



Head-to-Toe Tips On Email Marketing (Part II)



In our last issue, we talked about the effectiveness of email marketing and took you through the basics of ensuring a well constructed email marketing piece such as:

- “From” Line
- “To” Line
- “Sent” Line
- “Subject” of email
- Body content

 In this issue, we’ll elaborate further on the subject and touch on:

- ▶ Interactivity
- ▶ Tracking
- ▶ Diverse environments
- ▶ Testing
- ▶ Unsubscribe
- ▶ Updating of particulars
- ▶ Privacy issues



Interactivity – Use it, don't lose it!

Do you treat your piece of email marketing communication as a print version of your direct mailer?

We have received too many email promotional pieces that are simply images scanned from print flyers. This approach falls far short of the potential of the interactivity of the email marketing channel.

As far as possible, your email should entice your readers to some action, such as exploring your website or sending you an email for more information. Some things that you can do:

- Place links in your email for more detailed information.
- Run surveys and polls to gauge the attitudes and opinions of your email audience
- Insert 'Calls to Action'. These are actions that you want your reader to take. It can be anything from providing feedback or even making a purchase.

Remember, an interactive email enables you to gauge how well your message is being received, which brings us to the next point.

Track responses

Do you know how well your emails are doing?

Tracking is an integral part to marketing online. By vigilantly tracking responses, you are able to gauge how customers are responding to your email and how well your content is received.

Some of the things you should be able to track include;

- **Total emails sent**
This is a measure of the total number of emails that have been broadcast
- **Total bounced emails**
These are emails that are returned either because the email address does not exist (hard bounce) or because of some temporary problem such as a full mailbox (soft bounce).
- **Total number of successful emails sent**
This is simply 'Total emails sent' less the 'Total bounced emails'. It gives you a measure of the number of emails that reached the intended email addresses.



Number of emails opened

This is an approximate measure of the number of emails opened. It is also used as an estimate of the number of emails read. Typical open rates range from 30% - 60% and depends on the quality of your email list and the relevance of your email message.

Number of click-throughs

It is possible to track the click-throughs down to the specific link. In so doing, you get an accurate report of which link is the most popular.

However, you shouldn't be tracking email performance only. You should track your sales on the site and see how much of that is a result of your email marketing campaigns. You can do this by tagging different source codes to different webpages linked to the email. Doing this allows you to tie the email campaign to specific business results and helps you measure how well such campaigns are contributing to sales.

Be aware of diverse environments

Email environments are probably the most diverse on the internet. There are web-based emails such as gmail, yahoo and hotmail. Then there are POP emails that use a software (or in tech-speak: email client) like Microsoft Outlook to download the emails from a mail server. Different settings on these software can affect what is viewed and how they are presented.

When constructing your email be aware of the following;

- Some email software may be set to view only text email. If possible construct your email to include a text version.
- By default, many email clients do not display images. Therefore construct your email with the key messages appearing in html text so that your email message can be read.
- Try not to include Flash, XML or any other executables (files that run a program). Most email scanning software will detect this and give users a warning.

“WARNING-XML-CODEBASE-OBJECT...”

This warning is enough to turn most people off.

Test, test, test

There is no way you can be sure that your email works properly until you test it. Set up test accounts in different environments: yahoo, hotmail, gmail and different ISP within your market. Make sure your email looks and works properly in these environments.



Unsubscribe Message

In many markets with anti-spam regulations, inserting an 'unsubscribe' link is compulsory. In Singapore, it is part of IDA's guidelines. The 'Unsubscribe' option is not necessarily a bad thing. It is good because

- It helps to weed out people who are no longer interested in your communications, and keeps the list alive. Think of it as a renewing mechanism.
- High unsubscribe rates for a campaign tells you that you are doing something wrong.

It is very important that you strictly honor the unsubscribe commitment. DO NOT continue sending your customers messages after they have unsubscribed. More importantly, make sure your company maintains a central unsubscribe list if you maintain several lists.

Subscribe message

If you provide high quality communications, there is a chance that your email will get passed around. Make it easy for new readers to subscribe. Provide a 'subscribe' link for this purpose.

Also enable a 'subscription' option on your website. You may not get a sale the first time someone visits your website. But if you can get their email address via a subscribe link, you might be able to interest them in your offering at a later date.

Update particulars

If you do not maintain your email database and keep it current, its quality will degenerate over time. A good way to maintain it is to provide an 'Update Particulars' link in your email communications and one on your website. Let your readers update their details easily and you will keep the email address current.

Automate it all

Unsubscribe, subscribe, update particulars - all these can be very tedious and time consuming if done manually, not to mention prone to human error. Automate all these using a [professional email management system](#) so that you can focus your energies on the content and offers in the email communications.

Privacy Policy

This is a statement about how you will use the personal data gathered from your reader-base. State it clearly so that your email readers know what they are getting themselves into. Consumers are getting more cautious about handing out personal data these days so a clearly stated and strict privacy policy will put them at ease and improve your subscribe and update rates.

That's about all we have time for this month. Continue to tune in.

PS: Found this newsletter informative and useful? [Email us](#) with your comments, questions or other topics here!