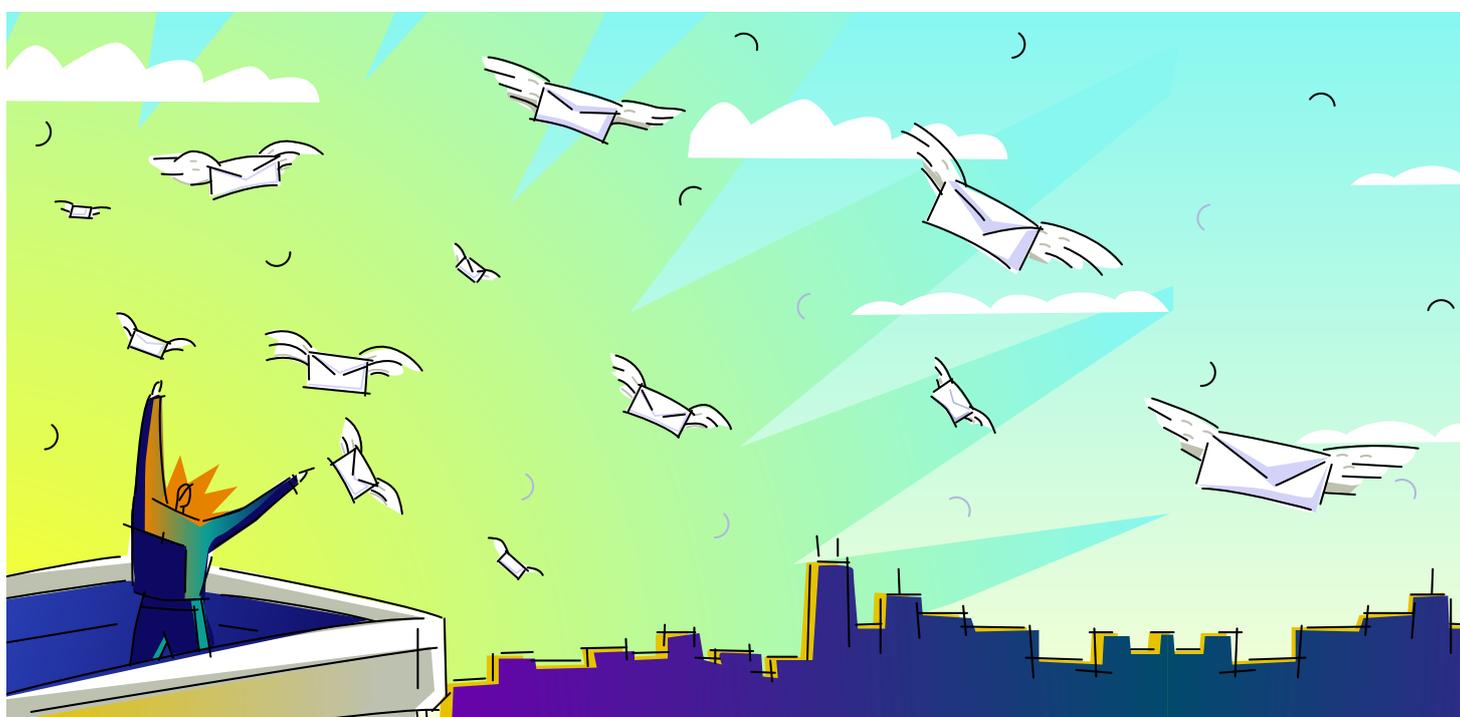


# 10 Killer Tactics for Email Marketing



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email marketing services

# 10 Killer Tactics for Email Marketing Strategies

Email remains the killer marketing app in 2011, it's as prevalent and important as search and conversion. It starts conversations, drives engagement and stimulates high quality experiences. It's great value for money and is totally measurable; it also integrates well with other sales and marketing processes. Here are 10 of the most important things to be doing in your email marketing strategy in 2011...



## Turn your messages into conversations

- Reflect the interests of the reader and your relationship with them. Think about how the relationship would have started and developed from there. You can use simple segmentation to create email lists which encompass certain behaviours, for example send an email to everyone who's bought something in the last two years and has opened or clicked an email you've sent in the last 6 months. You can then reasonably say that you've engaged with the person and should be able to treat them in a more friendly way without having to go over old ground, you can assume they have some knowledge of your brand and products and cut to the chase with your proposition or offer.
- Use abbreviated syntax, for example use apostrophes to shorten words; it makes text appear more conversational and makes it quicker to read. Read it back to yourself out loud and note the clunks, ensure it comes across as spoken rather than copy written.



## Just aim for a click

- The job of an email is to get a click, all the hard work should be done on the landing or product page. Too much time is spent in emails trying to explain the details of the proposition when what you need to focus on is getting the recipient moving forwards into your web site. The email is all about capturing the attention of the reader and intriguing them enough to click through, this does not mean that it has to be cryptic or heavily persuasive, in most cases it means being crystal clear about what you're offering.
- Think of the email as the first step in a thought path made up of several small decisions. Using the analogy of dating, you need to make friends and hold hands before you go in for the kiss.
- On that basis you must also craft the web pages where the person goes to from the email, they are just as important as the email itself, use the following watchwords to ensure that the path delivers:
  - Value Proposition (one clear premise)
  - Appeal (visual / monetary)
  - Exclusivity
  - Credibility (testimonials / references / awards)
  - Clarity



## Encourage list attrition

- Don't compromise your message for fear of upsetting people, make your tone of voice honest and direct and write with integrity and conviction. As long as you believe in what you're saying and the audience is willing to accept your emails you should get success. Some people may not open every email you send, the timing is not always right for every individual but many people will leave the email in their inbox for later or file it away. They will only unsubscribe if your relationship has become irrelevant or run its course, neither scenario is negative.
- Give people ample opportunity to profile themselves out of your list through an unsubscribe function or by opting for other subscription options. If you don't they may well just choose to mark your mail as spam which is never a good thing. If you have time and the inclination you can design the unsubscribe thought path to include a bit of humour, or at the very least keep it light, conversational and positive.
- You can also use segmentation to manage your own list attrition, if recipients don't open your emails three times in a row segment them off the main list, you can always send a reactivation email later. And always remember, if you pay per recipient a smaller list saves you money.



## Integrate email with everything you do

- Generating content is still the cornerstone of all marketing and if you go to the effort of creating quality content then you must make sure you leverage it across all your channels. Every email story, offer and proposition should be featured on your blog posted to Facebook, tweeted etc etc. And of course it works both ways, if you see content being posted to your facebook page which is relevant to the audience make sure you include it in your next email.
- You also need to make sure that people can sign up to your emails via Facebook and all the other places that your content is featured. It's worth having a separate list for people who sign up via different channels so you can use it in your segmentation strategy.



## Checking and testing are still vital

- If you ever become blasé about the email marketing process you've lost the right to interrupt your audience, it's an important craft that needs high levels of concentration and attention to detail every time you send. As well as being the most measurable forms of marketing it's also one of the most testable forms and most service providers have a simple method of enabling simple tests to be undertaken.
- It's also vital that you don't assume that generic "best practice" applies to everything you do; you must test each principal for yourself. Your emails, brand, offers and audience are all unique and when combined with timing and circumstance you have an organic mix of factors which may not fit into fixed categories. Never guess the outcomes of your actions, use segmentation to test different approaches and create your own rules and best practices.



## Send more email

- Reported stats show that there's no real down side to sending relevant emails to the right people, in fact in some cases sending more emails rather than less can be seen to increase sales and interactions. Most recipients are much more savvy about their inboxes with filters and junk mail folders doing some of the work for them so if they are staying subscribed it's reasonable to assume that they are happy to keep receiving email from you. As long as you stay focussed on creating relevant and quality content there's no reason not to increase the amount of email you send.
- Of course to do this is primarily a resource issue so it's good to look at automating as much of your email communication processes as possible. If you have a lot of process based or housekeeping emails make sure that they are sent via triggers rather than having to be done manually.
- When you do increase the amount of email you send you must always remember to be consistent with your structural components like the from address, reply address, unsubscribe process and layout. And adopt the right tone of voice at all times, especially in automated emails.



## Stick to the knitting

- An email marketing strategy has 5 key components:
  - List building and maintenance
  - Creative and content
  - Segmentation and personalisation
  - Testing
  - Reporting and analysis
- Using these fundamental building blocks will allow you to build a long term strategy for your business. If you find yourself fumbling for answers or wondering where to go next in your marketing go through these five areas and ensure you're doing the best that you can in each one. If you're looking to change gear and upscale what you do it's good to approach changes to your overall strategy one piece at a time. For example if you want to adopt a more vigorous segmentation strategy don't change the way you report on your key performance indicators at the same time as you may not get a clear view of what's working or not working. If you want to change the visual style of the email don't increase the amount of personalisation at the same time. Having clarity in the way you approach your strategy is absolutely vital.



## Take a lifecycle approach

You shouldn't just stop sending email to someone based on their inactivity, see the lifetime of a subscriber as a journey and use segmentation to manage your communications with them. Here's a basic structure for a lifecycle approach:

- Nursery program for newbies – take care to focus on their initial needs as a subscriber
- Activation program – turn readers into customers through careful product placement or specific offers
- Data enrichment – add additional fields to your data as you go
- Retention program – regular, relevant, engaging content and offers to keep people interested
- Segmentation - as you find out things about the recipients preferences and behaviours re-classify them
- Data Cleansing – review all your reports to ensure that you keep your lists full of active subscribers
- Reactivation – as people drop out of opening or clicking try and awaken their interest with a reactivation offer



## You're in a relationship...

- Permission is not an option, it's absolutely the cornerstone of everything you do in email marketing, there are degrees of permission which can be developed as people stay involved with your business but if they opt out make sure you respect that. If you see levels of unsubscribes or spam complaints rise you must take it very, very seriously.
- Build trust and respect privacy, trust enables you to develop goodwill with your subscriber and that goodwill can go a long way in helping you create great customer relations. But don't overstep the mark by over using personalisation fields or being too inquisitive about people's personal details. Only capture the data you need to enable a constructive relationship with the recipient at any moment in their lifecycle.
- Let subscribers manage the relationship, the bottom line is that the most successful email communication programs are the ones where the subscriber is in charge of what data you hold, what level of permission you have to contact them and how often. If you can give them the ability to change this as you go you will be fulfilling your role as a responsible marketer and you will reap the rewards for that.



## What you can measure...

It's an oldy but a goody, set up key performance indicators when you initiate your email marketing strategy and monitor them constantly, the main ones to focus on are:

- Open rate / Click-through rate / Click to open rate (# of unique clicks/# of unique opens)
- Bounce rate / Delivery rate (emails sent - bounces) / Unsubscribe rate / Referral rate ("send-to-a-friend")
- Number of spam complaints / Net subscribers (# subscribers + new subscribers) - (bounces + unsubscribes)
- Subscriber retention (# subscribers - bounces - unsubscribes/# subscribers)

## So that's our 10 killer tactics for email marketing in 2011...



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