

Email Marketing 101

How to Increase Engagement & ROI



Introduction

Prospects and customers spend a great deal of that time weeding through emails that may or may not be relevant to them. So how do you stand out in that crowded inbox?

Email marketing is a powerful tool. It allows you to engage with your opt-in list one-to-one at home, in the office, or while mobile. How many other marketing channels can say that? It also allows you to create a truly compelling campaign that speaks to an individual versus the mass audience. The key to having a successful email marketing program is to utilize best practices and be thoughtful about what tactics you will employ to create email campaigns that not only elicit an open but your desired result as well.

We've mapped out a guide for those who are new to email marketing, as well as those who are pros, that outlines how to develop and execute a successful email marketing strategy from acquisition to optimization. Included in this whitepaper are the following topics:

- **Create an Email Marketing Plan.** Most marketers ignore the importance of an email-marketing plan. Discover how you can create one that integrates with your traditional marketing seamlessly.
- **Grow Your List Organically.** Be successful growing your opt-in list without pain to the budget. Whether it's using valuable real estate on your website, or creating promotional campaigns to urge the respondent to subscribe, learn tactics for increasing your opt-in rate this year.
- **Email marketing best practices.** We've outlined design tactics that will assist you in engaging your audience as well as improving your deliverability.
- **Seven Email Marketing Refreshes.** Perhaps your email marketing is in need of a simple refresh. Review seven quick fixes for your email marketing program that will assist you in capturing low hanging fruit.

If you begin to utilize the tactics and strategies described in this whitepaper, you will begin to see an increase in your ROI and your customer engagement.

About Bronto

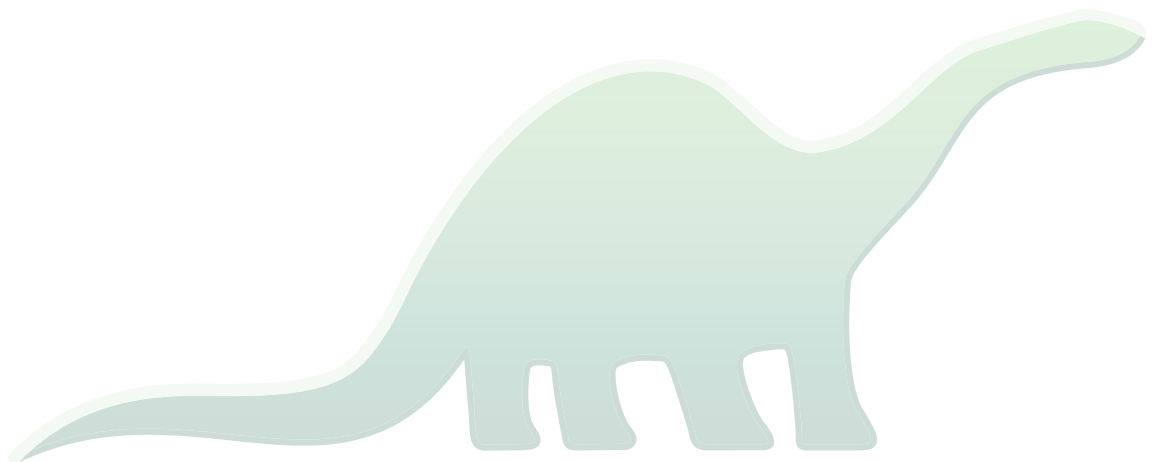
Bronto Software is an industry-leading email marketing service provider. Since its' founding in 2002, Bronto has simplified email marketing for businesses and organizations by offering a powerful, easy-to-use, email marketing solution together with industry-leading client services. The exceptional deliverability, detailed analytics and robust feature set of the Bronto application enables marketers in retail and other industries to easily and effectively implement email marketing that results in a positive ROI and business growth.



Creating Your Email Marketing Plan

A Quick Checklist

by: Sally Lowery
Online Marketing Manager



Companies spend a great deal of time planning their offline activities, but often neglect the email-marketing calendar. Many prefer that email marketing be more spontaneous, and in fact, do themselves an injustice. By dedicating time to construct your email-marketing calendar now, your future email campaigns will benefit from utilizing the correct “timing” to ensure emails are more relevant to consumers. In this whitepaper, we will define a list of email marketing activities to identify so that you are better equipped to customize your calendar.

When preparing your email-marketing calendar, there are a few things to consider:

- Internal & External Events
- Industry Events
- Seasonality
- Prospect & Customer Activities

All of these factors are essential to building your calendar in order to ensure that you reduce churn, identify opportunities when to send, and increase relevance.

Internal Events

An important consideration is your internal calendar of planned changes. Do you have any new product/service releases or store openings scheduled for the upcoming year? What does your budgeting cycle resemble for the planned fiscal year? While a new logo may not be of importance to a customer, the availability of a new feature within your website, such as site-to-store purchase, may be. If you already are aware of what’s planned for your fiscal year, be certain to include it in the email-marketing calendar as well as any appropriate segments. If you are opening a store in California, it probably isn’t relevant content to your East Coast customers. By planning your email marketing touches for your internal events ahead of time, you create a much more fluid multi-channel campaign.

External Events

What is going on in your direct community or the community at-large? Be aware of major sporting events, elections, or even major TV events (such as the Oscar’s). All can assist you in creating email themes for your customers. Be cautious though, although a die-hard sports fanatic may appreciate a World Series themed email campaign, a mother of three with no time to watch sports may not. Remember your audience and segment accordingly.

Industry Events

Industry events are a necessary B2B email marketer’s tool. Is there industry tradeshows or reports that are scheduled for the year? If so, take advantage of having a fluid marketing campaign now. If you can identify the activity, you can create the content and create interest using your email marketing. Often, company’s wait until the last minute to add the email channel, hence, the campaigns may not be as seamless as desired.

Seasonality

Grab a calendar and check out major, and a few minor, holidays and how they integrate into your email marketing plan. What are the local schools schedules? If you can determine those ahead of time, you can really have fun creating seasonal promotions. It’s also essential in determining when you are going to email, at what frequency and what the overall expected return will be. If you want to do a countdown to Christmas, or 12 days of savings, know when to start that campaign prior to the



holidays hitting you quickly. Also identify what the seasons and holidays signal to your audience and the impact that they have on your buying cycles. For a B2C email marketer, the holidays may mean an increase in online activity and responsiveness to email marketing, but to the B2B email marketer, it may indicate a lull in activity.

Prospect/Customer Activities

Identifying your prospects and customers preferred buying seasons and non-purchase times is key in planning your email marketing. You can also gather data and determine what automated messages you would like to send throughout the year. By identifying those ahead of time, you can create the campaigns and automate the messages. A good example is a drugstore company that sells hair products. They know that the average consumer has to re-purchase shampoo and conditioner every 32 days. That company can create an auto-campaign offering the customer a discount while reminding them that it is time to re-order. Scheduling it ahead of time, allows you to engage in your automated messages and affect how they perform. Take a look at the customer and prospect data that you are collecting and determine the information that you will use to create campaigns throughout the year. Other data can include:

- Customer/Prospect Behavior
- Demographics
- Preferences
- Personas

Building Your Email Marketing Plan

Once you've collected all the appropriate data and have determined your schedule, it's time to create a plan. Your plan may include:

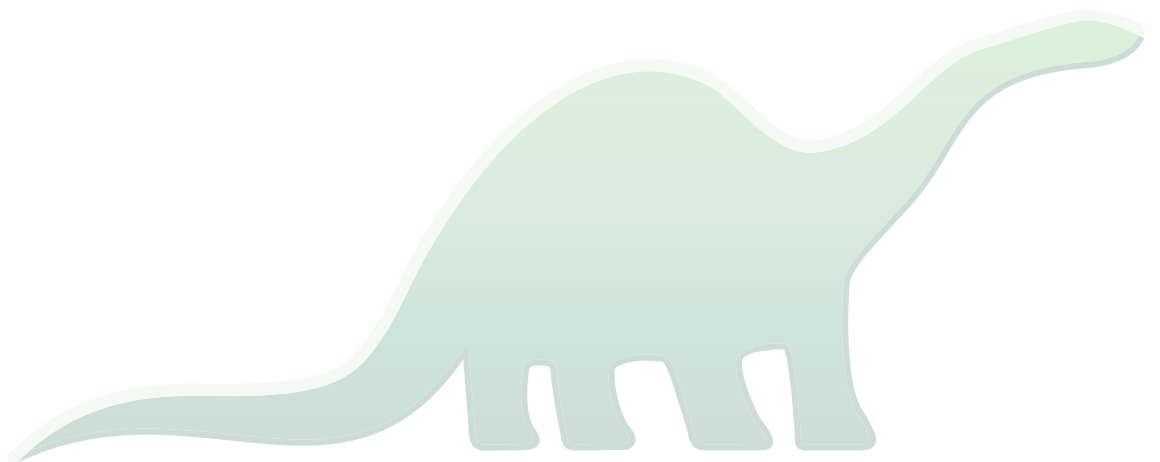
- Date
- Department
- Campaign (subject line, call-to-action)
- Format (newsletter, promotional)
- List & List Size
- Segments (buyers vs. non-buyers, transactional, etc.)
- Tracking Or Source Code

Don't know where to get started? [Download our Email Marketing Plan Template today!](#)

Regardless of what events and activities you decide to base your email-marketing calendar on, always remember the importance of relevance. Email really is a profit center and the more relevant experiences you can provide by having a well-organized plan will only increase your profit margin.

Effectively Grow Your List Organically

by: Sally Lowery
Online Marketing Manager



You've crafted a highly dynamic, engaging email campaign...now what? Without a list to send it to, the email campaign is worthless. Acquiring addresses is as essential as creating a targeted message. So where do you start?

First, it's important to understand the CAN-SPAM requirements for commercial email as well as how the definition of SPAM has changed over time. According to CAN-SPAM regulations, you must receive permission from your email recipient in order to send commercial or bulk email.

(1) AFFIRMATIVE CONSENT- The term 'affirmative consent', when used with respect to a commercial electronic mail message, means that--

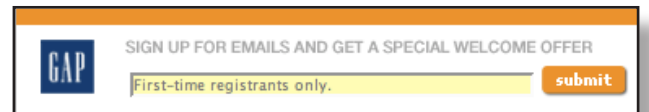
- (A) The recipient expressly consented to receive the message, either in response to a clear and conspicuous request for such consent or at the recipient's own initiative. *

**CAN-SPAM ACT of 2003*

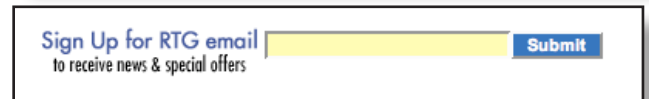
Over the last couple of years, however, junk email has been defined as any email that a recipient doesn't want to receive, regardless of whether or not they've opted to receive it. When it's all said and done, what matters most is how your recipient feels about the messages you send them. Permission ensures that you are creating a good list that creates a beneficial relationship for both your company and your recipients. "Opting-in" reiterates that your customers have opted "in favor" of that relationship.

Benefits of an opt-in list:

- Achieve Higher Subscriber Retention Rates – according to a report by Forrester Research titled "Email Marketing Needs Permission", opt-in lists retained 49% of their subscribers while those that didn't utilize opt-in lists only retained 28% of their subscribers.
- Engage More Valuable Prospects and Customers – those that are willing to opt-in to receive your messages are also going to be more willing to provide additional data such as preferences allowing you to create more relevant campaigns.
- More Profitable (higher conversion rates) – it's inevitable; someone who requested to receive content from you is much more likely to open, read, and convert. Remember to use the data that you have collected to ensure that the message is timely and meets the needs of the customer. In other words, deliver what you promised at registration.
- Reinforce Reputation – ensure that the messages delivered to your customer's inbox are as intended, by doing so you reinforce the trust that you created when they signed up to receive your messages. Deliver on time, relevant content with the frequency promised and you will create a relationship that will last from opt-in to win-back.



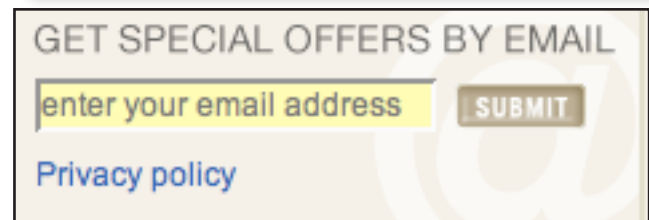
A sign-up form for GAP. It features the GAP logo on the left, followed by the text "SIGN UP FOR EMAILS AND GET A SPECIAL WELCOME OFFER". Below this is a text input field with the placeholder "First-time registrants only." and a blue "submit" button on the right.



A sign-up form for RTG email. It features the text "Sign Up for RTG email" and "to receive news & special offers" on the left, followed by a text input field and a blue "Submit" button on the right.



A sign-up form for exclusive offers. It features the text "Sign up for emails and exclusive offers." in orange on the left, followed by a text input field with the placeholder "Enter email address" and a red "SUBMIT" button with a right-pointing arrow on the right.



A sign-up form for special offers by email. It features the text "GET SPECIAL OFFERS BY EMAIL" at the top, followed by a text input field with the placeholder "enter your email address" and a grey "SUBMIT" button on the right. Below the input field is a blue link for "Privacy policy".

The following examples require a mere email address to register and receive email offers.



Become an NBA All Access Member here!

If you live and breathe basketball, you've found your home. Become an NBA All Access member today and get access to everything NBA. It's easy and free -- just fill in the info below.

STEP 1 - PROFILE
PROFILE INFORMATION

Enroll by providing the following information:

First Name:

Your email address will also be used to send you our benefits.

Email Address:

Confirm Address:

Date of Birth: Month:

Zip/Postal Code:

You're in!

Welcome to **NBA ALL ACCESS!**

Hey Sally,

Ready to fuel your passion for the NBA like never before?

Your NBA All Access membership is your ticket to a whole new NBA experience, with everything from fan communities and fantasy to online games and inside scoops. Best of all, there's lots of exciting benefits in the works, so stay tuned!

If you want to customize your membership profile or activate your NBA All Access benefits, simply visit the [NBA All Access Member Center](#).

You've just taken your love of the game to the next level.

Congratulations!
The NBA All Access Team

P.S. As a special thanks for joining the NBA All Access community, you get 15% off your next purchase at [NBASStore.com](#), [click here!](#)

Your NBA All Access membership info:
Member Login: [sally@bronto.com](#)
Password: millie78

CHECK OUT NBA ALL ACCESS NOW!

- Fan Voice**
Talk game with other fans
- Highlight Mixer**
Mix and share NBA videos
- Fantasy**
Draft your own dream team
- Games**
Play fun online games

And more
New benefits are always in the works

NBA.com sends a "Thank You" email upon registration to their NBA All Access Membership.

So we've discussed the benefits of creating an opt-in list, but how do you acquire those contacts? There are several different models of acquisition and many channels that you can use to impact your list growth positively.

Different Models of Acquisition

- **Opt-in Acquisition** – pretty straightforward. You allow your prospects and customers the option to check a box and subscribe to your opt-in list.
- **Confirmed Opt-in Acquisition** – a confirmed opt-in not only allows the customer/prospect the ability to register to receive your email marketing, but also includes a follow up email that reminds the customer of what they opted-in to receive.
- **Double Opt-in Acquisition** – often believed to be the best mode of list growth, a double opt-in includes the customer opting in, receiving an email, and requiring confirmation that they did in fact register to receive the email marketing. Double opt-in often times have a much higher retention rate as well.

After determining your opt-in preference, you will need to determine your offer. What will your opt-in pitch be?

- **"Easy Join" Promos** – promoting an "easy join" on your website can prove very successful. By putting very few requirements, beyond the standards, you can grow your list quickly and effectively. Offline call-to-actions – does your company offer in-store offers to subscribe to your email marketing campaigns? If not, you should consider it, and make it as seamless for the in-store shopper as possible. Perhaps create an easy form that can be quickly completed at checkout. You may also consider creating an offer or incentive to join such as "\$5 off your purchase when you sign up for our marketing".
- **Promotional Offers** – many customers/prospects are willing to give you their information in return for something valuable to them. Test different offers for signing up for your email marketing and see what your audience responds to. It may be free shipping, dollars off, or percentage discount. Be careful though, often times a contact that has subscribed to receive something for free may be less likely to be retained as an engaged prospect/customer. Instead, try promoting the benefits of the campaigns you are sending.

The key to successful acquisition is to include the subscriber benefits, the frequency expectations, and sample emails at registration. It's also helpful to anticipate and address fears about misuse/abuse of data. Be certain to keep the required information minimal. There will be ample time to collect additional data throughout the customer lifecycle.

What is your call-to-action? Will you use subscribe, register, sign up or join.

- **"Subscribe"** may have a negative connotation. It often implies a fee for service. Be cautious when using and consider testing against other call-to-actions.



- “Register” may also lead the prospect/customer to believe that there is a higher level of commitment.
- “Sign up” is user friendly and doesn’t leave any reservations regarding joining your contact list.
- Another popular call-to-action is “Join”. The key to using “join” as your call-to-action is to ensure that the prospect/customer really feels as though they are receiving benefits that only members that “joined” would receive.

Your Registration Page

You’ve determined the call-to-action and have constructed the incentive or promo to use; now you must focus on your registration page. What data do you feel you must include with that first touch and what additional data would you prefer to collect over time. There are a couple of fields you must require at the time of online acquisition: email and level of permission. Also required by the CAN-SPAM Act is timestamp/date that contact subscribed and ip address of contact. Other fields may include name, company, and phone number. You may also want to include data that will allow you to include basic segmentation with your list such as: city, state, or content preferences. Once again, test different data collections and determine if there are fields that cause form abandonment.



These companies chose to offer an incentive to register. Consider the benefits of acquiring contacts through your own promotion.

HP includes a “preview” of the message that they will be receiving during the registration process. This tactic reinforces trust.

Thank You/Welcome

You’ve captured their attention, registered them, and now it’s time to remind them of the benefits of subscribing. The thank you page should reiterate what the prospect/customer opted in for as well as reinforce the content and benefits of your messages. Often times, companies have chosen to send an email as well thanking them for registering. This presents the opportunity to collect more data as well. By creating a subscription management link and including it in a “welcome” email, you allow the customer/prospect the flexibility to change their preferences at any time.

Once you’ve finalized all the details of your opt-in process, it’s important to decide what channels you would like to promote your registration with. You can acquire new contacts through everyday interactions via the following marketing channels:

- Website traffic
- Paid Search

- SEO/blogging
- Online Advertising
- Email/Site Sponsorships
- Direct Mail/Print Advertising
- Transactional Messages
- Telemarketing

Remember, the key to successful list growth is to value your contacts email addresses and deliver what you promised.

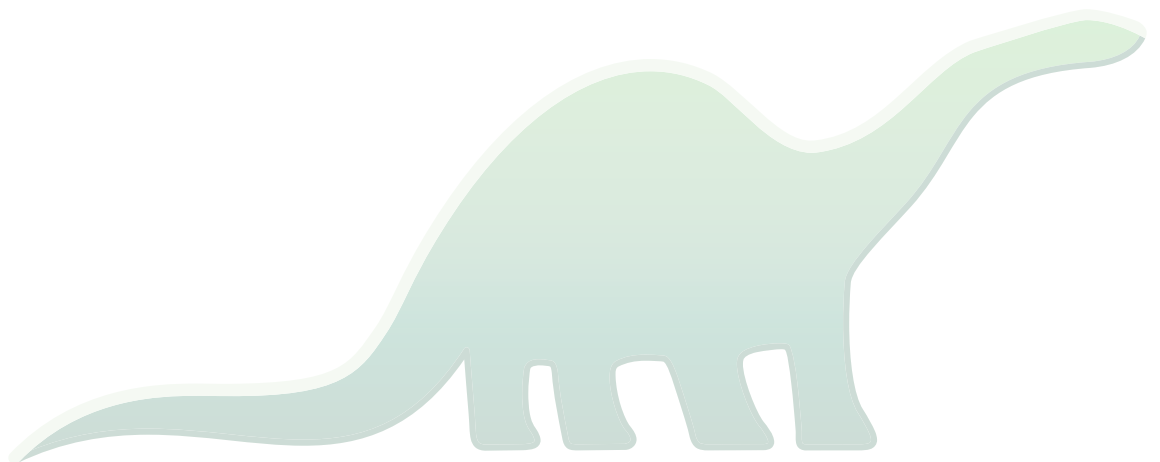


ClickZ and eMarketer repeat their subscription offer on every page by including it in the navigation of their website. eMarketer also allowed spacing for a "call out" within their navigation.

Email Marketing Best Practices Design Tactics for Improving Deliverability

by: Todd Darling

Bronto Software Support Associate



Email marketers already know that effective email design plays an essential role in branding and has a direct correlation with high clickthrough and conversion rates. However, many marketers overlook the effect that design can have on the deliverability of the actual email message. In light of the increasing use of preview panes, filters and the default blocking of images in popular email clients such as Outlook, Gmail, AOL, Bronto has outlined design best practices that will help you successfully reach your audience.

Code Carefully

An estimated 9 out of 10 HTML emails are not W3C HTML compliant, which can cause rendering and delivery issues. If you use HTML in your messages, make sure your code is error-free and follows W3C HTML guidelines.

Avoid scripting if possible, as well. Security risks due to script vulnerabilities in email browsers have increased over the years. Most messages containing JavaScript and VBScript result in stripped messages. There are a few email systems that reject the message immediately if scripting is detected. To ensure that you email is delivered, avoid using scripts in messages. Instead, you may consider driving your readers to your web site, where dynamic components may be implemented.

- Properly closed HTML tags. Poorly formed HTML often results in email messages being rendered in surprising and undesirable ways. Most mail clients are smart enough to know that if you don't close a paragraph tag then you probably made a mistake and it will add one in for you. However, other things like table tags are pretty tricky, so the mail client might guess correctly and might not — or it might not even try to fix it. Your message could look fine or it could be changed completely. It's a lot like leaving the punctuation out of an entire paragraph — people can guess what you meant, but they might guess wrong.
- Be mindful of CSS (Cascading Style Sheets). Don't link to external style sheets. Use inline styles tied to individual HTML tags since they display more reliably. Also, don't embed CSS in the head tags since many email clients strip those tags from email. If you do use CSS, be sure to test extensively. Some web-based mail clients combine your CSS with their own, breaking down the look of their application as well as the look of your email message.
- Use an HTML validator. HTML validators make sure your message uses properly formed HTML. Professional web design packages and browser add-ons, such as HTML Tidy, often include this feature.
- Keep a balance between text and images. Filters are on the lookout for email messages with only images. If you embed your text and graphics into a single image you risk your message going straight to the intended reader's spam filter.
- Include an alternative text version of your message. Use an email marketing product that allows you to send a text version of your message along with the HTML version. In addition to being another criteria for some filters, the text version of the message ensures readability by email clients that are not receptive to HTML messages.

Design Simply

Unlike web browsers, there are many different types of email clients and the way in which they display messages can vary wildly. Hence, it is best to keep your message and HTML code as clean and simple as possible for the most reliable results. Here are some more specific guidelines:

- Design your emails with formatting in mind. Using multiple columns or nested tables can be very unstable — in fact two columns can turn into a straight vertical line in some email clients. In most cases, it isn't worth risking deliverability due to excessive table tags. Tables also typically add a significant amount of extra bulk and extraneous HTML to your message.
- Avoid Flash. Embedded Flash does not work consistently in most email clients other than Mac Mail. Relevant, concise copy, a compelling call to action, and clean simple design will create more reliable and consistent impact than a risky "flash in the pan" mailing. If you do want to include Flash or other audio/video elements, it is most effective to include them on the adjoining landing page rather than embedding in the email message for best results.
- Use absolute links versus relative ones. Relative links open up the risk of all links and images being broken in the email because the mail client won't know where to go to get them. It's like giving the mailman your house number and street but no city or state. If you code a link to go to <http://bronto.com/stats/>, it has all the info that it needs to get to where you want it to go. However, if you just code the link as [/stats/](#), then it's not complete.
- Don't link to images used elsewhere on your website. Your web designer may replace, re name, or delete these images and inadvertently cause your images not to be displayed your email. By hosting your images with your ESP (or at the very least, separate from your other website images), you will avoid problems with broken links showing up in your email and probably speed up the display of these images in your email.

Grab Your Audience While You Can

Your email has a great deal of competition in the crowded inbox. Put your company name in the "from" line for quick recognition. Add an engaging subject line. Use the most valuable real estate, the top of your email preview pane, to be "disabled images" friendly. Incorporate teaser text instead of images to enable your customers to get an immediate preview of the email offerings, even if they are unable to see any associated images. Last, but certainly not least, display the important content – the offer, call to action – at the top for immediate viewing. You have a very short period of time between open and delete, use it well.

- Write Effective Subject Lines. Subject lines are one of the most important components of an email. The content of a subject line is the key variable for a recipient to proceed with opening an email, deleting it immediately, ignoring it, or reporting it as spam. The subject line content is also a major component in the algorithm of many ISP and recipient-level spam filters. A poorly written subject line may lead to a customer not opening your message, or it may never reach the recipient's inbox.

Keep in mind the following when creating a subject line: inform, intrigue, invoke action, and uplift brand.

- Utilize your real estate well. Are you wasting the most valuable real estate in your message? Give an incentive to the recipient to scroll further within the newsletter or email, or possibly even click the web version. A good example is “Scroll down to read why our content is the best”.

Test, Re-Test and Test Again

If you don't have a distribution list for testing, stop what you are doing and immediately set up one for your email marketing. Never rely solely on your internal email client and standard browsers for testing. You should conduct tests for the major ISPs (Outlook, AOL, Gmail, Yahoo, Hotmail, etc.) as well as other email providers that make up a large portion of your email lists. Also test the readability of messages in different browsers (Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari) to verify that your text and images translate successfully in each. Make a checklist for yourself of critical items such as the following that you will test across multiple ISPs and browsers:

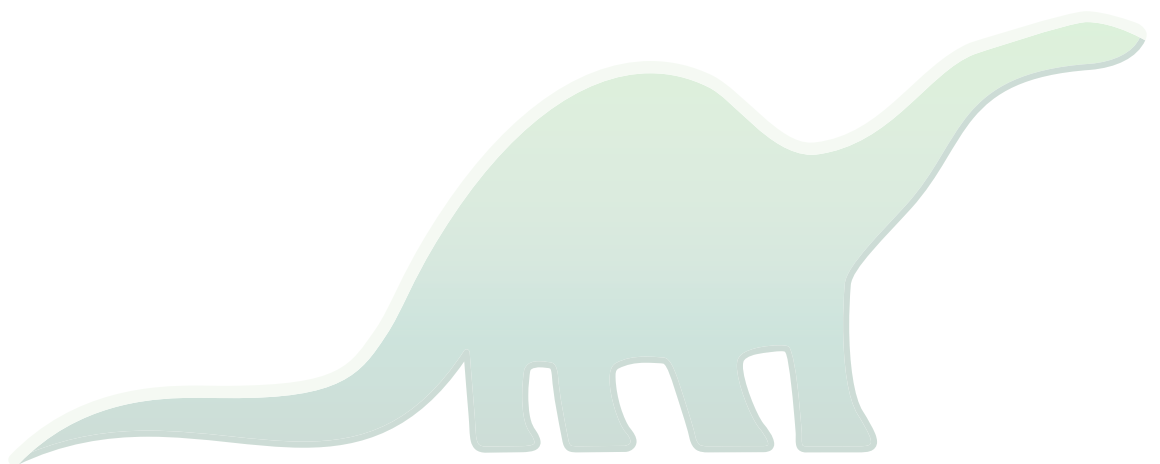
- Cascading Style Sheets are not altered or mangled
- HTML images are not blocked or there is a proper placeholder for the image if it doesn't appear
- Images are hosted with your ESP and not linked from elsewhere on your website
- An alternative 'text version of this email' label is displayed
- If the email client strips out your text and changes the background color, you can still read your message
- If used, columns and tables are unaltered
- URL links function properly

Hopefully this brief introduction to email design will get you well on your way to higher deliverability. For further information, check us out at www.bronto.com.

Seven Email Marketing Refreshes

by: Sally Lowery

Online Marketing Manager



The success of an email campaign can be determined by a variety of metrics: purchases, opens, or even post website traffic. Success really depends on your business objectives as well as customer engagement. Regardless of your metrics, it's easy to isolate areas in need of improvement and give them a much-needed refresh. Email that grows stale and stagnant isn't going to gain the same enthusiasm from your subscribers as ones that are ever evolving. This whitepaper will detail seven refreshes that you should consider that will quickly enhance your email-marketing program. You may also find some low hanging opportunities that you weren't aware you were missing.

These seven strategies and tactics outlined below will assist you in maximizing your email marketing return:

1. The Basics
2. List Growth
3. Design Impact
4. Relevancy
5. Interactive Elements
6. Analytics
7. Automation

#1 The Basics

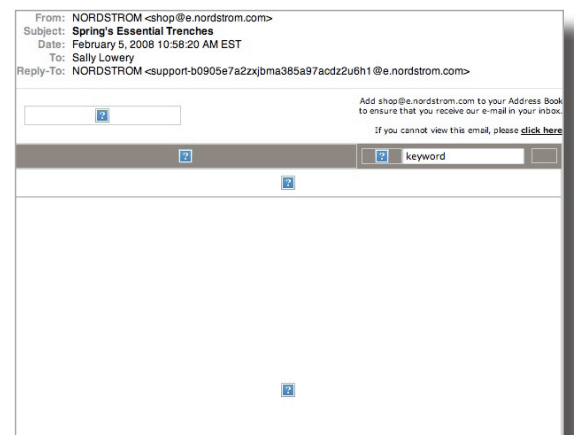
Subject Lines

Why is it that we may spend a week crafting content and creating a compelling design, but falter on the subject line. The subject line is the first introduction to your campaign that your subscribers may ever see. Take time and effort to create a truly relevant, engaging subject line that urges the respondent to learn more. For instance, if you are going to promote a percentage discount or free shipping, it's important to communicate that discount to your customers immediately?. It's surprising how many companies may use a subject line that speaks about products versus offers. For example, if you want to offer \$25 off to your subscribers when they purchase \$100 or more, the subject line that is going to initiate the subscriber to open is "\$25 off your next purchase", not "Preview our Fall Inventory."

If you are in the B2B marketing world, it's equally as critical to engage your subscriber by using a compelling subject line. Promoting new features, services , or products may be very appropriate to engage the business to learn more about your offering. However, be cautious to ensure that your message matches your subject line. If you are a linen company who works with hotels and have new offerings within your linen lines, a persuasive subject line may be "Orders Available Now for New Linen Line" versus "Follow Up Regarding New Linens". The previous subject line creates urgency as well as reinforces the new line.

Alt Tags

Oh alt tags, why are you so neglected? One of the easiest fixes which takes such little effort on your part is traditionally excluded from most marketers' html. An alt tag is the text content that appears when a subscriber's email client doesn't render images. For those online retailers who create their html as image slices (and there are plenty of you out there), be certain to include the alt tags, so that if those attractive images don't render, the subscriber has an idea of what the message is and can decide whether or not they would like to download the images. As more and more email clients, or more importantly subscribers, trend towards turning off



In this illustration, the email excludes alt tags giving the recipient no concept of the marketing message without downloading images.

images, it's important to use the alt tags as often as possible. It's also important to think strategically about what those alt tags represent. Instead of saying "picture of red shoes" for the alt tag consider the offer that you are promoting and include it in the alt tag. For instance, "25% off your next shoe purchase", would engage the recipient and urge them to download images to learn more about your promotional offer. Even if you have a good balance of text to image, it's still worth the additional effort to include alt tags in your email communications. If nothing else, your subscriber may become more interested in your campaign and see the full effect once they download the images.

Pre-Header Text

Pre-header text can be an email marketer's best friend. Think of it as pre-content that can tout your promotional offer, new product, or product feature or services. Most marketers use it today to offer a web version for those that may have rendering issues, and it's probably the most valuable real estate in your email message. So instead of using the standard "If you are having difficulty viewing this email, click here" try content that conveys the same message as your email content:

- Save Now During our Preview Sale, 25% Off
- Version 17.1 Just Released, Quantities Limited, Order Now

You can create an appealing pre-header text that the subscriber responds to regardless of whether or not they ever see the rest of the message.

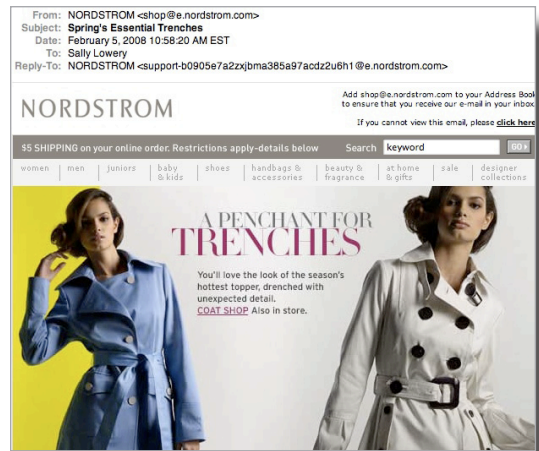
#2 List Growth

In 2007, 72% of online retailers sent welcome emails this year, it appears that more retailers are recognizing the value of these critical emails.

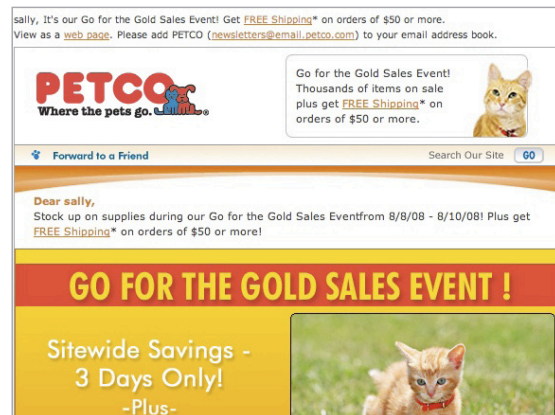
Retail Welcome Email Benchmark Study, DMA, Email Experience

List growth is a difficult subject to ignore as we discuss refreshing your email marketing. It's an important aspect of your email-marketing program that is often neglected. If your list has been static over the last year then it's time to implement alternative tactics to grow your list. It's also important to emphasize the word "opt-in" when we speak about list growth. The benefits of creating an opt-in subscriber list are clear: higher retention rate, more engaged audience, more profitable, and a reinforced reputation. The reality is that if someone has requested to receive communications from you, they are much more likely to interact with your email campaigns and ultimately convert. Requiring an opt-in before you send email marketing to a customer or prospect also create a relationship of trust, one that you can reinforce over time with each communication.

Here are a couple of things to keep in mind for growing your list:



This is the same message with images on.



Petco does a good job of utilizing the pre-header real estate by repeating their campaign message contained within the body of the campaign.



Opt-In is Easy to Find

No one wants to search for your email opt-in. Place it in a conspicuous place on your website and any channel marketing. Don't hide it deep within pages of content, requiring the visitor to dig to locate it. Another important note to keep in mind is to use valuable real estate on your website. It doesn't need to be just for your promotional campaigns any longer. Offering your subscription in a highly trafficked area will allow you to further engage an audience you may have previously been missing.

Make It Easy to Join

Don't require a page of fields for a visitor to register. If you require multiple fields you are doing yourself and the subscriber an injustice. The reality is, the easier it is for a subscriber to join, the more likely they will. Requesting multiple fields, including preferences, may cause a significant amount of form abandonment. Instead, get what you need to begin the dialogue and collect additional information over time.

Appropriate Call to Actions

"Subscribe" and "Register", while often used, can denote an additional commitment from the subscriber. Consider a "Join Now" or "Sign-Up" on your homepage or other areas where you promote your opt-in to increase conversions. It's also important to test. So don't stick with one CTA, see which performs best for you.

Don't Forget to Say Thank You

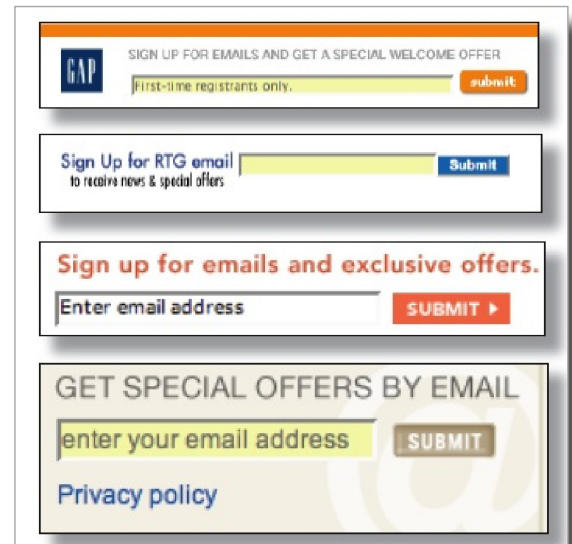
According to the Email Experience Council's 2007 Retail Email Subscription Benchmark Study, "61% of retailers delivered their welcome email within 10 minutes of signing up; 19% took more than a day to deliver." Deliver your welcome/thank you message immediately and be certain to reinforce frequency, benefits of subscribing, and content. It also doesn't hurt to add a preview of what email messages will look like.

#3 Design Impact

Seeking ways to boost your click-through and conversion rates? Your design may have more impact that you think. If you are creating an all image html campaign, chances are many of your subscribers may not see it. With that issue, your image laden email may be time for a makeover. Instead, consider using a reasonable text to image ratio as well as incorporating other best practices for email design. In addition, have you experimented with your call to action, footer components, header height or even dynamic content use? If you not, you should be. Your campaign will only be as successful as you allow it to be. Experiment with your design to see what engages your subscribers.

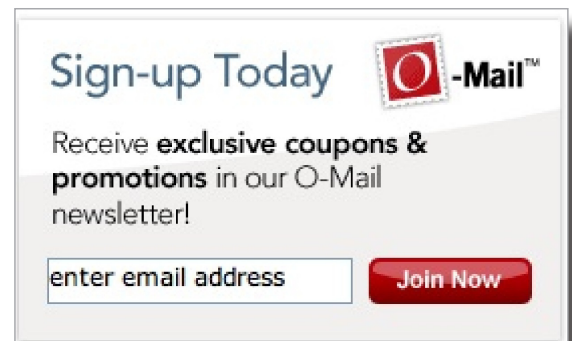
#4 Relevancy

According to eMarketer, "44% of marketers surveyed believe the biggest challenge in email is providing relevant content." Yet we know that delivering your email campaign to the right person, with the right message, at the right time is critical to your overall email marketing success. So how does one successfully create relevancy in their email marketing program?



The image shows three examples of email sign-up forms. The first is for GAP, with the text "SIGN UP FOR EMAILS AND GET A SPECIAL WELCOME OFFER" and "First-time registrants only." followed by a "submit" button. The second is for RTG, with the text "Sign Up for RTG email" and "to receive news & special offers" followed by a "Submit" button. The third is for a general offer, with the text "Sign up for emails and exclusive offers." followed by an "Enter email address" field and a "SUBMIT" button. Below the field is a "Privacy policy" link.

Many companies choose to offer a quick join on the homepage.



The image shows an example of an email sign-up form for O-Mail. It features the text "Sign-up Today" and "Receive exclusive coupons & promotions in our O-Mail newsletter!" followed by an "enter email address" field and a "Join Now" button.

Test to see if "sign-up", "register", "subscribe", or "join now" compels your audience to join.

Applying the Right Metrics

How can you elevate the value of your communications, reference a recipient's purchase history or preference profile? The easiest, and least cumbersome way, to split the data is to utilize list segmentation. Segmenting is an easy tactic that enables marketers to learn more about each specific group or audience they interact with, allowing them to better tailor their content and send more targeted messages.

Timing

Timing is critical when ensuring relevance. Think back to your subscriber segments. If you created a segment of customers that have purchased shampoo in the past 30-45 days, an appropriate campaign would include a discount off of their next shampoo purchase, or a buy one get one free combo for shampoo and conditioner. You wouldn't, however, want to send them an email campaign on hair dye. It will appear to your customer that you aren't in touch with their purchase needs and could potentially alienate them. Sending a campaign that speaks to their purchase behavior and preferences as well as creating campaigns that are sent at the most appropriate time, will yield a successful ROI.

5 Interactive Elements

In a web 2.0 savvy world, the need for email marketers to be smarter with their email marketing tactics becomes even more of a necessity than it once was. Using strategies that incorporate engaging elements such as videos, RSS feeds, polls, and conversion paths allow you to enhance your email marketing program with components that encourage the subscriber to interact. Of the many interactive elements, here are two that are easy to implement:

Polls

Polls are probably the easiest interactive element that you can incorporate into your email marketing. Those that have a tendency to elicit the most response are the ones that are short and sweet. Keep your poll to one or two questions, and show the results. If you are an online retailer, consider creating a poll around brands that you have or brands that you don't have to gain customer insight as well as provide your subscribers with a voice. The same could be said for the B2B email marketer, you can easily incorporate a poll asking about services or features your subscribers would like to see.

Videos

Videos are everywhere. YouTube is a testament to how much people enjoy viewing anything from the mundane to the highly entertaining. Think about how you would like to reinforce your brand in a video and include it in your email marketing. Here are just a few rules to live by, but not all may be practical based on your business objectives. Make certain that whatever options you decide to incorporate, the recipient leaves feeling satisfied, not let down:

44% of marketers surveyed believe the biggest challenge in email is providing relevant content.

- eMarketer

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 <p>Bookmark the Value Center today so you can check back all week for terrific savings on select merchandise.</p> <p>▶ MORE INFO</p>	 <p>From design tools and calculators to interactive tours and videos, we can guide you through your home improvement projects.</p> <p>▶ MORE INFO</p>	 <p>Check out our promotions page to learn about local store savings, credit offers, manufacturer rebates, and more.</p> <p>▶ MORE INFO</p>

Join the Garden Club | Shop Online | Visit the Online Gift Center
Get Ready for Your New Move | Check Out Do-It-Yourself Clinics

Home Depot sends an immediate thank you/welcome message that reinforces the benefits of subscribing.



- Always have the video stored outside of the email, and link to it.
- Use text to describe the video.
- List the file size, length of video and formats supported.
- Use flash video (FLV) whenever possible to achieve higher compression rates.
- Offer multiple (video format) ? choices to accommodate all users.

#6 Analytics

To really create impactful email marketing, consider integrating your web analytics data with your email marketing. Having the ability to take your email marketing/web analytics integration beyond traffic analysis and to gather specific data in real-time on your prospects and customers can give you the data to build true relationship email marketing. But how do you make it actionable? By gathering valuable insight into your customer behavior, you can create segmented lists that engage your subscribers post email campaign. Data to explore to create segments includes audience segment identification, conversion analysis, path analysis, and behavior tracking and metrics. This data can help you create a closed-loop measurement of your email-marketing program. To get started, identify your business goals and objectives and then create segments based on those. They could include promoting a repeat purchase, encouraging a first-time purchase, or increasing customer retention. How you choose to impact your email marketing is entirely up to you, so be creative.

#7 Automation

Trigger-based email marketing is probably the most effective email campaign management because it truly is one-to-one based on the relationship between you and the subscriber. To be successful though, you must be certain to define your business rules, set frequency limits, and remember the importance of recency. It probably wouldn't hurt to start out simple as well. Automated campaigns can create a truly significant campaign that the recipient is excited to receive. Always think about the customer when creating the rules, since you do want your email marketing to be a positive experience that reinforces your brand. Here are three types of trigger-based email campaigns that you can begin to incorporate into your current program:

- Transactional Triggers
- Recurring Triggers
- Threshold Triggers

Not certain how this fits into your current program? Here are just a few ideas of how to get started:

Welcome Programs

Incorporate trigger-based email messages into your welcome messages. For example, create a welcome message when one of the following actions is completed: download, purchase, sales inquiry, or registration.

Cross-Sell/Up-Sell Programs

You can create effective cross-sell and up-sell email campaigns using trigger-based actions based on your customers purchase profiles.

The screenshot shows a transactional email from Gap. At the top, there are navigation links for Women, Men, GapBody, GapMaternity, GapKids, and babyGap. Below this is a row of four images: a woman in a purple jacket, a baby in a white dress, two young girls, and a man in a striped polo shirt. The main body of the email contains the following text:

Dear Sally Lowery,

Thanks for shopping at gap.com. Your order number is #12HSYFH. Please print this page or write this number down, for future reference. This order should arrive within 7 business days.

You may check the status of your order by [clicking here](#), or by clicking the Order Status link at the top of any page on our site. [Your account](#)

Here's a summary of the order you placed on Jun 24, 2008 08:17:00 EDT:

Item Description	Size	Unit Price	Qty	Total	Return Type
Spocked ruffle dress	6-12 M	10.00	1	10.00	

On the right side of the email, there is a 'NEW!' promotion box with the following details:

- 4 stores
- 1 checkout
- 1 \$7 shipping rate

Below this is a 'Lime tag SALE' promotion for 40% off on shoes and handbags, with a 'Shop now' button.

The Gap offers a cross-sell within their transactional messages for their partner sites.

Lead Nurture Programs

Create action-based email triggers for your prospects that messages to their interests and introduces them to your company seamlessly based upon their website behavior.

Customer Satisfaction Programs

Consider creating an automated message that will be triggered when a customer makes a big item purchase to gauge their satisfaction with the process.

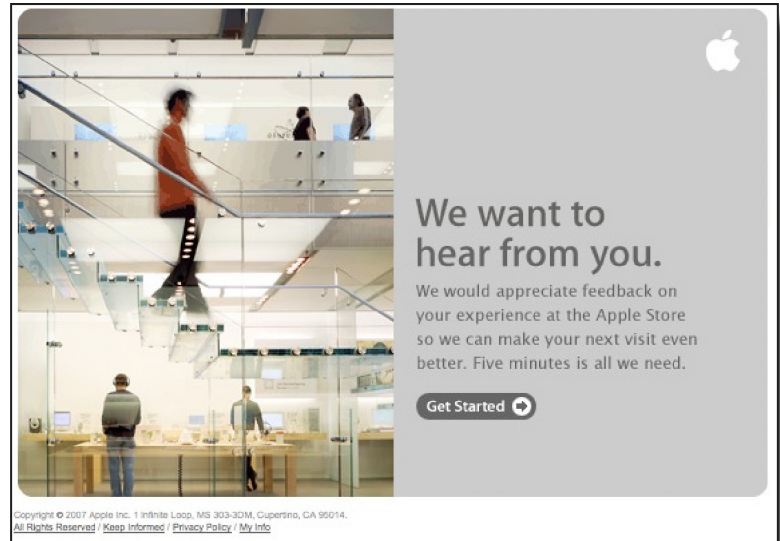
Abandonment Programs

When a customer abandons their shopping cart, trigger a message regarding their abandoned items and offer an incentive to complete the purchase.

Win-Back Programs

If you haven't had a customer return to your site or make a purchase in six months or more, integrate a win-back email that entices the customer

Take these 7 Refreshes and apply them to your email marketing. They will create a healthy discussion about your business objectives and how to create a successful strategy using email marketing. But not only that, you will also engage your subscribers and create additional ROI in the following months.



Mac created an automated campaign that would send to purchasers regarding their sales experience.