You may have heard the phrase "email is dead" — customers have so many other digital distractions that many marketers presume they don't pay attention to emails anymore. But this actually couldn't be further from the truth.

To date, there are 3.9 billion daily email users, and that number is anticipated to reach 4.3 billion by 2023. Email has a proven effect on customer behavior: according to a study by SalesCycle, 59% of respondents said that marketing emails influence their purchasing decisions. In fact, Experian found that transactional emails have 8 times more opens and clicks and can generate 6 times more revenue than any other type of email.

Marketers know that email marketing is here to stay. The US spent over $350 million on email advertising last year, and 59% of marketers cite email as their biggest source of ROI. So how do you make email marketing work for you? We've identified 18 different methods you can use to boost the effectiveness of your email marketing campaigns.

1. Test Your Emails and Adjust Accordingly

It's difficult to predict how your email campaigns will perform without doing any testing. First, test for spelling mistakes, broken links, or missing data. Many email marketing tools have built-in features that automatically test hyperlinks and buttons. Consider sending test emails to yourself as well. Sometimes an email looks great when you draft it, but it looks drastically different when it ends up in an inbox. Try using a marketing software that shows you what your email will look like on different devices and email services.

Outside of appearance, your email needs to have appropriate, attention-grabbing messaging — this requires understanding your audience. What are they expecting to learn or receive from you? Is what you're saying interesting to them? If you aren't sure what your customers will respond to, try conducting an A/B test. In this test, campaign A should be a standard email, and campaign B should be a slight variation of campaign A that might better spur a reader to take action. After you send both campaigns, measure the open and conversion rates of each. Continue running A/B tests to refine your email marketing content.

2. Identify and Track KPIs

Figuring out what key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure — and how to measure them — is critical to email marketing success. Open rate is the most obvious indicator of campaign health. If customers aren't opening your emails, there could be an issue with the email itself, or the copy may not be engaging enough.

But while open rate is easy to measure, it shouldn't be the only indicator you pay attention to. Open rates are often inaccurate, since many email users have image blocking enabled and therefore aren't counted. In addition, open rates aren't necessarily reflective of future customer behavior.

Click-through rate is a more reliable representation of how customers are responding to your campaigns. Simply add up the number of unique clicks and divide by the number of emails sent. This KPI represents the percentage of customers who clicked on one or more links in your email. Click-through rates are a quick way to measure the results of an A/B test and generally check how consumers are engaging with your content.

But an even more valuable metric is conversion rate. Conversion rates tell you the percentage of email recipients who followed through on a call to action and can show you which campaigns contain the most convincing messaging. This is a little trickier to measure, but some email marketing solutions help you create unique tracking URLs for email links so you can distinguish which actions came from each campaign.

You can also track KPIs like email forwarding rates and email list growth to see which emails are spurring prospects to pass along information to their friends and family.

3. Establish the Right Cadence

Timing is huge when it comes to email marketing. Establishing the right order and cadence of your campaigns can make a big difference in the way people respond to your emails. Map out your customer's journey and make sure that your content matches their state of mind. If they've only just heard of your company, it probably isn't the right time to share tips on how to use your product because they aren't familiar with it yet. Start by acquainting recipients with your business and what it offers, and then gradually ramp up their knowledge and interest.

It usually takes a few tries to get someone interested in your product or service, so don't be afraid to be persistent. Send emails on a regular basis so that people become accustomed to when they will receive your emails and are more likely to engage with your content. But remember, there's a fine line between persistence and pushiness, and the latter can end up driving away prospective customers.

A good way to determine a baseline cadence is to sign up for email lists of other businesses that are similar to yours. That will give you a good idea of what a "normal" frequency might be, and you can experiment from there.

4. Never Spam Your Contacts

Your priority as an email marketer is to get users to engage with your content, but the worst thing you can do is to saturate your audience with unwanted content. Spamming your mailing list like this won't drive leads to a call to action, and it will probably increase your bounce and unsubscribe rates. Moreover, consumers are protected by spam legislation, so you must be extremely careful with the way you contact your list.

Make sure your subject lines match your brand and give consumers an honest idea of what they will get out of your emails. Many email providers have spam filters that automatically sift out emails with subject lines containing gimmicky phrases, odd capitalization, and exclamation points.

You should also ensure that all of your emails are coming from a legitimate email address. CAN-SPAM, the law that serves as a guideline for all email marketers in the US, states that companies should not use a "no reply" email address as your campaign sender since it hinders consumers from opting out or replying. Plus, prospects are more likely to open and respond to emails if they appear to be written by a real person.

5. Clean Your Email List

You should always provide an option for people to unsubscribe from your list, but many people will not actually unsubscribe if they aren't interested, and instead will just delete your emails without even opening them. Keeping these people on your email list is a detriment to your open rate, because it will cause your campaigns to seem less successful than they actually are. You can clean your email lists by setting up reports that show the contacts who haven't opened your emails or clicked on any links in your emails over the past month, and then periodically remove these people from your list.

6. Build Your List; Don't Buy One

A list that you organically build and maintain yourself will consist of more people who are likely to act on your emails. You want a list full of contacts who are going to engage with your content, not random names that may have little interest in your offerings. Plus, it keeps you safer from legal threats — the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requires European recipients to consent to receiving emails, and oftentimes

those on purchasable lists haven't given consent, which puts you at risk.

7. Personalize, Personalize, Personalize

If your emails aren't targeting individual customers, they simply won't get opened. Statista found that 90% of consumers find personalized content very or somewhat appealing. Likewise, Accenture discovered that 91% of consumers are more likely to purchase from businesses that provide individualized recommendations and offers.

There is no easier way to get your emails deleted than by starting your email with something like "To Whom It May Concern." If you know the person's name, add it to the opening line. If you know a customer's company name, add that to the header as well. To make your emails feel even more familiar, add a real name in the "From" field. People are more likely to open emails from a real person, like an account manager.

Be sure you aren't blasting email lists with impersonal and irrelevant content. Personalize emails to your prospects down to the subject line. Test out different content and messaging to confirm that your emails are resonating with your target audience. Additionally, make sure the information you are sending is timely and makes sense given where the recipient is in their customer journey.

8. Automate Your Email Marketing Campaigns

With automation, email marketers can easily send individualized emails when subscribers or potential subscribers exhibit certain behaviors. These may include abandoning shopping carts, referring new customers, or signing up for your list. Sending emails based on events or time can be useful as well. An anniversary or birthday email can be a great way to put your brand in front of subscribers.

Although you might think automation is costly, it can save you time and effort in the long run. A survey conducted by Smartsheet found that 69% of respondents said automation helped reduce wasted time and 72% said that they would use the time they saved to focus on higher-value work. Automatically delivering more timely, personalized emails is likely to increase customer retention rates and increase your reach.

9. Offer Incentives and Rewards to Loyal Subscribers

A loyalty program is a great way to retain customers. After you've established a rapport with your subscribers, include special incentives in your subject lines. Offering "50% off your next purchase if you spend $100 today" or "free shipping on orders of $40 or more" can increase your open and click-through rates.

Remember to customize discounts or freebies you send to loyal customers. For example, if you already know they bought a laptop, you might give them a discount for a case, a mouse, or other accessories that would complement their previous purchase. Sending promotions that don't make sense just confuses customers and makes them feel less appreciated.

10. Practice Segmentation

The easiest way to do email marketing is to craft one message and send the same thing to every person on your list. But this is not the most effective way to do email marketing. Segmenting your audience can help you tailor your messages and content to encourage customers to follow through on your call to action.

Luckily, email marketing platforms usually come with segmentation included, allowing you to sort and filter your list by industry, role, location, past purchases, and even where they signed up for your list. Change up your messaging to fit the goals of each of those groups. For example, if your email is promoting meetups in various locations, use an image of the city closest to where the subscriber lives.

11. Use Drip Campaigns

Incorporate drip campaigns to deliver messages in a sequence designed to get a reader closer and closer to making a purchase. Begin by setting up a drip campaign for customers who signed up for a free piece of content or a demo. Then gradually send them more useful content to keep your products top of mind. This style of campaign can be highly effective and generate significant revenue over time.

12. Make Subscription Easy

While you must make unsubscribing from your list easy for consumers, you should make it easy to sign up for your list as well. Insert a subscribe button and a CTA that encourages people to sign up at the end of your emails.

Although this may seem silly given that the person receiving the email will already be on your list, the subscriber could decide to forward your email onto a friend or coworker. That friend or coworker could see the subscribe button at the bottom, and voila, you have another person added to your list. Make the subscribe button easy to see and in line with your content.

13. Write Engaging Subject Lines

Subject lines are one of the first things a consumer sees when they receive your email, so they need to be compelling and create a sense of urgency. Deals, conventions, or even soft product launches can be outstanding ways to foster excitement and cause subscribers to open and read your emails. Remember to keep your subject lines relatively short. They should be between 30 and 50 characters to account for screen sizes that tend to truncate longer text.

14. Align Your Emails and Landing Pages

The look and feel of your emails should match corresponding landing pages. Most subscribers are excited to open emails from you, particularly those announcing new products or sales, so make sure your landing pages carry that same energy. Be consistent with your subject lines, design, content, and copy to avoid confusing your readers. Moving from email to landing page to checkout should be a seamless transition.

Test out this flow to verify that your readers can get to where they need to go easily. Keep track of which email campaigns and landing pages generate the most clicks and conversions as well. And try to use the messaging appropriate for each segment of your audience.

15. Practice Consistent Branding and Design

Branding and design is important even outside of landing pages. People who have subscribed to your list are looking for something familiar, and departing from your regular programming can be jarring. Keeping a uniformity to your emails isn't just for aesthetic purposes — many readers are just skimming, so a consistent look helps them validate that the email is coming from a reputable brand that they've seen or interacted with before.

16. Produce Effective Copy

Engaging copy can mean the difference between a winning email campaign and a failure. As mentioned previously, start with an attention-getting, relevant subject line. After you've crafted a great subject line and preview text, write your copy in a way that's easy to absorb. Bullet points and short paragraphs can help ensure you don't go beyond one main idea per section.

The tone of your copy depends on your audience. B2B companies might sound more professional, whereas B2C emails may have a more conversational or even humorous vibe.

Use scarcity and urgency to your advantage as well. Consumers never want to feel like they are missing out on anything, so pique their curiosity with time-boxed discounts or sneak peeks. Testimonials, reviews, or other social proof can also make subscribers more inclined to respond to your CTA.

17. Ensure a Smooth Mobile Experience

Optimizing emails for mobile devices is essential. Over 80% of subscribers report that they will delete an email if it doesn't look good on their mobile device. Big fonts (at least 14 point) make copy much more legible on a phone, tablet, and desktop. You should also keep your emails to a single column. Multiple columns may look great on a laptop, but are very difficult to consume on a smaller screen. Prominently display your CTA buttons and make sure they respond to touch as well. Finally, avoid making people scroll by condensing your content to only the most pertinent pieces of information, links, and images.

18. Make Your CTAs Visible and Compelling

This may seem obvious, but you must make it crystal clear to your readers what you want them to do after they open your email. Even the catchiest emails can't spur conversions if users are scratching their heads trying to determine what they should do next. This becomes an issue when email marketers stuff too many themes into one email. Use words and images to drive readers to one action. Large buttons or links at the bottom of your email also make your CTA easy to find and click.

Unlock the Efficiency of Automated Email Marketing

At this point, you might be wondering how you could possibly integrate all of these tips into your marketing strategy. The trick is to use a tool to help you automate your email marketing campaigns.

Instead of compiling email lists and scheduling messages manually, email automation software allows you to send your emails based on triggers or a particular schedule, and then adjust according to data that you receive as you test out various campaigns. Not only can automation save you time, it can dramatically impact your bottom line — automated campaigns account for 21% of email marketing revenue.

Marketo Engage's features can help you realize these benefits. Marketo Engage helps marketers track and interact with customers at every stage of their journey, organically creating more personalized experiences and optimizing your email marketing strategy over time.

Discover what Marketo Engage can do for your email marketing team by taking an interactive tour today.