

How to write e-mail that gets results

By Cheryl Rickman

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Cheryl Rickman
info@webcritique.co.uk

WebCritique: Fine tune your website <http://www.webcritique.co.uk>

Your words and the way you present and convey your message are what counts when sending e-mails. It's all about what you say and how you say it.

You need to:

- • ensure your message is read
- • make your e-mail stand out from the rest
- • entice your prospect to click the link and open it
- • ensure that your prospect reads and acts on your e-mail message.

Why use e-mail as a marketing tool?

E-mail is cheap, fast and effective. It allows you to communicate with your prospects and customers quickly and easily, wherever they are in the world.

The problem is, everybody knows this. So everybody uses e-mail to communicate their messages. This has resulted in overflowing inboxes across the globe, and essentially means that your e-mail message is battling with many others for attention.

E-mail also puts you on an even-footing with the big boys. Posh stationery and logos, large corporations and posh offices are irrelevant in the realm of e-marketing.

You can use e-mail to:

- • respond to a prospect's request for information
- • follow up an old client
- • contact your existing customers
- • invite people to visit your website
- • broadcast your website address.

E-mail also enables you to send online press releases, either by hand, to your own list of e-zine editors and discussion board moderators, or in bulk to a targeted press list using a free service, such as <http://www.prweb.com> or <http://www.click2newsites.com/press.htm> or <http://www.pressbox.co.uk/>

Viral marketing is another technique that can be used to full effect in e-mails.

If you create and use a signature file to go at the end of every e-mail you send, you can spread the word when people forward your e-mail messages. (Also always include a sig. file on your postings to discussion boards and forums. It should always include your URL and be six lines or less).

Nowadays you can also give real time video or audio e-mail a try at <http://www.elive2u.co.uk>

12 insider tips for writing effective e-mails

Remember, you're jostling for position in very busy inboxes, so you need to get your e-mails right:

1. Think about what you want to say before you write your e-mail and then organise your ideas.
2. Think about your audience. Imagine the person you are e-mailing.
3. Write notes about the key points you want to get across, their priority, and the purpose of the e-mail. Think about what questions your e-mail recipients may have about your offer, service or product.
4. Establish your primary point and use that as the e-mail header or as the headline. Put your key points first. Expand that main point in your first paragraph of text.
5. Only make one point per paragraph and keep sentences and paragraphs short.
6. Make your subject headers interesting, compelling and concise, so that the prospect has to open the message. For example, "Web marketing tips to help you double your online business" would be better than "Frank's site update."
7. Keep the text upper and lower case and DON'T SHOUT by using capitals! [When capitals are used, they are the equivalent of shouting].
8. Format your e-mails so they are easy to read in any browser. If your e-mail program doesn't include word-wrapping facilities, make your line length a maximum of 60 characters and press return at the end of each line. When printed, it will be neatly laid out.
9. Use short paragraphs, headings and subheadings, bulleted lists and summaries, and add white space to ease reading.
10. Always tell your prospect what to do next. Use a call to action. E.g "Have your website appraised today, by visiting sending an e-mail to info@webcritique.co.uk"
11. Always check the e-mail for errors, omissions and spelling mistakes. Proofread as well as spell-check for errors the spell-checker may miss, and make sure you've included that attachment.
12. Target a specific audience who need your information. Don't bulk e-mail your message to thousands of untargeted people.

E-mail is one of the best online marketing tools at your disposal. Use it wisely and make your messages stand out from the rest; find out what works and what doesn't, and come up with your own winning formula.

Cheryl Rickman is author of, 111 winning ways to promote your website successfully.and the founder of <http://www.webcritique.co.uk> where she offers website appraisals, personalised web promotion plans and press releases, plus web page writing, editing and proofreading services.

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