

# The Top 10 Rules for successful Email Marketing

By John McCabe

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## Top 10 Rules

Over the years I have helped create and execute hundreds of email marketing broadcasts for everything from conferences to double-glazing, and betting services to financial services. I have seen some outstandingly good creative and some outstandingly bad. Creative is not the only factor involved in email success - data, timing, offer etc also have important bearings on response rates. Over the course of time I have come to recognize a few simple, but fundamental rules about email messages, that if followed, greatly enhance response.

1. Use good data. Only rent email addresses that have a verifiable opt-in status. Response rates are generally 10 times greater using good opt-in data rather than opt-out.
2. Keep the message simple. Email message broadcasting should be seen as a means to an end - the end being a contact with your prospect or a visit to your website. Long messages raise the threshold to response. Keep the reason for emailing to the forefront of the message.
3. Keep the creative simple. Try to ensure the whole message can be seen on one screen, including response mechanisms. Don't use lots of different font sizes and typefaces - it confuses and detracts from the message. Make sure that graphics are hosted so that the file size is kept to a minimum - preferably less than 24kb.
4. Create a good Subject Line. Give the recipient a reason to open your message. Poorly considered subject lines will negate any good creative or offer, as the recipient may not even see it. Subject lines should be intriguing and not too salesmanlike.
5. Make it easy to respond - after all, this is the point of the exercise. Always have a clear, concise call to action. Allow them immediate access to your website and contact by email - they are online so use the media. You should also enable them to contact you offline.
6. Be prepared to broadcast on multiple occasions. You should not think of email marketing as a one off hit - an all or nothing approach. Research shows that response rates increase with frequency as the recognition factor increases.
7. Make use of HTML. Whilst keeping the message simple, you should where possible use html to create the message - it looks far better on screen, and allows the URL's of links to be hidden behind visually pleasing images. You should always produce a txt version of the html to be broadcast simultaneously to the html, to ensure that recipients unable to accept html will be able to receive

your message.

8. Track everything - open rates, unsubscribes clickable-links, emails received, telephone and faxes received. Simply tracking the clicks is only half the story. You should monitor what happened when the click through occurred on the website, as well as your sales call centre.

9. Get the timing right - don't broadcast over night to B2B databases as the first thing that will happen the following morning is that the message will be deleted. Tuesdays and Thursdays have proved to be the most responsive for B2B broadcasts. Sending a message on a Friday afternoon to consumers has proved very successful.

10. Datacapture - make sure that at least one link on your email is to a datacapture screen.

About the Author:

John McCabe is the co-founder of UK Marketing Management (<http://www.ukmarketingmanagement.com>), a specialist direct marketing agency based in the UK. He has 15 years experience of developing direct marketing campaigns in a variety of industries. During the last four years he has concentrated on email marketing, both as a corporate end user and as an agency. During this time he has helped develop the media with list owners, broadcasters and clients - pushing up service levels and quality of data.

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