

# Email Marketing: Best Practices & Tips



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
---------------------	----------

---

<b>CHAPTER 1: Email Marketing's Importance to Your Business's Success</b>	<b>4</b>
---	----------

---

<b>CHAPTER 2: Building Your Email Marketing Program &amp; Strategy</b>	<b>5</b>
--	----------

---

<b>CHAPTER 3: Segmentation</b>	<b>9</b>
------------------------------------	----------

---

<b>CHAPTER 4: Automated Lifecycle Campaigns &amp; Rules</b>	<b>13</b>
---	-----------

---

<b>CHAPTER 5: Copy &amp; Voice</b>	<b>17</b>
--	-----------

---

<b>CHAPTER 6: Analytics/Performance Metrics</b>	<b>22</b>
---	-----------

---

<b>Ultimate Email Marketing Checklist</b>	<b>24</b>
---	-----------

---

<b>Final Summary</b>	<b>26</b>
----------------------	-----------

---

# Introduction

Email Marketing is still ranked as the **most effective marketing channel** over social media, affiliate marketing, and SEO. This channel is hugely effective simply because people use email more than other platforms. In 2017, data showed that **87%** of adult internet users in the US use email, which blows other channels out of the water. Search engines only see 15% of internet users, and social media sees about 22%.

Building out an effective email marketing campaign has never been more important. Inboxes are flooded with promotions on a daily basis, and without careful consideration and strategy, an email can easily end up disappearing into the masses.

In this ultimate guide to email marketing, you will learn:

- + Email marketing's importance to your business's success
- + Methods to build your email marketing program and strategy
- + Segmentation techniques through recommended filters and tags
- + Automated lifecycle campaigns and rules to know
- + Branding/design approaches
- + Copy/voice that connects with customers
- + Analytics/performance metrics to monitor and how to improve
- + **BONUS:** A checklist (downloadable infographic) to maintain success

# Email Marketing's Importance to Your Business's Success

Your business's success relies on healthy customer relationships and repeat product sales. Email marketing can directly impact both in a big way, and the numbers back that up. Email as a marketing channel generates the highest revenue, averaging 3,800% ROI. However ShippingEasy's solution has shown an even better ROI with a 5,000% average return.

With over half the planet (3.8 billion people) using email in 2018 and a **predicted 4.2 billion email users by 2022**, email is here to stay.

Email marketing is the most cost-effective way to generate leads, build new relationships with prospects, and nurture relationships with current customers.

Some outcomes of successful email marketing are:

- + More sales
- + Stronger awareness of your brand and product
- + More traffic to your website
- + Honest feedback from the buyer's experience
- + More personalized communication with your customers

# Building Your Email Marketing Program & Strategy

A documented email marketing program and strategy let your team know what's coming next, help set goals and maximize the amount of profit or awareness, and can strategically target and optimize content for specific audiences.

When planning your email marketing program and strategy, ask yourself:

## **Who is my audience?**

Determining your audience will help guide your creative decisions when building your campaign. Think about your audience's values, purchase history, and demographic and craft a message specific to them.

## **What am I going to say to them?**

Your customers receive dozens of emails per day. Stand out to them with a personalized message that feels valuable and relevant to where they are at in their buyer lifecycle.

## **How often will I reach out, and what are my goals when I do?**

Your customers don't need multiple emails weekly from you. Less is more. Pack as much value into one email as possible. Avoid saturating your emails with too much content. Rather, focus on making an irresistible single call to action that drives readers to more information on your website.

### **What's my schedule?**

Consistency is key. Over time, your audience should learn how often they should expect to hear from you. If you have a regular newsletter, send it on the same day each month. For sales and promotions, give your audience enough time to receive the email and take action before the deal expires.

### **What tools will I use?**

Even though text-based emails aren't as pretty, they typically perform better than overly designed campaigns; however, if you want to add some flavor, you may opt to use other tools to create graphics or text overlay. Do some research and find the tools that work best for your workflow. Some of our go-to's include: Canva, Adobe Spark, and Photoshop.

### **How will I measure my success?**

Review the metrics from your previous campaigns a week or so after they've been deployed. If you have a low open rate, consider testing out a different subject line. Low click-through-rate? Double check that your call-to-action is up front and centered and that you're not confusing the reader by giving them too many things to do in one email.

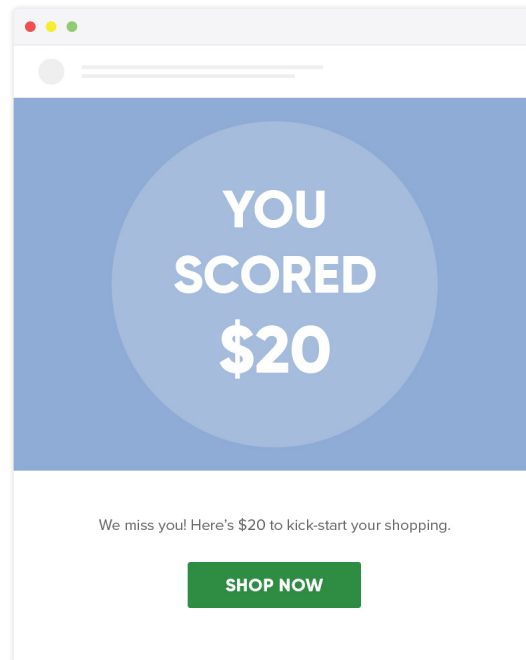
Once you think through these questions, you've completed the hard part. In regards to your strategy, there are a few essential elements to bear in mind:

### **Craft personal and valuable messages to a specific audience.**

By writing intention-focused content, you are providing your audience with a message that was written specifically for them. Talk directly to the customers who would be most interested in a sale you're promoting.

## CHAPTER 2

Tantalize lapsed customers with something they'll be more receptive to, like a special discount for shopping again, rather than a standard promotion.



### **Maintain consistent design and branding.**

Upon opening your email, your reader should recognize who it's from. Use the same colors and fonts consistently, and always include your logo. The email should be visually scannable, and readers should be able to identify what you're asking of them in a matter of a few seconds.

### **Write an honest, catchy subject line.**

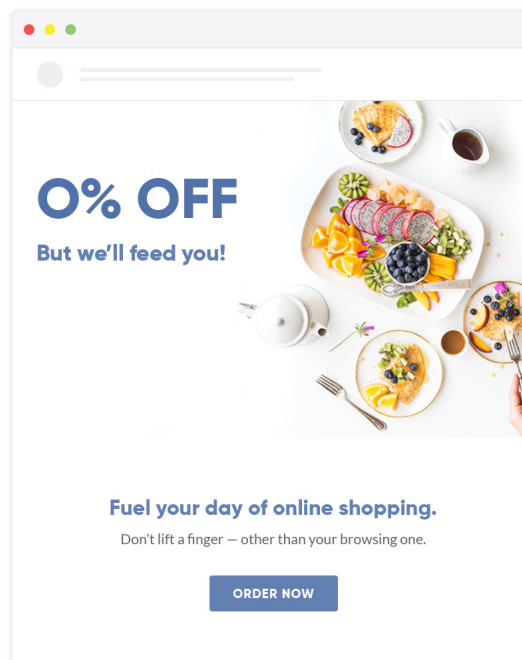
Be transparent and pack value into your subject line to increase open rates. Depending on who you're targeting, your subject line will vary. For example, write a subject line for a lapsed customer like "It's been a minute. Here's a 10% discount."

**Send your campaign at the optimal time.**

(We recommend Tuesday-Thursday around 10AM, but your audience may respond best to a different time.) A/B Test to gauge when your audience responds best, and schedule your future campaigns accordingly. Typically, mid-late morning early in the week yields positive results, but each audience varies.

**Take advantage and think ahead for holidays, seasonal changes (e.g. back to school), and e-commerce days like Cyber Monday when promoting your sales.**

Creating a content calendar early in the year is a great way to get organized and save yourself time during holidays and seasonal promotion periods. The more creative and planned your marketing strategy, the more effective it will be. Most e-commerce companies will have a sale for Cyber Monday, so think outside the box and figure out how your brand will stand out amongst the many promoting for this day. Consider going against the grain like Bite Squad and offer a “0% discount”. No one will expect it, and it will definitely get your readers’ attention.





# Segmentation

Segmentation is the division of your customers into more specific groups based on certain criteria. Normally, segmentation is used as a way to make your emails more personal and to deliver relevant marketing based on a number of factors like customer status, total order spend, geographic location, and more. Relevant emails drive **18x more revenue** than mass emails.

Broadcast email, which means sending the same email to all of your customers, may be a quick and simple way to try to reach your audience. But it's no longer the only way, or even the best way, to persuade more customers to buy from you. Every one of your customers are humans with unique personalities, demographics, and preferences. When you engage with them by the thousands, you're risking painting too broad of a stroke and missing your target. Rather than blast an email to all of your customers, think about how you can sort them into smaller groups and target each one differently.

When deciding to segment your customers, think about their shopping behavior.

- + How often have they shopped?
- + How much have they spent?
- + Who are your first-time buyers? Your VIPs?
- + Who could benefit from product recommendations based on their previous purchases?
- + Who is more likely to take action and write you a glowing review?

Another way to target your customers is by using lists of who you know engaged with previous campaigns. After you've sent a campaign, you can view the results and generate a new list for customers who opened, clicked, or made a purchase, then target messaging based on their action to show them you're paying attention.

## Why Segmentation is Key: The Numbers Don't Lie

Statistics have shown that targeted campaigns outperformed broadcast campaigns on performance metrics across the board:

<b>14.31%</b> higher opens	<b>10.64%</b> higher unique opens	<b>100.95%</b> higher clicks
<b>3.9%</b> fewer spam complaints	<b>9.37%</b> lower unsubscribe rates	

Using segmentation also helps you compete not just within your own marketplace but also in the inbox. A [2016 report](#) from Ascend2 research found 51% of top-performing marketers said segmentation was their most effective email tactic.

If you're a high-volume sender (three times a week to daily or even several times a day), and you're sending the same message to every customer regardless of status or longevity, you're training them to ignore your emails until they feel like opening them.

That just lays the groundwork for inactivity, but it doesn't have to be that way. If your email sending platform doesn't allow you to easily set up and automate a segmented messaging program, find one that does (like [ShippingEasy!](#)).

It's pretty clear: Segmentation helps you boost your email performance, and ignoring it can make you less competitive.

# Automated Lifecycle Campaigns & Rules

Lifecycle campaigns are customer-centric emails that are sent automatically, based on rules and triggers you set ahead of time. Think of your customers' lifecycle as a journey with different stages sparking different relevant conversations and recommendations.

Statistics show that automated emails get **119% higher click through rates** than mass one-time campaigns, and nurtured leads make **47% larger purchases**. Lifecycle campaigns are part of an always-on marketing approach and once set up, maintenance is rarely needed to continuously drive orders and traffic to your site.

There are a few must-have automated campaigns:

## Onboarding Campaign

A first-time buyer welcome email is a great example of effective onboarding campaigns. This email introduces your customers to your brand or product and welcomes them in a friendly way. Write in a conversational tone, include your logo, a strong brand statement and brand colors, and invite them to shop more with an offer.

## Feedback Requests

Make it a two-way street and ask for feedback after customers receive their

## CHAPTER 4

shipment. This gives them a voice, allows you to show the human side of your process, and lets you take an active role in managing your feedback.

### **Cross Sell**

Product recommendation campaigns are highly successful because they use a buyer's history to suggest other products they will love. These campaigns also open the opportunity to get more eyes on products you want to drive sales around.

### **Automated Offers**

Surprise loyal customers with an automated offer after they've been shopping with you for a while. Provide those who buy from you regularly with VIP treatment and offer a nice discount with a special code on an upcoming purchase.

### **Notifications**

Order confirmations are essential transactional campaigns that your customers will expect after purchasing from you. Make sure they are branded and set up to trigger in a timely manner.

### **Abandoned Cart**

With a subject line like "Hey, were you checking me out?" and a clever message inside, an abandoned cart email can recapture a prospect's attention and encourage them to complete the checkout process. With a quality abandoned cart campaign, you're likely to win the order 10-15% of the time; you'll find out why the customer didn't buy and use that information to improve your process; you'll create a great customer experience, and you can use humor to establish a relationship based on trust and comfort.

### **Retention Campaign**

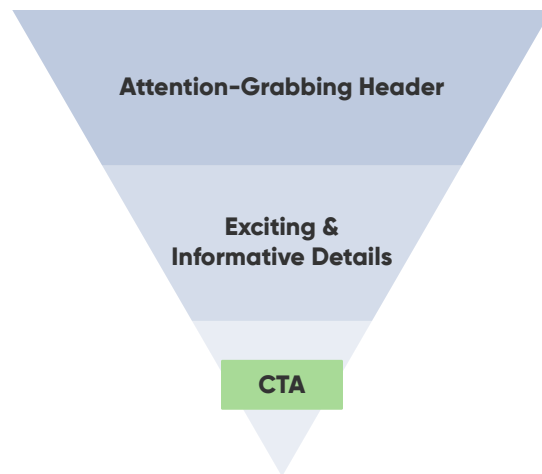
A lapsed customer win-back or a buy it again reminder extends a discount or simple reminder to those who haven't purchased from you within a certain time period. These are good to put your business top of mind again for customers who haven't shopped lately.

# Branding & Design

Immediately upon opening your email, a recipient should recognize who sent it. The content needs to be reminiscent of your website, social media, and physical presence (if applicable). This is important for customers to recall and trust your brand.

## Different Layouts:

One way email marketers structure information in emails, based on hierarchy, is called an **inverted pyramid**. This is a framework for structuring the assets of your campaign (headers, CTAs, pictures, text) so they work together to drive action, deliver pertinent messages first, and get recipients to click through.



We are also big fans of the one-column or “aligned” layout, which is mobile friendly, scannable, and easy to follow. At a max width of 640px, this layout should render well on most, if not all, email clients. It’s important to note that at widths wider than

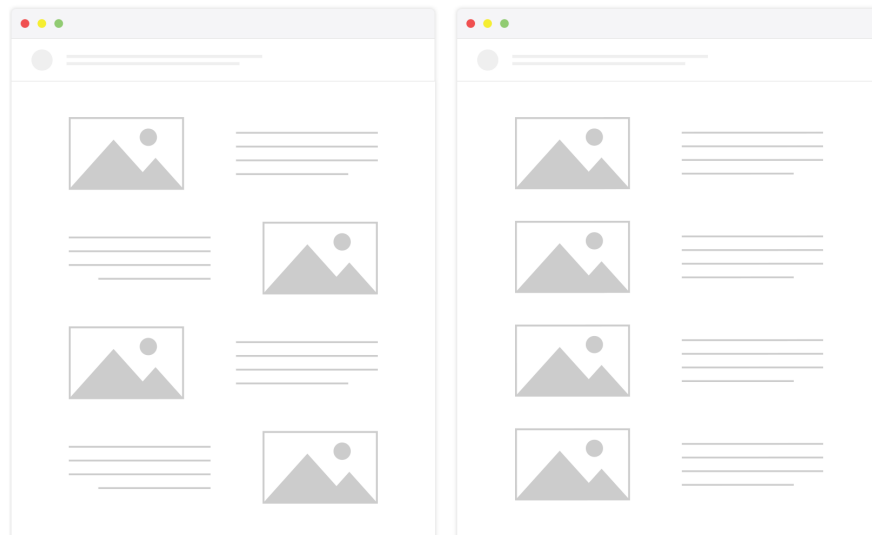
## CHAPTER 5

640px, clients like Gmail don't display any background color that would appear in the margins at most reasonable browser sizes (visible if browser is stretched wider than 1200px).

We recommend keeping your content width at a max of 600px. In email template builder tools, like the one ShippingEasy provides, the width can be adjusted in the settings panel of the editor; however, you should rarely need to change from the default.

The standard email campaign width is 600 pixels for desktops, 320 pixels for vertical, and 480 pixels for horizontal view on mobile devices. The height is unlimited and depends on the content length.

More recent and growing in popularity is a style that incorporates unique angles: the **zig-zag**, which entices readers to interact and follow an intentional path with calls-to-action. This design alternates the placement of image and text on each horizontal row, which breaks the monotony and adds more visual variety.



*Two-column layouts: The zigzag layout (left) alternates placement of images and text descriptions down the page, whereas the traditional aligned layout (right) presents images one under the other.*

## CHAPTER 5

Some branding and design tips to bear in mind:

- + **Structure your campaign for easy mobile reading.** Stack content vertically for easier scrolling, and minimize the number of calls-to-action.
- + **Treat your emails as an extension of your brand.** Your campaign should look and feel like your website with the same colors, fonts, and language.
- + **Always include a brand identifier.** Including a logo (or company name, branded messaging, etc.) at the top of your email is standard and lets your reader know immediately who the email is from. Over time, the reader will grow used to the format of your emails and will rely on that consistency to skim the content.
- + **Use clean, high-resolution graphics and images.** We live in an image-saturated world with high standards for visually-compelling graphics and pictures. With the help of a third-party resource, you can add elements to your campaign that will grab the reader's eye and motivate them to take action.

**53% of emails are opened on mobile devices**, with 26% being opened on the iPhone alone. Consider the device your reader will open the email on when laying out your content.

### **Content:**

Additionally, keep in mind the line length of your text, and stay within a range of 45-75 characters per line. If your font size is the same on mobile as in the desktop version, you can shoot for the minimum width to fit about 45 characters per line, and about 75 characters per line at the maximum width.

Personalization goes a long way when it comes to designing a campaign as well. You can make an email more relevant with personalization variables like first name or list of ordered items, as well as with coordination of images and colors. For example, design your email to compliment a particular event, sports team, or feature of the geographic region you're targeting.

### **Images and Alt Text:**

Some email clients do not automatically display images. This is important to remember when laying out an image-heavy campaign; however, you can create a little safety net by adding alt-text to your images. This is what will display when the image doesn't and can be edited from the settings panel in many email template editors (or in the HTML itself).

### **Footer:**

Footers likely won't vary from campaign to campaign, as this space is primarily used to show the physical mailing address of your business, an option to unsubscribe, contact information for customer support and feedback, and social media links. This information is required for promotional emails as part of the Canada Anti-Spam Law (CAN-SPAM).



# Copy & Voice

Whether your message is conversational, sophisticated, humorous, or serious, translating that style to your copy can be challenging. Setting your tone and determining your message prior to writing anything guides a smoother process when building the actual email.

What kind of message does your audience want to hear? Are they most interested in new product launches, seasonal sales, or an annual update? Should you keep it brief or write out a whole newsletter? Ask yourself what will actually appeal to your audience and craft your message accordingly. Content and timing are key when it comes to the success of your campaign.

The initial success of your campaign starts with what industry experts call the “email envelope”, which includes your sender name (or ‘from’) and the subject line.

Believe it or not, sometimes the simplest, one-word subject lines get the best open rates. Take the example of President Barack Obama’s “Hey” before a key fundraising deadline. This subject line, and others like it, caught the attention of millions of recipients and marketers for years to come; however, the work doesn’t stop there. Get specific, keep it short, and make sure it’s catchy.

Your open rate is almost entirely dependent on your subject line. Unfortunately, this means that caution is necessary when writing it to ensure the email doesn’t go to your audience’s Spam folders.

Spam filters have grown more sophisticated than the triggers we list below, but by carefully choosing the words you use in the subject line, you will have a better chance of seeing successful delivery rates. Your delivery rates should always be above 95%. If they are underdelivering, first scrub your customer list to filter out just truly engaged subscribers, and then check your campaign for spammy words that would make an ISP (Internet Service Provider) block your email from being

## CHAPTER 6

received.

If you're worried or see that your emails are being marked as spam, you can run a spam check with a free provider to see why your email may be ending up in your customer's spam folder.

Below are some of the email spam words/triggers you should avoid:

- + "As seen on", "Buy", "Buy Direct", "Shopper"
- + "Orders shipped by"
- + "Clearance"
- + "Chance", "Freedom", "Miracle", "Lose", "Lifetime"
- + "Guarantee", "Deal", "Giving away", "No gimmick", "No questions asked"
- + "You are a winner!"
- + "Money", "Click"
- + "FREE!"
- + "Opportunity", "earn", "million", "Viagra", "Xanax"
- + "get paid", "be amazed", "your income", "subject to credit approval"
- + "earn \$\$\$ per week", "check or money order"
- + "print out and fax"
- + "call now"
- + "no fees"
- + "free trial"
- + "meet singles"
- + Capitalization: WRITING IN ALL CAPS
- + Punctuation & Symbols: Excessive use of !!!!!, ....., \$\$\$, %, \*\*, etc.
- + Links: Excessive use of "click here"

## CHAPTER 6

The best strategy for crafting a subject line is to be transparent, authentic, and personable. Think about what kind of emails you are more likely to open, and remember that your audience is made up of real people, too. The more your subject lines and content speak to what matters to them, the more they will engage.

Below are the max subject line character lengths displayed across a variety of email clients:

- + **Android (480x320px) portrait:** 27 characters
- + **Android (480x320px) landscape:** 46 characters
- + **Android (800x480px) portrait:** 30 characters
- + **Android (800x480px) landscape:** 62 characters
- + **Gmail:** 70 characters
- + **iPhone landscape:** 64 characters
- + **iPhone portrait:** 41 characters
- + **Outlook.com:** 60 characters
- + **Outlook 2010 Preview:** 54 characters
- + **Outlook 2010 Compact:** 73 characters
- + **Thunderbird:** 66 characters
- + **Windows Phone Landscape:** 61 characters
- + **Windows Phone Portrait:** 42 characters
- + **Yahoo Mail:** 46 characters

*\*As of January 2019, the Apple iPhone is the highest used email device/client on the market followed by Gmail, Outlook, and then the Apple iPad.*

Next, let's talk about the sender, or 'from' display name. This is the first thing a recipient will look at when checking their inbox, so always ensure your sender name is your company's or another recognizable identifier. There are a couple options when customizing your sender name. Usually, it's best to stick with your

## CHAPTER 6

company name (e.g. ShippingEasy). At times, it can be appropriate to include a first name in the sender name (e.g. Lindsay at ShippingEasy).

Depending on your audience, message, and brand awareness, you can determine what works best for you.

### **Additionally, pay attention to preheaders/preview text.**

Preheaders are a line of text pulled in from the body of your email and usually displayed under the sender name and subject line in a recipient's inbox. Tare an extension of your subject line and are great ways to add on a little extra flare to grab your audience's attention.

Not all email clients will display preheader text, but for the ones that do, it's important to write a little something to follow your subject line. In fact, Litmus and Fluent's joint survey showed that 24% of respondents look at the preview text first when deciding to open an email.

After crafting a subject line and preheader that will grab the attention of your readers, ensure the content immediately communicates what you want it to and give your audience a call-to-action within the top half of the email. It's likely some readers will get distracted before finishing reading through, so the higher you prioritize the CTA and primary message.

Now that we've reviewed the sender display name, subject line, and preheader text, it's time to talk about the actual copy and tone of your email.

Similar to your subject line, your copy should reflect your company's voice, and the message should be crystal clear. Upon opening the email, a reader should know exactly what's expected from the call-to-action and should be motivated to engage, whether that's to provide feedback to check out a new product.

Determine your tone ahead of time, whether that's humorous or sophisticated, and stick to it when writing your copy. Unless your email is a newsletter that truly

## CHAPTER 6

engaged subscribers signed up to receive, keep your message brief and to the point.

Organize your message with a large, eye-catching header, a smaller, relevant subheader, and a few lines communicating your primary message. Add a bulletproof button below your primary message driving customers back to your store or landing page. If more information is necessary, add a divider, and organize your secondary information below.

Check your campaign for grammatical errors, design and voice consistency, and functioning links. The last thing you want after sending this out is to realize there was a simple mistake that was overlooked. This may interrupt your reader's experience and potentially decrease or ruin engagement levels.

# Analytics/ Performance Metrics

Each campaign's performance metrics provide you an essential opportunity to improve your next campaign. By reviewing metrics like open rate, click-through rate, and unsubscribes (as well as the others listed below), you will learn what works and what doesn't. We recommend checking your performance metrics a few days after every campaign send. You will see how it performed and have that information locked in for when it's time to send the next one.

Below are some of the top performance metrics that deserve your attention:

- + **Revenue generated:** Total monetary amount of orders placed within 5 days of campaign deployment
- + **Delivery rate:** Number of inboxes your email reached
- + **Open rate:** How many times your email has been opened
- + **Opt out or unsubscribe rate:** How many recipients clicked on "unsubscribe" from the last campaign they received
- + **Click rate:** How many clicks were made after email was opened
  - | In ShippingEasy's Customer Marketing tool, the number of clicks each link received is also visible
  - | This is often separated into total clicks (indicates the total times all your recipients clicked) and unique clicks (the number of recipients that have clicked on any links in your campaign)
- + **Total recipients reached:** Number of customers the campaign was sent to

## CHAPTER 7

- + **Bounce rate:** Number of addresses your email marketing provider could not deliver to at the time of send (this isn't always controllable as it could be due to a number of issues if you see a high percentage)

As mentioned previously, one of the most important strategies to improve deliverability is to remove any and all “spammy” words (e.g. free, all inclusive, winner, words in all caps, etc). Another way to trim down your email's weight and improve its chance of landing in your audience's inbox is to keep the use of large files and images to a minimum.

If you find that your open rate is low, check out your subject line and A/B test different options to determine which works best with your audience. A/B Testing is a randomized experiment with two variants, and in email marketing, A/B testing can be used in a variety of ways, from your subject lines to the content. Segment your audience, and send the first group email A and the second group email B. Change up your subject line, tone, and CTA's, and see which one performs better after a couple days. This experiment informs future campaigns, saving you time and ensuring a great response.

Typically, decent open rates range from 15-25% across industries. Low click-through-rates may mean your content either isn't engaging or isn't communicating clearly the action one should take.

# Your Ultimate Email Marketing Checklist

## **TEXT & CONTENT: What am I trying to say?**

- + My call-to-action is in the top portion of my email and communicates clear action.
- + The Four C's - My message is compelling, clear, concise, and conversational.
- + I have checked my grammar and spelling thoroughly.
- + I have added preheader text at the top of my email.
- + All my images, social icons and buttons are linked properly.
- + My "from display name" and reply-to email address are accurate.
- + The first 45-50 characters of my subject line are magnetic and catchy.
- + My message is focused and trimmed down to just the most valuable content.
- + I have included details on how readers can contact me.
- + \*I sent myself a test and made sure everything looks perfect.

## **DESIGN: Does this look like my brand and website?**

- + I have included my logo and brand identifiers so it's clear who the email is coming from.
- + My email looks amazing on mobile, desktop, AND tablet.
- + All images and graphics have alt text.
- + My colors match my brand identity and feel welcome to my audience.
- + I included a background image and made sure that the background is a color that my text will still show up on if the image doesn't display



## FINAL CHECKLIST

- + I've linked my social profiles and website so recipients can find me online.

### **SEGMENTATION: Who will receive this campaign?**

- + Everyone on my list opted in and knows who I am.
- + I have segmented my audience carefully so I'm only sending this campaign out to those who are interested.

### **TIMING: When should I send this to get the best response?**

- + My email will go out Tuesday through Thursday (note: always be testing, as your audience engagement may vary)
- + My email is scheduled to deliver between 9AM and 12PM, the time when most people open emails (but I'm still testing to be sure).
- + I've personalized my subject line around the delivery date/time. (Ex."Check out our Wednesday sale!" or "Good Afternoon!")
- + I will monitor my campaign results to see what types of open rates I get at certain times of the day.

### **ANALYTICS & REPORTING: Will this email generate any revenue or build my brand awareness?**

- + I have included insights from former campaigns to improve this one.
- + I have set a time on my calendar to review the marketing dashboard and campaign-specific analytics.

### **OBJECTIVE/PURPOSE: Why am I sending this campaign?**

- + I have included an offer and/or information that my audience needs to know.
- + I have a really valuable message that my customers can't miss out on.

# Summary

Email marketing is a healthy mix of skills, experience, and trial and error. If you are not satisfied with your email's performance, test out some different ideas. Better yet, ask your audience what they want to hear about from you, whether that's through a social media poll, on a landing page form, or in a feedback request email.

The industry is constantly evolving and growing to provide more tools, resources, and strategies for marketers to engage their audience. Likewise, it is evolving to benefit the recipient more by parsing through emails before they ever reach inboxes.

As an email marketer or small business owner promoting to your customers, it's important to stay attuned to your audience's needs and wants so you're always connected when you need to be.



ShippingEasy's Customer Marketing tool provides customer insights, segmentation, and lifecycle analytics that can then be leveraged to set up one-time or trigger-based email campaigns to generate reviews, build awareness of related products, and increase repeat business.

This tool is crucial to generating more revenue and building customer relationships. Whether you are a small business owner lacking the time and skill or an established e-commerce merchant simply needing a helping hand in the midst of day-to-day responsibilities, our Customer Marketing tool makes email marketing a breeze through automation and easy-to-use features.

Try it free for 30 days to put your order data and customer data to work and build repeat business—all in the same place you ship!

**TRY IT FREE**