

“Best Practice is

a management idea which asserts that there is a technique, method, process, activity, incentive or reward that is more effective at delivering a particular outcome than any other.

The idea is that with proper processes, checks and testing, a desired outcome can be delivered with fewer problems and unforeseen complications.”



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If you are marketing through email, following are some of the best practices to ensure optimum results.

Also get a know-how of some commonly used email marketing glossary and terms.

Best practice

Subject Lines

The subject line should pertain to the email and be informative enough to encourage the reader to open it. The subject line shouldn't be too long, in all caps or contain many exclamation marks or dollar signs. You should also steer away from using words such as "free," "guaranteed" or "approved" within your subject lines, as these may end up in spam folders.

From Lines

From lines should clearly identify where the email is coming from. It should be your company name, your name, or the advertiser's name. It should not be a marketing message or a sales pitch.

Creative

It is important to know what kind of email message works best for you and more importantly, for your target audience. Surveys show that most consumers respond better to HTML emails. Complicated e-mails can fail to render properly to some users, while overused creative may be blocked by the individual's Internet service provider. Text, although not blocked as often and completely supported by all the users of the Internet, may sometimes prove to be a viable option.

Landing pages

Do you control the branding of your landing pages and the destinations to which you are sending responders? These pages should reflect your brand as much as the email message itself.

Call for action

Provide a definite call for action. It can be a telephone number to call, print to redeem a voucher, fill a form or refer to friend.

Design for disabled images and preview panes

You will find your audiences are increasingly looking at your messages without images turned on. (It may not be their choice, but rather the default of their email client.) Make sure your messages are still readable and compelling without images.



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Variable content

Are you providing different segments with different content? Variable content will provide more relevancy and stronger actionable items.

Opt-Out Method

An email address or another Internet based response mechanism, such as an opt-out link, must clearly be provided in order to allow a recipient to request that you not send any future email messages to that address. This feature must remain active up to 30 days after the email has been sent. These requests must be honored, and you must stop sending all emails to any address requesting removal within 10 business days of the request.

Sender Name and Mailing Address

The sender's name and a valid physical mailing address must be included with any and all mailings.

Advertisements

If you are mailing any type of advertisement, it must clearly be stated within the email that it is an advertisement.

Suppression List

If any email advertisement has been sent in the past, then there must be a suppression list of recipients requesting to never receive that advertisement again. This list must be compared to your master emails list to ensure that those individuals are removed and do not receive this advertisement again.

Audience Segmentation

Breaking an audience into distinct, more manageable segments that are likely to behave in a similar manner has long been a fundamental principle of marketing. Email enables some incredible segmentation power, as well as the ability to truly take advantage of small audience segments that might otherwise be financially difficult to communicate with.



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Sending Frequency

You should be consistent in the frequency with which you send your emails. You should determine a schedule and stick to it, whether it is once a day, once a week or once a month. The more consistent you are in your mailings, the more familiar your clients will become with receiving them.

Privacy policy

Have you reviewed your privacy policy for accuracy? Are you confident it is up to date? Has it been audited by legal counsel?

Authentication

Are you making use of the latest authentication technologies, such as Domain Keys, Sender Policy Framework (SPF) and Sender ID?

Technical Compliance

There are already many technologies that exist to separate spam from legitimate email. It is important to make sure your email is being delivered with the proper configuration. This can include proper DNS topology and up-to-date email software that implements common international standards.

Test, test and test

Because of the immediacy of email data, testing should become an integral part of your email efforts. Knowing what to test, how to test it and what to glean from the results will make your email initiatives perform to their fullest.

Rethink tired campaigns

Rethink campaigns that have run for a while, and look at reports to uncover new avenues of content or functionality that your audiences will respond to. Email offers a unique platform to quickly and cost effectively change campaigns for the better.

The key to email success is developing, reviewing and continuously refining a comprehensive email marketing strategy.



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Email Marketing Glossary and Terms

Above-the-fold

The top part of an email or web page that can be seen without scrolling. This is generally more desirable placement because of its visibility.

API Application Programming

Interface that allows an outside system to have a well defined protocol by which they can access another system's functionality.

Append

The practice in which a marketer leverages offline data to match profiles with users and contact via e-mail.

Auditor

Third party to verify subscriber membership.

Blacklist

List of IP addresses that are being used by or belong to organizations or individuals that have been identified as sending Spam. Blacklists are often used by organizations and Internet Service Providers as part of their filtering process to block all incoming mail from a particular IP address.

CAN SPAM

A law, which became effective January 1, 2004, that establishes requirements for those who send email with primary purpose of advertising or promoting a commercial product or service.

Click-through

When a reader takes action and clicks on a link.



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Email Marketing Glossary and Terms

Click Through Rate

The number of times all links in an email were clicked compared to the total list size, represented as a percentage. To determine the click-through rate, divide the number of responses (clicks) by the number of emails sent (multiply this number by 100 to express the result as a percentage).

Click To Open Rate

The number of times all links in an email were clicked compared to the number of people who opened the email, represented as a percentage. To determine the click-to-open-rate, divide the number of responses (clicks) by the number of emails opened (multiply this number by 100 to express the result as a percentage).

Conversion Rate

The number of recipients that completed a desired action as a result of an email message compared to the total list size, represented as a percentage. To determine the conversion rate, divide the number of recipients who completed the desired action by the number of emails sent (multiply this number by 100 to express the result as a percentage).

Creative

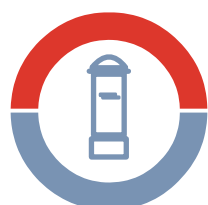
Terminology used for copy and content of an email. Email creative can be in many different formats including HTML, text, images, etc.

Demographics

Data about the size and characteristics of an audience.

Domain Keys

Email authentication system designed to verify the DNS domain of an email sender and the message integrity.



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Email Marketing Glossary and Terms

Double Opt-in Email Marketing

The process of collecting permission to email users whereby a submitted email address is not immediately added to a mailing list. Instead, an email is sent to the submitted address asking the user to take additional action to confirm that they do want to receive email communications from the marketer. If the user does nothing, the submitted address is not sent email communications. The user will only be sent email communications if they respond to the confirmation email.

Email Authentication

Practice of validating that an email sender is legitimate to cut down on spam and phishing scams.

Email Frequency

The intervals at which email marketing efforts are repeated: weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, bi-monthly, etc.

Email List Manager

Controller of email list or database entity.

Email Marketing Campaign

Coordinated email marketing messages delivered at intervals with a specific objective or goal.

Email Newsletter

An email message sent out to a group of subscribers with relevant information on a topic. Often used to capture Web site visitor's email addresses, they can also be used to keep in touch with existing customers, or simply as a means of distributing new product information.



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Email Marketing Glossary and Terms

From Name

The name by which the sender of an email is known.

From address

The email address from which an email is sent.

Geo Targeting

The ability to target users by geography such as city, state, country and postal code.

Hard Bounce

An email address that is rejected by the receiving server for a permanent reason (example: "email address does not exist"). Hard bounces are not valid email addresses and should be removed from lists.

List Segmentation

Breaking a list into smaller parts for the purpose of targeting recipients with specific characteristics or demographics.

Multi-part Email

An email that is sent with different versions usually html, text or AOL. The recipient's email client settings determine which version is delivered to that inbox.

Opt-in Code

Code posted on the webpage of a company's website that allows a subscriber to sign up for email from the company and be automatically added to that company's email list.

Opt-in Email Marketing

The process of collecting permission to email users whereby the user must take action to receive email communications



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