



Susan-Says®:

Email Marketing Campaigns Can Work for Your Business.

By: Susan Wilson Solovic, CEO, SBTV.com

What do a fondue restaurant, a bicycle shop, a department store chain and a major university have in common? They all have successful opt-in-permission email campaigns that enable them to reach, sell and track clients. A survey by DoubleClick, NFO Worldgroup, found 88 percent of respondents had clicked on an opt-in email during the past year and ultimately made a purchase.

But getting your e-mail promotions to the intended recipient isn't easy. Research by Return Path, an email deliverability company, found spam filters block 19 percent of opt-in-email from being delivered to people who request it. Personally, I get hundreds of blocked email messages in my junk mail box daily.

Nonetheless, if managed correctly, email campaigns can be an integral part of your marketing plan. Here are some steps which may enhance your ability to succeed..

First, make sure you send emails only to recipients who request it. An opt-in list is created by inviting visitors and customers to subscribe to your email list. When you use a signup tag on your website, a message immediately goes out to the subscriber acknowledging the subscription. This message should reiterate what the subscriber has signed up for, and provide an immediate way for the subscriber to edit her interest or opt-out.

“We know the results are much better when the message is anticipated and received from a trusted source. Somebody that has a strong reputation like your favorite restaurant, vendor or alumni association,” says Chris Kiersch, CEO Inbox Email Marketing.

When you build your permission-based list, use it sparingly. Respect the privilege of communicating with your customers and prospects by not bombarding them with messages. Develop a strategic communications plan that identifies how many emails you'll send and what the message will be.

Notwithstanding any provision in any documents available here, you are permitted to download an entire, unchanged copy (including any copyright notice and author attribution) to a computer and make a print copy of internal use.

This material is intended to provide a general overview and does not purport to provide all specific requirements for any person. MasterCard provides this material AS IS for the convenience of its members and cardholders.

Personalizing your emails can increase their effectiveness. People are going to be more accepting if you address them by name. Subject lines are also crucial to the success of your email campaign. Think of it as a teaser to compel the recipient to read it. But subject lines must be written with care to avoid using any words or symbols that can trigger spam filters. For example, “TV” is one of the terms that is frequently recognized as spam. Therefore, when we distribute information from SBTV to our audience, we use small business network news.

Make sure every message you send includes “Opt-out links so recipients can unsubscribe from future email communication. Be sure to include your address, phone names and other contact information so subscribers can easily reach you.

Monitor your opt-in list for subscribers who notify you of their desire to unsubscribe. “Some subscribers will reply to your email instead of clicking on the automatic unsubscribe link. Monitor your inbox for unsubscribes and complaints, then make sure you remove them right away and take action on any grievances,” says Constant Contact’s Michelle Keegan who is known as the Email Marketing Diva™.

Keegan also notes the importance of clearly posting your privacy policy. “It adds credibility to your company and your email even if recipients do not click on the link.”

A good email marketing system monitors performance. You’ll be able to track and measure your results and learn what is working with recipients. Armed with this information you can tailor your marketing efforts.

“We have to focus on whether or not we are delivering. What’s happening when they receive the email? Are they opening? Are they clicking? And how can we make the value better and enhance the value proposition?” says Kiersch.

“A survey is an inexpensive, easy and immediate way to find out how your customers really feel about your company and your email communications. So don’t forget to ask how your customers feel about your emails,” adds Keegan.

Customers don’t give you their email address on a whim. They do it in exchange for something of value. You must follow through by delivering something they’ll deem worthwhile in exchange.

Notwithstanding any provision in any documents available here, you are permitted to download an entire, unchanged copy (including any copyright notice and author attribution) to a computer and make a print copy of internal use.

This material is intended to provide a general overview and does not purport to provide all specific requirements for any person. MasterCard provides this material AS IS for the convenience of its members and cardholders.