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Your Checklist for A Successful Email Marketing Campaign

Whether you are new to email marketing or a savvy veteran, sending 500 emails a week or 500,000, there are policies you can follow to optimize your campaigns. Call them the commandments of email marketing or call them best practices; these ideas will improve your delivery, open, and response rates.

- Get permission** to email your recipients through an online opt-in process or have received explicit permission offline. Developing a positive relationship with your list is the most important step to help your mailings reach the inbox; so don't jeopardize it – and your company's reputation - with overly aggressive tactics.
- Clearly label your email** as coming FROM the person or company that has a relationship with the recipient. If you use a FROM label that a recipient doesn't recognize, it may prompt them to unsubscribe or worse complain to their ISP about you, even if they may actually be interested in your products.
- Provide an easy and obvious way to opt-out** from your mailings and remove them quickly from your mailings when asked. It's the law and it reflects favorably when you act responsibly. Trust me, you don't need the negative publicity that accompanies a "spammer" tag.
- Make sure your SUBJECT LINE reflects the content** of your email. When recipients think they're being tricked into opening email they often become resentful - and unsubscribe in mass numbers.
- Provide a valid postal address** in each email message and an easy way for recipients to contact you or the company responsible for sending your email. It's another avenue of communication with customers, and another opportunity to prove your value.
- Only send content that is relevant** to what recipients requested. If you start emailing irrelevant offers, they're more likely to unsubscribe.



- Remind list members where you obtained their contact information** and why they are receiving your message. Sometimes people forget that they signed up to receive your email, especially if it's been a while since you've last communicated.
- Create an ongoing relationship** with your list members. Building a mutually beneficial email relationship – like all relationships – takes time and care. Mail to your list on a regular basis.
- Ask members to add you to their address books** so they recognize your messages when they arrive. In many cases, once you're entered in an address book, your images will display properly and your emails will be directed straight to the inbox, not into the bulk folder.
- Test, Test, Test:** Segment your list, try presenting different offers, using different subject lines, and mailing on different days of the week to determine when you receive the best response.
- Combine both images and text** in your emails. Then, if graphics are stripped from your emails due to the recipients' preferences, at least they can read your intended message. If you must use an image as the dominant form of communication (we know, some graphic designers won't have it any other way), then insert a link at the top of the email that lets people read a hosted version of the message in a browser.
- Run your email through a spam filter** before you launch your campaign. If words get caught in the filter, replace them with alternatives that will pass the test before proceeding with your mailing. This easy-to-perform trial may dramatically reduce the risk of your email being mislabeled as spam.

Things You Should Avoid

- Avoid suspect rented lists.** Recipients on these types of rented lists did not opt-in to receive information from you specifically, therefore, it may result in you being flagged as spam - or even worse - blacklisted by the ISPs.
- Avoid punctuation such as "FR EE" or FR^E.** The use of punctuation in the middle of words causes many blocked messages since ISPs and filters are screening for this.



- Avoid overuse of punctuation.** Too much punctuation,!!!! or too many “Click Here!” references raises suspicions and may result in blocked messages.
- Avoid overuse of capitalization.** Abundant capitalization “ANNOUNCING A GREAT NEW PRODUCT” can be difficult to read – if it even reaches the inbox in the first place. There’s a good chance the excess punctuation will land your email in the junk folder.
- Avoid sending attachments.** Sending attachments with bulk email increases the chances the receiving ISP will block it and/or your list members will flag it as spam. ISPs don’t have the bandwidth to support getting a large number of emails with massive attachments.
- Avoid sending offers your audience did not request.** If your list members opted-in for specific information, don’t send them unrelated offers. Doing this will only upset your list members, and result in a higher unsubscribe and/or complaint rate.