


Email Marketing for Small Business: What's the Big Idea?

A **hands-on guide** to making email marketing **work for you**.





You're considering email marketing to promote your business? **Smart Move!**

Congratulations, you're about to step into the world of email marketing – one of the smartest ways ever for developing your business. And to help you get started, here's a bird's-eye view of what email marketing's all about – from planning, to getting your campaign going, to making it successful. For more helpful tips on this exciting marketing tool, take a look at [ConstantContact.com/learning-center](https://www.constantcontact.com/learning-center).

Good, Fast, or Low Cost Marketing?

Now you can have all three. And effectiveness, too.

We've all heard the old adage about how, when it comes to marketing, you can get what you need done well, delivered quickly or produced inexpensively; but you can only choose two out of the three.

Well, thanks to the wonders of technology, those days are gone. Today, using email marketing, you can communicate effectively with quality content, design, and delivery. You can do it quickly and repeatedly. And, you can do it within a budget that makes absolute sense for your business. What's more, you can do all this and at the same time build excellent relationships with your customers.

Who doesn't want to save money?

When you communicate with your customers through permission-based email you get everything you would in a print ad – except the paper. And without the paper, you can skip things like printing costs, mailing costs, and media costs. Plus email targets exactly who you want to reach, so you don't waste dollars on unlikely prospects, like other advertising options do.

It is said that communication is a 50/50 proposition.

We beg to differ. We believe good communication should be a 100/100 effort. With email, you not only control your message, but you also create a welcoming, easy way for recipients to have a two-way dialogue with you. They can also pass along your message to their family and friends – valuable referrals for your business.

Just like fingerprints, no two customers are alike.

With email marketing, you can send different messages to match the interests of different customer groups or even individuals. And, because email is so easy to create and change, you can revise your messaging to reflect the changing focus of your audience.



Things To Think About

What was the total cost of your most recent newspaper or direct mail campaign? Do you think it was a good investment?

What mechanism do you currently use to hear the voice of your customers? Is it effective?

How much time does it take to adjust your marketing message using your current system of communicating with your customers?

How Well Do You Know Your Customers?



Now you can learn more about them as they learn more about you.

The fact is, all of business is built on relationships. And the better you understand your customers, the better your chances of building a mutually-rewarding, ongoing relationship with each other. An email marketing campaign should be built on a clear understanding of your customers and their needs, as well as what you have to offer them.

It's easier – and cheaper – to keep a customer than to find a new one.

The more you know about your customers, the better able you are to meet their needs. That means they are much more likely to remain customers, and you don't have to spend extra money and effort trying to find new ones. What's more, a satisfied customer is your best advertisement, and can help you build your business through referrals to their friends and colleagues.

No matter what you say, say it consistently and regularly.

A sustained email marketing campaign is the perfect way to educate your customers about your goods, services, policies, and community involvement. Just be sure to map out a strategy for the types of information you plan to share with them, and make sure it's helpful, informative, or enlightening.

Don't forget to listen.

Every successful email marketing campaign shares a very important common denominator – the ability of the recipient to respond to the message. By including at least one, and preferably several, ways in which your customer can reach you (by email, phone, or in person), you invite comment, criticism, and congratulations. All are valuable ways to learn more about your customers and respond to their needs.

Make sure your email marketing campaign fits with your overall marketing plan.

Different kinds of objectives are best served by different kinds of email. For example, if you are looking for immediate sales, then an email highlighting a price reduction or new product introduction may be best. If, on the other hand, you're looking to establish yourself as an expert in your field, then a more informative email with case histories may be appropriate.

Things To Think About

Can you identify satisfied customers who may be willing to be quoted in your email marketing campaign?

What would a communications calendar about your business look like?

How can you ensure that your business responds to all customer comments in a timely fashion?

Do You Make Every Contact Count?

Collecting contact information is as simple as just asking for it.

The fact is, that email marketing can help you establish and build relationships that will help you grow your business. But, there are two rules you need to follow:

1. You can't communicate if you don't make contact.
2. Not all contacts are equal. The more information you gather about each contact, the better your chances of delivering the right message to the right person.

There's really no mystery to how to collect contact information.

Simply ask. Most people will be glad to supply basic contact information. Just be careful not to ask for too much personal information or they may balk at answering. Start by asking for a name and an email address. That's enough to get a contact on your list.

If the contact is in person or on the phone, you can also ask for a street address and a phone number. Additionally, you can capture contact information from a business card or an electronic communication.

Don't get caught "spamming." Get permission first.

When you send someone an email marketing communication and that person has not given you permission to do so, you are "spamming." There are strict regulations against "spamming" and you never, ever want to send "spam" to anyone for any reason.

The way to avoid becoming a "spammer" is to always get permission to send your messages to the people on your list. You can ask for *explicit* permission – which means the person understands that an email message will be headed their way – or you can go with *implicit* permission which means that you have an existing business relationship with the person and that they are open to hearing from you.

Motivate people to give you their contact information.

When you offer something to motivate contacts to provide their information, chances are more likely you'll actually get what you asked for. It doesn't have to be much, but it must have value to the person receiving it. A discount on certain products is a powerful motivator but something as simple as a downloadable white paper is also a good choice.



Things To Think About

Are you and your staff asking for contact information at every encounter? Why not?

Have you ever sent an email with a marketing message to someone who might not want to have received it? Did you know it would be considered "spam"?

What low cost but effective offer could you make to help ensure the collection of contact information and permission to communicate with them?

Why Would Your Customers Read Your Email?



Make it relevant and you'll build trust – and your business.

The surest way to get your customers to come back again and again is to get them to trust you. And one way to earn their trust is to communicate with them honestly, regularly, and in a way they can relate to. Give them that, and you'll not only have satisfied customers, you'll have true advocates.

Show that you care about their welfare, not just their dollars.

When information is useful, it is more likely to be remembered and acted upon. And remember, customers want to hear about things they care about – not just what you've got to say about your business.

For example, if you want to announce a sale, don't just talk about the dollars off (though that's certainly important). Also add information about how the product or service can benefit the customer. A 20% discount on cleaning a home's air ducts is interesting, but improving the air quality of one's home, or protecting one's children from airborne pests, is compelling. This kind of messaging encourages trust and demonstrates that you are interested in the welfare of your customers, not just how much they spend with you. It's all about building trust.

When in doubt, ask the experts – your existing customers.

If you find it difficult to figure out what to include in your emails, don't overlook the obvious. While you may think certain topics are "old hat," you'll be surprised how many customers may not know – or may have forgotten – certain pieces of information.

Another good source of content is your customer. Many of them will be happy to suggest topics, lend advice, or even be interviewed for your email campaign.

Things To Think About

Can you name three things you think your customers would be interested in knowing about your service or products? What kind of story can you tell about each one?

Can you name four customers you can seek advice from regarding your email campaign?

If you were to survey your customers on what they would like to see in an email from you, how would you do it?

How Can You Get Your Email Opened?

A few simple rules can keep you out of the junk mail file.

You may be thinking that, for all the potential benefits of an email marketing campaign, there are just too many emails floating around out there. And it is true that many emails are simply discarded without being opened at all.

But yours doesn't have to be one of them. Here are some simple ways you can encourage your customers to open, read, and act on your emails.

Make sure they know it's from you.

If there's ever a time to ditch the clever headline in favor of the straightforward approach, it's in the "from" line of your email. Always use the better-known of your name, your company name, your product name or whatever other designation your customers will most readily recognize. And do not use such common but ill-advised addresses like sales@ or service@. They're unfriendly and won't do a thing to build your relationship with your customers.

Make sure they know it's something they're interested in.

Is there anything more frustrating than opening an email and discovering you just don't care what it's about? It's a waste of time and a frustration to your customers. That's why your "subject" line should be descriptive but not deceptive. Instead of a generic phrase like "What's New This Month," try, "10 Reasons..." or "New Survey Reveals..." or "8 Ways to..." as more compelling titles.

Keep those emails coming.

No one likes to be bothered unnecessarily, but there is something to be said for establishing a regular schedule of communication and sticking to it. If your emails are interesting and pertinent, your customers will look forward to receiving them – and will be disappointed when they don't.

The way your email looks is just as important as what it says.

No matter how important or well-written your email is, if the design is cluttered, too busy, or just plain disorganized, the message will never get read. Remember that readers decide whether to read an email by previewing the first few lines. Be sure to use strong headlines and include words and phrases that appeal to their interests.



Things To Think About

What emails are you most likely to open and read? Which are you most likely to trash without reading?

If you were one of your customers, what would you like to read in an email from your business?

Can you make a commitment to regularly scheduled emails? Do you need help maintaining a regular schedule of communications?

What's The Right Email To Send?

When embarking on an email marketing campaign, it is wise to consider the several different formats available – and your intended purpose for each communication. Don't be afraid to “mix and match” formats across your entire campaign. After all, you may want to communicate one thing in one email and something entirely different in the next.

Also keep in mind that communicating too frequently can be just as detrimental as not communicating often enough. How often should you email your customers? It depends on the intent of the email, but certainly not more than every other week and no less than once a quarter. This frequency is about right, except in unusual circumstances.

If you want to:	Try this format:	This frequency:	And make note of this:
Educate your customers about you or your industry in general.	This is a prime target for a newsletter – a regularly-distributed publication generally about one main topic that is of interest to its readers.	No more than once a month and preferably quarterly.	Newsletters should be regularly scheduled, so if you're considering doing one, be prepared to produce it on a regular basis. Starting a newsletter and then not continuing it can be harmful to your reputation and cause a loss of trust.
Combine an educational message with a promotion.	While a newsletter can be primarily educational in tone, there's no reason why you can't add a promotional message to yours.	No more than once a month and preferably quarterly.	Be careful to not let the promotion overpower the educational message of your newsletter. If it does, you'll be seen as trying to drive sales rather than helping your customers.
Announce a promotion.	Try a purely promotional message – one that is straightforward in its intent and doesn't pretend to be anything other than a promotion.	As needed to match your promotional schedule.	Be careful with sending promotional messages too frequently. Doing so can lead your customers to doubt your pricing policy and wait to purchase only when promotions are in effect.
Invite customers to an event or make an announcement.	Try a simple invitation or announcement with no other message.	As needed.	This is a great way to get people to register for your event so you can judge your likely attendance.
Take a survey.	A Q&A format.	Online polls can be more frequent. Try sending them before and then after a major change in offerings, products, or communications.	Multiple choice surveys are more likely to be answered and are easier to score. However, you should always allow for customer comments.

Ready to get started?

It's time for an email service to help you get it done right.

As you've read, making email marketing a part of your business strategy requires forethought and planning. And, at Constant Contact, we believe that an email service will help you get your campaigns off the ground, and set you up for success. In fact, helping small businesses connect with their customers and build their businesses is what we're all about.

With our email marketing service, you can focus on your customers and your message, and leave the "nuts and bolts" to us!

Here are seven reasons you should consider partnering with Constant Contact:

1. **We're experts on email marketing best practices** – so your company looks professional and your process is smooth. From helping you with your list to sharing examples of other successful small-business email, we're all about education and support.
2. **We help you build a world-class list** – so it's a snap to send out your campaigns. Our customers trust us to help them with everything from building their list to uploading it and keeping it secure. After all, your list is one of your biggest assets.
3. **We provide email templates** – so you have a strong head start on making your email look great. Our large library of templated formats takes you from newsletters to promotions to invitations, and more. In fact, there's a template for practically every type of business needs.
4. **We make it easy to build your own email** – so you don't have to be a techie! Our email wizard tool leads even a novice through the steps to customizing our templates, so they reflect your company's look and deliver the message you want to send.
5. **We get your email delivered** – so you don't have to worry about your intended messages dropping through the cracks. Since email is our focus, we maintain strong relationships with the major Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to ensure that our customers' communications get delivered.
6. **We track your success** – so you'll know what's working and what's not. Your email marketing program should be a long-term investment. And, our campaign reports will give you important insight into which campaigns and messages bring you the responses you need, to make sure the investment pays off for your business.
7. **We stay on top of email laws and regulations** – so you can feel secure that your emails are welcomed by your recipients, won't get blocked as spam, and that they comply with the law.



How Can We Help You?



**Help is just
a click away...**

Marketing Resource Center

ConstantContact.com/learning-center

Live Local Seminars

ConstantContact.com/learning-center

Free Webinars

ConstantContact.com/learning-center

Free Live Help

ConstantContact.com/support

ConnectUp! Community

Community.ConstantContact.com

Our commitment to you doesn't end when you join.

You're an expert in a lot of things. You wear many hats. You don't have to be an email marketing expert before you join Constant Contact – because we'll make you one with our comprehensive education, coaching, and support. We have so many ways to get you started, keep you going, and make you successful with your own email marketing programs.

Marketing Resource Center

This informative library is your first stop for knowledge that's loaded with up-to-the-minute information and tips on email marketing best practices. Choose from our "Hints & Tips" articles, in-depth white papers, case studies in success, and more. You'll find the expert, proven knowledge and inspiration you need to craft your most effective newsletters, surveys, and promotions ever.

Live Local Seminars

We offer free, local, and live seminars across the country so that you can learn about email marketing from A to Z and network with other small businesses in your area. Check out our website to find a location near you and a time that's convenient for your schedule.

Free Webinars

For small businesses on the go, webinars let you access live training conveniently, on your terms – from the comfort of your office or home, at a time that works for you. What's more, you can view a variety of relevant and changing topics, from getting started with email, to promotional tips, to success stories and more.

Free Live Help

It's the email lifeline for our customers and trialers. With a single phone call, you get access to a Constant Contact expert in our office who knows our email and survey tools inside and out, and can actually walk you through any rough spots – from loading your list, to importing copy, to uploading photos, and more. They work with small businesses all day, every day, so they're pros at answering your questions, coaching you through the process, and getting you back to running your business.

ConnectUp! Community

Small business owners face many challenges – and who better to help you than other small business owners who know exactly what you do every day? Constant Contact's online community puts you in touch with your peers, colleagues – and maybe even competitors! You don't have to reinvent the wheel. Find out what works for others in your industry, area, or somewhere else entirely. You'll find an active, helpful, and encouraging assembly of small business owners just like you who exchange ideas, solve problems, and gain inspiration to become even more successful.

It's Easy! Sign Up Today!

Your email's on its way –
and so are you!

There you have it – everything you need to get started on a successful email marketing campaign. You now know why email marketing is so effective, how to prepare for your own campaign, how to get your email opened, what kind of email to send, and even what to look for in an email marketing partner. And you can find out even more and sign up for a FREE 60-day trial at www.ConstantContact.com.

One final word of advice – don't wait.
The sooner you launch your campaign, the
sooner you'll see how successful it can be.



FREE 60-Day Trial!
www.ConstantContact.com


Constant Contact[®]
Connect. Inform. Grow.



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