B2B Email Best Practices

12) Hibernate: Regularly separate out records that are unresponsive for a period of time. Adjust the numbers to suit your company, but we recommend separating out records that haven't opened or clicked on any campaign emails for 3 months. Let them sit for 2-3 months, then reintroduce them. Or you can chop this 'hibernation' list into 5 pieces and include 1 piece with each send to your more active list. You will likely see little to no reduction in interaction with your campaigns, and you won't be paying to send messages to contacts that are only annoyed by your emails.

11) Separate New Lead Generation: You may use a marketing automation or email delivery platform (like Constant Contact, Mailchimp, Marketo, Pardot, etc), for your client and Newsletter email, but for new lead generation you must have a separate delivery system that allows sending to purchased lists. Never send large amounts of unsolicited emails directly from your own email servers or your primary email marketing service. For new marketing campaigns to contacts that have not opted in we recommend Clickback.com or SalesNexus when managing your own email distribution, Or talk to your MountainTop Data account manager about our fully managed email delivery service. There are many other companies out there that provide these services as well, but these are companies we are familiar with.

10) Delivery Timing: Pay attention to the time of day, days of the week, and frequency with which you send emails. There are a large number of theories regarding the best email delivery times, and they generally agree that Tuesday through Thursday is the best delivery window for B2B emails. Emails sent in the middle of the night are more likely to be suspected as spam by filters. It varies from business to business though, so test sending campaigns on different days of the week and times of day to see what gets you the best results. Also, if you send out 1,000 emails a day for days, you will generally get better results than 10,000 emails all sent in one day.

9) Diversify and Customize: Use a variety of subject lines and content in your campaigns. Recipients can't see your content if the subject line doesn't get them to open your email, and different people will be attracted to different subject lines. Varying subject and content can help target niches within your general target audience from one campaign to the next and will help keep you out of spam folders. Most email recipients decide whether to open an email based on the subject line alone.

8) Follow up: Follow up with responses from your email campaign the same day, not a few days later, or a week later. Make sure your campaign is set up to allow you or one of your people to react to any direct responses in a timely fashion.

7) Avoid Looking Like Spam: There are millions of phrases that you can unknowingly included in your email content that will increase your odds of being blocked as spam, but the general rule of thumb is: don't sound like a cheesy commercial and you are less likely to be perceived as one. More specific examples include: Don't put lots of text in ALL CAPS, and don't use words like "free" or "discount" frequently (and never in the subject line). There are many services that will tell you how likely your email is to be blocked as spam due to the wording in your content. Google 'email spam score checker' and you will get many options for this, using more than one never hurts.

6) **Get to the Point:** You have 6 seconds or less to capture the interest of your audience. Make sure your email is short and to the point and that your call to action is in the first couple of lines. If your audience has to scroll down to read the whole email they likely won't. If your audience sees large blocks of text they will likely decide to move on to their next email. Use bullet points and lists whenever possible to get your information across in a visually pleasing way. The best length for an email is between 50 and 125 words

5) **Limit Images:** Some images and formatting are good but if too much of your email is image spam filters will block it. Resist having a large image at the top of your email or having critical parts of your message as an image. A large banner at the top of your email screams "this is marketing". As much as 50% of recipients have image loading turned off, so they will only see empty boxes where your images should be.

4) **Maximize Response Options:** It's good to have 1 main call to action, but give the recipient the option to reply to the email they have received, go to a website, or pick up the phone and call you as well. More options for response = more responses.

3) **Use a Dedicated Domain:** If your company's main website is www.xyz.com, don't use that domain for your marketing campaigns. Always use a dedicated domain just for your marketing, such as www.xyz-email.com. This creates an extra layer of security between your corporate domain and marketing and gives you more independent control of your marketing campaigns.

2) **Make the Email Content as Personal as Possible:** Open with the recipient's name, end with a signature line and have the email come from a person at your company rather than from your company in general. If your sending address is info@, for example, it will hurt your campaign. The more the email looks and feels like something they would receive from a peer, the more likely they are to take time to read it.

1) **Be CAN-SPAM Compliant:** In 2004 Congress passed a law that specifically states it <u>is legal</u> to send unsolicited bulk email for marketing purposes. In this law they give guidelines you must follow when engaging in email marketing to non opt-in contacts. You can see all the details on their site at https://www.ftc.gov/tips-advice/business-center/guidance/can-spam-act-compliance-guide-business The most important guidelines are:
    1. **Don't use false or misleading header information.** Your "From," "To," "Reply-To," and routing information – including the originating domain name and email address – must be accurate and identify the person or business who initiated the message.
    2. **Don't use deceptive subject lines.** The subject line must accurately reflect the content of the message.
    3. **Identify the message as an ad.** The law gives you a lot of leeway in how to do this, but you must disclose clearly and conspicuously that your message is an advertisement.
    4. **Tell recipients where you're located.** Your message must include your valid physical postal address.
    5. **Provide an option to opt out.** Your message must include a clear and conspicuous explanation of how the recipient can opt out of getting email from you in the future.
    6. **Honor opt-out requests promptly.** You must honor a recipient's opt-out request within 10 business days. Any opt-out mechanism you offer must be able to process opt-out requests for at least 30 days after you send your message.
    7. **Monitor what others are doing on your behalf.** The law makes clear that even if you hire another company to handle your email marketing, you can't contract away your legal responsibility to comply with the law.

Make sure you also review your direct responses (out of office, etc) for opt-out and requests and emails that are no longer active. Removing these from your campaign will assure you have the cleanest possible deliveries.

For more tips and further details on any of the above items, contact us at info@mountaintopdata.com or call (818) 252-8140 and talk with one of our experts.