

B2B Email Marketing

What is B2B Email Marketing?

Email marketing is the use of email communication to increase awareness, generate leads and build relationships with prospective and existing customers. In B2B marketing, email marketing is essential to building trust and maintaining an ongoing dialogue with your audience. Every campaign you send out offers the opportunity to:

- Listen to the ways your segment responds (by paying attention to open and click-through rates).
- Maintain relevancy in your conversations (by acknowledging recipients' profiles and interests).
- Engage with them in the most meaningful ways possible (by following up appropriately).

What B2B Email Marketing is NOT

True email marketing is NOT taking the "batch and blast" approach, in which any email is sent out without considering the relevancy of the message to the audience or what follow-up measures will be taken. For B2B marketers, it is important to remember that email campaigns are always part of a larger effort to build relationships with individuals and help them along the buying process.

B2B Email Marketing Optimization

When sending out emails to your leads keep in mind the ultimate goals of your programs. These may be different for each organization. Optimization strategies will ultimately be company specific. Once this end goal is established, or multiple goals if you have the ability to segment portions of your list, make sure that each message you send supports that goal in some way.

Below are some tips for email marketing optimization:

- Develop buyer and customer personas and align them with the content in any email message. Create multiple messages or use dynamic content to ensure the email is sent with information that is important to that persona.
- Use the same name and email address when sending mail to ensure the recipient recognizes the email sender. Also, keep your emails in the same style as other branded content so the email feels familiar.
- Make sure to use A/B testing to find the right subject lines, images and content for your buyer personas.
- Each email should have a call to action, typically in the form of a link, which will allow you to see if the message resonated with the recipient. Try to limit the number of calls to action so the recipient does not become overwhelmed or miss an important call to action.
- Go beyond following CAN-SPAM rules, ensuring that every recipient has opted-in to your email.
- Test how emails will render in multiple email clients like Microsoft Outlook, Lotus Notes, Gmail and Hotmail. Also, test to see how emails will render on mobile phones.

Glossary Terms

A/B split – Refers to a test situation in which a list is split into two pieces, with every other recipient being sent one of two specific emails, to determine which email is more desirable

Above the Fold – The part of an email message or web page that is visible without scrolling. Material in this area is considered more valuable because the reader sees it first

Acquisition Cost – In email marketing, the cost to generate one lead, newsletter subscriber or customer in an individual email campaign; typically, the total campaign expense divided by the number of leads, subscribers or customers it produced

Authentication – Technical standards through which ISPs and other mail gateway administrators can establish the true identity of an email sender. Examples of proposed authentication standards include: SPF (PO Box, AOL), Sender-ID (Microsoft), DomainKeys (Yahoo), and DKIM (Cisco and Yahoo)

Attachment – A file that is sent in addition to the text or html in an email message

BANT – The acronym for Budget, Authority, Need, Timeline—fundamental ways to determine the sales readiness of a lead

Blacklist – A list of IP addresses believed to send spam

Bounce – A message that is returned to the sender because it was not deliverable

CAN-SPAM – Federal legislation governing unsolicited commercial email that went into effect on January 1, 2004. This law does not prohibit unsolicited commercial email, but it does regulate how it must be sent

Dynamic Content – Email content that changes from one recipient to the next according to a set of predetermined rules or variables, either by preferences the user sets when opting in to messages or based on behavior or demographics of the recipient

Email Campaign Management – The process of creating, executing and measuring email marketing programs directed at specific audience segments

De-duplication – The process of finding and consolidating and/or updating duplicate sets of contact information

Deliverability – The ability of an email message or campaign to reach the intended recipient's inbox, which is affected by spam filters, client-side filters and junk folders

DomainKeys Identified Mail (DKIM) – A method for email authentication that allows an organization to take responsibility for a message in a way that can be validated by a recipient

Email Marketing – The use of email communication to increase awareness, generate leads and build relationships with prospective and existing customers

List Hygiene – Process of cleaning and de-duplicating email files to ensure all addresses are accurate, unique, current, opted-in and deliverable

Lead Nurturing – The process of building relationships with qualified prospects regardless of their timing to buy, with the goal of earning their business when they are ready

List Fatigue – A condition producing diminishing returns from a mailing list whose members are sent too many offers, or too many of the same offers, in too short a period of time

Marketing Asset – A piece of marketing content (e.g. whitepapers, videos, newsletters, webinars, etc.) used to educate and generate interest for a company's products or services

Opt-in – The agreement to receive email from a business source. Confirmed or Double opt-in refers to a double-check procedure in which a decision to be included on a mailing list is confirmed

Personalization – A targeting method in which an email message appears to have been created only for a single recipient. Personalization may include any known demographic or behavioral information including recipient name, company name, website page visited and more

Plain text – Text in an email message that includes no formatting code

Segment – The ability to slice a list into specific pieces determined by various attributes, such as open history or name source

Suppression File – A list of email addresses you have removed from your regular mailing lists, either because they have opted out of your lists or because you do not wish to email them (competitors, etc.)

Rigger – An event based on a change or update in status, demographic information or user behavior that causes a lead to proceed along a specific workflow branch or new path

Unsubscribe – To remove oneself from an email list, either via an emailed command to the list server or by filling out a web form

Workflow – A pre-determined path of interactions for individuals to experience based on their profile, demographic, and/or behavioral data with the goal of nurturing and building relationships

B2B Email Marketing – Basic Techniques

- Incorporate A/B testing in your email campaigns—start simple by testing subject lines, headers or marketing assets.
- Segment your audience based on demographic or BANT characteristics.
- Consider the time of the day as well as the day of the week when executing your email campaigns.
- Personalize email messages based on database fields such as name and company.
- Ensure deliverability by proofing how your campaign looks in different email readers and troubleshooting content that may set off spam filters.

B2B Email Marketing – Advanced Techniques

- Try more advanced ways to segment your email lists by combining users' demographic information with their online behavioral data.
- Create personalized email templates for the sales team and experiment with different calls to action (download offer vs. follow-up call vs. scheduling a meeting).
- Explore more complex automated email workflows for lead nurturing (e.g. implement triggers to send out emails based on lead score).
- Establish a standard set of emails to cover communications throughout the different stages of your buying process (educational emails vs. solution-oriented emails).
- Keep your database up to date and clean through de-duplication.

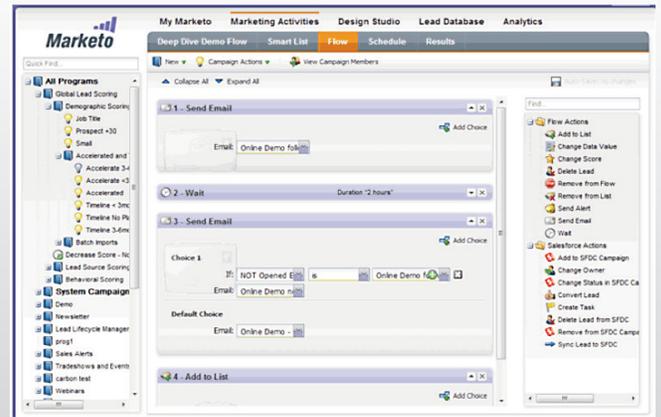
Top Metrics to Measure ROI with Email Marketing

- Acquisition cost
- Increased deliverability rates
- Increased open and click-through rates
- Decreased unsubscribe rates
- Increased conversion rates from each stage of your revenue cycle to the next stage (inquiry to lead; lead to qualified lead; qualified lead to opportunity; and so on)
- Increased revenue per email campaign

Top Resources

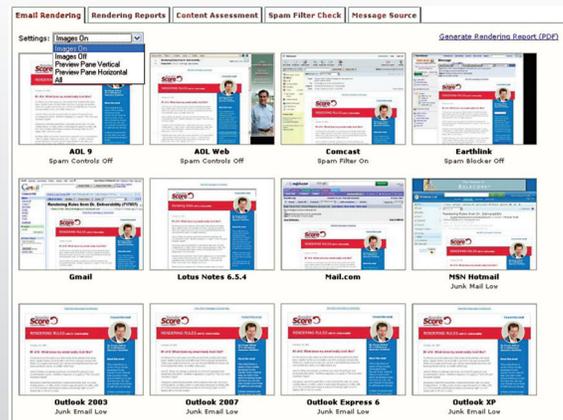
- Modern B2B Marketing Blog: www.emarkable.ie
- Email Marketing Insights Blog: www.strongmail.com/resources/blogs/email_marketing_insights
- ReturnPath's IN The Know Blog: www.returnpath.net
- MarketingSherpa: www.marketingsherpa.com
- MarketingProfs: www.marketingprofs.com

B2B Email Marketing Workflow



Here is an example of an automated email workflow that incorporates triggers based on user behavior.

Email Rendering



B2B Email Marketing - Analyst Facts

"Ninety-six percent (96%) of organizations believe that email personalization can improve email marketing performance."

– "Email Marketing: Get Personal with Your Customers," Aberdeen Group

"Email's low cost and high ROI continue to drive email marketing volumes upward. In the US, volumes will reach a high point of 838 billion marketing messages in 2013. We expect returns resulting from email campaigns to remain strong through 2009, but after that, volumes will level off as consumers increasingly start to ignore marketers' loud and frequent pitches. Messages triggered by events, which only 13% of marketers currently send, represent the next era of email marketing. Because they're tailored to match customer needs, they can generate returns of up to three times their cost."

– "US Email Marketing Volume Forecast, 2008 to 2013," Forrester Research