


# Head-to-Toe Tips On Email Marketing



**FACT:** 95% of the 2.65 million internet users in Singapore<sup>1</sup> use the internet for emailing, ie, 2.5 million people living in Singapore can be reached via emails.



Besides its popularity, email is also an economical way to keep in touch with your customers, understand their needs better and give your products and brand top-of-mind awareness. From **1 cent** per email, email marketing can be the best way to spend your limited marketing dollars.

But with spam (unsolicited emails) being a global problem, how do you cut through the noise and make your email stand out? We've compiled a head-to-toe list to guide you through the process. Whether you are an experienced e-marketer or a novice, there is something in this list for you.

## In this issue, we'll look at the basics of the:

- ▶ "From" Line
- ▶ "To" Line
- ▶ "Sent" Line
- ▶ "Subject" of email
- ▶ Body content

<sup>1</sup> IDA Annual Survey on Infocomm Usage in Households and by Individuals for 2004

## "From" Line

**This line tells your recipient who you are. Make sure your "From" line contains a name that is familiar and easily identified by your customer.**

Customers identify with your product's brand more often than the company's name. For example, customers recognize the store Ikea, though not all know that the company that runs it here is Ikano Pte Ltd. Therefore, if your email comes from "Ikano" rather than the more familiar "Ikea", customers are likely to delete or treat the email as spam.

### **Send emails via your own email gateway**

If you're using a vendor to manage your email broadcasts, make sure the email is sent via your own email gateway. This is because some email scanning software can detect differences between the "From" line and email gateway and flag the email as a possible fake (or phishing) email. What happens then? Your email ends up in your customers' 'Junk' or 'Bulk mail' folders.

## "To" Line

**Who are you sending to? Did you first obtain their permission?**

**Tip: Do not send emails to complete strangers.  
Do not purchase unvalidated email lists for mass broadcasts.**

Spam is a serious problem and you will be at risk of breaking the law in some countries or see your reputation take a nosedive.

You can get permission from customers via 'Opt-In' or 'Opt-Out' options.

In 'Opt-In, customers explicitly request to be put on your mailing list. In 'Opt-Out' or "Unsubscribe", they remain on your list unless they ask to be taken out. An 'Opt-Out' or "Unsubscribe" option is the minimum requirement for email marketing, but 'Opt-In' definitely gets you a better email marketing list.

## "Sent" Line

**How frequently are you sending your emails? Do you stick to a fixed frequency?**

Developing an email relationship with your customer is like developing any personal relationship.

- Think of a friend who has not bothered to contact you for a long time. Out of the blue, this person sends you a message asking you to buy something from him. Wouldn't you simply ignore him?

- How about the friend whose interaction is limited to forwarding jokes sent by other people? You're not likely to take those relationships very seriously, are you?
- Then, there is the friend who takes the time to write to you regularly. Aren't you more likely to read what is sent to you and carefully consider the requests in the email?

There is something to be said for being committed to a regular schedule in communicating with your customers. Consistency helps your customer anticipate a message from you and be better pre-disposed to its contents.

## Subject Title

**Does your title clearly announce the purpose and content of your email? Does it contain lots of spam-prone words like "Free!", "Special", "Limited offer!"?**

In his book, 'Confessions of an Advertising Man' and "Ogilvy on Advertising", David Ogilvy says that 'On the average, five times as many people read the headlines as they read the body copy'. This principle applies to online communications as well.

Your subject title is your headline. In email, just like in the newspaper, the area that is immediately viewable, ie 'above the fold' is the most important. Put your most important message right on the top portion of your email.

While making your subject tile interesting and relevant, be aware of using words like 'Free'. With the widespread deployment of Spam filters, words such as 'Free', 'Special', 'Offer' are likely to result in your email being relegated to the 'Junk' or 'Bulk Mail' folder.

## The Body

### **Announcements / notices**

You may want to start your email with some important announcements.

Some messages you may consider are:

- Messages advising the reader to take an action that will prevent your email from landing in the junk box. This has recently become more important with the widespread adoption of Spam screening software on emails. The message could be something like this:  
*"To avoid sending this email to your junk / bulk mailbox, please add this sender to a safe sender's list."*

- Tell your reader why he or she is receiving this email, sometimes, subscribers forget that they have subscribed to your email, remind them where you got their email from. You may start off your email with: *“You are getting this email because you have subscribed to Interact!, Design Depot’s free e-newsletter on e-marketing.”*



### What’s in it for the reader?

Would you enjoy reading an email from a friend who talks only about himself without a single thought for you? Obviously not!

When conceiving the content for your email, ask yourself what’s in it for the reader. Emails that have little value to the reader are not much better than Spam. Continue sending it and your unsubscribe rate will go up accompanied by a downward spiral in your open and response rates.

Some content that can add value to your email include:

- Reviews or tips on selecting products
- Genuine special offers
- Product information updates, especially to customers who own an older version of the product
- Service emails. E.g. confirmation of purchases, reminders to renew, notification of delivery etc

You will need to invest some time and effort to develop content that is worthwhile reading. But the effort will be worth it in the long run.

**This should give you quite a bit to chew on. In our next issue, we’ll cover other oft-overlooked issues in email marketing such as:**

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

Talk to you then!

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