



5 TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE MASS EMAIL CAMPAIGNS USING OUTSOURCED DATA



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Best practices for mass email deployment

Mass email deployments can be an extremely effective strategy for conveying your message, and can produce an excellent ROI. But first you have to ensure you're doing it right. These five tips will help get you there.

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BEST PRACTICES FOR MASS EMAIL DEPLOYMENT

INTRODUCTION

A mass email deployment can be one of your best tools in telling your target audience about your products, service or offers. It's efficient, quick, provides trackable metrics and often has a great ROI. More than that, it can initiate long-term, profitable relationships, can saturate your market with your message, and can be a powerhouse weapon in your arsenal to build your brand and enhance awareness.

But first you have to ensure you're doing it right. These five tips will help get you there.

TIP #1: BE SURE YOUR EMAIL DEPLOYMENT PARTNER ADHERES TO CAN-SPAM COMPLIANCE

Legitimate mass email deployment companies will gladly comply with the CAN-SPAM Act. Stiff penalties, and in some cases even jail time, await those who shirk this responsibility.

You may think following the CAN-SPAM law falls on your email partners' side of the court, but that's not entirely true. Both your email deployment partner and you as the marketer have responsibility to follow the law.

Therefore, it pays to have some familiarity with what the Act allows and what it forbids.

First established in 2003, it has gone through revision, but essentially the CAN-SPAM Act establishes the requirements for commercial email, provides the right to opt out of receiving unwanted email messages, and sets up serious consequences for abuses.

According to a Direct Marketing Association study (DMA National Client Email Report, 2015), large scale email deployments can produce a 3800% ROI.

The following are just some of the specific rules outlined by the Act, and all are designed to assert your credibility. Visit the Federal Trade Commission site for more information, or hit up this link for an outline of the rules and regulations: <https://www.ftc.gov/tips-advice/business-center/guidance/can-spam-act-compliance-guide-business>

- a. Avoid dishonest subject lines. There are a number of ways to write great subject-line copy, but all of them include accurately conveying the content of the message.
- b. Make sure your recipients know the message is an ad. The Act gives marketers a wide berth in how they want to follow this requirement, but you must make it clear that you're advertising something.
- c. Include a physical mailing address. Your marketing must include a valid physical postal address, which doesn't need to be your street address--a PO box you've registered with the Post Office will do.
- d. Make sure recipients can easily opt out of receiving email from you in the future. The law requires that your message provides a clear, unambiguous method for recipients to remove themselves from receiving future email from you. Most email deployment companies provide their own opt-out link. They should be able to share the list of all those email recipients who have opted-out of your campaigns.
- e. Your email deployment partner is not solely responsible for compliance. You are, too. Even if you opt for a mass email deployment company to send your messages to their database, the law states that you are not able to indemnify yourself or protect yourself simply by signing a contract. It is still your legal responsibility to comply with the law – just as it is for your email deployment partner, too.

**Business
thought-leaders
McKinsey &
Company found
that email is 40
times more
effective at
acquiring new
customers than
Facebook or Twitter.**

TIP 2: DEVELOP YOUR MESSAGE WITH A PRECISE GOAL

One of the great effects Twitter has on the cyber conversation is to force people to trim their content into a punchy message down to 140-characters or fewer. This approach can be adopted to your email message. But it's not limited to a good subject line or a streamlined body copy. Or even impactful visuals. What matters most is determining a clear goal for what you are trying to accomplish even before you begin.

Some factors that go into deciding upon an appropriate goal are:

- which of your products or services you want to market (hint: it's usually more effective, especially in email, to limit yourself to just one);
- which target audience would be best served by your communication; and
- understanding how what you want to convey is relevant to the recipient.

Once you determine your email message's objective, you can compose your call-to-action appropriately.

An example of a goal may be to encourage people to sign up to review a white paper or download an e-book. Some common measures of success may be found on your tracking report such as opens or click-through rate; it might be site visits; it can be the total number who downloaded the e-book or white paper. Or it might be how effective this white paper / e-book campaign was in turning prospects into customers (demonstrated by conversion rate).

All that must be considered and agreed-upon before-hand.

The concise approach is one we often recommend, particularly for those using outsourced, mass email deployments. The reason for this recommendation is because the recipients of your email may not be familiar with your product, service or brand. That lack of familiarity requires precisely written copy that provides key points right up front. And it begins with your Friendly From and your subject line.

According to
Campaign Monitor,
68% of Americans
say they base
their decision to
open an email
on the
'From' name.

TIP 3: DEPLOY OFTEN – WE RECOMMEND A MINIMUM OF 3 TOUCHES PER CAMPAIGN

We have seen the more successful campaigns utilize an overall strategy that includes multiple email touches on average. This leverages familiarity and capitalizes on frequency.

Such a strategy is usually best exemplified by a minimum of three (3) separate touches to realize optimal performance.

The question then arises about the communication again: the graphics, subject line and body copy. Can they be the same for each deployment?

There are many factors that can go into answering that question—from budget constraints, to performance, to timing, to many more variables. And we have not found a magic bullet that works in every case.

But often, to maximize fresh messaging and combat communication-fatigue, we recommend at least a tweak to the subject line on the second and/or third deployments.

Ultimately, the best strategy is to test. A test of not just of creative, but of a deployment matrix/schedule, will yield information that can help increase response and performance for campaigns going forward.

While you're testing, be sure to consider adding a test time-of-day (TOD) test into your matrix. Some email marketers have seen significant lift in response a particular times during the day, such as 10am v. immediately after work.

At the Email Marketing Summit in 2015, Marketing Sherpa reports 72% of Americans surveyed prefer to receive promotions through email, compared to 17% who prefer social media.

TIP 4: PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR TRACKING REPORT

Tracking reports are a vital element of any deployment program. They are the most effective showcase of your direct marketing e-mail's performance. A typical report includes metrics such as number of emails deployed; number and rate of opens; number and rate of clicks.

Marketing companies that deploy lists on their clients' behalf typically don't provide quantity sent, as they often send the full quantity ordered. They are able to send the full quantity by keeping some small portion of records in reserve; in case the total number of email records ordered falls short of total deployed, they deploy their reserve to make up for the shortfall.

Further, the quantity deployed will not tell you where your e-mail landed — whether in your recipients' spam filters / bulk folders or in their proper inboxes.

On your tracking report, the amount opened tells you about the effectiveness of your From Lines and Subject Lines.

The Click-Through-Rate (CTR) will tell you about how well your offers and messages resonate with your target audience.

TIP 5: UNDERSTAND THE LIMITATIONS OF YOUR WEB REPORTING SOFTWARE, SPECIFICALLY GOOGLE ANALYTICS

Many email marketers resort to Google Analytics ("GA") to track their site visitors in order to determine the effectiveness of their campaigns. Google has a stellar brand and that alone often places the data giant above reproach. However, GA does not measure traffic in real time and, we've seen it lower its results by as much as a third as a consequence.

But GA is not the only tracking system. In fact, there are many others out there. For marketers who truly desire a deeper understanding of the statistics they're tracking to determine what's "real", we number two important considerations:

1. Use multiple services – this will clearly identify the wide variance amongst statistics by tracking system; and,
2. Determine which statistics and set of numbers will be your KPI's (key performance indicators). Define what success looks like to you, and use those statistics to determine it.

No matter what tracking system you settle on, it will provide "real," actual

numbers. They will show you factual statistics from the server and counters on your pages. However, each service varies in the manner it compiles and evaluates its numbers, and this effects its count.

For example, GA is notorious for under-reporting web traffic, taking hours to count visits in some cases, and consequently will produce numbers that are lower than the statistics from other trackers' reports for the same site and same time. This is due to a number of reasons, from coding to IP addresses, and more.

If you're using Google Analytics to verify tracking reports, you may see sharp discrepancies, which is a common occurrence in the industry.

Instead of using Google Analytics as your independent verification option, we suggest reviewing raw server logs for an accurate, objective read on your campaign's traffic.

CONCLUSION

Mass email campaigns using extensive audience pools are effective in reaching prospect groups and should be considered a vital part of any large-scale online marketing effort. As you develop your strategy, be sure to determine in clear, concise language what you're marketing and who your best target audience is; what you want to tell them; how is that message relevant to them; and how often and at what times you want to reach them. Remember to make sure you and your email deployment partner are following all laws governing email advertising. Lastly, determine which analytics platform is right for you, understanding the limits of your chosen system; once you're certain your tracking statistics are correct, you are better able to determine the strengths of your campaign and where you can improve performance to optimize future initiatives.

If you need assistance or deeper discussion on any of this, Unik Advertising's team of seasoned professionals is here to help. We can assist you is set up a best-performing mass email deployment that can help turn our database of prospects into your dedicated customers.

THANK YOU FOR THE PRIVILEGE OF YOUR TIME

AND GOOD LUCK!

Please contact us with any questions.

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About the Author

Andrew Marino is Vice President of Account Management at Unik Advertising, a digital marketing agency specializing in mass email deployments utilizing its database of over 200 million email and postal records with more than 150 selects available. In his role he provides strategic insight, account management and oversees a team of professionals providing digital media services to a variety of clients across a broad spectrum of categories.

Andrew is the author of dozens of business articles, white papers and guest blog posts on email- and digital marketing. He's also spoken at a number of marketing industry conferences.

His new book, *101 Rules for Digital Marketing Your Small Business*, will be released in 2016.

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