



GROWING YOUR BUSINESS WITH EMAIL MARKETING

A How-To Guide on Getting Started

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WHY EMAIL MARKETING?

For many small business owners, managing the daily operations of a company is a full-time, borderline 24/7 job. While you may try to play the Jack of all Trades, you've probably felt like there's never enough time to do it all.

As a result, it's common for marketing to become an afterthought for business owners. You're already struggling with the "essential" tasks, how could you possibly add another thing to your list?

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

Email marketing delivers a return of 4,300% and is more cost-effective than other forms of marketing.

 [Tweet this](#)

Email marketing delivers a [return of 4,300 percent](#), is more cost-effective than other forms of marketing, and it frees up your time so you can get back to running your business. And consumers love it. Take a look – the stats don't lie:

74% of consumers [prefer to receive commercial communications via email](#)

66% of consumers have [made a purchase online as a result of an email marketing message](#)

138% [more is spent by consumers who receive email offers than those who don't](#)

At its simplest, email marketing is a powerful communication tool for building relationships with customers. It gives you a chance to speak to a lot of people at once and even expand your reach. And it allows you to stay connected with loyal customers and on-the-fence prospects who otherwise may have never interacted with your brand again.

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 she had an opportunity to hear from you again – a chance to sign up to your email list and leave the door open for future interactions. And quite possibly, a win-win scenario of a sale for you and a satisfied customer who found a sweater in the perfect shade of teal.

Email becomes so much more than just another way to throw your company name before customers – it's a way to connect with people, develop their trust, and present the value of your business and products.

And that's what sets email marketing apart from traditional advertising. Instead of just telling consumers about your company and hoping they make a purchase, you're making real connections with those who are truly interested in your business and building long-lasting trust.

Considering that most people prefer to communicate with brands through their inbox, email marketing is a no-brainer. ***So what are you waiting for?***



GETTING STARTED WITH EMAIL MARKETING

Before you kick off your email marketing plan, be sure to research and choose a reputable email service provider (ESP). A couple of characteristics to look for in a good ESP include quality customer service support and excellent deliverability. By having a top-notch team to help you throughout your email marketing journey, as well as the highest possible chance to get your messages delivered to your subscribers' inboxes, you'll be better prepared for success.

Once you've found your match, you can finally implement an email marketing strategy.

SETTING UP

Establishing Goals

What do you hope to achieve through email marketing? While this may change 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 may want to focus your goal on growing subscribers. In this case, your goal might look like the following: *I plan to collect 1,000 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.

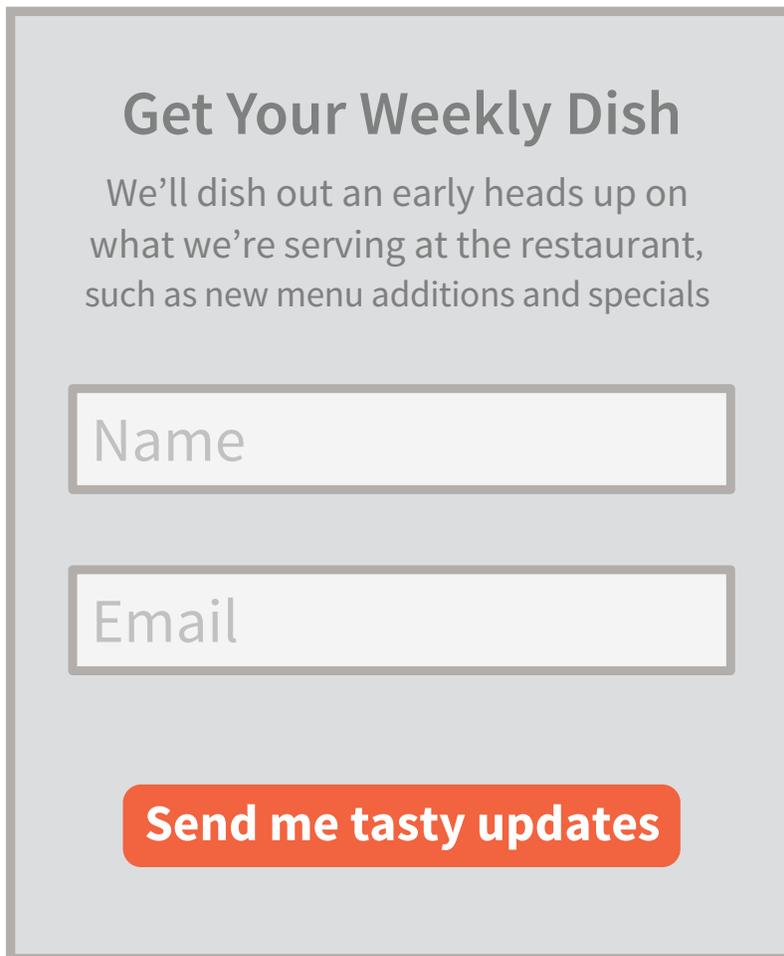
As you plan your tactics, also consider the target audience you hope to reach. For example, a fitness trainer with a focus on health and wellness might reach out to those who want to start exercising and changing their diet. Understanding your ideal customers will help you determine the best ways to connect and communicate with them.

Set goals with numeric values, a due date, and a general idea of how you plan on meeting that number.

Creating a Sign Up Form

The sign up form is where your website visitors will submit their email address to begin receiving your emails. Typically, it lives in the header or sidebar of a website page, or as a pop up box that displays over a website.

It's an easy first step for both you the business owner and your prospects, and one of the most important. Why? Because this is the place where you must convince your visitors that they'll get a great benefit by signing up to your emails.



Get Your Weekly Dish

We'll dish out an early heads up on what we're serving at the restaurant, such as new menu additions and specials

Name

Email

Send me tasty updates

There are a few details to consider when creating your sign up form:

Message

Within your sign up form, briefly explain the purpose of your emails and why visitors should sign up to receive them. Everyone who sees your sign up form will wonder “What’s in it for me?” – and it’s essential that you answer this question in your form. If you plan on offering an incentive, such as a free eBook or printable, be sure to mention this in your message. While you can include a variety of fields in your sign up form (e.g. name, address, state, favorite color), don’t go crazy just for the fun of it – the basics will do.

Call to Action (CTA)

This is the part of your form where you ask your readers to take action. In this case, the CTA will be to sign up to your emails. But instead of going with the generic “Sign Up” button, try using a unique and action-oriented phrase, such as “Get awesome information now!” or “Send me my free eBook!”

Location

While the form should be featured on your homepage (preferably above “the fold” in the header), consider adding it to the sidebar and on other pages, such as your blog. To really grab a visitor’s attention, consider using a [pop up or lightbox form](#).

Design

From a design perspective, your sign up form should be consistent with your company website and/or branding, yet still stand out from the rest of your website. This will allow for a cohesive user experience, which further adds to your business’s credibility. Additionally, consider the size of your sign up form, as well as colors that may be more attention-grabbing.

Growing Subscribers

Now that you have a place to collect subscribers, it's time to focus on how to do so.

Offer Incentives

[Offering an incentive](#) your audience will want is a great way to encourage them to sign up to your emails. Some incentive ideas include a free trial or discount on a service or product, a downloadable checklist, or even an eBook.

Use Social Media

Tap into your social following on platforms such as Facebook and Twitter by encouraging them to subscribe to your emails. Add a [sign up form to your Facebook](#) business page, tease content exclusive to those signed up to receive your emails, or post a link to a [hosted web form](#).

Run A Contest

Feature a valuable prize and [host a contest](#) that requires an email address upon submission. Be sure to promote it on your website and social media!

Use a Third-Party Integration

From landing pages and shopping carts to membership clubs and pop up forms, you can connect your ESP with a unique [integration tool to help grow your subscribers](#).

Offline Opportunities

Whether you're at an event or in your brick-and-mortar store, you can leverage these interactions with customers and prospects to sign up for your emails. Download a [mobile email sign up app](#) to your phone or tablet, or use an "old school" pen and paper form that can be easily transported from your store's register to your next event.



PUT WHAT YOU LEARN TO THE TEST

You're learning the key tricks to growing your business with email marketing.

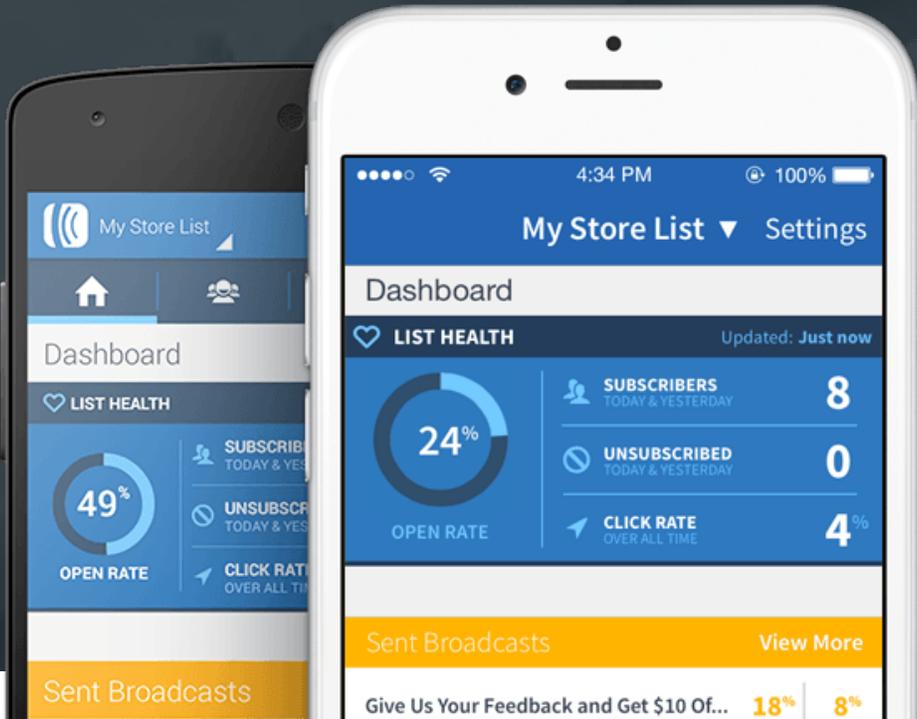
We're excited to share this guide with you, and it is our hope that you'll be able to take what you've learned and begin applying it to your email marketing as soon as you're done reading it.

Email marketing is our thing, and we want to make sure others understand its value to their businesses, too.

That's why we've created guides like these, as well as a massive resource of informative blog posts, how-to articles, videos and webinars so business owners like you can continue learning about email marketing. Not to mention, our supportive email marketing experts are here and ready to help you along the way.

To experience what simple email marketing and great support is really like, give us try. Or, [contact one of our email marketing experts](#) to get the conversation started today.

I want to try AWeber



CREATING EMAILS

You told your subscribers what to expect from your emails – now's the time to deliver the goods. The content in your emails is the first step to establishing a connection with customers and prospects, so it's important to carefully craft your message.

Types of Emails

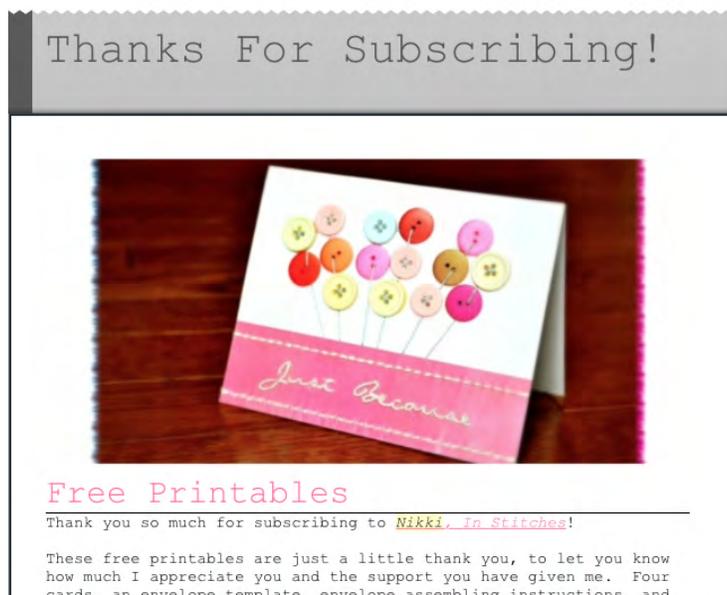
There are four types of emails you can create:

1) Confirmation Message

The purpose of this message is to confirm that new subscribers would like to receive your emails. It is automatically sent to those who sign up to your email list.

2) Welcome Email

As the first email your subscribers will receive from you, be sure to welcome them to your list and thank them for joining. If you offered an incentive in your sign up form, this is when you should deliver on your promise.



Craft blog Nikki in Stitches, kindly welcomes new subscribers and provides a link to the printables promised in the sign up form.

3) Broadcast

A broadcast is a one-time message that is delivered to subscribers at a scheduled date and time (which means you can create it days in advance!). You may use a broadcast to inform subscribers about an upcoming sale or event, or to send monthly newsletters or blog updates, such as the sample below.



4) Follow Up Series

Also known as autoresponders, follow ups are messages created in advance and automatically sent in a sequence to those who sign up to your emails. A follow up series is often used to introduce new subscribers to a company and products. In the first email, you can welcome new subscribers. Following the welcome message, you may choose to send staggered emails to teach them more about your company and products, and how they may benefit from them.

Or, you can use a series to further educate subscribers about a specific topic (such as how to use a product or service), or to tease content from an upcoming eBook or event.

An auto repair shop, for example, might create a follow up series with vehicle maintenance tips (e.g. When to Bring Your Car Into the Shop) that can help any new customer. In this way, your emails allow you to drive people to your website or business.

Writing Emails

Before you begin writing your emails, consider the value you hope to bring your subscribers. With any branded content your audience will read or watch, they will always ask “What’s in it for me?”

In your emails, the answer should be clear within the subject line and first half of your email. This is crucial to creating effective emails that people not only want to sign up for, but also open again and again. And the more loyal they become to your emails and brand, the better it is for business.

Not sure what to write about? Here are some general topics any business can cover:

- Industry News
- Product Information/
Upcoming Sales
- Alternate ways people can use
your product or service
- Customer Spotlight/
Customer Testimonial
- User Generated Content
(Social media posts)
- Company History
- Case Studies
- Special Events
- Newsletters
- Featured Blog Content

Basic design principles to consider when creating an email include:



Using a color scheme that's consistent with your branding, yet easy on the eyes of readers.



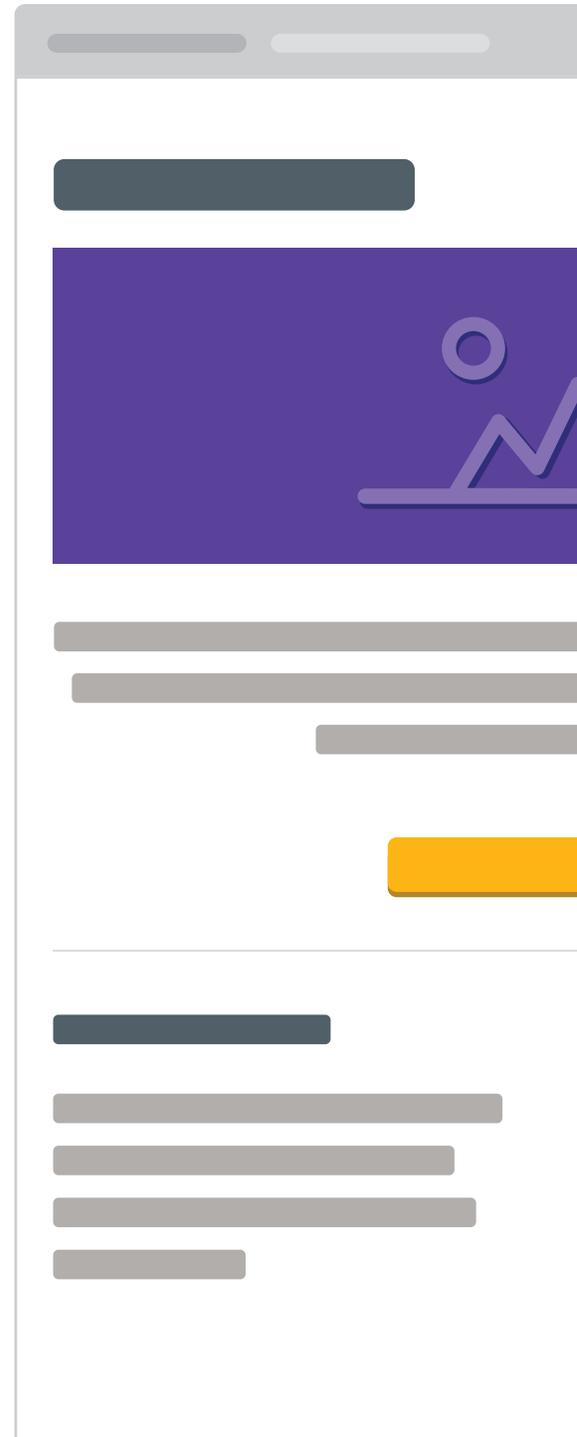
Avoiding a layout with more than one column – multiple columns can make your email appear cluttered and difficult to read on smaller mobile devices ([which can represent at least half of your readers](#)).



Breaking up chunks of text with visual images. Readers prefer short blurbs of information, which can be easily presented by including graphics and lines when necessary.



Featuring the most important content at the top of your email, with less salient information at the bottom. Or, include a brief overview of your email contents in the header of your email. Consumers want the ability to quickly scan and pick out information that's interesting to them – providing visual hierarchy of content will make this possible.



SENDING EMAILS

Time & Day

While there are many variables that affect whether or not a person opens your email, one element you can control is when you send it. To determine the best day and time to send your emails, research the average send times in your specific industry.

If you want to see if your unique subscribers have different preferences, try sending an email on different days and at various times. Then, review your open rates to determine which gets the most opens.

Another thing to consider is consistency. By sticking with a regular send schedule (such as every Monday or the last Thursday of each month), your subscribers will have a better idea of when they can expect to receive content from you. This not only makes it easier for you to stay organized from an email creation standpoint, it also makes you appear more trustworthy to customers and prospects.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			TEST B			
	TEST A					

Targeted Emails

In addition to sending generic emails to your entire subscriber list, you might want to consider sending emails with tailored content to a specific group within your audience.

For example, an online clothing retailer with customers from around the world might send promotional emails to a segment of subscribers based upon where they live. This can allow a business owner to send emails specific to local seasons and national holidays. By providing content that's even more relevant to your subscribers, the greater the chance they'll make a purchase.

By providing content that's even more relevant to your subscribers, the greater the chance they'll make a purchase.

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MEASURING EMAIL PERFORMANCE

The 6 Metrics You Should Be Analyzing

If you've struggled in the past with reading, analyzing, and taking insights from your analytic reports (or if you've overlooked them altogether), you're not alone. Even though it's one of the most common areas small business owners struggle with, the success of your email marketing relies on it.

By reviewing your email reports, you can identify opportunities to improve the impact of your email messages, bring more value to customers and prospects, and ultimately build a loyal fanbase.

Fortunately, [reviewing your email marketing reports and making improvements isn't difficult](#). These are the six key reports to review:

Sales

Click Throughs

Opens

Unsubscribes

Traffic

Deliverability

1) Sales

To see how much revenue your emails are generating, you must track the sales that resulted from each individual email. (For more information on how to set up sales tracking, check with your ESP). Once you have your stats, you can use this information to improve your emails to generate more sales.

To increase your sales numbers, you'll want to:

- **Assess your content**

Review your emails that are attracting higher-than-average revenue and those that have been total duds. What are you saying in the successful email that's 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're selling. 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 make a purchase, and that's okay. But that doesn't mean you shouldn't do a little sleuthing to find out why. Sometimes, simply presenting the original message or product in a new angle can do the trick. Including an exclusive incentive, such as a coupon to use towards their first purchase, can encourage them to give your business a try.

- **Perform split tests**

Still not sure why your emails are performing poorly? Consider conducting [a simple split test](#) on different variations (such as a different headline, call to action, design layout, etc.) of an email to help you identify your subscribers' preferences.

2) Click Throughs

Click reports show how many times a person clicked a link in your email. This can shed light on what type of content is popular among your subscribers and what they're less interested in.

To keep click through rates high, you should:

- **Eliminate underperforming content**

If you notice a link isn't attracting a lot of attention, consider changing the way you present the information (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 you know a segment of your subscribers share a strong interest in a particular topic, continue sending them even more relevant content.

Be clear about the content and benefits subscribers will get from your emails and deliver on that promise.

 [Tweet this](#)

3) Opens

This report tells you how many people opened your email and when they opened it. Your open rates can reveal various insights, such as the strength of your subject lines and the best times to send an email to your subscribers.

Aim for high open rates by:

- **Setting clear expectations**

Be clear about the content and benefits subscribers will get from your emails (e.g. helpful tips, industry news, coupons) and deliver on that promise. If they signed up for one of those reasons, they'll be more likely to open your emails to get what they want.

- **Writing compelling subject lines**

The subject line is the first part of your email subscribers will 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.

Some of the best subject lines include actionable (and sometimes humorous) phrases, such as “Get What You’ve Been Eyeing” or “Chocolate Truffles...Enough Said.” Consider using personalization, such as the subscriber’s first name, to add a personal touch to your emails and make them stand out in a crowded inbox.

4) 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.

If you notice you have a steady number of unsubscribes, you can:

- **Ask why they're leaving**

Direct those who want to unsubscribe from your emails to a unique landing page that asks them why they're leaving. Consider using their feedback to help shape and improve future emails.

- **Reevaluate your email marketing practices**

Make sure you're setting your emails up for success and taking care of the basics. This includes using confirmed opt-in (people are [less likely to unsubscribe](#) to an email if they take the extra step to confirm their subscription) and setting accurate expectations as to what subscribers will receive in your emails.

- **Continue attracting new subscribers**

To ease the impact of losing subscribers, remain proactive in collecting new email sign ups each month. This will also help you grow your list over time.

People are less likely to unsubscribe to an email if they take the extra step to confirm their subscription.

 Tweet this

5) Traffic

To make a sale, you need to drive email subscribers to specific pages on your website. Traffic reports reveal how many subscribers are going to your website.

To maintain steady traffic, consider the following questions:

- **Are emails consistent?**

Sending emails infrequently can cause subscribers to forget about your brand or that they signed up to your email list in the first place.

- **Is there a clear call to action?**

A hidden call to action or no CTA at all makes it impossible for people to take a next step after reading your emails. Whether you direct them to the homepage of your website, a product page, or a blog post, make sure there's a logical next step your audience can take.

- **Are there links to your site within your email?**

If not, peppering links to relevant content can help drive traffic to your website and other branded properties. If you already have 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 re-think your email content strategy. Address the needs of your customers and prospects by delivering information that interests them.

Addressing the issues mentioned earlier in the guide may also help give your traffic the boost it needs.

6) Deliverability

If the stats for one email are unusually low compared to others (or if your bounce rate is abnormally high), your emails may not be reaching your subscribers' inboxes.

While many factors can influence email deliverability, it's commonly caused by a high number of spam complaints. The more subscribers mark your messages as spam, the greater the likelihood that an internet service provider (e.g. Gmail, Yahoo, AOL, Outlook), may place future messages in junk folders.

Spam rates should be below 0.1 percent. To maintain a high deliverability, it's important that you adhere to the tips mentioned throughout this guide, such as:

- **Sending valuable content.**
- **Emailing frequently.**
- **Sending segmented messages.**

To ensure your emails make it to their inbox every time, ask your subscribers to add you to their address book. You can share [this whitelisting guide](#) with those who may want step-by-step instructions on how to do this on various email platforms.



GETTING STARTED... AND STICKING WITH IT

Email marketing is a simple way to promote your brand and build relationships with customers, but don't get discouraged if it seems like a lot of work. Just as with any good habit, it's important to stay motivated and stick with it. Consider devoting at least 30 minutes a day to nurturing your email list until it becomes routine. And if you do have any questions along the way, [feel free to contact us at any time](#) – we're happy to help!

**Are you ready to kick-start
your email marketing?**

Sign up is easy – and the first month is free.

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[Log in now](#) to start growing your business.

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 120,000 small- and midsize-businesses, entrepreneurs, agencies and nonprofits are making the most of AWeber's sophisticated segmentation and analytics capabilities, split testing applications, extensive template libraries and industry-leading deliverability and live support.

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