THE AMAZINGLY EFFECTIVE EMAIL MARKETING AUTOMATION GUIDE

5 TIPS FOR MORE SUCCESSFUL AND MORE PROFITABLE EMAIL CAMPAIGNS

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EMAIL IS (STILL) A MARKETING POWERHOUSE

The research shows it, and the industry experts agree. Marketers around the world continue to get great results from email campaigns.

But there's a catch – competing for sustained attention in the inbox is no picnic. How do you keep your messages fresh, interesting, and directly relevant to your target audience? How do you create campaigns that get your readers excited when they hear their email "ping" with a new message from your brand? How can marketing automation make email marketing easier and more effective?

In this guide, you'll find next-level best practices for marketers who are ready to move past the basics of email marketing and are looking for new techniques and technologies that will help optimize their results.

DID YOU KNOW?
THE EMAIL UNIVERSE IS EXPANDING QUICKLY
According to the Radicati Group:

- The number of worldwide email accounts is projected to grow to more than 5.2 billion accounts by the end of 2018.

- The total number of worldwide email users, including both business and consumer users, will also increase to more than 2.8 billion in 2018.

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1 TIP: MAKE IT AWESOME ON MOBILE

Because half of all email opens are happening on mobile devices, it's important to keep mobile-friendliness in mind when you design your templates. Let's take a look at some ways to create better user experiences on mobile devices and increase engagement.

WHAT TO TRY:

Responsive design

Responsive design changes to fit the screen size of the reader. It means the content will be resized, relocated, or removed based on the client or device being used. This method uses CSS media queries to adapt design elements for smaller screens.

Mobile-Friendly Design

Mobile-friendly design doesn't refer specifically to responsive design. It just means you've designed a message with smaller screens in mind. Mobile-friendly emails typically use a single column of content with a strong visual hierarchy, larger thumb-friendly buttons, and larger font sizes so that emails are easy to read on smaller screens.

Your marketing automation software should make responsive email design a snap. For example, Act-On has responsive design capabilities built right into the email composer so you can view how your email renders dynamically across multiple devices!

> JUST OVER 36 PERCENT OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION IS PROJECTED TO USE A SMARTPHONE BY 2018, UP FROM ABOUT 10 PERCENT IN 2011. THE NUMBER OF MOBILE PHONE USERS IN THE WORLD IS EXPECTED TO PASS THE FIVE BILLION MARK BY 2019.

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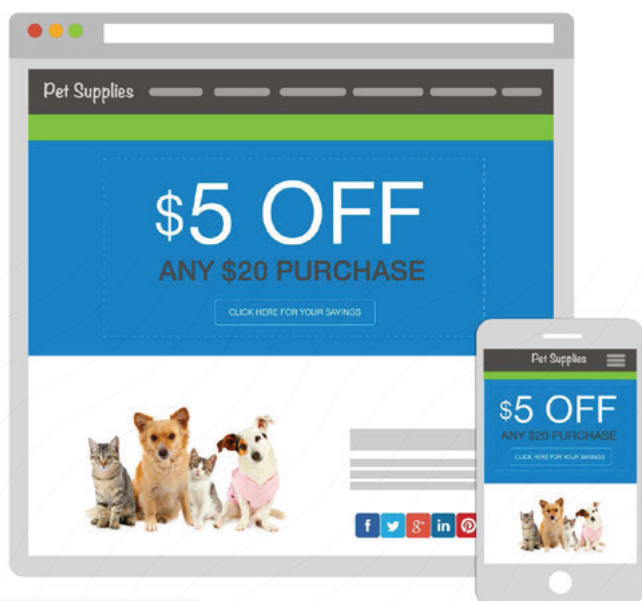
TIP: MAKE IT AWESOME ON MOBILE (CONTINUED)

5 Ideas for Marvelous Mobile Emails

Here are some best practices to keep in mind when designing email for mobile devices:

Provide plenty of white space: You should already be doing this to improve readability. On mobile it's even more important: it provides a small "safety net" for your design, and also leaves room for finger-focused navigation.

Leave room for copy: Due to variations in font rendering between different platforms, fonts are not always the exact same size or width between one browser or mail client and another. Mobile HTML rendering engines will sometimes resize small text to be more readable, and white space gives this text room to expand. You'll want to allow some margin of error here as text grows, shrinks, or shifts slightly between devices.

Keep load times short: Long load times cause visitors to abandon your email. Big images are the main reason file sizes get huge, so keep your image sizes down.

Don't assume everyone is using the latest device or has a great connection: Some mobile devices are older and slower, or your recipients may be downloading content over a lower-grade connection.

Optimize the preheader text: On mobile email applications (as well as some desktop email clients), the subject line can appear above the first line of your email copy. Make sure these two lines of copy work together (rather than just repeating each other).

Emails designed with all screen sizes in mind will not only increase engagement and clickthroughs, they'll also make your brand stand out (in a positive way) in the minds of your audience.
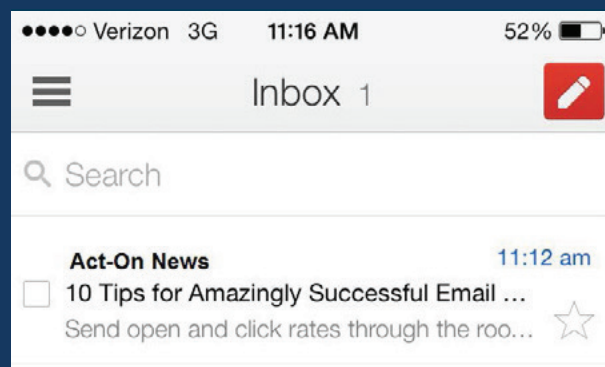
On many mobile devices, the subject line and header appear together in the inbox, so it's important to make sure they support each other.

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2 TIP: GET PERSONAL WITH YOUR AUDIENCE

Using personalization in your email campaigns is a great way to jumpstart long-term relationships with your customers. Let's take a look at best practices for personalizing email messages.

First, make sure you have the data to customize your campaigns. Check your customer list or CRM and find out which fields you can use. Or, you can use marketing automation to gather information about the web pages people visit and the content they download, and send emails targeted to the interests their behavior reveals.

5 Ideas for Better Email Personalization

01 **Confirm that your list contains all the data you want to use for personalization.**

02 **If the data is in ALL CAPS, change it to Sentence Case before including it in your campaigns.**

03 **Make sure your marketing automation solution can adapt the email if the data is missing from the field by removing surrounding text and replacing it with a generic message.**

04 **Send confirmation emails asking your contacts if their information is correct.**

05 **Use a preference center to capture information like preferred prefix and name, and which topics they want to receive mail about.**

According to Econsultancy, 74% of marketers say targeted personalization increases customer engagement. The survey also found that 94% of companies agree that personalization "is critical to current and future success."

MARKET SMARTER, NOT HARDER.

Act-On's **Adaptive Journey's™** vision helps predict and deliver the best message, at the perfect time, through the ideal channel. Let your B2B marketing programs adapt to your customers' specific behaviors, preferences, and interests.

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TIP: GET PERSONAL WITH YOUR AUDIENCE (CONTINUED)

WHAT TO TRY:

Location Personalization

Location personalization means sending an email with details about local weather, sports teams, events or any other geographically relevant information.

Put it into action:
Customize a campaign based on seasons and/or weather-related events, or send out information about sales happening in a nearby store.

Personalize On Activity

Behavior-based personalization means sending a message based on the specific behavior of a customer or prospect.

Put it into action:
Create an automated email program that triggers an email to go out instantly in response to some pre-defined behaviors, with content that's customized based on what the customer or prospect is interested in.

Personalize On Roles

Role-based personalization means targeting the right person with the right message based on their job.

Put it into action:
Create email campaigns that include distinct messaging and/or content based on the top 2-3 roles, job titles, or personas your company targets.

> For LEGO Education, a person's role or job title is an important part of the personalization strategy. Are they talking to a teacher? A parent? An administrator? Different roles demand different messages.

Personalize On Lifecycle Stage

Lifecycle stage personalization means targeting messages to your audience based on where they are in the buyer's journey.

Put it into action:
Send an onboarding message with educational content and power-user tips when a customer is first learning how to use your product. A solid personalization strategy is essential for prospect engagement, conversion, and longterm trust. And the right marketing automation solution can make it easy to create and send customized messages that get results.

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3 TIP: CONNECT THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

Email and social media can be a powerful combination, but in order to get the most value out of both, it's important to look at them as complementary. At the very least, you'll want to make sure your email campaigns do, in fact, include links to your social networks. But what kind of links? There's a difference between sharing and connecting on social media.

Sharing

These links make it possible for your subscribers to share the email (or a part of it) with their social network. For example, if you included a surprising statistic in an email, you could include a link to "Tweet this fact!" This is a good way to get more visibility for your brand and possibly acquire new leads as well.

Connecting

This is where you ask your email recipients to follow your brand on LinkedIn, follow you on Twitter, "Like" your Facebook page, subscribe to your YouTube channel, and so on. For example, if you send an email with a link to an educational video, you might encourage your readers to subscribe to your YouTube channel for more valuable videos. It's a great way to deepen your relationship with your customers and prospects.

No matter what type of social link you're providing, make sure the value of sharing or connecting with your brand is clear right up front, and that you're using the social media platforms that make the most sense for your audience.

According to Social Times, adding social sharing buttons to email messages increases click-through rates by more than 150%.
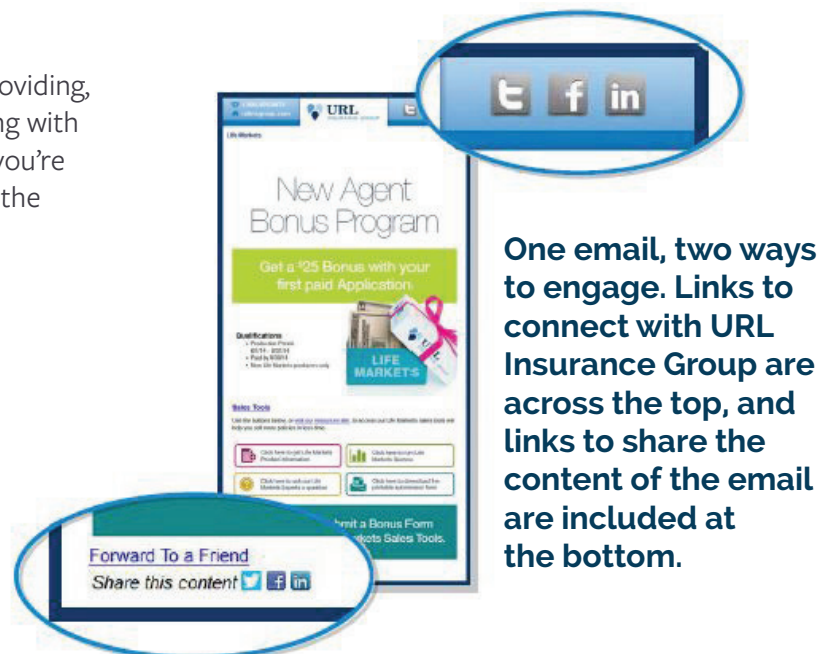
One email, two ways to engage. Links to connect with URL Insurance Group are across the top, and links to share the content of the email are included at the bottom.

3 TIP: CONNECT THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA (CONTINUED)

Email and social media can be a powerful combination, but in order to get the most value out of both, it's important to look at them as complementary. At the very least, you'll want to make sure your email campaigns do, in fact, include links to your social networks. But what kind of links? There's a difference between sharing and connecting on social media.

5 Ideas for Avoiding Email + Social Mistakes

Don't drive a person to a Facebook page – or any other social media site –that doesn't reflect the branding and design of your company. If you do, chances are good they'll click away.

Don't use social media just to sell something. Start with a conversation.

Don't forget to listen and respond to customers. Do it as quickly as possible – preferably in real time.

Don't let your social site become a ghost town. If you're not using it, stop linking to it.

Don't start on too many social channels at once. Start where your customers are right now and branch out.

The right marketing automation platform should make it easy to integrate your email programs with your social media efforts. Act-On's suite of social media tools can help turn social media into a business driver using simple drag and drop social sharing widgets that encourage cross-channel social amplification. Track, interact, and build your audience all from right within the platform!

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TIP: CONNECT THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA (CONTINUED)

WHAT TO TRY:

Drive Up Subscriptions

Get more opt-ins to your email list with social media. Use Facebook, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn and other social sites to announce discounts and special offers. When you ask visitors for their email address, provide the opportunity for these potential subscribers to opt into your list.

Put it into action:
If you have a regular newsletter, post a link to it on your social sites to drive traffic (and subscriptions).

Create Once, Use Often

Repurpose content from your newsletter on social sites like Facebook and LinkedIn, then link back to a newsletter archive as well as a landing page where visitors can sign up to get the email.

Put it into action:
Grab interesting bits of content (like statistics, quotes,or visuals), tweet them out, and link to the assets they're from.

Gain Followers And Fans

Whenever you provide a subscription page or preference center, be sure to include the opportunity to follow and connect with your brand through social channels.

Put it into action:
Add social links and icons in the footers of every asset you create, such as white papers, eBooks, data sheets, and case studies.

Wherever possible, be sure to include the benefits of signing up for your email or connecting with your organization through social media. Because if you can't think of a benefit, your audience won't be able to either – and that means they'll unfollow, un-like, and unsubscribe in a hurry.

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4 *TIP: NURTURE WITH CARE*

Nurture marketing campaigns are a type of drip marketing program that takes undecided prospects along an educational path. Over time, as people respond, you can learn more about their needs and interests and target your messages accordingly, providing increasingly relevant information to make prospects ready for contact from sales.

Nurture email campaigns provide a reliable way to develop relationships with potential buyers. They create a rhythm of contact and keep the line of communication open.

Drip marketing campaigns are designed to engage your prospects and customers with a series of messages delivered at scheduled intervals.

For example, you could support a free trial with drip messaging by sending a series of emails asking if the recipient needs help, and then a timed progression of "your free trial is ending soon" alerts. If the prospect doesn't respond within a certain period, the next automated message could be a reengagement offer. Onboarding is another common use of drip marketing.

These kinds of campaigns are also useful when you're dealing with extremely long buying cycles. Using marketing automation, new leads can enter the program at the beginning and proceed through each step in the buying journey, and every action they take (or don't take) can add to their lead score. Highly responsive prospects with a high lead score can automatically be transferred to the sales rep.

47%

NURTURED LEADS MAKE 47% LARGER PURCHASES THAN NON-NURTURED LEADS.

(The Annuitas Group)

PICARRO

Think you've got a long sales cycle?

Learn how Picarro kickstarts great conversations with automated email programs to support their event marketing programs.

Download ⟶

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WHAT TO TRY:

Webinars and Event Promotion

Online webinars and events are an excellent way to generate new leads, nurture existing leads, and interact with customers in real time. And drip campaigns are a great way to communicate with your audience before, during, and after an event.

Put it into action:

- Deliver invitations with details about the event.
- Send a preview leading up to the event, and provide social media links and hashtags so participants can interact before, during, and after the event.
- Schedule additional invitations to those who have not yet registered.
- Send reminder messages to registrants so they don't forget to attend.
- Send "Thank you for attending" or "Sorry we missed you" follow-up messages and include links to the presentation slides and videos.
- Ask for feedback and invite attendees to sign up for alerts about future events.

Rescue Abandoned Shopping Carts

If your prospects have products in their carts but haven't purchased, you can send them a series of messages to bring them back.

Put it into action:

- Send an email right after the shopping cart was abandoned. Find out if the prospect had problems placing the order.
- After a few days, remind the prospect that the product is still available. Show related goods, and add an incentive (for example, "buy these shoes, get 20% off the matching bag" or "free shipping on orders over $50").
- In a few weeks, remind the prospect again and specify that the incentives and offers end soon.

The emails you send should include images of the products so prospects remember what they wanted, as well as a link to the shopping cart so it's easy to complete the order.

Webinars and events are fantastic drivers of leads, but can be very time consuming to plan and execute. Marketing automation **platforms like Act-On**, can help dramatically reduce the time you spend on organizing your webinars and events while increasing the quality of your results.

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5 TIP: PULL THE TRIGGER TO GAIN ATTENTION

Trigger messages go out automatically when a user takes a specific action (or doesn't take it), or when a calendar date is reached. Examples of actions might be watching a video, abandoning a shopping cart, downloading a white paper, attending a webinar, or entering a contest. The calendar date could be an expiring subscription or an anniversary. Trigger messages are a proven way to send the right message at the right time. When an email is both timely and relevant, clickthrough rates go up – and so do conversions.

5 Ideas for Better Email Personalization

01 Send an email wishing a customer a happy birthday, or congratulate them on a life event, such as getting married (just make sure the customer has shared this information with you, or you'll look like you've invaded their privacy).

02 Is it National Aviation day? Send a message with information on airfare deals. Be sure that any observances or localized festivities are actually being celebrated by the recipient.

03 If your customer has achieved VIP level, send a trigger message letting them know the benefits.

04 After your customers have purchased from you, send messages asking them to post reviews or provide feedback.

05 If they respond by leaving feedback, writing a review, or interacting with your organization on social media, trigger an automatic message thanking them. If you're awarding them something (like points or discounts), let them know.

Rapid response makes trigger emails extremely relevant and especially effective; it's real-time interaction, from your buyer's point of view. Responding quickly means you'll catch someone at the time they're still actively thinking about the product or topic that caused their action – and your email.

Triggered email campaigns produce:

197%
larger open rates

203%
larger click-to-open rates

406%
larger click-through rates

than typical campaigns

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WHAT TO TRY:

Messages Based On Web Behavior

Understanding what activities visitors are conducting on your website and sending a message based on that activity.

Put it into action:

If someone visits a high-value location on your website, such as a pricing page, trigger a message from a sales representative offering to talk about pricing options. If a customer adds an item to their cart but doesn't buy, trigger an email that alerts them when quantities are running out.

Confirmation Messages

Confirmation messages include a variety of emails with different purposes. They can be a welcome to new subscribers, thank you notes for making a purchase or taking a survey, or verification that a person has registered for an event.

Put it into action:

Try including a supporting message to increase engagement. For example, a confirmation that a product has been shipped might include the expected delivery date, a tracking number, and also a link to review the product – or a special offer on a related item.

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ABOUT ACT-ON SOFTWARE

Act-On Software is the world's growth marketing leader, offering solutions that empower marketers to move beyond the lead and engage targets at every step of the customer lifecycle. Act-On makes customer data actionable so marketers can strategize smart, effective solutions to grow their businesses and generate higher customer lifetime value – all with the fastest time-to-value.

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