Email Marketing

What to Expect from Email Marketing

If you're new to email marketing, you're probably asking, "What kind of results can I expect?"

The simple answer is: There is no simple answer.

Organizations such as the Direct Marketing Association and MarketingSherpa publish annual reports on "industry standard" results. Why? Because the success of your email marketing hinges on many factors: the quality of your list, your audience, your offer, your messaging and more. Response rates also vary widely by industry.

No doubt, you should be aware of industry data, but be cautious about using it as a baseline for performance. MarketingSherpa's recent email marketing benchmark guide reported an average open rate of 20% and a click-through rate of 8% for business-to-consumer emails. B2B emails enjoyed a slightly better response: an average open rate of 24% and a click-through rate of 12%. But don't forget: Your email results may not be directly comparable. Based on your own experience, you might consider an open rate of 20% and a click-through rate of 5% reasonable and achievable goals.

The best place to start is to establish your own baseline using your emails. Track your opens and click-throughs from campaign to campaign and month to month. Once you have a good understanding of your own response trends, establish measurable goals and start testing different subject lines, offers, messages and more.

Improving open rates

No matter what industry they're in, all email marketers share a common goal—persuading a recipient to open an email. Here are a few tips to help you increase your open rates:

Include your brand name in your From line
Using your brand name in the From line—your name, company, or product—should spark instant recognition with your recipients. Your brand in the From line assures your recipients that your email is coming from a reliable source. According to Internet advertising giant DoubleClick, 64% of respondents cite the From line as the most important factor motivating them to open permission-based email.

Write a strong Subject line
Just like the From line, the content of a Subject line will drive prospects to open an email, delete it, ignore it, file it or report them as spam. Don't deceive your recipients—tell them exactly what's in the email, and keep it short and simple.

Don't forget the preview panel
Many recipients view emails through a preview screen, and others only view the top portion of your email before deciding whether to open it. If the top of your email is well-designed, you can build on the interest sparked by the subject line.

Send emails at the right time
When's the best time and day to end emails? The only way to know for sure is to test. Don't leave it up to chance or assume another marketer's results apply to you—test your email schedule by sending the same message on different days or at different times to see which gets the best response.

Improving click-through rates

Every opened email moves you one step closer to a conversion. the next step? Persuading the recipient to click on your links. Here are a few ingredients to help you persuade your recipient to act on your email:

A simple message
You only have a few seconds to get your customer's attention—do it with a simple, powerful message that clearly explains what you're selling and the benefits.

A compelling offer
Are you helping your readers shop smarter, or save time and money? Your success depends on understanding their needs and presenting relevant offers. Offers come in all shapes and sizes—a discount, a free trial, promotional items or coupons.

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A clear call-to-action
Many emails are full of information and end up confusing the recipient—they don't know exactly why or how they need to respond. Lay out exactly what you want the recipients to do—do you want them to call you, visit your website, fill out an enclosed response form, or send you an email? Design the call-to-action so it's clear and easy to follow.

A relevant message
For example, if your customer needs printer ink cartridges but you're sending them emails about office furniture, there's a good chance it will end up in the trash.

Test, test and test some more. Many variables can affect the response to your email campaign—the list, the offer, the price, etc. The best way to find out what kind of response you'll get is to track your results and run tests. Work hard to find the most responsive lists, the best email copy and the most compelling offer.

When you purchase an email marketing campaign from us, you'll receive insightful reports to help you gauge the effectiveness of your campaign. We'll tell you how many emails were delivered, and how many people opened your email and clicked on the links. Use this information to see how your audience responded and use that knowledge to create more effective campaigns.