



# THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO EMAIL MARKETING

*EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW TO GET STARTED.*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome .....	1
01. Email Marketing 101 .....	2
02. Plan an Email Strategy .....	5
03. Grow Your Email List .....	7
04. Write Engaging Email Content .....	15
05. Design Beautiful Emails.....	22
06. Schedule and Send Emails .....	26
07. Advanced Email Automation .....	29
08. Analyze and Improve Emails .....	31
Conclusion .....	40

# WELCOME

Email marketing doesn't have to be intimidating. You just have to know how to do it right.

This guide covers everything from planning an email marketing strategy to growing your email list to optimizing your emails for success.

If you're brand new to email marketing (or just looking to give your campaigns a boost), this guide will help you get started and attain the results you actually want. We've tapped into real-world examples to give you inspiration and even asked our industry friends to share their tips for email marketing success.

Create real connections with your community through email and grow your business in the process with *The Ultimate Guide to Email Marketing*.

# EMAIL MARKETING 101

When you sign up to receive email newsletters from your favorite blog or email updates from your favorite store, you're giving that person or business permission to send you emails. And it's the email sender's responsibility to give you what you signed up for; whether it's an email newsletter or a limited-time sale.

As you receive those emails, you might notice that you grow more attached to the brand, engage with their content and maybe buy a product or two.

When all of that happens – relationship building, customer nurturing and business growing – that's email marketing.

- It's not about sending spammy messages or buying email lists. And it's more than simply sending commercial emails to others. Email marketing is about making real connections with people who want to hear from you. It's about communicating with multiple people at one time (in a way that feels like a 1:1 conversation), building relationships and growing your brand as a result.

## Grow your business with email

For many small business owners, bloggers and entrepreneurs, managing the daily operations of a brand is a full-time, borderline

24/7 job. While you may try playing the Jack of all Trades, you've probably encountered a few (or many) times where it's felt like there's never enough time to do it all.

Juggling all of those responsibilities often causes certain things to fall to the wayside, like marketing or building an audience. You're already struggling with managing the "essential" tasks, how could you possibly add another thing to your to-do list?

With email marketing, however, promoting your business and connecting with your audience becomes a whole lot easier – and that's only a snapshot of the bigger email marketing picture.

Now, you may have heard that email was declared "dead" just a few years ago.

With the rise of social media, many assumed it had become irrelevant – and therefore ready to join the resting places of has-been marketing tactics like phone books and telemarketing.

But we were proved wrong. As creating educational content to engage and build relationships with customers became the cornerstone for every blogger and business, email evolved with it.

Today, email marketing is one of the most effective ways to not only communicate with an audience, but to build your brand as well.

Just look at the benefits.

Email marketing delivers a return of 4,300 percent (!). Plus, it's more cost-effective than other forms of marketing. And it frees up your time so you can get back to running your business. Best of all?

Consumers love it.

The stats don't lie:

- [Almost a third of consumers](#) prefer to receive communication from brands via email.
- [66 percent of consumers](#) have made a purchase online as a result of an email marketing message.
- [138 percent more](#) is spent by consumers who receive email offers than those who don't

Aside from the opportunities to grow your business, email marketing can also help build a community of loyal customers.

Imagine this scenario for a moment: A bright eyed-individual is exploring your website. She looks around a few pages, but leaves with an empty shopping cart when she doesn't see a sweater in her favorite color. Maybe she'll return and consider making a purchase, but the chances are slim.

Now imagine if there was a way for her to hear from you again; a chance to sign up to your email list and guarantee future interactions – future interactions that might lead to a satisfied customer who found a sweater in the perfect shade of teal.

Email becomes so much more than just another way to advertise your brand. It's a way to make real connections with those who are truly interested in your business.

Considering that most people prefer to communicate with brands through the inbox, email marketing is a no-brainer.

# PLAN AN EMAIL STRATEGY

Before you can begin collecting email subscribers or importing them into your list, you should first take some time to think about your email marketing strategy – which starts with identifying your expectations and goals.

## Set goals

As you think about what you hope to achieve through email marketing, it will be helpful to ask yourself:

- How do you want your emails to help your business?
- Do you want to increase sales for your product?
- Do you want to build relationships with subscribers?
- Who is the ideal subscriber for your email list?
- How will it fit with your overall marketing strategy?

While these goals may change or evolve over time, it's important to consider the purpose of your emails and set goals that are both measurable and attainable.

For those just starting out with email marketing, you might want to focus your goal on growing subscribers.

In this case, your goal might look like the following: I plan to collect 500 email subscribers over the next 12 months by leveraging online and offline opportunities to attract sign ups.

By including a numeric value, a due date and a general idea of how you plan on meeting that number, you'll have a clear target to work towards. It can even provide guidance for executing tactics that'll help you achieve your end goal.

As you plan your tactics, also consider the target audience you hope to reach. For example, a fitness trainer with a focus on health and wellness might target people who are just getting started with exercising and changing their diet.

Understanding your ideal customers will help you determine the best ways to connect and communicate with them.

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*Take Action! Take 15 minutes to answer the questions above and identify goals for your email marketing strategy. To help you craft a more thorough plan, use the email strategy template you downloaded along with this PDF.*

# GROW YOUR EMAIL LIST

An engaged list of subscribers is the key to email marketing success. But it's not just about how many subscribers you have – it's about having the right people who are interested in your brand and what you have to share with them.

To help you grow your list and attract quality email subscribers, there are a few steps you need to follow. And it all begins with the sign up form.

## Create a sign up form

The sign up form is where your website visitors submit their email address in order to subscribe to your list and get your emails. These forms can also allow you to obtain other information, like name, geographical location, specific interests and more.

Sign up forms typically live in the header or sidebar of a website page, or as a pop up box that displays over a website.

Creating a sign up form is the first step to building an email list, which also makes it one of the most important elements of your email marketing strategy. Why? Because this is the place where you must convince your website visitors that your emails are worth signing up for.

When building your sign up form, [there are a few elements to consider](#):

## Types of forms

### Static sign up form

The regular sign up form is a classic way for attracting website visitors to subscribe to your email list. These are static blocks that you can put on your homepage, in your sidebar, in the middle or at the end of a blog post or on a dedicated page for subscribing.

### Pop up form

Pop up forms are a [high-converting option](#) and work really well at attracting new sign ups. A pop up form will appear over your web page, and give you a bit more real estate to convey your value. Most tools will let you set the time before the form pops up as well (we recommend 45 seconds, but be sure to test this to see what works best for your audience).

When a visitor first explores The Prairie Homestead blog, for example, they're presented with a pop up after spending a brief amount of time on the page. The content in the form relates to what they would read about on the blog. In this case, the ebook becomes a supplement to what they'll find, and allows Jill to grow her email list.

### Notification bar form

A notification bar form sits at the top of your site or blog. Pop up forms can be disruptive for some audiences, and static sign up forms can get lost in the content. The notification bar form is a great way to promote your form on the top of a web page and ensure that new visitors are aware of your email list.

## Slide-in form

A slide-in form can be less intrusive than a pop up, and is perfect for pages that have a lot of content. As a user scrolls down a page, a simple sign up form will slide onto the screen, usually from the lower right corner. This engagement typically hits the reader after they've already started reading the post and obtained value from your content.

Our friends at CrazyEgg, for example, placed their slide-in form in the bottom right corner of their website. As a result, readers can make it through the post uninterrupted and have an opportunity to sign up for a free trial.

## The copy

Your form should tell readers exactly what they're going to get after signing up to your list. Will you be sending them a weekly newsletter? Product promotions? Setting clear expectations will be key to attracting quality subscribers who want to hear from you – and staying out of the spam folder.

Your sign up form should clearly explain the benefits to signing up for your list, including information about content (i.e. blog updates, email newsletters) and how frequently you'll be sending (i.e. daily, weekly, monthly). By defining this up front, your subscribers will know exactly what they signed up for, which increases the chance they'll view your emails as valuable instead of spammy.

## The call-to-action

This is the part of your sign up form where you ask readers to take a specific action. In this case, your [call-to-action](#) (CTA) is to sign up to your email list. Instead of going with the generic “Sign Up” button, however, try getting creative. A unique, contextual and action-oriented phrase such as “I wanna join!” or “Send me my free ebook” will certainly grab your reader’s attention.

## The location

Your sign up form should appear on highly trafficked website pages, such as your homepage or blog. Ideally, you want to place it in a location where it’s noticeable and grabs your visitor’s’ attention. Since the location will also depend on the type of form you use, be sure to consider this as you decide on what form is best.

## The design

To create a consistent experience, your [sign up form design](#) should reflect the look and feel of your website and/or brand. [A cohesive user experience helps to establish your credibility and build trust with your audience.](#)

In addition to carrying over various brand elements, consider the size of your sign up form and colors used within it; for example, you might want to use a more attention-grabbing color for your CTA button.

## Create incentives

People love receiving exclusive gifts and discounts. So why not [add one to your sign up form](#)? Offering an incentive (or lead magnet) that appeals to your audience is a great way to encourage them to sign up to your email list – especially individuals who are on the fence.

Common lead magnets include product discounts, ebooks or whitepapers, [a downloadable checklist](#) or printable and more.

### Customer Spotlight

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How powerful can an incentive be? Just ask [Jill Winger, homesteader and creator of The Prairie Homestead blog](#). After launching her website to educate others about maintaining a truly self-sufficient lifestyle, Jill admits that she didn't actively try to grow her audience beyond using an RSS feed. But once she got started with email marketing, she struggled to grow her list.

What then enabled her to grow her list to 50,000 and counting? An ebook she wrote about essential oils and offered for free on her sign up form.

## List building tips

If you're active on social networking platforms like Facebook and Twitter, you may already have a growing community of people

interested in your business. So why not reach out to this audience and encourage them to subscribe to your email list?

By doing so, you can expand your reach, increase the chances that they'll see your content and nurture customer relationships in a way that can be more powerful than if you were to rely on social alone.

## Connect with social followers

Fortunately, encouraging your social followers to sign up to your email list can be as simple as sharing a post that teases exclusive content in your emails. Or, consider adding a sign up form to your Facebook business page and sharing a link to a web-hosted version of your sign up form.

There are also certain social platforms that provide additional opportunities for you to promote your list. [Facebook's Call-to-Action](#) feature is one of them. By linking the button in your cover photo to your email list, you can drive even more email sign ups.

## Launch a contest

[Host a contest](#) that features a valuable prize and requires an email address to enter. Promote it on social media, your website and any other place where you can interact with your audience.

## Publish valuable content

People are more likely to sign up to your email list after you prove that the content you have to offer is worth it. If you have a blog, take the time to write content that's going to make a difference in helping your audience.

Once you prove to them that they need your content, they'll be primed for signing up to your list.

To drive more traffic to your website, [try tactics like syndicating your content on publishing platforms like Feedly and Alltop](#). Or leverage strategic [partnerships with influencers](#) or other businesses that have similar audiences to yours. The more you can reach new communities of individuals who are likely to be interested in your brand, the more traffic you'll be able to bring to your website – which can increase sign ups to your email list.

## Connect with third-party apps

From landing pages and shopping carts to membership clubs and pop up forms, there are a number of [apps and tools that are designed to help you grow your subscribers](#). And when you connect them to your email marketing service provider, you can trust that your subscribers will move directly into your list.

## Collect subscribers offline

Whether you're at an event or brick-and-mortar store, you're interacting with people who might be interested in your email list. Leverage your interactions with your audience by downloading an email sign up form app (like [AWeber's Atom app](#)) to your phone or tablet to collect new email sign ups on the go.

If you'd prefer to go 'old school,' the reliable pen and paper sign up sheet works just as well. Just remember to add your new subscribers to your email list!

## Customer Success Story

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Whenever [Emma Johnson, creator of the blog Wealthy Single Mommy](#), discovers one of her articles is getting a lot of engagement, she leverages it to increase her audience in two ways.

First, she features it at the top of her website so anyone who lands on her blog immediately sees it. Then, she adds a sign up form for her email list at the bottom of the post to capture addresses. The sign up form also features a free downloadable guide to incentivize visitors to subscribe.

With that triple threat, Emma is able to boost her email list.

*Take Action! Identify one strategy to start growing your email list and focus on setting that up in the next 10 minutes. An easy first step is creating a sign up form and adding it to your website. You can always create incentives and try another list building tactic another day! (Don't have an email marketing platform? [Try AWeber today free for 30 days!](#))*

# WRITE ENGAGING EMAIL CONTENT

If having quality subscribers is one part of the equation to achieve email marketing success, then the other piece is creating valuable content. This should be the cornerstone of your email marketing strategy.

After all, the only way to attract the right people to your list is by giving them content they're interested in.

The first step? Identifying what your audience considers to be "valuable" content.

## Create engaging content

The first step to writing email content is first identifying the value you hope to bring your subscribers. As with any branded content your audience will interact with, they will wonder what they're going to get out of it.

The answer should be clear within your email content. This is crucial to [creating effective emails](#) that people not only want to sign up for, but open and engage with again and again. Remember, the more loyal subscribers are to your emails and brand, the better it will be for your business or blog.

So how can you create emails that your subscribers actually want to open? Let's take a look at the different types of emails you can send, and how you can leverage each to grow your audience and business.

## Types of emails

In the world of email marketing, there are a few different types of emails that you can send to subscribers. Each one serves a different purpose, but all are essential to every email marketing strategy.

### Follow up emails

Follow ups (also known as autoresponders) are [automated emails](#). These are messages you can create and schedule in advance so they automatically send in a sequence to those who subscribe to your email list.

This means that all of your subscribers will receive your message at the times you selected, so you don't have to manually send the same information over and over again.

[Follow ups](#) can be used to welcome new subscribers (which we'll get to more on that topic later), educate them about a specific topic, introduce your business, nurture them to become customers and more.

### Broadcast emails

A broadcast is a one-time email that is delivered to subscribers either immediately, or at a scheduled date and time. You can use a [broadcast to share time-sensitive information](#) with subscribers, such as:

- Newsletters
- Recent blog posts

- Product updates and releases
- Limited-time sales and promotions
- Upcoming events
- Industry news
- Alternate ways to use your product or service
- Customer spotlight or testimonial

## The essential emails

You have the freedom to email your subscribers anything you want, whether it's a newsletter or product update. But there are two emails that you should have set up and ready to go for your subscribers: [the confirmation and welcome email](#).

### ***Confirmation Email***

The purpose of your confirmation message is to give your new subscribers a chance to confirm that they actually want to receive your emails. Maybe someone signed up accidentally, or they changed their mind.

Using confirmed opt-in helps you screen for quality subscribers who are more likely to engage with you in the future, and filter out those who aren't really interested in hearing from you. Sticking with email marketing best practices, such as using confirmed opt-in for new subscribers, can have a big impact on your overall success.

### ***Welcome Email***

As the first email your subscribers receive from you, your welcome email should thank them for joining your list. You should also include information about what they'll receive from you in future

emails. If you offered an incentive in your sign up form, the welcome email is the place to deliver it.

Here's a quick checklist of talking points you'll want to include in your welcome email:

- Thank your subscribers
- Tell them more about your business
- Provide more information about the future email content they'll receive
- An incentive (if you offered one)
- Contact information

## Writing subject lines

Want more eyes on your emails? [The subject line is where to start.](#)

Think of it as the first impression you give to subscribers when your emails hit their inbox. Your emails could be filled with amazing content, but if your subject line stinks, nobody is going to read it.

While there is no secret to crafting the perfect subject line, there are a few tried-and-true tactics that provide consistently impressive results:

- **Keep your subject line short.** Subject lines with [30 characters or less](#) have been known to get an above-average open rate. It makes sense considering 40 percent of emails are first opened on mobile devices, where you're limited to just four to seven words.

- **Utilize the preview text.** Have a lot to say but not enough space? The oft-forgot preview text is an email marketer's friend. It's not as in-your-face as your subject line, so you can add additional information while still remaining mobile-friendly.
- **Be clear and concise.** Your subject line should always be relevant to the information inside. (Remember how we stressed the importance of gaining your subscribers' trust?) Tell your readers what's inside and don't mislead them.
- **Create a sense of urgency.** People hate missing out on things. There's even a term for this: FOMO (or "fear of missing out"). And it's exactly why creating a sense of urgency within your subject line copy is such a powerful tactic. Because who wants to miss out on an amazing sale, webinar or promotion? Nobody, that's who.
- **Be specific.** Speaking of sales, email is one of the best ways to promote them! Be really specific about what you're promoting and how much of a discount you're offering. Don't bombard your subscribers with sale emails, however, or they might feel overwhelmed and unsubscribe altogether.
- **Ask a question.** You can be clear and concise while still creating a bit of intrigue. Posing a question in the subject line is a great way to achieve that vibe. It's friendly, approachable and conversational. Bonus points for giving your subscribers a way to reply!
- **Get personal.** Adding your subscribers name to the subject line can up your open rates by [29 percent](#). Using it sparingly can really grab their attention. Save this trick for a really important use case.

And speaking of personalization... that brings us to our next section.

## Personalize your emails

Good email marketing shouldn't make people feel like they're being marketed to. They want to know that you have their best interests at heart, and that should show in the content you send them.

There are a few different ways to personalize your emails so they make your subscribers feel like you're talking directly to them, and not just one of hundreds of other people.

One way is to address your subscribers by their name in the subject line or the beginning of your email content.

You can also personalize your emails by sending [content that's based on their specific needs and interests](#). Whether you have their feedback from a survey you sent out, or they added specific information in a custom field in your sign up form, you can send them emails based on their top interests.

In addition to personalizing your emails based on subscriber information, you can add a personal touch to the tone within your email content as well. Including a specific person in the signature of your emails (instead of a message from the whole company), for example, brings a human face to your brand.

Additionally, make sure your "From" address reflects an individual from your company, not a specific department. For example, an email from **john@companydomain.com** is much more inviting than **help@companydomain.com**.

# Monetize your emails

Email is a fantastic way to build relationships and trust with your audience. But if the goal of your emails is to make money, [it can also help with that, too](#). Email is hands down the most effective channel for converting customers than any other (that includes social media and search engine marketing).

Monetizing your emails might seem intimidating at first. But if you're providing valuable content and you have a passion for what you're doing, you're already halfway there. Here are some more [ways to generate revenue from your list](#):

- Create a paid email course
- Share links to featured product pages on your website
- Regularly offer exclusive sales and discounts
- Create a lead nurturing email series

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*Take Action! If you're just getting started with email marketing, now's the perfect time to customize your confirmation message and craft a welcome email. Create the emails within your email marketing platform, or simply start a draft in your favorite word document tool, like Google Documents or Microsoft Word.*

# DESIGN BEAUTIFUL EMAILS

Great content is an essential part of a successful email, but it cannot stand alone without design.

Consider this: visuals are processed [60,000 times faster than text](#), and they have the ability to influence a person's emotions, which then impacts their behavior.

If you're not a pro designer, the task of designing an email may seem a bit intimidating. But if you follow the basics of design or use a pre-made email template provided by your email marketing platform, sending beautiful emails can be as easy as clicking send.

## Email design best practices

Here are some best email marketing practices for designing your emails:

- Use a color scheme that's consistent with your branding, yet easy on the eyes of your readers.
- Avoid a layout with more than one column. Multiple columns can clutter your email and make it difficult to read on smaller mobile devices (which can represent [at least half of your readers](#)).
- Break up chunks of text with visual images. Readers prefer short blurbs of information, which can be easily achieved by including images and lines when necessary.

- Feature your most important content at the top of your email to grab your readers' attention; less salient information should appear closer to the bottom. Also, consider including a brief overview of the your email content in the header of your email. Subscribers want to easily scan and pick out information that's relevant to them, and providing visual hierarchy makes this possible.

To help you get started and inspire the creative guru within, you may want to sign up to other email lists and see [how they design their own emails](#).

## HTML vs. Plain text emails

Two of the most common formats for creating emails are plain text and HTML. HTML emails allow you to do things like change the color or treatment of your fonts so they appear **bold**, *italicized*, or underlined. It also makes it possible to include images. Plain text emails only allow text; no images or special font treatments allowed.

You might have heard other email marketers say [they prefer plain text emails over HTML](#), because they fear certain email clients such as Gmail and Yahoo won't display their images properly.

Fortunately, all of the major email clients should have no trouble presenting your HTML emails to your subscribers – which means you should feel comfortable including images, graphics, colors and more in your emails if you so desire.

It does become a concern, however, if something is broken in your HTML. That's why certain email service providers like AWeber

automatically creates a plain text version of your email. So if something isn't working properly with an image in your message, your subscribers will see copy that tells them exactly what they're missing.

In the end, it's up to you to decide what types of emails you want to create. If simplicity is your goal, do keep in mind that you can still achieve this look with an HTML message.

## Build emails for mobile

More than half of all emails are opened on a mobile device. Unfortunately, [less than half of marketers](#) are actually designing their emails to be mobile-friendly. And that's a scary thought to consider when 75 percent of readers are likely to delete a message if it's not mobile friendly.

The experience your emails create should be a great one, no matter where your subscribers are interacting with it. Here are some mobile email marketing tips to keep in mind when creating emails:

- **Optimize your images.** Use visuals to break up large blocks of text and make your emails easily scannable. But be careful not to include too many images – this can cause your emails to take longer to load, which can cause your subscribers to lose interest.
- **Use white space.** Avoid overcrowding your emails with content and images. Blank space in your emails frames your content nicely, which helps increase readability.
- **Have clear calls-to-action.** Use accentuating colors to highlight your call to action, and make sure the button is large enough to be easily tapped on a mobile device.

- **Keep your content brief.** Those who read emails from small mobile devices are more likely to skim your content, so keep the copy brief, with the most important information up at the top.
- **Learn to love simplicity.** With a variety of devices and screen sizes, it's best to keep your email design as simple as possible to ensure it's universally compatible.

Most important of all? Be sure to test your emails. Use a tool like [Email on Acid](#) to get a preview of how your emails will look on different devices. If something looks off, you'll have time to fix it before sending it to your subscribers.

# SCHEDULE AND SEND EMAILS

## Choose a date and time

While you can immediately send a broadcast email as soon as you're ready, you might want to schedule your emails ahead of time. A big benefit to scheduling your emails is that you get to send emails at a time when your subscribers are more likely to open them.

To [determine the best day and time to send your emails](#), you should start by researching the average optimal send times in your specific industry. This is a great starting point, as it will help you get a sense of when audiences similar to yours are most engaging with the emails they receive.

From there, you can try different send times to see what works and doesn't work for your specific audience. Continue testing until you find the prime time.

Another thing to consider for your email strategy is the send cadence. You should aim to maintain a consistent email send schedule (such as every Monday or every other Thursday).

This gives your subscribers an idea of when they should expect to receive content from you. In doing so, that makes it easier for you to create emails in a more organized way, and helps you appear more trustworthy.

# Send targeted messages

Sending emails to specific segments of subscribers within your email list allows you to send hyper-relevant content to your audience when they need it most.

Here are a few ways you can [segment your emails](#):

## Geographical location

There are a variety of situations when you might want to send an email to people based on where they live.

If you own multiple stores in different locations, for example, you might want to send emails to subscribers who live closest to each location. You can send things like exclusive shop offers, upcoming events and even advice or news from local employees. Or, send emails that speak to local events, seasons and holidays.

For those who have subscribers from all over the world, you can use subscriber segments to [send emails in their native languages, too](#).

To discover where your subscribers are located, simply ask them in your sign up form in a custom field. Some email marketing platforms will provide information about your subscribers' geographical location (country, state, zip code) based on IP address.

## Email engagement

Sending emails based on subscriber behavior is a great way to provide relevant content to your audience. When someone clicks a link in one of your emails, they're expressing interest in that

particular topic. This provides great insight into what content your subscribers find most relevant – and creates a perfect opportunity to create a new subscriber segment.

Say you own a bakery, and you send an email with a link for an apple turnover recipe. If a third of your subscribers clicked the link, you've just discovered a whole group of people who are probably interested in baked goods with apples. Create a segment for those who clicked the link, and send additional emails with more recipes and a discount off an apple-treat from your store.

At the same time, those who didn't click the link in your message might not be interested in apple baked goods at all. You can send them a recipe made with a different ingredient to see if that piques their interest.

Open rates can also tell you a lot about whether or not your subscribers are influenced by your subject line to read the contents of your email. To encourage more engagement with your subscribers, consider sending an email to the segment of subscribers who did not open your first message – and be sure to tweak the subject line.

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*Take Action! Go back to your email marketing goal strategy, and add information about when you plan on sending your emails. When you have it written down, it'll be easier for you (and anyone else on your team) to stick with the schedule. Then, start building your email content calendar for the next two months using the free calendar template you downloaded.*

# ADVANCED EMAIL AUTOMATION

Earlier, you read about follow ups and how you can use them to automatically send messages to your subscribers at preselected times.

But you can do more than that. You can also use [email automation](#) to create multiple autoresponder series, as well as more robust campaigns that are triggered on certain actions or tags.

## Create multiple campaigns

Here's what that might look like: Let's say you're a guitar teacher. You might offer two different ebooks (one for beginner's and one for advanced musicians) as incentives to encourage people to subscribe to your email list.

In a case like this one, it can be difficult to send the same content to everyone; what might be relevant to someone just getting started with guitar might be too simple for someone else who's ready to learn new riffs.

With email automation, you can create two different [welcome series](#) with content that's targeted for each audience. This way, both your novices and pros will get emails that are most relevant to them and their needs – which is also great for subscriber engagement.

## Link campaigns together

As you create different email campaigns, there may be times when you want to link them together so subscribers who complete one campaign can move onto another.

By [linking campaigns](#), it allows you to automate even more of your communication with subscribers, which can keep them engaged over a longer period of time. You can do things like set up a welcome series that is followed up by an educational course, or connect two educational courses together.

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Take Action! Email automation can be as easy as setting up a simple welcome email. If you crafted the copy for your welcome email earlier, take that and add it to a new email draft. Then, set it up as the first follow up in your email list.

# ANALYZE & IMPROVE EMAILS

For many marketers, much of the focus for any specific strategy lies in the planning and execution phases. What often gets pushed to the back burner, unfortunately, is the part where you review and analyze performance to make improvements.

But just as analytics are important in every other business strategy, so too is it essential to a successful email marketing strategy.

## Review email performance

By [reviewing the performance of your emails](#), you can identify opportunities to improve the impact of your email messages and increase the value you bring to your audience. Fortunately, reviewing your email marketing reports and making improvements isn't difficult.

Here are the key reports you should review to determine [whether or not your emails are getting results](#):

### Opens

This report tells you how many people opened your emails and when they opened them. Your open rates can reveal various insights, including how compelling your subject lines are and the best times to send emails to subscribers.

To increase your open rates, you should:

- **Set clear expectations.** Before people subscribe to your email list, they should already have an idea about the content you'll be sending and its benefits. The best places to communicate this is in your sign up form, as well as confirmation and welcome messages. Then, be sure to deliver on that promise. If someone signs up to your list because of the content you said you would deliver, they'll be more likely to open your emails.
- **Write compelling subject lines.** The subject line is the first part of your email subscribers see, so make sure it's engaging. You have around 35 characters to leave a lasting impression. Use this space carefully and be clear about what the email contains.

While this may come as a surprise, subject lines that directly explain the contents of your emails tend to have open higher rates than those that are more vague or rely too much on humor. People want to know that opening your email is worth their time, so give them a reason to read your message.

Another way to stand out in the inbox is to use personalization, such as the subscriber's first name, in the subject line too.

## Click-throughs

Click reports show how many times a person clicked a link in your email. This can shed light as to what types of content resonates best with your subscribers, and what they find less interesting.

To maintain a high click through rate, you can:

- **Remove underperforming content.** If a link doesn't receive a lot of engagement, consider changing the way you present it (such as adding more enticing visuals) or removing it from future emails. Frequently including links that aren't valuable to your audience may hurt their perception of your brand.
- **Feature popular content.** If a link attracts a significantly higher number of clicks than others, continue featuring relevant content and links in upcoming emails. Find a new way to include it again, or share related products or news.
- **Send targeted emails.** If a segment of your subscribers share a strong interest in a particular topic, send a targeted email with relevant content to only those subscribers.

## Unsubscribes

Discovering someone unsubscribed from your email list can be disheartening. But it's a great opportunity to explore the reasons why they left, and what you can do to bring them back or prevent others from leaving too.

In this situation, you can:

- **Ask why they're leaving.** On your unsubscribe page, include a question that asks why they've decided to leave your list. Then see how you can use that feedback to improve future emails.
- **Reevaluate your email marketing strategy.** Make sure you're setting your emails up for success and taking care of the basics. This includes using confirmed opt-in for new subscribers (people are [less likely to unsubscribe](#) to an email if they take the extra step to confirm their subscription) and setting clear expectations for your email list.

- **Continue attracting new subscribers.** To make up for the subscribers you lost, remain proactive in collecting new email sign ups each month. This will also help ensure you continue growing your list over time.

## Deliverability

If you find that some emails are performing considerably worse than others, there may be another issue at hand: your deliverability.

Deliverability determines [whether or not your emails make it into your subscribers' inboxes](#).

Here's a general breakdown of how it works: Every email sender has an [email reputation score](#), which is generated by Internet Service Providers like Comcast and Roadrunner, and mailbox providers like Yahoo! and Gmail.

The score is determined by a number of factors, such as how many emails you send, your complaint rates, your bounce rates, how many times you've landed in the spam folder, how many inactive/old addresses you have and more. If your score is low because of those factors, it can make it difficult for your emails to get to your subscribers.

Part of maintaining good email deliverability also relies on how well you and the email marketing platform you use adhere by the CAN-SPAM Act.

According to this US law that regulates all commercial emails, every email must:

- Include a way for subscribers to unsubscribe from an email and
- Contain the sender's valid physical postal address.
- Be clear about who is sending a message
- Identify the message as an ad
- Avoid deceiving subject lines

(For more information on the CAN-SPAM Act, you can read all about it [here](#)).

In addition to abiding by the rules outlined in the CAN-SPAM act, you can maintain a high deliverability by implementing the best practices mentioned throughout this guide, such as:

- Sending valuable content
- Emailing frequently
- Setting expectations and delivering on what you've promised

Regular email list hygiene will also help keep your email list fresh and engaged.

Maintaining a healthy email list is an important variable in avoiding the spam folder. As your list grows, you might find that some of your subscribers become inactive; either they don't open your messages or click links within them.

Although it is a bummer, it's important to give these unengaged subscribers a chance to leave your list. If someone hasn't opened your emails in the past six months, there's a good chance they won't open them in the future. And worst of all, they could mark your

emails as spam.

Removing these inactive subscribers or [kicking off a reactivation campaign](#) can help lower the risk of getting flagged as spam. It also allows you to improve the accuracy of your email analytics. Win-win.

## Traffic

Traffic reports reveal how many subscribers are going to your website from your emails. If your goal is to increase sales, this data will show how many subscribers are going to specific pages on your website, such as your blog, homepage, product pages or order page.

To maintain steady traffic to your site, ask yourself the following when creating emails:

- **Is there a clear call to action?** A hidden call to action or none at all makes it impossible for people to take a next step after reading your emails. Whether you direct them to your website's homepage or a blog post, you should include a primary action for your subscribers to take.
- **Are there links to your site within your email?** Including links back to your site can help increase traffic. If you already include links, check to see if any of them are broken and fix them as needed.
- **Is your content valuable to your readers?** If your emails don't pass the "What's in it for me?" test, it's time to rethink your email content strategy. Address the needs of your customers and prospects by delivering information that interests them.

- **Are my emails consistent?** Sending emails infrequently can lead subscribers to forget about your brand. This can cause your emails to go unopened, and therefore, unclicked.

## Sales

To see how much revenue your emails generate, you can track the sales that result from each email you send. Once you have this information, you can use it to improve your emails to generate more sales.

To increase your profits, aim to do the following:

- **Review your content.** Look at your emails that attract higher-than-average revenue and those that are total duds. What are you saying (or not saying) in the successful email that goes unaddressed in the underperforming one? You may be inconsistently focusing on a need your subscribers have, or are failing to pique their interest in the products or services you sell.

Remember, your emails should focus on bringing value to your audience.

- **Send targeted messages to those who didn't make a purchase.** Not everyone will buy from you, and that's okay. But that doesn't mean you shouldn't find out why they made that decision.

Sometimes, presenting the original message or product in a new angle can convince them that they need your product. For example, offering an exclusive incentive, such as a coupon

towards their first purchase, might encourage hesitant subscribers to give your business a try.

## Revenue per email

Return on investment is an essential metric to track, but it is a tricky one. For some, identifying the cost of an email marketing initiative can be difficult. And that's why calculating revenue per email (RPE) can be so helpful.

With RPE, you can get a sense of how much revenue your email list brings to your business. To calculate the number, simply use the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Revenue}}{\text{(Email quantity sent - number of bounces)}}$$

It is important to note, however, that many marketers commonly use a variation of this formula – known as RPME (Revenue Per Thousand Emails) – to identify minor differences between the success across multiple campaigns. RPME is the revenue generated for every 1,000 email messages delivered. To determine this number, all you have to do is multiply the RPE (which is attained using the formula above) by 1,000.

According to Noah Kagan from SumoMe, this is the most effective metric for identifying the success of an email campaign.

“For sure, the best way to compare across email campaigns that we’ve found is RPME. Revenue per 1000 emails send. This helps us compare emails with a consistent metric across all the campaigns.”

## Ask for feedback

While you can use any of the reports above to improve your email content, don’t hesitate to ask your subscribers for their opinions, too.

If your goal is to create content your subscribers love, it’s often easiest to go right to the source. Simply send your subscribers a survey or ask for them to respond to your email with ideas and feedback.



*Take Action! After you send your first broadcast, review your email open rates. Identify one way to improve the open rates by choosing one element in the subject line you can change (such as adding an emoji or turning the subject line into a question). Then, send the email with the new subject line to subscribers who didn’t open your email the first time to see if it increases engagement! Take note of what you discover for future email sends.*



# GET STARTED WITH EMAIL MARKETING

You just learned a ton of awesome information about email marketing, and if you just read all of that all the way through, virtual high-fives to you because that is awesome!

If you need a little time to let everything soak in, go for it.

But to help you take small steps towards launching your email marketing strategy, I encourage you to choose one thing you've learned from this resource and implement it this week.

Whether that's taking an hour to identify your email marketing goals, crafting your welcome message or even just choosing an email marketing platform from which to send emails, today is the day to get started.

There are people out there who are ready to learn from you or enjoy your products or service – all you have to do is start building that community and give them a beacon to find you.

Good luck, and happy emailing!

## About AWeber

AWeber is an easy-to-use email marketing tool that allows business owners and entrepreneurs to cultivate relationships with their customers. Since 1998, AWeber has been the email engine powering the growth of organizations around the world, including leading sites like Social Media Examiner and ProBlogger and industry influencers such as Peter Shankman and Ann Handley.

Today, more than 100,000 businesses, entrepreneurs, agencies and nonprofits are making the most of AWeber's sophisticated segmentation and analytics capabilities, extensive template libraries and industry-leading deliverability and live support.

## Implement what you've learned.

Join the AWeber community to get access to our email marketing platform, which includes unlimited email sends, automation, templates, customer support and [more](#).

**[Start Your 30-Day Free Trial Today](#)**