



An Email Marketing Question & Answer Session

Find out the answers to the 20 most asked email marketing questions

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Executive summary

Email Marketing has come a long way since its popularity started to grow during the turn of the century. As technology has evolved, email marketers have benefited immensely, leading to campaigns that have much more functionality and interactivity.

Here at eMailCampaigner.com we have been involved at the sharp end of email marketing for over 6 years and we are well respected within the industry by clients and peers alike.

Our regular monthly newsletter – Email Marketing Hints & Tips – has a regular feature that allows our subscribers to ask questions and seek advice. We have decided to publish the 20 most relevant questions we have received concerning email marketing and have prepared this white paper to showcase our answers.

1 How often should you send your email marketing campaigns?

The answer to this question lies within the quality of your mailing list and the content that you send. It is also dependant upon any expectation you set for the recipient when they subscribe to your mailing list.

For example, businesses that trade within a business to consumer (B2C) market may have more relevant offers based on price and availability than businesses who only sell to other businesses (B2B). For this reason, it may be applicable for them to send weekly offers to their subscribers.

Sending too many campaigns can become annoying to your subscribers. If you told them when they signed up that they'd receive campaigns once per month then it is important you stick to that promise. If you don't, it is likely that you'll lose the trust you have worked hard to build.

Put yourself in your subscriber's shoes and ask whether you would be happy to receive the number of campaigns that you intend to deliver. If so, and you send campaigns quite frequently, then

keep an eye on your unsubscribe rates to see whether your subscribers share the same opinion.

2 What is the best time of the day to send an email campaign?

The easiest way to find out the best time to send email campaigns for your business is to test and measure. Try sending on different days at first to see which days give you the best response. Do the same thing with the time of the day you send it.

There are a couple of things to avoid here. For instance, if your recipients are other businesses, it is probably not wise to send out a campaign towards the close of business on a Friday. If half of your subscribers leave early on a Friday, they will only see your email first thing Monday morning at which point its priority will be quite low.



3 Should I send my email campaign in HTML or Plain Text?

If your campaign needs to include images then it is best to send a HTML email, backed up with a Plain Text version. If you speak with your email marketing provider, it is likely that they will send your email in HTML format and automatically include a Plain Text version for



those recipients who have configured their email client to receive Plain text only.

If you are sending a campaign which requires no images, then it may be useful to send only in Plain Text.

Seek advice from your provider or for further advice from eMailCampaigner.com, call **John Coyne on 0870 770 4990** who will be happy to offer free advice.



4 How long should the subject line be? Your subject line is key to the success of the whole campaign. Get it right and it could mean increased enquiries and sales. Get it wrong and it could mean no enquiries and sales.

Ideally your subject line should be no more than 50 characters. It should be newsworthy, descriptive and should never mislead your recipient. Try and create some intrigue within your subject line. Test it on your friends and colleagues and ask for their opinion on whether they would open the email if they received it.

5 How do I build an email list? There are many ways to build a high quality, opt in email mailing list. Initially, have your staff provide a list of prospects who have contacted or made an enquiry with your company over the past couple of years and who have requested further information/costs from you. You will be amazed at how many email addresses you actually hold internally who have asked for further information from your company.

To add new subscribers to your email mailing list you can use the following techniques;

- Website subscription
- Competition entry
- Collect business cards at seminars, conferences and networking events (B2B)
- Collect email addresses at point of sale (B2C)

These are just some of the ways that you can build a mailing list of subscribers who are happy to receive information from you.

6 Should I purchase email data? Purchasing data is a very emotional subject as having a large volume of data does not guarantee immediate results. Despite increasing your reach and giving yourself more coverage, you might find that you get no return.

There are some important questions you should ask your data provider when purchasing data;

- What percentage of hard bounces and gone-aways can I expect?
- Do you offer replacement data or money back for these bounces?
- How often is your data cleansed?
- Is the data for single or multi use?

As mentioned above, there is no guarantee that buying data will bring good results. Home grown data, collected organically will more often than not be the most successful route.



7 What are email marketing auto responders?

Auto responders are a great way of building a relationship with prospects.

Lots of companies generate high volumes of traffic but don't quite manage to actually find out who is visiting the site. Auto responders can help turn some of this unknown traffic into prospects as they allow visitors to leave their details via an online form in order to receive an instant email back from you.

Auto responders are also a great way finding out more about each new prospect such as their likes and dislikes. All of this information is vital as it allows you to build up your knowledge about each prospect and tailor your offer to each of them personally.

To find out more about Auto Responders, please email John Coyne (john@doc-net.com) and request a copy of the White Paper: **Winning Business with Auto Responders**.

8 Why do I have a low open rate?

There are many factors that can contribute to a low open rate from your email campaigns;

- Email flagged as spam by ISP
- Email flagged as spam by recipient
- Poor delivery rates
- Poor subject line
- Poor 'from' line

Put yourself in the recipient's shoes. Take a look at the email you are about to send. Would you open it? Is the subject line informative yet appealing enough to open the mail? Does it create interest?

Make sure the 'from' line in your email displays your company name so that all recipients can recognise who the email is from. If you have nominated an individual within the company and your recipients are used to receiving emails from that individual then make sure you use that name.

Also, ask your email marketing provider to confirm how they monitor the spam score your email will generate to ensure it gets through some of the strict ISP mail filters that are in place.

9 Why do I have a low click through rate?

Good click through rates are vital to a successful email campaign. If you are experiencing low click through rates it is important you put steps in place to remedy immediately.

Ensure the quality of your mailing list is high. Make sure that those on your list have asked to be there.

Create a compelling offer and ensure that your call to action is strong. Once you are happy with the content, make sure that it is relevant to your target audience. It is also important that the recipient knows what you expect them to do with the call to action, i.e, email you, phone or web click through.

Finally, make sure that the creative aspect of your campaign is of high quality. Having a good list, great content and a good offer combined with a weak looking email is akin to driving a Rolls Royce with a Robin Reliant engine.





10 Are there any good tactics to impress recipients?

Writing good content that is informative and offers something of value (be it educationally or via a free download) is enough to keep your recipients wanting more.

There are no secrets to being a successful email marketer. Keep your content relevant to your audience, keep it interesting and make people want to read more. Offer case studies, free white papers, free mini courses as this will build trust between you and your recipients.

11 Should I include attachments?

It isn't practical to send a PDF or similar attachments along with every outgoing email.

A simple solution to this is to store the document on your server and link directly to it from the email. That way, you are also able to track who opens the document. For more information about attachments and resources **call John Coyne on 0161 839 0101.**

12 Should I use email marketing as a way of winning new business or retaining my existing customers?

Both! Email marketing is perfect to acquire and retain customers.

Winning business is all about gaining trust and by sending consistent marketing messages that contain strong, valuable content you are able to build this trust slowly over time. Keep things simple – send a regular newsletter offering hints, tips and advice.

Retaining business can often hinge on making your customers feel valued. If you don't communicate with them on a regular basis it is much easier for them to defect to a competitor who may come along with a similar product or service but at a cheaper price. It's vital to stay in touch with customers and for them to know that

you value their custom and don't just see them as cash till. As email marketing is inexpensive and quick, you can use it as your means of regular communication with clients. Again, keep things simple – you can send a monthly newsletter, product or service updates, welcome packs, customer service questionnaires and special offers/discounts.

13 What is the best way to plan an email marketing campaign?

When developing your plan it is important to know what outcome you want from your marketing efforts. This can be hierarchal.

For example, when we carry out email marketing campaigns to existing customers we have an overall objective, followed by smaller objectives which work towards achieving this top level goal.

When planning your campaigns, it is important to keep things simple. At the start of each month, brainstorm with your colleagues and decide what information is newsworthy and likely to add value to your customers and/or prospects.

For example, do you have a new service that will make an improvement to a customer's current package? Do you have new features that will enhance a product?

To find out more about strategy and planning, please email John Coyne (john@doc-net.com) and request a copy of the White Paper: **Email Marketing Strategy & Planning**



14 How do I make sure my email marketing campaigns are legally compliant?

Let us keep you out of trouble! Here at www.eMailCampaigner.com we ensure that all of the legal boxes are ticked. It still amazes us to see so many email marketing providers broadcast campaigns on behalf of their clients that don't have the necessary disclaimers, company details and working unsubscribe links.

Speak with your email marketing provider if you aren't sure whether your existing campaigns are legal. **Alternatively, for free advice, please call John Coyne on 0870 770 4990.**

15 What is the best way to segment my email mailing lists?

List segmentation is ideal as it allows you to target your campaigns to the right people. How you segment your mailing list will depend on the product or service you sell. For example, if you are holding an event in London, it is better to target people on your mailing list that would be local enough to travel rather than people who live in Scotland!

Other examples of segmentation include industry type, geographical location and company information (such as turnover).



16 How important is email marketing to my business?

Every business wants to be successful. Every business wants to find loyal customers who are profitable and keep them as customers for as long as possible. In order of importance, winning new customers and retaining existing ones will be the priority for many businesses. Email marketing can help towards this objective. It's the quickest route to communicating important information, especially information that is time critical.

17 Does animation work well within email marketing campaigns?

There are pros and cons to using animation within email marketing campaigns. With all of the issues surrounding Spam, animation has fallen out of favour. Certain email clients will not display animation so you may want to consider this before spending some of your marketing budget on a large design fee.

If used correctly, animation can be quite powerful and can result in increased click through rates. However, unless you are 100% sure that your campaign will benefit additionally from animation then it may be worth considering keeping your images static.

18 Why do I need an email marketing provider, why can't I do it myself?

There is nothing to stop you sending out your own email marketing campaigns. It is worth knowing however, that your ISP may not allow the sending of bulk emails and they may terminate your service if you send without permission.

The bigger picture however is that an email marketing provider knows the ins and outs of the industry. They will know how to keep you out of trouble (see question 14) and ensure that your campaigns tick all the right boxes. They know tactics that will help with delivery and open rate success, as well as being able to advise you on



strategy and planning. Ultimately, working with a good provider is more likely to make you successful.

19 Should I personalise campaigns? Does it make a difference?

Personalisation is something that should be used. It adds a personal touch to your email campaign and will ensure the recipient knows that you are making the effort to provide them with content and offers that meet their preference. It is also worth noting that personalisation is not just limited to names.

20 Does email marketing provide return on investment?

Email marketing is accountable. Advanced tracking features allow you to measure the success of each and every campaign.

As email is now the preferred method of communication for many, more and more businesses are using email as their primary communication and marketing tool. Return on investment is very important in today's business climate as businesses have more and more marketing options. Email marketing is one of the fastest growing industries as marketers know they can generate a return on investment very quickly.

Conclusion

We hope that you have found the above answers beneficial and that they have answered some of your own questions.

This list above is not exhaustive so if you have any other questions then either email John Coyne (john@doc-net.com) or call 0870 770 4990.

eMailCampaigner - Helping you retain your customers

eMailCampaigner™ is a practical solution to your permission based email requirements that helps you manage, create and monitor your e-marketing program.

Let us shown you how you can:

- **Dramatically reduce costs** through switching from direct mail to email marketing
- Use advanced reporting in real-time to **enjoy a faster sales process**
- **Increase profitability** with highly targeted campaigns
- **Reduce production time** spent creating projects with our friendly template system

Just some of the great brands that trust us to achieve their marketing objectives:



Call us on **0870 770 4990** to find out how we can help you meet your business objectives or visit www.eMailCampaigner.com to find out more today or contact

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