

From the website: <http://www.marketingdonut.co.uk/marketing/online-marketing/email-marketing/email-newsletter-faqs>

Email newsletter FAQs

15 FAQs on email marketing and email newsletters.

1. Why should I send an email newsletter?

Email is the most cost-effective and highest ROI (return on investment) marketing medium. Its best application is for customer retention, marketing to your in-house list.

However, take care not to consider email low value just because it's cheap. Failing to take care with your email marketing strategy will be detrimental to your relationship with your customers. Put the same care, effort and focus on your email as if it was a costly direct mail.

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2. What are the advantages of email over other marketing channels?

Email provides excellent measurability. No longer do you need to guess how people will react to your marketing messages. With email, you can measure who opens and clicks on your email. This not only means you know who in your audience is engaged but also what information is interesting and of value to them.

The measurability gives the data necessary to allow optimisation and improvement in your marketing. You can test different messages and improve marketing **based on facts**. This means no more meeting room arguments as to what might be better - you can do it, test it and find out what works best.

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3. What should I put into a newsletter?

Your content is what will keep your customers reading your email. After they sign up, they will read your next two or three emails. If they like the content they will continue reading, but if they don't they will unsubscribe or emotionally unsubscribe. Emotional unsubscribing is when someone will not bother to actually unsubscribe but will continue to receive your newsletter and will simply hit delete without even skimming it.

In your content don't talk about yourself and how good your company and products are. Today's readers are skeptics. The most effective newsletters deliver information of interest and value to the reader without being full of marketing and sales speak. If you provide thoughtful, helpful and insightful information that is of value to your readers on its own, then you will build your relationship and trust so that they will become interested in your products, services and spending money with you.

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4. How often should I send a newsletter?

It needs to be regular enough so you are not forgotten and not so frequent that your readers feel spammed. Monthly is very common and anything between two weeks and two months is reasonable. Be consistent, too; don't send two emails in three weeks and then none for six weeks.

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5. Can I measure the success of my newsletter?

The fundamental metrics are 'delivery', 'open' and 'unique click' rates, expressed as percentages. All good e-marketing software and e-marketing agencies will provide these statistics.

- 'Delivery' is the ratio of the number of emails that didn't bounce to the number of emails sent.
- 'Open rate' is the ratio of number of people opening to number of emails delivered.
- 'Unique click rate' is the ratio of people who clicked links to the number of emails delivered.

Good figures are delivery over 95 per cent, open over 30 per cent and clicks over 10 per cent. However, actual values vary massively. The most significant aspects are campaign data quality and value of content. Campaign data quality here includes the accuracy of match of your message to the target audience and the audience history. If you are sending the tenth email this month for which there is a low match to readers' interests, then don't expect a good response.

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6. How long should my newsletter be?

Content should be short, scannable and in small chunks. Readers spend just seconds skimming over emails, picking up on general keywords and topics. Should something be relevant from skimming they will then slow down and read more carefully. Start by writing your email, then remove half the words and then review and remove some more. You'll be getting close then to having just the key information.

But where do you put the full details that you want to share? Link from the short, scannable email text to landing pages that contain the full articles and information.

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7. When should I send the email?

The perfect time to send your email is when your reader is going through their emails and they have no unread emails left. This is, of course, much easier said than done but it is a guiding principle.

For many campaigns, the prime time is between 10am and 4pm, Monday to Friday. Your list and email content will affect the ideal send time. The best approach is to test different send times to see what works for your audience.

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8. Should I send graphic emails or simple plain text only emails?

Graphic emails with appropriate use of layout, images, colour and fonts perform better than plain text emails in almost all instances. Graphic emails are created using HTML, the same language used for web pages.

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9. How do I ensure the email displays correctly?

You will need to ensure your email displays correctly in major email clients. Having your HTML email created by an email coding expert is a good first step. The rules of acceptable HTML are different for emails and for web pages, so don't be tempted to get a webmaster with no email experience to do it for you.

You, or your email coder, should test that it works in common email clients. There are third party services that can check the email displays correctly and this speeds up the process. Some email service providers can also provide such tools.

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10. How do I know if I'm getting to the inbox?

There are many factors that affect deliverability. Using a good email service provider will mean the specialist technical issues around deliverability are managed. You will still be responsible for campaigning issues that affect deliverability.

Use an inbox delivery confirmation checking service to verify you are not getting spam filtered and, if you are, seek advice from your service provider. Inbox delivery confirmation services are available from third parties or via a good email service provider.

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11. Who should I say the email is from?

The 'email from' name - that is, the name the reader sees in their inbox when they receive the email - is a very important human filtering factor when deciding to open an email.

Emails which come from your boss or partner get treated differently from emails from someone you've never heard of. So, the 'email from' name should be a name your reader is likely to identify with. It should only be the name of a real person if you are sure the reader will recognise the name. If not, then use your company name.

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12. What makes a good subject line?

The purpose of the subject line is to persuade someone to give you another 20 seconds of their attention and get them to open and scan the body of your email. It is not to explain the whole contents of the email or your offer.

An example of a bad subject line is 'March Newsletter'. This tells the reader nothing about what is in the newsletter or why they should be interested. Just as bad would be 'Buy product X now'. Before asking someone to buy, you need to give them a reason to want to buy. You can't do all of that in the subject line.

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13. What is dynamic content?

Dynamic content is a block of content that is only included in your newsletter for some recipients, not all. The information that is relevant to the recipient is added 'dynamically' as the email is sent.

Dynamic content is a way to improve content relevance. For example, dynamic content could be used to:

- Include different content depending on the lifecycle stage of the customer. A new subscriber, for example, needs to be treated differently from a regular customer.
- Supply content based on preferences expressed by the recipient. If you have many products or services, you can include information on only those your customer has expressed an interest in.

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14. What does 'above the fold' mean?

'Above the fold' is a phrase taken from the world of direct marketing. In email terms it means the part of the email seen in the preview window or the part you can read before scrolling down.

It's an important part of the email as it is seen first. Unless it hits home, it is unlikely someone will read further. It needs to have headlines and text to drive people into the email body.

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15. What must I include in my email?

You need to obey the laws relevant to your country. In the USA, that means Can-Spam, and in Europe, the Directives on Electronic Communications.

For more information see:

- [The Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations](#)

- [The Electronic Commerce Regulations](#)
- [The Consumer Protection \(Distance Selling\) Regulations](#)

The key items are relevant permission and inclusion of an unsubscribe link, your company registration number, place of registration and registered office.

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Written by [Tim Watson](#) of [Zettasphere](#).

Social Media Vs. Newsletter Effectiveness

by Joe Murray, Demand Media



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Social media websites such as LinkedIn, Plaxo, YouTube, Google Plus and Facebook rely primarily on user-contributed content. Newsletters, whether they're sent by email or postal mail, consist entirely of editor-supplied content. For the small business this is the difference between using a rifle or a shotgun. The target market in social media can range over hundreds of thousands or even millions of individuals, many of whom may have little or no interest in your business model. Conversely, the newsletter intends to reach a far smaller, yet much more motivated, group of consumers, customers or clients. When properly developed, each approach can be effective in building customer base and brand loyalty. When the two are combined the total effectiveness is noticeably greater than the sum of the two parts.

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Social Media Marketing Strategy

Consider using the social media websites that present the best opportunity to promote your business; identify, then develop, your channels of distribution. The way to go about this process varies depending on your product or service, your customer base and your supply chain. However, several factors including competitive research, creativity and target audience identification are commonly shared. For example, make a video capturing your product in its best light and make it available on a social site. If you are selling skateboards, make a video of one being used in a winning competition; if car insurance, a heroic cartoon character in action might be the ticket. Whatever your enterprise, your company's social media effectiveness depends largely on how well your video and Web page are received.

Newsletter Audience Planning

The primary goal of a newsletter is to grow its company's mailing list. Its effectiveness depends to a great extent on the attractiveness of its content. However, no matter how pleasant the appearance or fascinating the copy, if you are only reaching the same few dozen subscribers with each issue, your efforts will fall short. You can use several methods to boost subscriptions and with them, effectiveness. Always include a signup box on your company website. Promote contests, discounts, family plans, and other incentives in your newsletter.

Related Reading: [How Are Corporate Boards Overseeing Social Media?](#)

Rifle or Shotgun

As a business, you use social media websites to get the attention of the greatest number of possible users with the expectation that a percentage become potential consumers, customers or clients. Your newsletter targets the converted: that is, those who have made it a point to subscribe to your monthly or weekly mailings. With your targeted newsletter audience, you have a better chance of selling the subscriber a product or service that has already piqued their interest. It's not a question of which method is more effective, though. Social media expands your mailing list; newsletters inspire the names on that list to purchase your products or services. Both have their place in your company's sales, marketing and advertising efforts.

Going Viral

One aspect of social media and online newsletter marketing involves a rare occurrence and can neither be planned nor purchased: going viral. A vanishingly small proportion of YouTube videos, for example, achieve the fortunate state, according to Kevin Allocca, the trends manager of YouTube. This unique phenomenon of the Internet occurs when a video catches the attention of a few hundred viewers who pass it on until in a period of hours or days it has been seen by millions. If this happens to your company's video, do not forget to include the link in your next newsletter!