Email Marketing

Who reads email these days? Apparently, everybody.

There's a reason marketers are still talking (and asking) about email. Email, the first digital marketing channel, remains the highest driver of return on investment (ROI).

Begin by determining which program you will use. Some web-building programs give you an option to send out an email marketing letter. An integrated option is always better because it helps you create a list without having to ask people to go to a website to sign up for your newsletter. Once they land on your website, you can create a pop-up newsletter sign up form. For example, when you land on the OrilliaMatters website, and if you haven't already signed up, it will show you a pop-up prompting you to sign up to receive an email every day.

Effective email campaigns don't just happen on a whim. Creating a successful email campaign takes data, research, and some tricks to get it rolling.

Here are some tips and tricks as tried and tested by experts in the field. Before we begin, it is crucial to remember that the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission has some rules around email marketing. Top of the list is that people should volunteer to sign up to receive notifications or marketing from

your business. This falls under the Anti-Spam Legislation, so take a closer look at the rules here: crtc.gc.ca/eng/internet/anti.htm.

Setting Goals and Measures

Create a vision for your email campaign by naming a couple goals you hope to achieve from it. It could be as simple as getting people to visit your website.

Set your program up to measure list growth, for example. Once you have created a mental vision of the campaign, establish a benchmark for success (I will get 10 out of 100 clicks). Gather data on previous email campaigns to see what subscribers responded to before — and where there's room for improvement. Were there periods of high engagement? Were there periods of mass unsubscribes?

Understand your history. Knowing your benchmarks for success upfront will influence how you build and send email. Established Key Point Indicators (KPIs), for instance, click rate.

At the off chance that this is the first time you're creating an email campaign, you might need to do some research by signing up for newsletters from your competing businesses.

That should give you a good idea of what others are doing and what you should be doing differently to attract your customers.

Building Trust

Now the first thing to remember is that if you're building an email list, you have to explicitly get their permission before you start sending them anything. Think about creating a pop-up form that gives your web visitors an option to sign up. You could also ask them verbally at check out if they would like to sign up to receive special offers. Since you can't force anyone to sign up for email marketing, you can still tell customers the benefits of opting in.

Describe what you'll provide in exchange for their information. Say why it's valuable, explain how often they'll hear from you — and anything else they should know. Immediately after a subscriber opts in, send them a confirmation email reiterating the perks. Always tell them they can unsubscribe from the service at any time.
Stop sending unengaged subscribers the same emails as the rest of your database. If

someone hasn't opened or clicked one of your emails in over 90 days, send a message that engages them and takes notice of their absence.

Designing Your Campaign

When you send an email to someone, make sure the message is designed in a way to catch their attention. When you're using a free program, such as MailChimp or Constant Contact, pick a template and stick to it. You can deviate from templates for special occasions, but make sure your email looks great on any device.

Use images that relate to your message, but don't overdo it. Make sure you always use your logo in the email and a cover photo that can stay consistent in every email.

For text, break it up into piecemeal chunks. Make sure it's readable and are styled like headings. Try and end it with a call to action, which should be prominent.

Send yourself a test email before you schedule it to be sent out to your entire list.

Include links in it, preferably in the form of buttons, so people can click on them in response to a call to action. Always remember to hyperlink your visuals to your website, no matter what.

Content for Your Email

Can your subscribers answer what, why, and how after just a few seconds of looking at your email? Order your content so the most important message is visible before any scrolling.

From there, ensure every piece of content directs the reader where to go next — and why.

Think about how you'd like customers to understand your core values. What is your brand's story? This should ideally be at the end. The newest material or the most important message should be at the top.

Try to focus on one message in each email. When you do have to include multiple viewpoints (don't talk about more than two things), think of ways to streamline the presentation. Don't forget to edit your content for clarity and succinctness.

Think of catchy pre-headers, which are single text lines that follows the subject line in an email preview. It can be as important as the subject line itself. Make it a call to action or use it as a short summary of the email content, making sure it supports the subject line. Remember to limit this pre-header to about 100 characters.

When thinking of subject headers, avoid click-bait materials or sales pitches. Try to generate curiosity or tell your audience of a direct benefit they will get from clicking on the email: We're offering curbside pick up!

You can also include an offer right into the email subject: Take 10% by ordering before May 31.

This also creates an urgency. Another tactic is to indicate a sense of scarcity, although these should be used sparingly.

Sometimes, an email is just about a story and not a sale. It could also be you delivering news to your customers: We've bought a new location! Or We're expanding our business :)

There's also something called social proof. It's email marketers banking on customers going through with a behaviour because a bunch of other people in the community have already done so.

Know Your Audience

The cardinal rule for marketers is to know your audience thoroughly: their needs, their wants, their location, language, and more. You can get all this data from your social media platforms. Learn their pain points and address them. Use dynamic content to personalize for these different segments at scale. Show your reader you've taken the time to really get to know them.

Chart the most common customer experiences with your brand. (This has to be only as detailed as you like.) Visualize how customers engage, when they hear from you, and when they like to hear from you. Then determine which types of messages are optimal for these moments.

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