

## **Email Marketing Guidelines**

### **Best Practices for Email Marketing Results**

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#### **1. "FROM" LINE**

The "From" should be consistent in your email messages. Many email recipients decide if a message is SPAM by it's "From" and "Subject" lines.

#### **2. "SUBJECT" LINE**

Keep it short. Shorter subject lines get better open rates than longer ones. Make it engaging and under 40 characters.

#### **Words to Avoid:**

- Free, \$\$\$, Save & Discount can get your email caught in the SPAM filters.
- Percent Off, Reminder and Help also decrease open rates.

#### **3. CONTENT IS KING**

Make sure your message content matches what subscribers signed up to receive. The top reason people unsubscribe is that they feel the information is no longer relevant.

#### **More message content guidelines:**

- Always embed at least six links in the message.
- Don't add extra images, flash or video: it reduces click-through rates. Most people receive the message **without** the images showing.
- Make sure your main **call-to-action** is written in text and not an image.

#### **4. CONSISTENT FREQUENCY**

Receiving too many emails is the second major reason people choose to unsubscribe or label your email as SPAM.

Sending consistently, without sending too much, is the best approach. Send your newsletter on a regular schedule. Examples:

- Weekly Information Email: Weekly on Tuesday at 2 p.m.
- Email Newsletter: Monthly on 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday at 11 a.m.
- General Marketing Email: Monthly on the last Thursday at 2 p.m.

#### **5. PERSONALIZATION POWER**

Using the recipient's name in the email can increase open rates. Examples:  
Do NOT personalize the "Subject" line, it decreases your open rate and click-through rate.

## 6. WELCOME MESSAGES HAVE HIGHEST OPEN RATES

- Welcome new subscribers to your enewsletter.
- Send a welcome email message with an overview on company services.
- Offer a bonus set of links to articles on the Internet of industry interest.
- Include your company address, hours, URL, blog links, etc.
- Close the message with:  
Best regards,

First Name Last Name, Title

Company Name

Visit our Web site at <http://www.yourdomain.com>

## 7. MEASURE YOUR EMAIL METRICS

Determine how effective your emails are using the following metrics. You should check these metrics a couple days after you send the email, and again one month later. Make sure to keep track of your stats.

- **Deliverability Rate**—the percentage of the emails you send that are actually reaching your recipients' email boxes.
- **Open Rate**—the percentage of subscribers opening your emails.
- **Click-Through Rate**—the number of subscribers that are clicking on the links in your emails.
- **Conversion Rate**—how many subscribers fulfill your email's ***call-to-action***. For example, the number of people that register for a workshop in response to your email.
- **Unsubscribe Rate**—the amount of subscribers that request to opt-out from receiving your emails.

**What are good metrics?** This varies widely by industry & message type, but an open-rate near 20% and click-through rate of 4% is considered very good.

## 8. TEST, TEST, TEST

If you feel your metrics are not on the mark, there are several ways you can try to improve them:

- **Test your "Subject" lines.** Try a couple different approaches with your "Subject" line and send them to small segments of your list to determine what attracts a greater open rate.
- **How often are you sending emails?** If you send emails weekly and have low open and click-through rates, try reducing the amount of emails you send to once or twice a month.
- **Timing.** What day and time of the week are you sending your emails? Try sending your newsletter to different segments of your list at different times and days of the week to determine which result in higher open rates.
- **Content.** Take another look at your message content and see if it can be improved and more targeted to the recipient's needs and interests.

## 9. LANDING PAGES

Your email should contain at least 6 links to your Web site, but make sure your readers don't feel like they are on a scavenger hunt. The links should go to specific Web pages that will help fulfill your messages' **call-to-action**.

**Example:** Emails should include several links to specific action. Make sure these links take the reader to a specific page where they can place an order and/or read more information about the specific action promoted in the email. Avoid taking them to your Web site homepage, or other general information page, forcing them to look for the information they want.

## 10. HTML and TEXT VERSIONS

Don't overlook the text version of your email. A text version should always be sent simultaneously with your HTML version. Many subscribers elect to receive text only versions of emails and with the growing usage of mobile devices, the text version is increasingly important.

## 11. USE A EMAIL MARKETING VENDOR

Greater Knoxville SCORE has use Constant Contact with great results. .See the various programs listed at <http://www.constantcontact.com/pricing/pricing-plans.jsp>.

Other vendors:

- VerticalResponse
- IContact
- StreamSend

Costs are minimal and the benefits of a well managed email marketing program are substantial. Services are based upon the size of your email list. For example, the smallest is typically for a customer list of 500 or less costs about \$ 10.00 per month.

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