

Creating A Successful Email Marketing Campaign

By Leyla Hussein • 21 April 2023



I watched a marketing manager [hit send on a campaign](#) once, five thousand recipients in a single click, and then sit very still for about thirty seconds, as if she had just posted a letter she could not get back. She had, in a sense. Email is like that. It is cheap, it is fast, it reaches exactly the people you choose, and for all those reasons it is one of the best tools in marketing. It is also very easy to do badly, and a poor one lands in five thousand inboxes just as quickly as a good one. The difference is almost entirely in the preparation.

A campaign that works is not luck and it is not clever wording alone. It is a handful of things done properly, every time. Here is what actually separates the emails people open from the ones they delete on sight.

Know the goal and the audience

Before a single word is written, be clear about what the email is for and who it is going to. The goal should be specific and measurable, not “raise awareness” but something you could actually check afterwards. And you should know who is receiving it: what they care about, what keeps them up at night, why they would give you thirty seconds. An email written for everyone speaks to no one.

Earn the open with the subject line

The subject line is the whole gate. It is the first and sometimes the only thing a subscriber sees, and it decides everything that follows. Keep it short, make it genuinely worth opening, and steer well clear of the spammy language that gets you filtered before a human ever reads it. A little personalisation here goes a long way.

Segment the list

Sending the same message to your entire list is the most common mistake there is. Break it up instead, by behaviour, by interest, by what people have bought or looked at before. A smaller, well-chosen group that receives something relevant will out-perform a mass send every time, in opens, in clicks and in the goodwill you keep rather than burn.

Make it personal, properly

Personalisation is more than dropping a first name into the greeting. It is tailoring the actual content to what a particular reader cares about, using what you already know about them. Done well, the reader feels understood. Done as a token gesture, it is worse than nothing, because everyone can spot a mail-merge.

Ask for one clear thing

Every email should want the reader to do something, and it should ask for exactly one thing, plainly. A single, clear call to action beats three competing ones, which only leave the reader unsure what you actually wanted and therefore doing nothing at all.

Build it for a phone

A large share of email is opened on a phone, so a message that only looks right on a desktop is already losing. Use a responsive design, go easy on the images, and keep the copy tight. If it is a chore to read on a small screen, it will not be read.

Test, then measure

Finally, treat every campaign as something to learn from. Test subject lines, calls to action and copy against each other, and then look honestly at the numbers, the opens, the clicks, the conversions, to see what actually worked rather than what you hoped would. Each campaign should make the next one better.

The marketing manager who sat so still after hitting send need not have worried, because she had done the work first. Getting an email campaign right is a mix of good practice, a little creativity and a willingness to look at the data. Get the preparation right and the send button stops being frightening. It becomes the easy part.

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