



The beginner's guide to email marketing.

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Reaching customers online doesn't always have to involve a website. Netregistry guides you through the dos and don'ts of email marketing.

If you've ever bought a book from Amazon.com, chances are you've also received regular emails from them encouraging you to go back and buy more. Those emails from Amazon probably account for about half of my purchases from them – as well as my recent need to buy a bigger bookcase - as they are targeted to my individual interests and remind me of upcoming releases I may otherwise have missed.

Yet email marketing is simple enough that almost any online business can create results. True customer-based email marketing – not spam – now makes up an estimated 27% of a users inbox. This means that your typical customer is happy to sign up for newsletters and email campaigns that are relevant to them.

There are also obvious price benefits in using email instead of a traditional postal campaign; all those printing and postage costs simply don't exist.

Email marketing is rapidly increasing as an effective, efficient and low-cost method of marketing targeted campaigns to your best customers. With the right approach, you can build a highly effective email marketing campaign that builds brand loyalty, creates repeat business and broadcasts your marketing message further than your website ever could.

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Are you talking to your best customers enough?

Let's crunch some numbers.

It is a well established economic fact that, for most businesses, 80% of their sales will come from 20% of their customer base. For some, the ratio is closer to 90 / 10. What this means is that the business coming from a small number of established customers usually far outweighs that from new customer acquisitions. Yet, most businesses continue to spend 80% of their effort and marketing budget chasing new customers that will most likely only produce 20% of their business income, a complete reversal of that ratio. Genuine sales growth is almost always produced by maximising results from an established customer base, and that means giving that precious 20% more attention - lots more.

Wouldn't it be better for your business if you could increase business from your best customers to 85% or 90% of your sales? By doing so, you would be relieving pressure elsewhere in your business and reducing the need for so much effort on customers that don't have a major impact on your bottom line.

And if you like crunching numbers, email marketing is your perfect tool!

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What results should I expect?

Email marketing allows for the detailed analysis of very specific data in relation to your campaign. You will be able to see how many emails reached inboxes, how many of those were opened by the recipient and whether they clicked through a link to your site.

Tracking these results can help you to determine your return on investment (ROI) and steadily improve sales over time. If you know the ratio of site visitors to sales from analyzing your business stats (for example; for every ten site visitors, you sell on average \$100 of merchandise) it becomes extremely easy to plot an effective ROI strategy. That way, you don't need everyone to open your email or click through to your site. In fact, as Netregistry's Mailroom service starts from less than \$20 a month to run an email marketing campaign to five hundred recipients, you may be surprised at how few responses you need for the campaign to finish in credit!

Inevitably, not all emails will make it to their destination. The myriad of internet service providers (ISPs), different email software protocols, security firewalls and filters will unfortunately mean some emails will always slip through the cracks. Even the best email systems available cannot achieve 100% delivery. Usually, 95% is considered a strong result to aim for, meaning your email reputation is good and the ISPs are not mistakenly identifying you as spam.

By using a professional email marketing service, you increase the chances of your emails getting through to more people – and generating more sales!

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Open sesame

Not everyone who receives the email will open it, even if they asked to subscribe. On average, only 20-30% will open a marketing email in the first week and this is considered acceptable in most campaigns. Don't be shocked if you achieve open rates of only 1 in 5 (20%) when you start email marketing. Remember, you don't need everyone to click through if you've worked out your sales predictions and understand how many visitors you need to make a profit.

However, it is possible to increase your open rate - and sales - with careful planning. Not surprisingly, open rates are higher among recipients who specifically requested the newsletter. By building an email marketing list primarily with customers who have provided express consent, you will achieve a higher open rate than a list obtained through inferred consent.

Understandably, recipients will open the email if they believe there's something in it for them. People are less likely to open an email that looks like a simple advertisement - we skip advertisements, we don't take time to open them. A subject line announcing your new products is probably going to sit unopened, except by those customers who are already in the market for that product at that time. Meanwhile, the email offering 25% off all book purchases that week, or offering useful advice on how the product can enhance the customer's life, will have recipients eagerly opening.

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Express or inferred consent

To avoid the legal definition of spam within the Spam Act 2003, all email addresses need to be gathered by either express or inferred consent.

Express consent - There is a clear indication that the recipient has asked to receive the emails to a specific address. A customer ticks a box or types in an email address in the clear expectation of receiving email communications.

Inferred consent - Exists when there is an expectation of further email contact, even if it hasn't explicitly been stated. For example, if a consumer enters their email online as part of a transaction or in registering a product or warranty, the assumption is that there will be some email contact. The nature of that additional contact is usually outlined on the site, suggesting that the email address may be used for marketing purposes.

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Collecting email addresses

Many businesses worry about collecting email addresses, but you don't need a large list to get started. Even if you start out only sending your newsletter or campaign to ten people, those ten can help spread and grow the list if the content is attractive. Campaigns don't grow overnight. Amazon wasn't always the e-commerce behemoth it is now. In the beginning there would have only been a handful of customers and emails going out to a fraction of today's numbers.

If you start with only ten email addresses, and set a target of signing up twenty new addresses each month, within a year you are talking to 250 eager and receptive customers. That's only one new address every working day – easily achievable, and even exceedable, with the following tips.

Avoid paying for email lists - there are plenty of services on the internet selling long lists containing thousands of email addresses. As these addresses have not provided either express or inferred consent, you risk your campaign being identified as spam.

Be honest and up front - building lists through trickery – for example; gathering email addresses without disclosing that they may be used for marketing material - breaches the Spam Act and creates distrust among your customers. Transparency is always preferable. You want to build lasting, valuable relationships, not trick the customers once for them never to come back.

Provide benefits to subscribing - some of the best email campaigns work because they offer promotions unavailable anywhere else. Clearly advertise on your website or in your high street store that your newsletter comes with exclusive special offers, and more people will happily subscribe. Borders bookstore uses this technique very well. Each email contains vouchers available for a limited time, offering deals not available to general customers. This

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prompts more customers to sign up to receive the exclusive offers and open those emails when they arrive.

Ask - Simply asking politely and stating the benefits to the customer is always the best technique. A good email campaign offers the customer something for nothing - free advice, vouchers or informative news - motivating more people to gladly give you their email address.

Add a subscription box - Place a clear area on your site where people are invited to enter their email address to subscribe. This catches those readers who may be interested in your area of expertise, but may not be ready to make a purchase. Again, make sure this section promotes the benefits to them in subscribing.

Offer subscriptions in checkout - if your customers are able to complete their transactions online, it is normal to follow up with a confirmation email. As this necessitates the customer providing their email address to you, you can give them the opportunity to receive additional material from you with a simple check-box.

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Understanding spam

Australia has some of the strongest anti-spam legislation in the world, but it shouldn't impact on your email campaign if you understand a few basic rules.

The Spam Act 2003 was released by the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts (DCITA) to combat the growing amount of nuisance email. Spam has become such a popular way of describing any unexpected email that confusion surrounds what is often a legitimate use of email marketing.

Spam is defined in the Act as "unsolicited commercial electronic messaging". This includes email, SMS, instant messaging and other popular forms of mobile phone messaging. What is not contained in the definition of spam is any suggestion of bulk. Ten thousand emails can be sent at once quite legitimately while another single email can be identified as spam if it is commercial in nature and the recipient believes it is unsolicited.

On average, 20% of legitimate emails are mistaken as spam, but there are ways to lessen this impact.

Online email hosts, such as Yahoo Mail and Hotmail, use certain tools to authenticate if incoming mail is coming from legitimate sources. These include SenderID, SNDS, SPF Records and Domain Keys. For example, by tagging emails with SenderID, the Hotmail servers can clearly identify the source and thereby trusts the email is legitimate. Without a SenderID tag, Hotmail will assume the email is spam and either block it or push it into junk mail folders.

Netregistry's Mailroom system automatically tags your email campaigns with the relevant authentication data to reduce the risk of your emails becoming blocked by ISPs as spam. As the

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system automatically tags your email campaign, the system takes care of the complex techy stuff while you concentrate on producing the best campaign you can.

Unsubscribe requests

One major feature required under the Spam Act 2003 is the inclusion of an efficient 'unsubscribe' facility. Without this, your email may contravene the act, yet it is incredibly easy to manage.

Webmasters are expected to process all unsubscribe requests within five working days. Beyond this, any further emails to the specific email can result in fines.

Mailroom automatically processes your unsubscribe requests and cleans your data. If one of your recipients clicks on the unsubscribe link, they will be taken through a simple process that quickly and easily removes their email from your database without you needing to do anything. This prevents the risk of error and gives you confidence that your email list is always spam free.

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Better customer service with email

Email marketing can be used in a variety of ways to improve the customer experience. Many customers expect confirmation emails on purchasing a product. This serves as a reassurance that the transaction went through as intended and provides further information should there be any concerns. Newsletters are also popular, although a regular, predictable schedule is always recommended to avoid recipients thinking you've faded away.

A fantastic use of email is to target different customer groups based on their place within the sales life cycle. For example; new customers may receive campaigns designed to inspire and provide information that encourages further sales, whereas long term customers can be rewarded with incentives and more in depth features in recognition of their greater experience and brand loyalty.

Some companies tie email to a customer time line, producing an individual and relevant experience. A new customer receives a welcome email, plus a one month, two month campaign that keeps communication open and responds to the likely issues at those points. Understanding the time-related triggers connected to your products could help you develop extremely focused emails that speak directly to a customer's need at the time they most need it.

However you choose to use email marketing, the best results will always be achieved by servicing the needs of the customer rather than your needs as a business. Even though you may simply be announcing your latest sale, the email should express the information as a benefit to the reader, motivating them to read more and take the appropriate action.

By creating email campaigns that your customers value, you can build stronger relationships, loyalty and trust and generate genuine business growth. Netregistry's Mailroom service takes all the hard work out of managing email campaigns and allows absolutely anyone to produce professional, spam free, email communications that work.

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Easy to use email marketing from Netregistry

Mailroom - \$19.00 per month (plus setup fee)

- Customisable templates that are easy to use
- Detailed reports and statistics on every campaign
- Easy administration of email addresses and individual campaigns
- Capable of sending up to 500 emails per month!

Mailroom Pro - \$39.00 per month (plus setup fee)

- Customisable templates that are easy to use
- Detailed reports and statistics on every campaign
- Able to store and administer up to 3 different email lists
- Capable of sending up to 10,000 emails per month!

Mailroom Premium - \$99.00 per month (plus setup fee)

- Customisable templates that are easy to use
- Detailed reports and statistics on every campaign
- Able to store and administer up to 10 different email lists
- Capable of sending up to 50,000 emails per month!

Netregistry.com.au has everything you need for every stage of your online business.

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