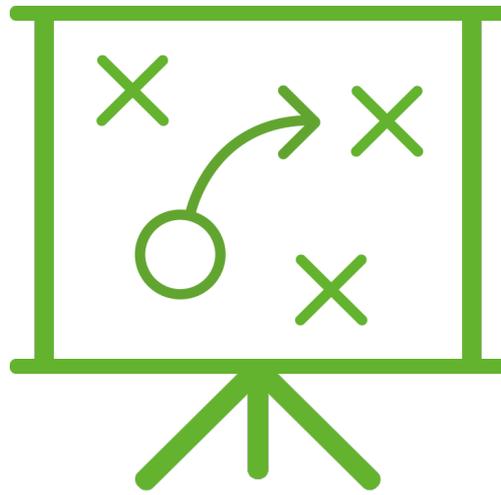


GREEN 4



Best Practice Series

Data-Driven Email Marketing Strategy



Overview

Email marketing is one of the most widely used and most effective ways for companies to reach their visitors and fans. The total number of worldwide email accounts forecast to be in use by 2018 is a staggering 5.2 billion – so there's never been a more crucial time to hone the way you communicate with your fans and visitors. Email marketing is also the most effective digital channel for increasing customer retention, as 90% of consumers said that they preferred to receive updates from companies via email newsletter.

Having said this, the reach of email marketing has declined over recent years due to a mixture of the sheer volume of emails being received by subscribers and the use of email spam filters. Therefore, without an effective email marketing strategy organisations face the challenge of not only engaging their subscribers, but reaching them too. If you are underwhelmed at the results generated by your email marketing campaigns, then consider tweaking your strategy using these data-driven email marketing techniques – after all engagement is key!

Personalisation

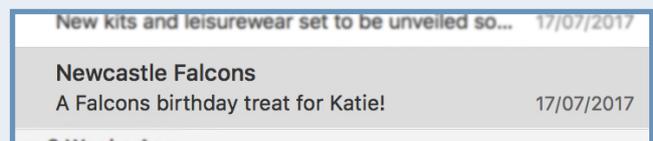
Personalised email marketing campaigns help companies to build relationships with their visitors and fans – however due to the wide range of phishing, identity theft and fraud scams out there, some subscribers are wary of emails that only have first name personalisation.

A more effective way to personalise your emails could be to combine name personalisation with other data such as location or previous purchase history. The take home message from this is that personalisation can help build the relationship between supplier and subscriber, but only if conducted in a meaningful fashion.

How can you increase the effectiveness of your email marketing campaigns by personalising them?

Green 4 suggest the following:

- Track and record email marketing campaigns and understand which subscribers have received and/or opened them
- Track and record subscriber purchases and interests
- Use the subscriber's contact data to personalise emails





Subject Lines

Research has shown that subject lines with below 10 characters achieve a higher average open rate of circa 58% than that of subject lines consisting of 60-70 characters.

The key to finding out which subject line strategy works for you is to test the effectiveness of your subject lines using the following methods:

- Develop a hypothesis that you would like to test
- A/B test subject lines
- Track all data on email campaigns for reporting and comparison
- Keep in mind that what works well for certain email marketing campaigns might not work so well for others
- Adjust your subject lines accordingly to keep them fresh and up-to-date with the latest subject line trends (E.g. use of emoji's, personalisation etc.)

Free Content

Research has found that subscribers are most interested in free content that is useful, relevant and helps them to solve a problem – whether that be email marketing templates, e-books, exclusive interviews or blog posts. Giving the subscriber a free piece of useful information or content can act as an incentive to get the subscriber to further engage with the brand.

Another effective way of increasing email opens and clicks is to draw the subscriber in by advertising free to enter contests or giveaways.

Key considerations for giveaways and contests are:

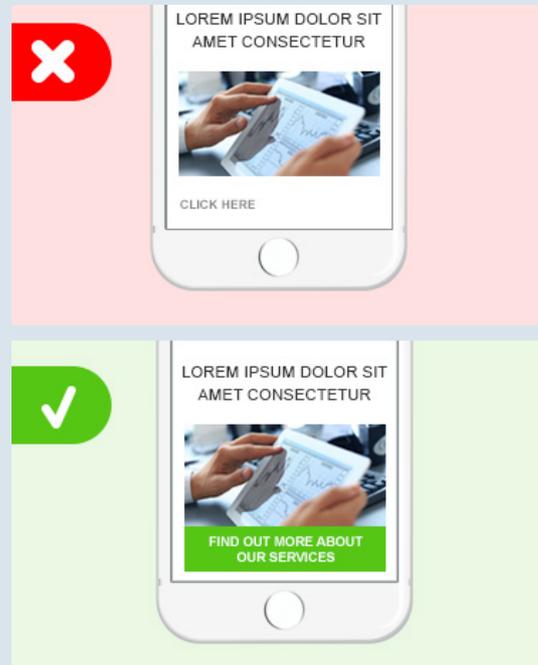
- Create specific landing pages for each of your special giveaway offers, allowing you to monitor engagement with the pages and therefore offers
- A/B test various offers to gain an insight into what giveaway or contest generated the highest open and click rates
- Develop email campaigns based around your subscriber's giveaway product interests

Leverage CTA's

Calls to action (CTA's) are a crucial part of successful email marketing.

Follow these steps to optimise your CTA's:

- Use concise and specific text in your CTA
- Focus on the benefits of clicking the CTA
- Avoid any negative words in your CTA
- Use CTA buttons that are appropriately sized and eye catching
- Make use of the available space in the email by inserting a CTA



Mobile Optimisation

It is essential for all email marketing campaigns to be fully optimised for mobile devices.

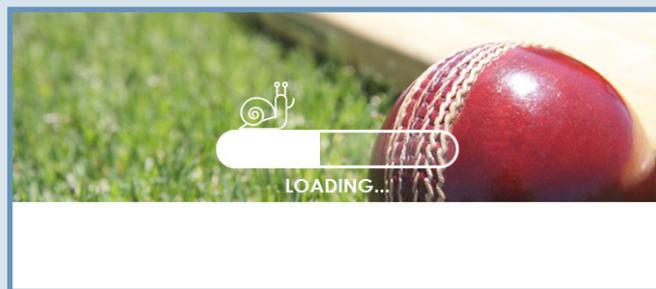
How can you ensure your email marketing campaigns are mobile optimised?

- Change your email templates so that they are one column
- Increase font size for better readability on mobile devices
- Make the call to action as obvious and easily clickable as possible
- Keep clickable elements of the email in the centre of the screen
- Optimise for retina devices
- Keep subject lines short and snappy, ideally below 30 characters

Visual Optimisation

Visually optimising your email campaigns can result in increased engagement, to facilitate this consider the following:

- Make use of sight-lines. If your imagery features a person, then position their line of sight so that it is pointing towards the key feature of the email
- Ensure all images are saved out and optimised for web to ensure quick load times
- Do not include images just for the sake of it, only use those that contribute towards the message you're trying to convey
- Show off the 'personality' of your organisation through the imagery

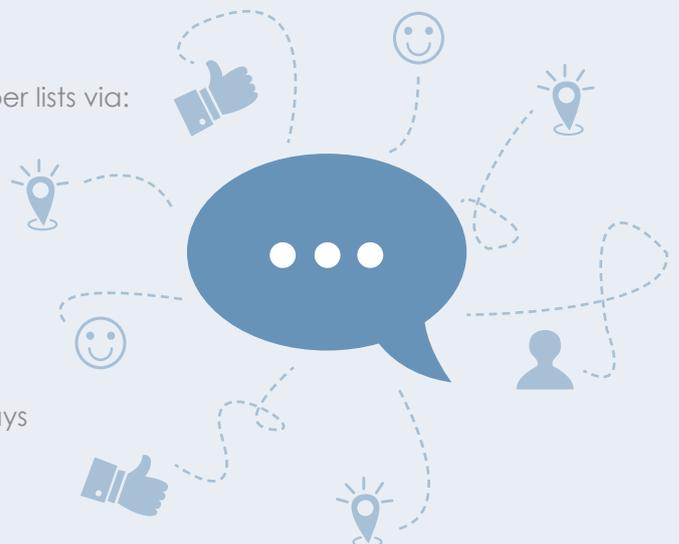


Social Media

Although social media platforms tend to achieve lower engagement, they can be used as an effective way to increase your email subscriber volume and engagement due to the large volume of daily users.

Social media networks can increase email subscriber lists via:

- Promoting landing pages
- Sharing premium content
- Sharing an incentive to subscribe to emails
- Promoting contests, competitions and giveaways
- Testing product adverts



Inactive Subscribers

Research has shown that on average 63% of an email database is inactive, meaning that these subscribers are not engaging with emails thus making them less likely to make a purchase with the organisation.

To try and re-engage these subscribers, an email re-engagement campaign is often a good place to start. How could you re-engage your inactive subscribers?

- Identify the inactive subscribers in your mailing list
- Re-ignite their interest by sending them an email re-engagement campaign. The aim of this email should be to let the subscriber know what they have missed and that you want them back, so the subject line for the campaign is key. A special offer or discount for a returning subscriber often goes down well.
- Move any subscribers who engage with the email out of the inactive list. It is important to let inactive subscribers know that they will be removed from your mailing list if they do not interact with an email within a specified time-frame.
- Once the deadline has passed, remove non-engagers from your email database

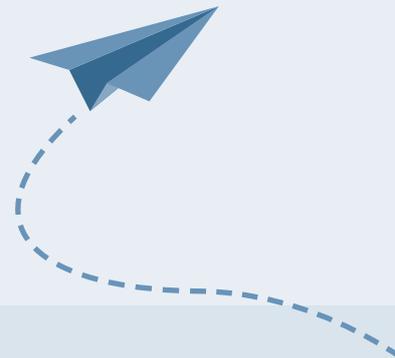
After your re-engagement campaign(s), you could also try the following steps:

- Ensure subject lines are concise and clearly communicate the message the email is trying to give
- Offer discounts and reductions to incentivise subscribers to open your emails
- Test the most effective sending frequency for your mailing list
- If you send e-newsletters, make sure you limit the amount of promotional content and sales messages
- At the point of unsubscribing ask people to give a reason why they are no longer interested in your emails, then use this data to tailor your email content
- Provide an 'update your details' link allowing subscribers to update any of their personal details
- Consider an annual subscription renewal process in which subscribers must renew their subscription to remain in your mailing list. This helps to remove contacts who are no longer interested in your communications.

Send Times

A commonly asked question in email marketing is 'what is the best time to send emails?' Whilst there isn't one rule that fits all industries and audiences, data can help to provide guidelines for coming up with a testable hypothesis. Email marketing research has shown that the best email engagement rates tend to be achieved during the morning/early afternoon time (9am – 2pm), with the peak time being around 10:30am. In terms of email engagement, it is most optimal to send email campaigns on weekdays when compared to weekends.

There can be a wide range of factors that influence the engagement levels that email campaigns generate, assuming they are all up to a consistently high standard, such as other email campaigns, spam filters and the state of the recipient's inbox. It is crucial to test the send times of your emails to formulate effective email marketing campaigns and timetables for your organisation.



Testing

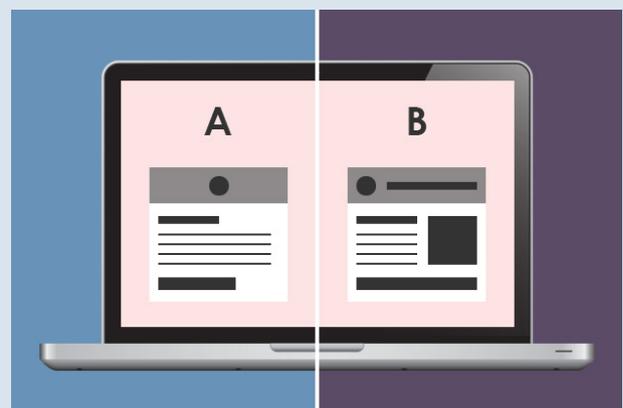
Don't go away after reading this and incorporate all the above into your email campaigns before you've looked at what works best for your organisation and industry – instead test, test and test again to determine what works and what doesn't for you and your audience. For example, before sending out your newly mobile-optimised email campaigns ensure you test how your emails render across all email providers and browsers to see what works best.

TOP RESOURCE: We use [Email on Acid](#), an online platform which tests your emails across a wide range of email clients, apps and devices.

It is also important to consider how you are going to track, monitor and report on the performance data of your email campaigns, allowing you to analyse the effects of changes to different elements of your emails. By reporting on what works well and what doesn't, you can begin to tailor your future email campaigns to elicit the greatest engagement.

A/B testing elements of your emails such as subject lines, CTA's and content is also a key part of the testing process, and it allows you to look at which version of an email campaign generated the highest engagement.

As with all marketing, creating the most effective email marketing campaigns is a process that requires a combination of good strategy, planning and analysis.





Go+ Managed Service

Green 4's Go+ consultants work with customers to deliver the relevant resources and knowledge to support the achievement of their CRM strategy objectives. The consultants are driven by a passion to deliver ROI, acting on the insight derived from fan and visitor data to deliver tangible results.

Authored by James Moorhouse. James is a Go+ Account Manager at Green 4. He works with Green 4 customers to develop their data-driven email marketing strategies and campaigns.

About Green 4

At Green 4 we enable our customers to utilise data to build improved fan and visitor relationships and create compelling digital journeys across the sport, leisure and attraction industries. As your partner, we are committed to your success and focused on delivering results using cutting edge, insight led strategies.

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