### EMAIL MARKETING PLAYBOOK

Force24<sup>™</sup>

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## Introduction to email marketing

Email marketing is one of the original digital channels. It gives the ability for brands and businesses to communicate with customers, both existing and new, via email, has been around for a quarter of a century - and is growing exponentially.

Dropping directly into a recipient's inbox, a marketing email can be a powerful vehicle for promotions, brand messages and news. In other words, it is a versatile tool when it comes to creating conversation.

One of the most popular uses of email over the years has been as a way of communicating with customers, whose email addresses are held in a database (be that a CRM system or an Excel file, etc.) following an interaction or purchase. It's great for talking to a customer base to quickly and informally drive engagement and sales. Email has often also been used as a tool to acquire new customers, through the purchase of new email address lists and the creation of complex, beautiful, email journeys (just like the ones you can deliver with the Force24 platform)!

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This exclusive playbook looks at how you, as a marketer, can leverage email to become your most effective, efficient marketing channel, through the use of tools, messaging, marketing psychology and creative genius!

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Of course, recent years have seen huge developments in both the way email is used and how we must treat customers and their data. Privacy and data protection pressures have come to the fore and customers now expect to receive only personalised, tailored messages for which they have given explicit consent. Power most certainly now lies with the recipient, with GDPR regulations and the ability to unsubscribe at any time, constantly preying on the mind of email marketers.

But it needn't be this hard - trust us!

This exclusive playbook looks at how you, as a marketer, can leverage email to become your most effective, efficient marketing channel, through the use of tools, messaging, marketing psychology and creative genius!

Sound good? Get yourself a brew and settle in for this 15 minute read - you deserve it!

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# Why email marketing?

Very few marketing channels allow you to gain the attention of recipients like email can. When someone opens your email, for a few seconds you have their complete focus and opportunity to engage them through creative imagery, headlines and compelling content - right there and then, in the moment.

As it's one of the few 'head down' channels - where the recipient is focused completely on the content rather than seeing it only in their peripheral vision - marketers must seize the immediate opportunity to generate engagement. That means we must prepare our communications to instantly capture the attention of the audience. This is where we come in!

At Force24 we live and breathe email and its advantages. Why? Read on...

- COMPLETE FOCUS for a few valuable seconds, you can enjoy the total attention of the recipient
- MULTIPLE TOUCHPOINTS we can send many emails over time to the same recipient, reinforcing the same message
- PERSONALISED MESSAGING email presents the ability to talk to the customer about what they have actually looked at, purchased, or engaged with
- INSTANT DELIVERY click send and within seconds the email message lands in the inbox of the recipient
- GREAT ROI it's incredibly low cost and efficient, especially when the right metrics are analysed
- MEASURABLE AND EFFECTIVE track KPIs and understand how email is working for you, from both brand and commercial perspectives
- SUPPORTS SEASONAL CAMPAIGNS tailor messaging and timings throughout the year, ramping up and down based on the seasonality of your business.

In truth, the list goes on...

But these bullet points should be at the back of your mind whenever you're creating an email marketing campaign, because at Force24, we champion the use of our intuitive tech so that you have to think less about the doing, and more about the bigger picture. How? Through automating more of your comms!

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The power of marketing automation allows you to seamlessly stitch together complex, multi-channel communication journeys that work in harmony and drive real results for your business



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### Why marketing automation?

In a nutshell, imagine the power of email - automated. Ok, we joke. But seriously, when you pair the benefits of email communications with an intuitive automation engine, you can achieve amazing campaign results. What's more, you'll break far less of a sweat than you are right now! We promise!

At Force24, we believe marketing automation liberates the marketer and allows them to disconnect themselves from the wheels of the marketing machine, and spend more time focusing on strategy, instead of getting bogged down in the weeds.

So what does this mean for you?

The power of marketing automation allows you to seamlessly stitch together complex, multi-channel communication journeys that work in harmony and drive real results for your business. Using the Force24 platform you can segment your audience and talk to multiple groups of customers at the same time, all from one email build. It takes the complexity out of having to create multiple variants of emails - and ultimately saves you time!

"When you pair the benefits of email communications with an intuitive automation engine, you can achieve amazing campaign results"

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On average, a typical newcomer to the Force24 platform reports saving 8 hours a week versus their pre-automation life.

That's an entire day a week to do something completely different! Do you fancy working 4 days a week instead of 5?!

(DISCLAIMER: using the Force24 platform does not give you a licence to automatically start working 4 day weeks!)

On top of all that, automation requires less human involvement. This means there's reduced room for error and less likelihood you'll upset your customer base! Win-win, right?! If you're talking to your customers with relevant content and at the times they want to be spoken to, the engagement (and subsequent results) of your campaigns are going to be far superior to those of a manual campaign send.

### Don't believe us?

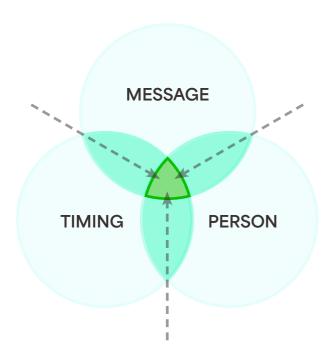
Book a demo with an expert today to see Force24 in action!



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### Your data and audience

As with all marketing channels, the most relevant message in the world can fall on deaf ears if it doesn't land at the right time, or worse yet, goes to the wrong audience! Driving the most engagement possible all comes down to that balance.



Automation allows you to truly hone your campaign message by segmenting your data pool and talking to multiple groups of users, with different messages, at different times. Imagine trying to manage that manually!



On average, a typical newcomer to the Force24 platform reports saving 8 hours a week versus their pre-automation life. That's an entire day a week to do something completely different!



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We talk a lot about personalisation in our content, and regular readers will know that true personalisation is about much more than just, 'Hi [FirstName]'. No no. Gone are the days of that. Personalisation (at least to us at Force24) is all about crafting the right message, delivering it at precisely the right time, and to exactly the right person.

Now just pause for a minute and think about the last email campaign you sent out. Ask yourself - was this sent at the right time for this audience? Was it even sent to the right audience? And most importantly, did it contain the right message?! If you can't answer all three elements of that question correctly, chances are you're doing it wrong.

We could write until the cows come home on this topic - in fact, we have previously! If you want to read more about this, we suggest you take a look at our 'How to utilise data to drive revenue' guide that was published in late 2020. There is some wonderful insight and methodology in there that will help you get the most out of the data your business holds!



Even in an automated journey, where contact with that customer is completely qualified, the messaging we include must be relevant, concise and helpful



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# Email content - what you should know

We've talked about how email marketing provides marketers with the perfect opportunity to engage with customers, but ultimately that engagement can't happen without compelling content within the email itself. Even in an automated journey, where contact with that customer is completely qualified, the messaging we include must be relevant, concise and helpful.

The great thing about email is that there are multiple content elements we can use to encourage recipient engagement.

In this section we will talk about how these elements can be utilised to maximise the chances of the customer engaging.

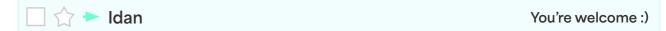
A subject line and the sender are the first two things a recipient will see when your email drops into their inbox, and we must make effective use of them both to encourage the customer to open the email.

The job of the sender name is to assure the recipient that the email has been sent from a trusted source. From a marketing perspective this means including the brand name.

"Engagement can't happen without compelling content within the email itself"

Onto lines, there are many proven tactics for writing effective copy, including:

 Ambiguity: Teasing the recipient by giving an ambiguous message that encourages a click to find out more



 Temptation: Offering the customer a benefit - usually financial - if they open



• Urgency: Implying that what's on offer is limited or exclusive



· Personal: Inserting personalisation fields into the subject line



 Ego: Praising the recipient to generate positive sentiment and a higher propensity to open, i.e. be better/faster/fitter/richer/ sexier



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Using a combination of these subject line tactics can create variation in your campaigns and keep the recipient on their toes, encouraging them to open your emails.

Once the email is opened then it's down to the content, UX and layout to generate a click. Always strive for that click to be commercially beneficial, whether you're nurturing someone towards completing a data capture or lead generation form, encouraging a sales call or driving further brand exposure.

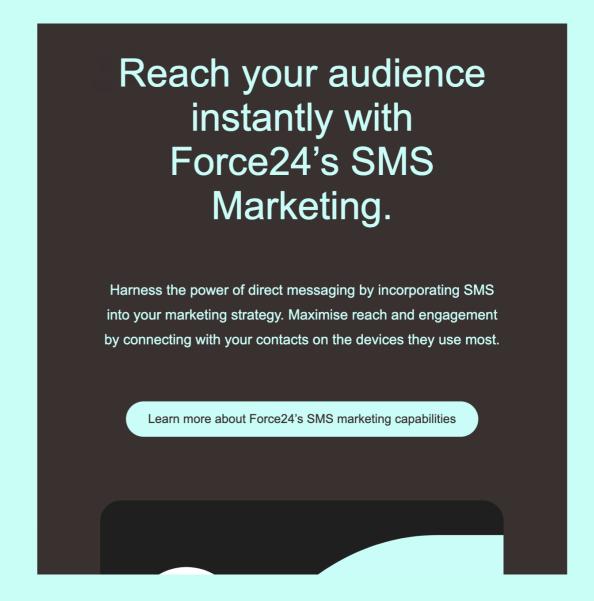
Microsoft recommends a really simple - a 10-word headline and a single call to action. With automation we can be super-specific and clear with the messaging as we can split the content story over several emails in a journey, reinforcing our message, from different angles, across multiple touches.

### Remember

Email is not about cramming as much info into each send as possible - it's about each email delivering a single, concise encouragement to act.

That 10-word headline and single call to action are our main weapons to grab the recipient's attention and get them to click, so think about using clear, large fonts and UX-focused call to actions - paying close attention to size, colour and copy.

### The Squint Test



A sure-fire, yet simple way to get a view of how engaging your email content might be, is to use 'the squint test'... sit back, with your email headline, main image and call to action on screen, and literally squint at it! If the elements are well-spaced, well-sized and have stand out, then you're onto a winner! If you find that elements are bleeding into each other, stepping on each other's toes, or the CTA doesn't stand out, then it may be time to readdress your layout.

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Whatever sits below our headline and CTA is called 'the trampoline', designed to bounce the reader back up to what matters; the all-important call to action. Trampoline content should cover two main areas:

### Authenticity and trust, for example;

- Reviews
- Testimonials
- Social validation "other marketers loved the last webinar"
- · Humanisation putting a face to the brand

### **Associated content**

- "You might also like..."
- Related products and articles

Automation platforms, such as Force24, allow us to send targeted emails to carefully selected audiences, but they also enable us to tailor our content to each audience - even at an individual level. As a result, personalisation is a key tool we can use to relate to the recipient.

The true definition of personalisation is not 'Hi [FirstName]', but sending the right message, to the right person at the right time. And automation is perfect for this! Setting up the right journeys for the right audiences is the most powerful method of connecting with our base and driving engagement.



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05 Email content - what you should know

However, the people reading our emails will always engage better when they feel the email is just for them. A clever approach can be as simple as including their name in the subject line, headline or copy, and also including content relevant to their previous behaviour - they're human after all, and we all like to feel like we have a friend. So, try to also consider content related to which products they've looked at on a website, for example, the content they've consumed or downloaded, or the services in which they've registered an interest via a form completion.

### To recap

The key points to consider when creating your email content are:

- Sender name
- Subject line tactic
- Headline
- Call to action
- Trampoline content
- Personalisation

The Force24 platform even allows you to create ultra personalisation with our Genius Block functionality. This means you can send the same dynamic email to multiple audiences, but only show each recipient the content you want them to see based on the list they are in! Multiple audiences, one email... Genius!

So far we've talked about how to encourage an open, and how to encourage a click, but the journey is by no means over. What really matters is what recipients do once they've clicked...

Where do we send that click? And what content do we present when they land?

"Landing pages, or microsites, empower marketers to create tailored content"

05 Email content - what you should know

Landing pages, or microsites, empower marketers to create tailored content designed to seamlessly continue the journey a user takes after clicking through from an email. If we land email clicks on to generic pages, for example the homepage or a product/service page, conversion rates are likely to fall as the user is not being presented with what they sought when clicking.

By landing the click onto a page that echoes and reinforces the message from the email, on the other hand, significantly better conversion rates can be expected.

Many of the same content principles we talked about for email, should be mirrored on landing pages. So, clarity of message, clear call to actions and use of personalisation, are the places a savvy marketer should start.

In addition, a clever tactic to use is to strip out the main website navigation from the landing page to discourage 'click leakage', where users are tempted to explore elsewhere in the site. By doing this we create a laser-focus on what we want our visitor to see and do - our core message and our 'must click' call to action.

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Force24 allows you to create tailored landing pages within the platform and publish them to your website, in just a few minutes.

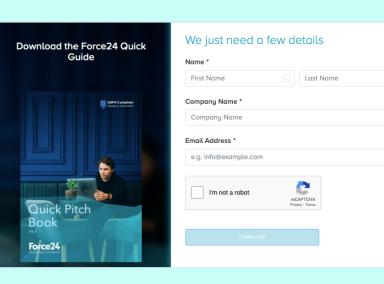
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Force24 allows you to create tailored landing pages within the platform and publish them to your website, in just a few minutes. And as our landing page builder is connected to your contact data in Force24, we can personalise landing pages with any field we have data for, including name, location etc.

We can even utilise the same snippet and Genius Block approach we use for building emails, allowing you to tailor different content to different users, on the same landing page.

All of this improves the user journey and increases our chances of more users converting.

One last thing, while we're speaking of converting users - ensure that the action you're asking an individual to take has commercial benefit for you. In a B2B and/or non-commerce environment, this



comes down to generating a lead. In this instance you should consider using gated content, where a user is required to enter details in order to get what they want - a document, a guide, a free template etc. This creates a win-win situation where the user received the content they're looking for, and we get their details so we can market to them in the future.

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## How to structure an email sequence

We often say that in order to drive engagement and get your message across, you need to say something 6 times. Think about it - how many times in your life have you seen brand emails drop into your email inbox and just deleted them without barely even entertaining the subject line? Quite a few I'd imagine.

So, the first thing you should understand when structuring your email sequence is your audience. Define your audience first and foremost. Think about who you're targeting, how often they're going to be checking their emails and at what times? This first critical decision should help to lay the foundations for your email sequence.



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Next, establish a set of goals. What do you want to achieve from this campaign? Maybe set some benchmark key performance indicators (KPIs) that you can look back on to determine, 'yes this campaign performed well, let's repeat it' or 'no, this was a waste of time, but we learnt a lot'. Having a set of goals established before you embark on structuring your email sequence is paramount. Keep these goals at the front of your mind as you work on your emails and make sure you're constantly asking yourself questions like 'is this going to help my goals?'. This will help you remain on track and prevent you wasting time on activities that won't contribute to your ROI. In fact, establishing and

checking-in on goals across your whole marketing strategy (and life) will make you a more productive and effective marketer. There's no point in doing anything if you don't know why you're doing it!

"There's no point in doing anything if you don't know why you're doing it!"

OK, so we've defined the audience and established our goals - now what? Segment and group.

Categorise your audience so that you can talk to them as collectives. Maybe you want to split them into males and females and use different languages? Go for it.

The next step is the most important. Create some great content! You can have the most perfectly structured email sequence in the world but if the content is poor it's not going to resonate - there is more on this section earlier in the guide, but we just thought it was worth highlighting here.



You can have the most perfectly structured email sequence in the world but if the content is poor it's not going to resonate.



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OK, audience defined, grouped and segmented, goals established, and now we have our content created too - all the hard work is done! Right? Well, not quite - now it's time to piece it all together and build the automated journey. The beauty of this part is that, with the Force24 platform, if you've created all your emails, building the journey should take no more than 10-15 minutes after just a few minutes training! Imagine being able to build a journey that runs for 6 weeks in just 15 minutes - this is a genuine possibility with the Force24 platform!

"building the journey should take no more than 10-15 minutes after just a few minutes training"

There are, of course, more elements to journey building such as timing and orchestration of additional channels. But outside of that, you're pretty much ready to go.

We've talked a bit about this before in our 'How to build a high performing integrated campaign' guide if you'd like to read about it in a bit more detail - just look for the 'social proof' section. You can download it here.

# What about deliverability?

Every email sent - even personal ones - is being scored for engagement by very clever technology, owned and managed by some of the biggest tech brands in the world, such as Google and Microsoft. To help you understand what's happening technically when you send an email, we have outlined some of the steps below.

Getting emails seen in people's inboxes is a tricky concept, and every single marketer has a responsibility to ensure their messages are landing correctly and timely. But how do they do that? These days, spam filters are less interested in the content of the email - although don't be fooled, this must still be perfect. Instead, they're interested in how recipients are engaging with emails.

So, what do we mean by this? Well, if you're sending emails to 100 people and only 2 of them actually open your email, you will have a 2% open rate. This is not good, and mail servers like Microsoft, Google, Yahoo and BT will remember it too. Therefore, the next time you send an email, they'll recall that not many people liked it and will therefore be more aggressive in their spam marking.

Now let's assume, instead of sending to 100 people you send to only 10 - if still only 2 of them opened, the difference now is that you have a 20% open rate. This is good and the mail servers will reward you for this.

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07 What about deliverability? 07 What about deliverability?

Remember, email is a free service that these mail servers provide to their customers. And marketers sending irrelevant emails into such servers are actually deemed a bit of a nuisance! So, by removing the 90 people that didn't open emails previously, the mail servers will effectively say, 'thank you, great targeting'.

Let's not forget compelling content though. Engaging words providing value towards a worthwhile subject matter is still of paramount importance. Technology alone cannot get your message into the inbox. So, the problem is which 90 contacts do you eradicate? Well, this is where marketing automation comes into play. Marketing automation can help you understand the engagement of everybody you're sending emails to, when they open them, when they click, which pages they then subsequently go on to look at on the website and even what lead score they achieved. If you would like to know more about Marketing Automation, why not download our <u>Ultimate Guide to</u> Automation?

Download now! **Ultimate Guide to** Automation



Let's also think like a computer for a moment and consider how your emails will look from a receiving mail server's point of view. Picture sitting in a mailroom at Microsoft - overworked and underpaid - and all of a sudden you receive 20,000 letters to distribute from a company sending a commercial offer scored for that your recipients didn't ask for. We can imagine what expletives would be running through your head! That's what it's like for the receiving mail server.

"Every email sent - even personal ones - is being engagement"

To compound this problem, don't forget the majority of the email service provision market is owned by 3-4 main players.

So, each time you send a commercial email there's a chance it will be received by the same underpaid mailroom worker metaphorically speaking (they're actually supercomputers running highly advanced AI, but you get the point)! Understanding this should give you the ability to see how they differentiate large volume commercial emails from the small volume individual personal emails.

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## How do we measure success?

For years email has been measured using traditional vanity metrics such as open rates and click through rates. However, developments in link tracking, identification of visitors and eCommerce performance reporting, mean that we can now dive much deeper into how our email campaigns are performing.

Firstly, it's essential to understand the objective of our campaign - what we are trying to achieve. For example:

- Reach and awareness
- Data capture (form completions)
- Commercial website visits
- Enquiries

- Sales
- Cross/up sell opportunities
- Competition entries
- Blog content consumption

### The list goes on...

By articulating what we are trying to achieve from our campaign, we can uncover and report on the relevant metrics that really matter. These metrics are known as KPIs and we can use them to benchmark previous/current performance versus what our new campaign delivers.



By articulating what we are trying to achieve from our campaign, we can uncover and report on the relevant metrics that really matter.



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If we are running a commercial campaign, designed to drive direct sales and/or enquiries, for example, we should use commercial metrics such as form completions, conversion rates and revenue. If we are running a softer brand or content campaign, then we would instead focus on engagement metrics such as blog post views and post-click behaviour (bounce rate etc).

Open rate and click through rate continue to be valid metrics, however they are nothing more than vanity measures that tell us how trusted we are by the recipients and how good our email content is. This intel doesn't lead to business growth or that all-important campaign ROI.

Remember, the email itself is simply a driver of action, and it's that action that we need to measure. So, drill down into what action the recipient took. Was it the action we were encouraging? Was there a commercial benefit for us from that action?

Force24 introduces even deeper performance understanding by giving a tangible score to recipients - a lead score. This score is driven by how recipients engage with email campaigns and your website, and how likely they are to convert. Force24 customers find this massively useful for informing campaign segmentation and sales performance, both at individual and average levels.



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## How can Force24 help?

Force24 is the fastest growing, UK-based marketing automation platform. We believe that marketers should be disconnected from the daily grind and have more time to 'think big' and plan an overarching strategy. If it's taking you more than 5 minutes to build an email or 15 minutes to build a full end-to-end multichannel journey, you should really think about your work stream and where you need some more

automated processes.

The entire content of this guide is made possible by the extreme power and intuitive nature of the Force24 platform. Everything from our email and microsite builder, right through to our web



tracking and analytics reporting, is built with one sole focus in mind - making you a more effective marketer.

If this sounds like something you want to see more of, just visit our website and get yourself booked in for a free, no-obligation, personalised web demo. Our web demos are completely tailored to your needs and scheduled for a time that fits you! What's more - 1 in 4 people who see the platform in action, go on to buy it.

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We believe that marketers should be disconnected from the daily grind and have more time to 'think big' and plan an overarching strategy.



### Get in touch

If you want to talk about your marketing

call us 0845 272 5990

or email info@force24.co.uk

