

Email Marketing Secrets Guide



Email Marketing

www.getresponse.com



Why email marketing?

Have you ever wondered why email marketing is the most popular and one of the most effective tools used in marketing today? Perhaps you've been using it for years because it's so affordable, but never realized its advantages over other methods? Whether you're an experienced user or new to email marketing, we'd like share with you some impressive statistics and important tips to help you maximize your return on this amazing tool. Let's start with some statistics from independent studies to begin our journey to higher marketing ROI.

Did you know that:

- ✓ Email and e-newsletter marketing are the **second-most effective tools** for generating conversions according to the "Ad Effectiveness Survey", commissioned by Forbes Media, Feb/March 2009. Email marketing is second only to SEO!
- ✓ **80.4%** of marketing executives said that email marketing was a strong performer for their company.¹
- ✓ According to Veronis Suhler Stevenson's annual "Communications Industry Forecast", the global email marketing budget will grow from **\$11.9 billion** in 2008 to **\$27.8 billion** by 2013.
- ✓ Email marketing was the **top target** area for investment in 2009 among **650** marketers.²
- ✓ Internet Retailer's April 2009 email marketing survey found that **51.6%** planned to increase spending on email during the recession.



¹ Datran Media's 2009 Annual Marketing & Media Survey

² The CMO Council's Marketing Outlook '09 Report

- ✓ Regular email marketing to existing customers **generates a 15 – 50% increase** in total online business.

Email marketing benefits

- ✓ **IT'S LOW BUDGET**

According to recent reports, email marketing is **20 times more cost effective than direct mail** – in some cases **costing less than a penny each!** Wow! Think about how many clients you could reach for a mere one hundred dollars! It doesn't take a math genius to figure out that you could double or even triple the return on your email marketing investment in one campaign! Can you afford NOT to devote a few dollars to email marketing every day?

- ✓ **IT'S EFFECTIVE**

We know that every business is unique and has its reasons for spending exorbitant amounts of money on direct mail, or print and TV ads. However, whether email marketing is a priority for your business or not, the statistics don't lie. Email is the most cost-efficient marketing tool available today. Not only is it affordable, but the response rate of opt-in **email is 50 times greater than advertising and 5 times greater than direct mail!** But rather than take our word for it, let's look at the stats:

- The Direct Marketing Association (DMA) reported that email marketing **generated an \$43.52 in 2009 for every dollar spent.** Non-email Internet marketing delivered \$19.94 in 2008.
- According to DMA Interactive survey results - email is the best online tool for increasing web traffic and customers to web sites and storefronts, according to 54% of small businesses surveyed.

✓ **IT'S IMMEDIATE**

If you've ever organized a media or TV campaign, you know how time-consuming it can be and how difficult it is to measure. **Email marketing generates rapid responses and leaves a digital footprint** that can be measured instantaneously. In addition to standard metrics such as open, click through and delivery rates, leading Email Service Providers (ESPs) provide tools to measure sales, conversions, file downloads, event registrations, newsletter subscriptions, social bookmarking – just about anything you can do online!

✓ **IT'S TARGETED**

Forget about “spray and pray” advertising campaigns that try to reach everyone with the same pitch. Let's be honest, not everyone is a potential customer and that's ok. But somewhere out there the ideal prospects are waiting to hear about your products or services and your mission is to reach them as quickly as possible. Of course, you have to identify them first!

Email marketing is one of the most **efficient tools** for managing contacts and creating targeted lists. **In just a few clicks, you can segment your contacts** using a variety of criteria, such as demographics, purchasing history, or interests. In that way you can tailor your messages and product offers to the individuals most likely to respond. (More in Chapter 2!)

✓ **IT'S EASY**

Creating an email marketing message is almost **as simple as writing an email**. Major ESPs (like GetResponse) provide all the necessary tools and materials such as professional HTML templates, web forms, autoresponders or follow-up messages, and list segmentation and targeting capabilities, as well as automatic tracking and reporting. You

don't need any special knowledge or skills except one: crafting messages that are well written, relevant, and explain your product's benefits clearly and concisely. After all, **your messages are your brand**, so you need to make a positive impression.

✓ **IT'S AUTOMATIC**

If you have too much free time and need more tasks to perform, do not read this section! If you need more time to focus on your business, think about how autopilot works in a plane. You just input the settings and autopilot does the rest. Well, email marketing has a tool called an "autoresponder" that's like "autopilot" for campaigns! For instance, if you want to send a campaign message out on particular days after someone sign up to your newsletter you just create the messages and schedule the delivery from your Email Service Provider account – and **all your messages will be sent out on time, automatically**. This is important not only to save you time and money, but it's crucial to **stay in touch with your customers**. According to the stats, **only 10% of subscribers purchase** after the first email contact. Usually **it takes up to 4 or 5 contacts before subscribers purchase**. So even though you can automate your messages, it's up to you to "keep the ball rolling"!

List building and segmentation

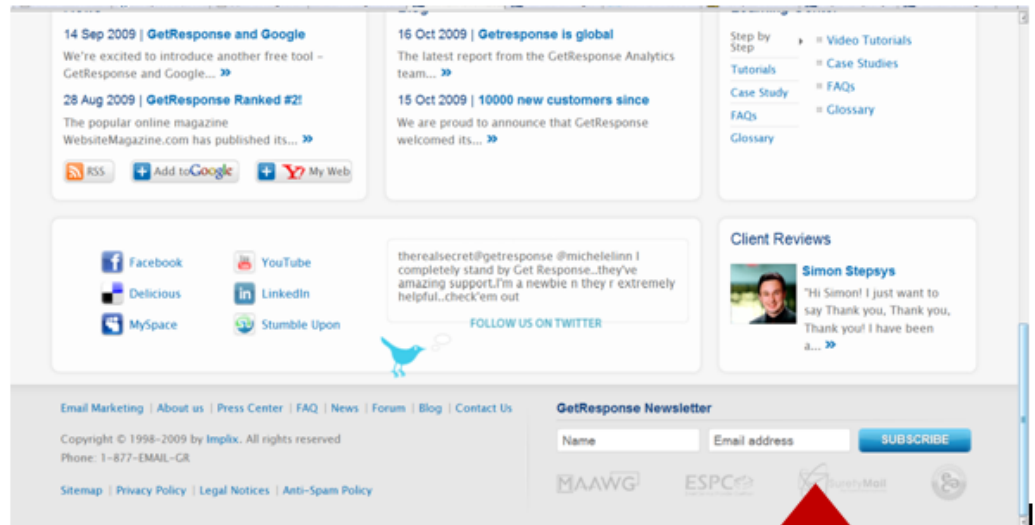
Start to build a list of customers, contacts and prospects

If you've never used email marketing, you'll have to start from the scratch. Your list should include current and (hopefully) future clients – even friends, family, or acquaintances you think would benefit from your product or service, and be interested in hearing about it.

There are many ways to build your database, some require set up time, but are completely automatic after that. Below are some of the most effective list-building methods you can use to maximize your campaign ROI:

- ✓ Add a **sign-up form on your website**. Place it right on the home page and on any other high-traffic pages where it could be effective, like company and social media profile pages, splash pages or online advertisements. Remember, to avoid spam complaints, you should **always ask your contacts to “opt in”** and give you permission to send them emails. It's also a good practice to include a privacy policy that assures visitors their email address will not be shared with or sold to any other organization without their express consent.
- ✓ Try to use only a few fields in your sign-up forms. Your prospects are busy people too, and a form that takes more than a minute or two to complete is a huge turn off. On the other hand, it's important to include the most effective fields for building a high-quality list:
 - To avoid cluttering your database with invalid email addresses, always include the “*email address*” and “*confirm email address*” fields together.
 - Use those fields which will help you collect the MOST essential information about your subscribers, such as name, sex, age, city/town, etc.

- Use the field “*Recommend it to your friends*” to reach more potential subscribers without lifting a finger!



Sign-up form on home page:



Sign-up form on [Facebook page of GetResponse](#)

✓ Make it worthwhile for people to give you their email addresses! Offer them discount coupons, free shipping on their first email-based purchase, or discounts for paperless billing. If your margins can't absorb any added promotional costs, then offer valuable information. For instance, a restaurant could offer advice on increasing the nutritional value of your home-cooked meals, or how to make fancy sauces in minutes. Language schools could send out interesting articles from foreign magazines with translations of the most difficult phrases or words. If you have one handy or have some time to write, a short ebook in PDF or white paper about how customers benefit from your products, for example, could be very popular.

Remember: The more value you offer your email contacts, the more likely they are to remain on your list.

As you can see, there are lots of ways to collect prospect addresses and build a high-quality contact list. How many addresses you need and how you segment them depends on what kinds of products or services you offer. Are they exotic or practical? Serious or silly? Big ticket or low cost? Check out the link below to find loads more ideas for list building:

[**60-plus great ideas for building subscriber lists!**](#)

Anatomy of a good email message.

HTML, plain text messages or video emails – which is more effective?

Why are HTML emails becoming so popular?

According to survey results, more and more newsletters and promotional emails are sent in HTML every year. In 2008 it was 59% and in the first half of 2009 it was almost 74%!

There are lots of reasons. One of them is that we live in a world where we're constantly bombarded with colorful ads, images and animations. We're also on the move, and while we don't want to miss anything, we have little time to read. Besides, it's usually not as much fun! For example, what would be more interesting to read in a magazine: endless pages of plain black and white text peppered with an occasional photo – or a mixture of fonts, logos, photos, images, charts and diagrams presented in an easy-to-read, eye-catching way.

With email, it's the same...only more so. Almost everyone prefers emails that are visually interesting and include some "eye candy" just like magazines, without crowding or overwhelming the space, of course. Plus, with email, you can get "interactive" and include videos, animations, and links to social media sites and blogs – all stylishly packaged to please.

Just to remind us of the importance of visual presentation, let's compare these email pages. Which would you read first? Why? Which format would encourage you to continue reading? Clearly, the plain text email could be vastly improved by following our best standards for organizing

content, but from a visual perspective, well-designed HTML pages make a strong impression.



Summary of HTML advantages:

- ✓ You can display your company colors, logo, custom fonts and images in your email messages, building brand image and loyalty over time. There is simply no more cost-effective method of strengthening your brand than email marketing!
- ✓ You are able to constantly improve your campaign messages and targeting by tracking open and click ratios, and sales and sign ups. Because email is digital, it's instantly measurable, providing a powerful tool for your marketing success.
- ✓ You can use animations, links and high-CTR videos to keep readers engaged and on the path to purchasing. With HTML, the links take them instantly to sign up or splash pages, cross-sell product sites, or related blogs and articles to help educate them on your product's benefits.
- ✓ Most leading ESPs offer clients a variety of HTML email templates, making it quick and easy to create attractive campaign and newsletter emails.

Know when and how to use plain text effectively!

On the other hand, plain text messages can be quite effective if they are concise and well formatted. In fact, certain types of emails to certain audiences fare better than highly-designed HTML “pitches”.

- ✓ Plain text messages can earn higher deliverability and open rates because they don’t look like advertisements or SPAM messages and aren’t perceived as “hype” by some recipients.
- ✓ Most Internet Service Provider (ISP) email platforms can open your messages without any rendering problems.
- ✓ Text is necessary in all kinds of messages – HTML emails included – so better to learn how to use it correctly, as text is what usually delivers the sales “pitch”, not HTML.

What’s the real deal with video email? Is it as powerful as the reports say it is?

There are several irrefutable benefits to using **video email marketing**. In today’s new media environment, customers like to watch real people in action and listen to them speaking instead of reading text, especially in sales situations. That’s why online video is the fastest-growing media platform in history – with **71% of the online audience watching Internet video**, and the number of streams consumed expected to double by 2013. At these growth levels, it’s not surprising that video emails generate **2 to 3 times higher click through-rates!**

Now there’s a powerful new tool that makes it easy to produce, send and archive your own videos from your online ESP account. Video emails grab and hold readers’ attention, making it easier for marketers to create emotional connections and use sight and sound to increase the impact of marketing messages. Is it powerful? A resounding “Yes”! Should you start using it today? First think about your audience, your

product offerings, and the types of email communications you send. Then include video where you think it could work its magic!

Is your message relevant and readable?

Before you begin to create your bulletin or newsletter, take a minute to ask yourself:

- ✓ *Based on my audiences, what are the best newsletter topics to write about today?*
- ✓ *What titles and subject lines will ensure my messages get opened and read?*

Let's start at the top with your newsletter title. Rather than going for catchy or "salesy", It should accurately reflect the focus of your newsletter. For instance: "Restaurant VEGE – news and tips for vegetarians" or "Bookstore "Gandalf" Newsletter – Newness books, CD and DVD on market"

Before you begin to write, it helps to create a brief outline of the topics, with some ideas and notes to keep you on track. Include tags to tell you where to place buttons, images, etc, to help rough out your design.

REMEMBER: only include helpful information and media that serves the interests of your subscribers, not you! How to find new and interesting topics? More about that later!

Mark where to place **call-to-action buttons** such as "Sign up now", "Download new version" or "New product information". Use enough to be convenient, without being annoying. Remember to include these especially when sending HTML messages, as you can really make them "pop" in HTML. Strategically placed "action" buttons can make a big "dollar difference" in your campaign ROI!

Now, readability! Try to achieve a **balance of color, images and text** so nothing overwhelms the message as a whole. Half text and half images is a good ratio, but always use your best judgement and customize for every audience and type of message.

We know how challenging it can be to come up with fresh topics and ideas for every newsletter or bulletin. But there are things along the way to give you a solid head start.

For example, you can create a list of potential topics that cross your path every day. If there's any content attached, just cut and paste it and include the source or URL so you can verify the content. It doesn't have to be original every time, just valuable to the reader.

Below are a few ideas to help you create your topics list:

✓ **News About Your Company**

Write about your company: new products, new or enhanced website content, awards, events, charities, contests, the list is endless. Just try to communicate it in interesting, not a self-serving way, and include articles, photos or links to related sites.

✓ **Visit the Forums**

Try visiting the forums that target your market. This will allow you to get basic information about what people are concerned about, what the market is doing, and any consumer trends that may impact your business. You could address these topics and concerns in a special section just once, or on a regular basis, enhancing your "expert" status.

✓ **Write How-to Articles**

People are always looking for an easier/better way to do things, including how to use your products to their utmost benefit. Your newsletters and E-zines could provide that information and strengthen

customer loyalty, and campaign success rates. For example, if you own a vegetarian restaurant, you may write a newsletter about "How replace meat in your daily meals" or "What vegetarian meal you can cook for your 3-old baby"

✓ **Offer a "Tips and Tricks" Section**

Depending on the product or service you offer, you could provide tips on how to solve problems, perform tasks more efficiently, improve your golf or tennis score, or perhaps your paint brush technique. Make it useful, fun and interesting, and be sure to include additional resources, books, or websites along with your tips so your readers get maximum benefit!

✓ **Provide Product Reviews**

Write detailed reviews about products you have actually used to help your subscribers spend their money wisely. Only write a good review if you truly believe in the product. Also, don't be afraid to point out any shortcomings, including the price.

✓ **Recycle Your Old Website Articles**

If some of the articles on your website include valuable information that your subscribers could use, think about including them from time to time in your newsletters. There's a very good chance the majority of your subscribers have never seen the material!

✓ **Promote Social Media Channels, e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.**

Use links to your company's social media profile on Facebook, YouTube, or Twitter. Use the social media integration tools your ESP offers to send out updates to your blogs, bulletins, and more. Maybe your subscribers would like to follow your Twitter account or be fan of your Facebook

page! Remember to refresh your profiles so that visitors always find something interesting. Keep up the “virtual conversation”! You never know who’s listening.

Email subject lines

Let’s move on to another very important subject – the “subject”! For some of you, it’s a piece of cake. For others, it’s difficult to get right. And there are plenty of reasons to “get it right” because your subject line impacts deliverability and open rates in a big way.

Imagine your subscribers sitting down to check emails on their lunch breaks or after the kids go to bed. They don’t have much time, and there are 40-50 bolded entries demanding to be read. Almost everything that happens in the next second or two depends on the subject line, which needs to have real “stopping power”. For example, the wording should be concise but catchy, dramatic or funny, and offer great (time-limited) savings, or perhaps important statistics and useful “insider” information. Most importantly, it needs to accurately summarize your message.

It should also use language that is relevant and appropriate for your target audience. For example, you wouldn’t use “Biz” instead of “Business” in a report you send to business executives, but it might be perfect for your SOHO prospects. So put yourself in your subscriber’s shoes and imagine what would make you stop, open and read!

Basically, to be relevant and effective, subject lines should answer two basic questions:

- ✓ *Who is the sender?*
- ✓ *What’s in it for me?*

While keeping your subject line to 6 words or less is the goal, including your brand or product name here makes it instantly recognizable and

keeps recipients reading. According to a recent Jupiter Research report, including your company name in the subject line can increase open rates by **32% to 60%** over a subject line without branding! Think about it...what if 10% of that 60% purchased your product! “What’s in it for me?” is really the key question recipients ask themselves in the split second after they see your email. Therefore, the subject line should tell the reader, in a few short words, what they will find inside not try to sell the content in one line of text.

Fortunately for many email marketers, there is **SpamAssassin to offer the “spam relief” they’re looking for.** SpamAssassin is one of the leading spam filters. It doesn’t just flag potential spam, it informs you of any issues spam filters may have with your messages and gives you an opportunity to modify them – all within the message editor. SpamAssassin users can also change the test score values and determine the level at which emails are filtered. It is generally believed that most companies/ISPs use a total score of around 10, but that some may go as low as 4.

Split testing

Split testing is a feature that allows you to **automatically test different versions of your email marketing messages** on sample groups to determine which one is likely be the most successful. It’s quite easy. You simply create your best messages, perhaps using different personalization techniques, subjects, and styles. Your Email Marketing Platform will test each version for you, then automatically select and send the best! It’s a smart and cost-effective way to learn which subjects and techniques are likely to return the highest open and click-through rates. So experiment to find out what works best for your target market and you’ll save *and* earn more every time!

The “From” field

Subscribers may only have a few minutes once or twice a day to plow through all those emails, so it’s important to let them know the email is from a source they know and trust. **Do not send** emails from addresses like: “*admin@company.com*”, “*service@company.com*” or “*abuse@company.com*”. However, once subscribers have become familiar with you and your staff, you may be able to use the sender’s personal email address to make a more personal connection. The bottom line is: be very clear and consistent with your branding, even when the message is coming from another department or third-party. This is yet another example of why building a strong brand is so important.

Email marketing best practices

✓ Personalization

More than **70% of marketers are personalizing their email campaigns** by using the recipient’s name in the body of the email. Even this simple form of personalization fields higher open rates and click-throughs. On the other hand, personalization is not welcome if recipients don’t recognize your company name or brand. In fact, it can be offensive and treated as SPAM, e.g. *John, click here to find out how much money you won!*

So you should decide if certain groups of customers and prospects are ready to be emailed using familiar language and titles, or read about their personal preferences and interests in order to help them discover new products. Some “safe” types of messages for personalization include: birthday or holiday greetings, special offers based on profiles, gifts, event or sale reminders, surveys, and so on. For example: *It’s your*

birthday John! Or John, for our 5th anniversary, we have special gift for you!

✓ **Pre-Header**

It's a small phrase like: *"If you having trouble viewing this email, please visit this link"* which should be shown at the beginning of your email, above your message content. Adding this kind of **preheader improves your email stats**, because it can solve rendering problems with smart phones and some ISPS, allowing your recipient to read the entire message. Every ISP handles HTML code differently, so adding a preheader is a smart email marketing practice.

✓ **CAN-SPAM Complaint Footer**

This feature shows the client company name, street address and contact info. It should be an obligatory and stable footer that subscribers can't erase.

- **Unsubscribe link**

Never take your readers for granted. Give them the opportunity to choose if they still want to receive messages from you. Include an "Unsubscribe link" in every email and you'll find out instantly if you're succeeding! Providing an easy and clear **unsubscribe process can prevent spam complaints**, so it's not only a good email marketing practice, it can improve your deliverability and campaign ratings.

- **Privacy policy link**

This is a link to a legal document which describes how you or your company retains, processes, and purges customer's data. Privacy policies usually contain details regarding what personal information is collected, how it may be used, any persons or entities to whom the

information may be disclosed, and the security measures taken to protect the personal information. The exact contents of a privacy policy will depend upon applicable law. For instance, there are significant differences between the EU data protection and US data privacy laws. Again, information regarding policy laws can be found online.

- **Physical street address**

Finally, according to the **CAN-SPAM Act of 2003**, a physical street address has to be included in every commercial email message.

However, the new rule states that a valid post office box or a private mailbox may be used, as long as it is registered with the United States Post Office, or with a commercial mail service that follows all USPS regulations. If the post office box or private mailbox wasn't accurately registered, or if the registrant fails to comply with applicable requirements, the address will be deemed "invalid" and the sender will be liable for non-compliance.

✓ **Permission Reminder**

A permission reminder is a non-obligatory message which should be shown in small print at the top of your email. It tells your subscriber why he is receiving the email by stating something along these lines:

You are receiving this email because you signed up for the weekly "Healthy Restaurant" newsletter at www.healthyrestaurant.com.

Currently, permission reminders have become standard practice. They not only improve the probability that your email will be read, they remind the customer why and how they got your email or newsletter. You can also use your permission reminder to ask recipients to add your company's email address to their whitelist. In that way you'll be

recognized as a safe sender, and your emails will no longer land in the spam file.

Another “safe” practice? Using your permission reminder to ask customers to confirm their email addresses. It tells ESPs that every email you send is permission based.

Double opt-in subscribers are more valuable

If you have ever subscribed or opted in to receive emails from a business, you know how irritating it can be to see unexpected messages from unknown companies cluttering up your mailbox! Or how nerve-tracking to receive campaign messages you care nothing about, and never subscribed to in the first place. Do you recall what you thought about those companies at the time? Never again?!

As you already know, email marketing success really depends on getting permission from subscribers to send them your messages. So, no matter what, try to ensure that your subscribers really want to receive messages about your company and **never sell or share your list with anyone.**

Opt-In Email comes in two modes: **single** opt-in and **double** opt-in.

In a single opt-in, people submit an email address and agree to receive your emails. Unfortunately, it’s not reliable or secure as someone may have submitted their name for them, against their wishes. While single opt-in is a faster way to get people on your list, that’s probably the only advantage!

With double opt-in, the submitted name is not immediately added to a mailing list. Instead, an email is sent to the address, asking to confirm that the email address should indeed be added. If the recipient of the

confirmation email does nothing, the submitted address is taken off any mailings. The name is only added to a distribution list if the recipient responds to the confirmation email.

The double opt-in method helps you:

- ✓ **Keep your lists clean** – Typographical errors are a common problem with sign-up forms. It's a huge headache for mailing list managers. One wrong letter and your emails could be sent to a different person, or the mailbox may not even exist, so you've wasted your time and money, and possibly annoyed some potential customers. No matter how innocent the "offense", both situations can cause serious deliverability problems with ISPs, like redirecting all your messages to junk folders or even blocking future emails.
- ✓ **Dodge malicious subscriptions** – Imagine the effect of someone subscribing email addresses to your list as a caper or, even worse, using a malicious script to fill out every sign-up form on the Internet (including yours) with bogus information! Or spammers using forged email addresses to send millions of emails, including the one used to sign up to your list. This stuff CAN happen to you, and HAS happened to many others! Using confirmed opt-in takes care of these problems for you, AUTOMATICALLY!
- ✓ **Avoid the "spammer" label** – What happens when subscribers complain about your emails and send spam complaints to your email marketing provider (like GetResponse) or to your ISP? Many providers, like Hotmail, Yahoo or AOL, sometimes ask you to prove that your list consists only of email addresses from subscribers who signed up to receive your messages. In most cases, the only undeniable proof is



confirmed opt-in subscriptions. If you can't provide that, you might be marked as spammer! We all know that could cause major problems for your business, so better protect your list (and your reputation) now than pay for it later.

✓ **Increase your email deliverability** – We've said this before, but your contact list is your "goldmine" so build a list of verified addresses and subscribers who are certain they wish to receive your emails. It will increase your email deliverability AND deliver much higher open and click ratios and fewer complaints or removals. All these factors improve your reputation as an email marketer – *and* your email marketing results.

Tips for maintaining list hygiene

You built your list carefully and according to best practices, but your emails are still being returned with the annoying comment that they couldn't be delivered. There can be many reasons for "undeliverables": missing letters or invalid addresses, nonexistent domain names, or the recipient's mail server blocked your server. That means that your email "bounces". The best way to avoid these annoying (and costly) errors is to **keep your database clean!**

A good list hygiene requires more than removing duplicate addresses. Here are some best practices to try.

✓ **Remove or correct invalid addresses**
Invalid domains must be removed or corrected right away. Closely review your failure reports, identify bad addresses and evaluate whether they are the result of a data capture problem, a nonexistent domain, or other error. Simple data entry mistakes like misspelled domains (alo.com, hotmale.com, et cetera) are common but can be easily corrected.

✓ **Remove "spam" email addresses**

Remember to remove email addresses that include the word "spam". These are usually associated with spamtraps, which can lead to blacklisting by ISPs or antivirus companies.



✓ **Delete inactive addresses**

Check customer email activity levels regularly. Review open rates over time to see if there are trends that require your attention. For example, if you send a newsletter out every week and one recipient hasn't opened a single email in months, you should remove the address from your list. You could add them to another list that you use to reach out to non-active customers with other types of communications.

✓ **Use data checkers**

To avoid invalid email addresses, use common data checkers at the point of data collection on your website. It will ensure that each email address is properly formatted before being accepted into the database. Data checkers identify errors at the point of entry and give you the opportunity to correct user errors as they make them.

Your ESP can perform list hygiene for you

If you use a reputable Email Service Provider, then it will automatically manage list hygiene for you 24/7/365. State-of-the-art management systems permanently filter out all addresses that incur a hard bounce or multiple soft bounces, ensuring impeccable list management and top-notch deliverability.

Those “SPAM” words

How often do your subject lines and messages include words and phrases like “*For Free*”, “*Cash bonus*”, “*Promise you \$\$...*”, “*Credits*”, “*Serious cash*”, “*Get paid*”, “*Call now*”, with more “offending” words being added every day. So be careful when creating your sales pitch.

Hype can be perceived as spam and many common sales terms are already on the “list”. **Monitor these phrases to make sure spam filters never mark YOUR message as SPAM.**

The Benefits of a Good ESP

High deliverability

Here's a short list of important functions performed by automated anti-spam tools and human deliverability experts to help build strong ISP relationships, reputations, and revenue results for your business!

If you're wondering what benefits a top-notch Email Service Provider can offer, we can sum it up in one sentence: Your email messages will receive consistently high deliverability rates.

✓ **Human Monitoring**

Expert ESP deliverability staff monitors and manage abusive email traffic.

✓ **ISP Feedback Loops**

Automatic feedback loops with major ISPs allow ESPs to receive complaints whenever recipients click the "This is spam" button on emails sent by customers. Quick action on these complaints assures good ISP relationships.

✓ **List Hygiene**

Failure to remove inactive email addresses can negatively affect deliverability. That's why ESPs automatically manage list hygiene for their customers. After all, when you succeed, they succeed!

✓ **Advanced Bounce-Back Sorting**

Emails bounce back for a variety of reasons, e.g. incorrect address, inactive email, typos, etc. Whatever the cause, a professional ESP can

analyze and act on each bounce immediately and appropriately, so you don't have to.

✓ **Spam Filtering and Monitoring**

The leading ESPs automatically deploy anti-spam filters so your messages end up in prospect inboxes, not their junk folders! If your ESP doesn't do this, you're not receiving top-notch email service.

✓ **Spam Score**

It's the duty of your ESP to make sure your messages are not recognized as spam. Every email communication should be verified by a qualified spam checker like Spam Assassin.

Get great results with great tools

There are other advantages to using a leading ESP. First of all, ESPs offer professionally designed templates and formatting tools to help you create **attractive, audience-appropriate newsletters and promotions**.

The best ESPs provide advanced features that are easy-to-use and help marketers appeal to today's media-savvy online audiences.

For example, email marketing survey tools can **perform valuable market research** at little or no additional cost. Email marketing is digital, as we discussed, so you can track and analyze every aspect of your marketing programs to learn where you need to make improvements and adjustments. And, unlike collateral, direct mail, and print advertising, email marketing is multichannel. A single email can send the reader on a journey across the Internet – to social media sites, blogs, product review pages, online videos, tutorials, and on and on. Many readers share their

most interesting emails and links with friends and co-workers, creating an almost **endless viral marketing campaign**. Sound complicated? It's not, but let's discuss:

✓ **Video Email Marketing**

Give a face and a voice to your messages with video email marketing! **Customers want to see a product in action and know who they're buying from**, even in today's digital world. And video is so much more compelling than plain text sales messages. In fact, studies show that video can **triple your email click-through rates!** Film customer testimonials, meetings and events, product demos, virtual tours, and much more! Just find an ESP that offers a Multimedia Studio that lets you record and store up to 100MB or so of audio and video files, right from your account – no added software or expense required!

✓ **Online Surveys**

Believe it or not, you don't need to hire researchers or buy expensive reports to find out what customers are thinking. When you use online surveys on a regular basis, **you'll have all the data you need**, at little or no extra cost (shop around!). You should be able to ask as many questions, as often as you want, to get the data you need to **improve products, target campaigns and stay ahead of the competition!** And online surveys are a snap to use – just point and click to design, publish and watch the results roll in.



✓ **Follow-up Messages**

One of the most powerful, automated features provided by an ESP is the autoresponder or follow-up message feature. It allows busy marketers to set up and schedule sales messages for drip campaigns,

and to send out relationship-building messages – from welcome notes and birthday greetings, to reminder notes and triggered up-sell and cross-sell offers. While the time to set up your follow-up messages is minimal, the ROI can be amazing.

✓ **Social Media Integration**

Are your prospects getting their product “buzz” from social networks? If so, you need to be there! ESPs can **put you in the middle of the conversation** with easy integration with your blogs and social media sites. Subscribers get instant posting updates, and links to your latest broadcasts from Twitter! Encourage your fans to pass it on and **keep the buzz going!**

Creating the perfect HTML message for every audience and industry

Most ESPs are keen followers of email marketing rights and regulations.

Most ESPs give customers anywhere from ten to hundreds of designer HTML templates to help **create eye-popping campaigns for every audience and industry**. They are professionally designed, but you’re encouraged to use the editor tool to customize your own newsletters, bulletins, invitations and postcards with cool graphics, fonts and formatting, then brand with your company logo and colors to sign your masterpiece. After all, it should represent your business, not the ESP’s!

Need help selecting the right template, subject line, etc? Even though you try to keep up with surveys and web forms, it’s hard to keep up with changing customer tastes. Thankfully, **most leading ESPs provide a tool to split test different versions of your message automatically**. All you do is create a few good emails, perhaps using different personalization

techniques, subjects, and styles. The ESP tool will test each version for you, then **automatically select and send the best!** It takes only minutes and can save you buckets of cash! Honestly, why wouldn't you use this tool?!

Professionally managed subscriber lists

Removing inactive email addresses can be difficult or even impossible and what is worst can negatively affect deliverability! That's why ESP automatically **manages list hygiene for customers even 24/7**. State-of-the-art management system permanently filters out all addresses that incur a hard bounce or multiple soft bounces, ensuring impeccable list management and top-notch deliverability.

CAN SPAM Act Rules

Many participate in email marketing regulations initiatives such as the Email Service Provider Coalition (ESPC), Messaging Anti-Abuse Working Group (MAAWG), Email Sender Accreditation Program (IADB) or the Email Experience Council, all of which promote responsible, permission-based email marketing. You might browse your ESPs website to review their level of commitment. At the very least, professional ESPs should be committed to compliance with all 2003 CAN-SPAM Act requirements, including:

- ✓ Do not set false or misleading header information
- ✓ Do not set false or misleading subject lines
- ✓ Give your contacts an opt-out method
- ✓ The unsubscribe link must work for at least 30 days after sending your email
- ✓ Include your physical mailing address in the email
- ✓ Identify your company clearly and let the contact know that this email is an advertisement

You can find out more about the CAN-SPAM act at the [U.S. Federal Trade Commission](#) website.



Automated email marketing

As much as possible, use your ESP's automation tools to save time and money and work for you 24/7, so you can focus on your business. As we discussed earlier, you can use automation to schedule ongoing communication with subscribers and generate multiple sales "touches" for your drip campaigns. Remember, it can take 5-6 contacts to get that sale!

There are automated tools for list building and hygiene, for example: subscribers who purchase your product can be removed from one campaign and moved to another **for cross-sell purposes**; you can delete recipients who subscribed to different campaigns at the same time; or add persons who visited your website to a campaign that fits their profile, etc. All of this can be accomplished without using any human resources. Everything should be done automatically by your ESP's software. So the more you can automate, the greater your marketing ROI!

Measuring Performance

As we have discussed, there are many powerful features and channels you can use to maximize your email marketing success. But which ones are the best for your business?

If you are investing time and resources into using email marketing, you need to know what return it is bringing to your business.

The two most effective ways to measure business performance are **contribution** and **process metrics**. The first measures your email marketing program's performance against your organization's strategic marketing and business goals. The second one determines how each element of your email marketing campaign contributes to the company's overall business success.

Contribution metrics

The following are common contribution metrics:

✓ **Revenue**

Dollars! There's nothing more telling than measuring the income generated from your email marketing campaigns, both individually and over time. It's highly measurable, as we know, but don't forget to also consider the residual revenue gained from relationship building, referrals, and brand loyalty.

✓ **Cost savings**

From your very first email marketing campaign, you



should be able to quantify the time and cost savings of email compared to other mediums such as direct mail, and print or TV advertising.

✓ **Leads generated**

This is simply the number of leads generated by your email marketing campaign.

✓ **Website traffic**

Measuring website traffic is extremely important to the success of your online marketing campaigns, not just email marketing. More and more, it's becoming a best practice to integrate digital marketing programs across as many online channels as possible. This can explode your marketing ROI! Use every ESP tool, including Google Analytics, to track the behaviors of your email recipients and Website visitors as they travel across the Internet. It's very helpful in identifying the "paths" (links, articles, splash pages, buttons) that lead to purchases, so you can replicate your success.

✓ **Track my sales**

As soon as you've completed your email marketing campaign, monitor your "Track Sales" stats to see how it is performing. Everything's digital, so it's easy to monitor purchases made as a result of your links and messages. Whether they travelled from a splash page, or directly from a Buy Now button, the path to purchase can always be captured!

Process metrics

The following are the most common email-marketing process metrics:

✓ **Delivery rate**

All your time and efforts are wasted if your messages don't get through!

Fact: Marketers lose millions each year on undelivered sales messages.

When your ESP helps you monitor delivery rates, you get critical information on how many emails went through, how many bounced, how many were marked as SPAM, etc. Often you receive other valuable information that will help you continuously improve the deliverability and ROI of your email marketing initiatives.

✓ **Open rate**

When subscribers receive your messages, your marketing challenge is only beginning. The first important step you hope they take is to open it. That tells you they recognize your brand, and are intrigued to see what's inside...so far, so good! Unfortunately, an "open" doesn't mean the email was "read"; sometimes it means that it was just "viewed". That's not good. It means your message failed to hold their interest. But if you're earning an open rate of about 20% to 30%, you're doing about average. Don't be discouraged if your open rates have fallen from the 50% to 70% of your first emails...that's pretty standard. If you keep delivering high-value content and offers, it will return to a healthy level again. Just keep at it!

Remember: recording "open rates" is possible only with HTML emails, not with plain text messages.

✓ **Click-through rate**

A critical measure of email marketing performance is the click-through rate. This indicates you've passed several "tests" of readability, design, relevance, and messaging. As they progress through your email, you can discover what is most interesting for your subscribers as they click on

product links, research, news links, offers, and more. This helps you keep the best and lose the rest!

✓ **Share rate**

Measures subscriber interest levels and the “viral marketing” potential of the offer and content.

✓ **SPAM complaints**

First of all, a SPAM complaint is the worst thing a subscriber can do with your email! It starts with Feedback Loop software which returns all messages marked as SPAM by their email account users. Here’s where your email may get treated as an abusive message or SPAM for a variety of reasons. For example, if recipients get an email they didn’t ask for and don’t want, they should click “This is SPAM”. But sometimes it’s because they don’t recognize – or remember – the sender, even though they opted in. Sorry, they’ll get flagged and filtered out just the same. Remember, whatever the reason, if your email message is marked SPAM by a recipient and you receive the dreaded message, your ESP will remove the recipient from your contact list.



✓ **Unsubscribe rate**

As you already know, your every email should have an “unsubscribe” link which means that your recipient can unsubscribe from your campaign whenever he/she wants. It’s important to check your unsubscribe rates after every campaign to see if your message failed to impress. Sometimes they were going to opt out anyway, but overall, if unsubscribe rates are higher than usual, you should use your ESP analytics and good judgment to discover why and fix it immediately!

Future of email marketing

As consumers hop across these sites and applications, the lines between them will blur and email marketing will become more important than ever as a tool that can span every online channel with a few clicks of the mouse – linking people, products and places in more personal ways than anyone thought possible a few years ago.

It's a great time to be a SOHO or SMB email marketer! There are so many new online tools and platforms for marketers to use for pennies a day, or for free!

How will email marketing fit into the mix?

Marketing messages to primary inboxes are expected to swell to more than 9,000 annually in 2014, and marketing budgets balloon to \$2 billion. Wondering what new or expanded roles email marketing will play in the mix? We know that it's ideally suited (and automated!) to support retention marketing. But are the new video email, social media, and mobile application tools going to help you grow your business, or are they just too complicated to bother with?

Let's review some of the most popular and promising trends, and hopefully calm your fears regarding any learning curves or added costs to your business. Basically, if you can use email and know how to use the Internet, you can use these tools!

Social Media Integration

Social inbox users will total 47 million in 2014, but you can rest assured that email marketing is here to stay! According to a Marketing Sherpa report 97% of marketers agree that social media will complement other marketing tactics, such as email, rather than displacing them. But it's

true that online marketing is becoming multichannel and much more conversational. Customers want to hear from you and want you to listen to them. Think forums, blogs, surveys, etc. Having said that, what better way to reach online customers than with HTML emails offering links to social media sites, articles, videos, product demos and more?!

How can you join the conversation? Leading ESPs offer integration with most popular social media sites, making it easy for you to create a “**viral marketing**” effect. This is perhaps the **most important business benefit of social media integration**. Here’s how it works: when your subscribers click on the link that allows them to share that email on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn (or wherever you have an account), it becomes a message on their personal page, and the site will automatically send your updates to ALL the subscribers’ contacts! Our prediction? When integrated with email marketing, social media should function as a powerful, online branding and viral marketing tool that will maximize your online ROI.

Video Email Marketing is for real!

Why video? It’s a media-driven world! ComScore reported that U.S Internet users viewed **14.8 billion online videos in January 2008**, with YouTube alone scoring over **100 million unique viewers**. There’s no doubt that video is an incredibly popular medium of entertainment, education, and promotion, and will only continue to grow in popularity. The good news for online marketers is that now there are tools to use video in emails, not just on Web sites, and the results are spectacular – up to triple the click-through rate of traditional emails! So we strongly recommend using an ESP that lets you create, send and archive videos straight from your online account. Create customer testimonials, product demos, seminars, and more! Live or taped, interactive or one-way, video is here to stay!

Are smartphones the new laptop?

Everyone knows what a smartphone is – there’s a plethora of styles and models available, with the most popular being the Apple iPhone and the Blackberry. MOST business folks and many everyday people use these tools to chat, get directions, surf the Web, and check their emails. So, when you’re sending out your marketing emails you should know that many of your recipients are viewing it from their smart phones. Make sure that your messages and subject lines render properly on small screens and different platforms. Now, did you know you can manage your email marketing campaigns from your iPhone? Don’t miss a single business opportunity or lose that new contact! If your ESP doesn’t offer an iPhone Application, find one that does. To get ahead of the mobile curve, we recommend that you create your smartphone strategy today!

We’ve covered a lot of territory in this report, yet there’s so much more to talk about! Email marketing is rapidly becoming one of the most important tools in marketers’ toolkits and we’ve only scratched the surface! Remember, you don’t have to be a computer geek or marketing pro to use it effectively in just a few hours, so try it today!

We hope we’ve provided some valuable information to help you on your journey.

About GetResponse

GetResponse is an easy-to-use email marketing platform designed to increase email marketing ROI faster than any other medium for SOHO and SMB marketers. It is the first SOHO/SMB email marketing solution to offer email-to-speech capabilities, audio and video recording, storage and delivery, Twitter integration, and an iPhone® application. The solution includes email analytics, unlimited follow-up messages, 300+ HTML templates, online surveys, and professional-level training and support. Launched in 1999, GetResponse has grown to over 140,000 active users from 172 countries, delivering 5 billion permission-based emails per year.

For more information, please visit <http://www.getresponse.com>.

About Implex

Implex was founded in 1999 by Internet marketing prodigy and entrepreneur, Simon Grabowski, whose vision of helping SOHO and small business marketers around the globe improve marketing efficiency, reduce costs, and increase profitability continues to define the company. Today, Implex maintains worldwide operations, with offices in the U.S., Canada and Europe.