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Best Practices for Email Marketing

Jennifer S - 2018-01-30 - in Email Marketing

Keep Your Audience in Mind

The audience is the most important part of your email, so make sure to tailor your message to them whenever possible. For example, it might be really helpful for you to send water bottles and sweatband ideas to nonprofits in the spring for their upcoming charity walks, but it might not make as much sense for you to send those same ideas to a bank. Remember, you can always segment your list and send them separate emails.

Don't Buy Email Lists

These lists may be huge, but they are often ineffective. Many of the recipients of purchasable lists are random at best and don't have any affiliation with you. A smaller, more targeted list will always be more effective.

Make it Concise

Your audience is most likely on the go and email isn't their top priority. Try to keep your message concise and to the point whenever possible. If you feel a large amount of words is necessary, break it up and make it easier to scan with bullet points or smaller paragraphs.

Avoid Spammy Tactics

Try to avoid common spam tactics like using all caps when it's not necessary, linking to suspicious websites, using special characters to break up words or phrases (Ex: Fre3 W!nn3r) and misleading subject lines.

Engage With Your Subject Line

This is how people will be introduced to your email and it's how they will judge whether or not to open it. Feel free to get creative to get their attention, but remember it should still make sense when they see your email. It's just like a regular conversation; if your introduction doesn't make sense with the rest of it, it's easy to lose interest.

Some additional helpful information regarding subject lines¹:

- *Four to Seven Words is Ideal*

While subject lines with four words have the highest engagement, but up to seven words were still popular with recipients.

- *Avoid "Black Friday" and "Cyber Monday"*

Interestingly, subject lines which included those phrases have been shown to have less recipient engagement.

- *Lower Engagement With Percentages*

Using an exact percent discount in the subject line, such as 20%, did not have the same efficacy as those without a percentage. If you do want to use a discount percentage, it might be advantageous to use a unique or odd number. Also, words like "soon", "tomorrow", and "now" or "today" were also had a higher open rate than an percentage.

Double Check Before You Send

Before you send your email, take a last look at it for things like grammatical errors, images not loading, subject line and form fields. Sending a test email to yourself or having someone else take a look at your email are great ways to catch mistakes. Remember, every email you send represents your brand, and mistakes might distract from your message.

Interestingly, using "Black Friday" or "Cyber Monday" in the subject line indicated lower engagement.*

Track Your Results

Knowing what works and what doesn't is a big part of being successful. If you keep sending topics or ideas your audience doesn't like, they might tune out or unsubscribe. Even changing the day of the week or time of day might make a difference - be sure you're measuring and tracking the results of each campaign so you can adjust accordingly.

Find Your Frequency

Every audience has different email preferences, but try not to overwhelm your audience with multiple emails per day. We recommend you set a consistent schedule so your audience knows what to expect. Start by sending one a week and then decrease or increase based on the response. Pay close attention to your results. If you're getting a lot of unsubscribes, you're either sending emails too frequently or the content is not useful to your audience.