# EMAIL SUCCESS WORKBOOK

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Often abused and overused, email has gotten a bad reputation. But if done well, email delivers extraordinary and cost-effective returns.  In this workbook we'll step through the basics of building a successful email campaign.

## GETTING STARTED: SET YOUR OBJECTIVE

## What is the goal of your email campaign?

All great marketing starts with an end result in mind. Email can help do any of the following:

- Increase sales of existing projects

- Launch new products

- Drive people to your website

- Nurture leads

- Request referrals

- Increase downloads of resources

- Increase program registration.

It cannot do all of those things at once.  For each campaign **pick one objective.**

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# Be Specific: How will you measure success?

Good marketing is measurable. The more specific you are on the front end, the easier it is to to determine if the campaign actually worked.  Potential metrics will tie to the objectives you outline on the previous page. Potential metrics include:

- Open rate

- Click through rate

- Inquiries / Leads

- Sales

- Web traffic

- Conversion form submissions

- Video views

There are two parts to the metric. What you will measure, (open rate, leads, etc) and the value (how many or what % are you trying to achieve).  Select your specific measurable goal

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# CONTENT - WHAT WILL YOU WRITE ABOUT?

Your email marketing can help you demonstrate your expertise, answer common questions, or introduce new products. The quality of the content is what will keep readers coming back.

## Where content comes from:

Content is everywhere in the questions you answer for prospective clients, to the trade journals you read which are filled with information your customers will want to know. Here are just a few sources of information:

- Make a list of frequently asked questions

- Your company blog ( You have already written the content use your email to share it to a wider audience)

- Industry journals and news media

- Blogs, newsletters and social media of other thought leaders in your industry.

- Set up Google Alerts

## What will your topic be?

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# How much is too much?

People have a limited attention span so your email needs to be short and to the point. Typical rules of thumb:

- Word count: 250 – 400

- Calls to action: 3 Maximum

- Pictures: 3 Maximum

# What is your call to action?

The purpose of a CTA is to motivate the reader to take the next step.  They should  be tied to your objectives.   List your CTA's

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

# Design tips:

- CTA's should be in a button, not simply a text link.

- Use ALL CAPS

- Select bright or contrasting colors

- Use short phrases

# GETTING READERS TO OPEN YOUR EMAIL

The most creative email campaign is worthless if you can't get people to open the email. We get so much email every day, we mentally sort email in to three buckets: now, later or never. Your objective is to get people to open the email NOW.

## The Subject Line Basics

**Keep it short.**

One of the casualties of the digital age is the attention span of your reader. They just won't hang around for the punch line of a long headline. Compounding the problem is the fact that most email clients, search engines and social media sites will truncate long titles.

**Limit to 4-7 words or a maximum of 50 characters**

**Minimize a boring detail**

With so few words to work with, it is important not to waste even one character on unnecessary information. Phases like: "*New blog post*" or "*News from*" are a complete waste of words.

**Avoid excessive punctuation or all caps.**

These old style advertising techniques have been overused by spammers so unless you want to go directly to the junk file it is time to let them go.

**Subject Line Styles:**

There are many styles of headlines which will grab attention. Choose one which fits your objective.  Don't be afraid to vary the style for different campaigns.

**The Gain Headline** – Define the specific benefit your reader will gain from spending time with your content. Example: "Increase your leads by 50% today" is more appealing than "How to increase leads".

**The Pain Headline** - The desire to avoid an unpleasant outcome is actually stronger than the desire to reach a positive one. That's why headlines which essentially promise a way to protect yourself from disaster, are effective. Example: "How to avoid paying too much for your next car."

**Numbers and Top Appeal** - Numbers pique human curiosity. When you use a number in a subject line, people have a hard time resisting the urge to click. Use words like top, most common, best or worst  to add additional value  Example: "25 Worst Dressed Celebrities"

**Surprise, Shock or Negative Headlines** – Headlines which seem counter intuitive or a bit edgy will stand out, make a reader pause and open and email.  Example: "Don't read this" or How to ruin your carpet".

## What is your subject line?

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# Set a schedule

While surprises are good in some types of marketing, building a habit so your customers expect to hear from you on a specific day and time will improve your open rate.

**When is the best time to send an email?**

Every list is different. To figure out what works for you, divide your list in to equal parts and send the same campaign at different times of the day. Study open rates and click through rates for clues to find best time for you audience. Common rules of thumb:

- A number of studies have been done to test for the best day and time to send an email. The conclusion is there is no one perfect time. In general:

- Emails sent on weekdays typically perform better than on the weekend

- Educational emails work best earlier in the week

- Action emails perform better later in the week and also later in the day

- The majority of your opens will come within one hour of delivery so avoid the 4 – 6 time period.

## When will you send your campaign?

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# KEEPING YOUR READER'S ATTENTION

First impressions matter. So if you want a positive response to your email campaign you need to make a positive first impression.

## Consistent Branding

When customers and prospects open your email it should feel familiar creating a visually smooth transition to your website or social media profiles. You can create this familiar feeling by using your logo, brand colors and standard brand images in your header, footer and throughout the email.

## Design for Mobile Viewing

Today, a significant portion of readers view campaigns from mobile devices. Following a few simple rules will dramatically improve the user experience encouraging them to read the entire email.

- Use a single column format.

- Keep sentences and paragraphs short.

- Use headlines and dividers to break up the content, making it easier for readers scan and find relevant details

- Use buttons instead of links for CTA and place the most important one in the first 1/3 of the campaign.

# Select easy-to-read fonts

Your font can support or distract from your message.  Font tips:

- When possible use standard brand fonts

- Serif fonts are easier to read on screens.  Example: Calibri, Arial, Helvetica, Tahoma and Verdana.

- Use serifs for titles only. If you must use a serif font because if fits with your branding, use it sparingly, for heads and calls to action.  Example: Times, Georgia, Cambria.

- Use all caps for buttons.

- Limit yourself to two fonts

# Bring your campaign to life with color

Color tips:

- Start with your brand colors. These should be used prominently throughout the email in buttons and links, headers and dividers.

- Use bright colors sparingly to attract attention to key points,

- Limit the primary color pallet to 3.  Too many colors makes the design "busy"

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# Use images wisely

People respond to images. In one study **82%** of people pay more attention to emails that have images so we know they add value if done well. Here a few simple things to remember when using images:

- Don't rely on images to convey critical information. Many email providers, as a default setting, do not automatically show image.

- Use image descriptions.  If someone doesn't display an image, they will see the description.

- Keep images relevant. If you are going to put a picture in an email, it is best to use an image which adds value to your message.

- Three or fewer images.  Too many images actually turn people off.

# What type of images will you use?

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# MEASURE RESULTS

The best thing about email marketing is the ability to easily measure the results.

## Common Terms

No matter what software you're using to send emails, the information in your reports will by and large remain the same. Take the time to familiarize yourself with the following concepts:

- Send – This is the number of people who you hoped to reach with the email.

- Opens – How many people actually opened your email.  Open rates vary by industry by a good starting goal is **15 - 20%.**

- Clicks or Click-throughs – This is the number of people who clicked on a link inside your email.  Like open rates, clicks will vary but a starting point is **10% click rate**.

- Bounce - When an email is undeliverable it is said to "bounce." This may be caused by a suspended or is nonexistent address, or your email is being blocked by a spam filter, a company policy or a temporary service outage at the delivery point.  The more often you update your less the lower your bounce rate.  **Look for 1 – 2% bounce rate.**

- Opt-out – Someone received your and decided to unsubscribe from your email list.

- Spam – This is more serious than a simple opt-out. In this case, the recipient received does not believe they gave you permission to send email to them. If your spam complaints exceed **1/1000** you could find yourself in serious jeopardy of being prohibited from using certain email tools.

# Use the information

The numbers are the beginning not the end of the process.  Use them to improve your campaigns.  For example:

- Low open rates – Work on your headline and adjust your send times

- Low click through – Adjust your layout and change the calls to action

- High unsubscribe rates – Lower your frequency

- High spam complaints –Start with a permission based list. Periodically remind people how they ended up on your list.

## START YOUR NEXT CAMPAIGN

Now that you have finished this workbook you are ready to start working on your next email campaign.  If you are still not sure you want to try it on your own give us a call!

If you found workbook helpful, be sure to check out our resource page:

# **www.roundpeg.biz/resources**