acquired through a partner should be reviewed carefully. Plan how you want to communicate with them so you do not scare them in hitting the opt out button before they know or understand what knowing you is in it for them. 59% of marketers identify list/build/attrition as one of their biggest challenges according to Forrester Research.

10) What about Handheld audiences?

With the advent of Blackberry's, Ipods, and Iphones the growing list of hand held devices is demanding attention in regards to email communications. If you have a strategy in place you can get around the hassle of communicating with someone who really hates thumb scrolling through tons of HTML links before ever seeing an image or text relating to the message content. Two ways to get to the handheld user are:

- Program a text message in the text window of the management application. Use the recipient agent data to determine what browser was used to open the message, then flag the recipient record as a handheld user. Knowing that you can send them only text messages.
- you can also host the HTML version of your message and ask all handheld users to click to view HTML You will have to include some sort of language at the top of the message and a link to encourage them to click through. Once you know how your customers want to communicate with you its easier to craft a message that makes it easier for them to work with or better yet buy from you.

10.5) PS. Make sure it's legal

Remember that email is a regulated industry and therefore needs to meet federal and state requirements. Take care in making sure that all your email programs are compliant and to ensure protection for you and your business.

US Laws:

CAN-Spam-www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/canspa.shtml

Utah registry and Suppression Purchase-www.utahkidsregistry.com/senders/

Michigan registry and Suppression Purchase - www.protectmichild.com/senders/