Creating High Performing Emails: How To Do It Better (+Examples)

In this article, I will take a look at how to create high performing emails. I will also be looking at:

The next principle we will discuss is personalization and the impact it has on running an effective email strategy. By personalizing your emails you give the user a unique experience, which will help drive opens, clicks and conversions. Here is an example of an email from Amazon, tailored specifically to the user:

A. Recommendation for the customer: the email clearly states "We have a recommendation for you" letting the user know that this email is tailored to their interests

B. Addresses the customer by name: using a customers' first name makes the email seem more personal

C. Display a product based on the customers viewing history: By using data on customers viewing history you can compose an email the user will immediately recognize and increase the chance of a conversion

It is important to be strategic about the timing of your email to ensure it delivers the right message at the right time in order to drive open rates. For the majority of email campaigns, one single send time will not suit all recipients. Here are some tips for improving the timing of your email send:

- Test your audience: there is no specific day and time that will suit all organizations. Utilize A/B testing to find the optimal send time for your audience.
- Optimal days: from the majority of studies Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday are the best days to send email campaigns but as mentioned

above, always test this with your audience.
- Optimal send times: the best sends times in a day include 10 a.m., 8 p.m.-midnight, 2 p.m, and 6 a.m.

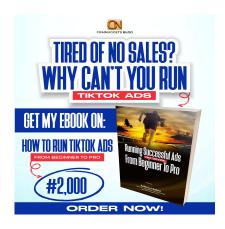**Note: make sure to take into account customers in different time zones.**

Building an email list is one thing, keeping those subscribers interested through a strong email engagement strategy is another. Here are some actions that can be taken to ensure that your emails draw your readers and recipients in and keep them engaged:

- Start your email communications off on the right foot by welcoming all new subscribers.
- Tell your subscribers how often you will be emailing them. This will set expectations early for the recipients and they will become familiar with how often you email them.
- Set expectations about what your emails are focused on. Let your subscribers know what types of emails they will be receiving and allow them to set preferences for what emails they would prefer to receive.
- Simplify your email messaging. By reducing the amount of different CTAs and text in your email, you can focus the subscribers' attention and concentrate on a single goal.
- Create targeted segments around individual experiences. As we saw in segmentation, there are many ways to group users and by doing so you will see better results.
- Always test your audience. The best way to see what works for your subscriber is to continuously test and optimize your emails accordingly.

After every email campaign, it's important to perform data-driven analysis and apply the learnings to optimize future campaigns. By applying the learnings of

past campaigns you can increase the opens, clicks and conversions from your emails and thus drive business growth.

We will take a look at email analytics in my next article.

To implement an efficient email strategy you will need the help of a software program. That's where Email Service Providers come in. An email service provider, or ESP, operates and maintains the software and hardware for delivering bulk email. They provide a platform for managing and segmenting your contact lists, building email templates, and sending and tracking your campaigns on a large scale.

An ESP should make the process of sending emails and managing your contact database easier. Some of the features an ESP provides include:

- **Contact database:** this is where the subscribers' email address and all related information is stored, making it easy to add, edit, and remove contacts
- **Segmentation:** because the contact database stores all the information about your contacts, the ESP can use this data to segment users
- **Personalization:** such as adding the users the first name of each email or displaying certain content based on their preference

- **Automation:** allowing repetitive tasks, like sending a welcome email to every new subscriber, to be automated and sent automatically
- **Tracking behaviour:** providing insights to who opened and clicked the email
- **Unsubscribe management:** manage users who want to opt-out from receiving your emails
- **Email and landing page creation:** drag and drop builders allow you to quickly create and edit your emails and landing pages

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Effective ESPs enable emails to be tailored to their recipients, facilitating a unique experience.
This unique experience is supported by three different considerations:

#1 Merge fields
Placeholders, such as an email address and greeting, where information is populated from the contact database. For example, using the customer's first name to personalize an email. As you can see in the email on the slide, it is addressed personally to a student called Vanessa.

#2 Dynamic content
It allows the content in an email to dynamically change based on data. For instance, if a user's currency is Euro the email will display a '€' symbol but if it is dollars it will display a '$' symbol. We can see this dynamic content in the example shown above. The email pulls personal data about Vanessa, the recipient, a final year student at Yale. Adding specific and relevant information about the recipient gives a personalized touch to the email and builds a relationship with subscribers.

#3 Accurate targeting

This has to do with scheduling an email campaign at a relevant time for each user, based on their country and time zone. Here the accurate targeting can be seen in how Vanessa, a student from Yale was targeted in the Summer before going back to college in Autumn.

Effective ESPs have the ability to send automated emails based on user activity, personalization, segmentation, triggered emails and scheduled emails. Marketing automation helps you to stay connected to your customers every step of the way and reduces repetitive tasks such as abandoned cart notifications, product recommendations and retargeting.
The steps shown in the above example are as follows:
1. The user is sent an email about an upcoming sale.
2. They are then placed in a 3 day wait period.

3. After that time expires, the ESP checks to see if the user has made a purchase. If they didn't they are automatically sent another email about the sale letting them know it's about to end. This adds a sense of urgency.

4. The user is now aware the sale is about to end and is encouraged to make a purchase.
As you can see the ESP reduces the amount of manual work required to perform such a campaign. To do the same campaign without ESPs automation would

require a lot more work as you would have to check all users in the campaign and see if they made a purchase, then only send the second email to those who have not.

Taking a look at the different ESPs available, you may recognize a few of the more household names such as Gmail, Yahoo and Outlook. But what separates these providers from the rest? Which ESPs are best to use for day to day communication and organization, and which ones are more suitable for creating email marketing campaigns?

We will now take a look at the features of each email service provider and identify the ones that will enable you to best manage your contact lists, create and design email campaigns, test and optimize your email campaigns and automate your emails.

First, let's take a look at the ESPs you may be more familiar with:

Gmail: One of the most popular email service providers with over 1.2 billion people using it for personal and business communications. Its many features include contact list importing and exporting, powerful spam filters, filters based on different types of email (promotional, personal and social), email forwarding and an undo send feature. It integrates cleanly with popular productivity tools including Google Calendar, Google Docs and Google Sheets. It is perfect for internal and external business communication, but may not offer you everything you need to create, design, deliver, automate, test and optimize your email marketing campaigns.

Outlook: Microsoft's Outlook.com email provider is a strong option and has over 400 million users. Outlook offers some more advanced features than Gmail in the way that it reduces email clutter. It finds emails that are most likely low priority and separates them from your inbox. It has the ability to undelete or recover an email after you've accidentally discarded a message.

The outlook was originally designed for office use, and it is still the perfect choice for that application, however, this does not signify that it will be a suitable ESP for email campaigning. There are two main reasons why Outlook may not be the best choice for sending your email campaigns, the lack of bulk mail support and the risk of being blacklisted. Looking at the risk of being blacklisted first, Outlook provides the ability to report any email message they get as spam, sometimes too easily.

This feature is useful for office workers, but it poses a real risk for email marketers. If your emails have been reported as spam, this can result in your entire domain being blacklisted. Secondly, Outlook was **never** designed for sending bulk emails, so it lacks the features that report on how recipients engage with emails, making it difficult for a marketer to gauge the effectiveness of their campaigns.

Yahoo! Mail: Is one of the earliest Internet companies (dating back to 1994) and is now owned by Verizon. Like Outlook and Gmail, Yahoo! Mail is an email

service provider for personal communication use. Its main features include auto-deletion of trash messages after 90 days, huge storage capacity (1 TB), a built-in web search tool, calendar and notepad, spam filters and SSL encryption. Similar to Outlook and Gmail, it does not offer the features an email marketer would need for sending effective email campaigns.

Zoho mail: This email service provider has been described as a complimentary email client for small businesses. Its free license allows for 25 users to register under one account, however, each user is limited to 5 GB of storage. It includes antivirus protection and spam filtering and integrates with other Zoho productivity tools.

An added bonus to Zoho Mail is that it does not run advertisements. As mentioned, if you are a small business already using Zoho productivity software, Zoho Mail may be perfect for you, but may not be the most suitable for creating large email campaigns.

We have talked about four email service providers that offer a reliable means for personal and business communication, but are lacking somewhat in the areas of email copy design, testing, optimizing and delivery. Now we will take a look at ESPs that provide the advanced features we want in order to create effective email campaigns:

AWeber: AWeber is a paid ESP and one of the most popular email marketing service providers. It is considered intuitive, easy to get started on and connects seamlessly to most platforms, including WordPress. Its features include ready-to-use email templates, list management, auto-responders, and email tracking with detailed insights. It also provides support options such as live chat, phone support, email support, live webinars, and a vast library of how-to's and tutorials.

Constant Contact: Constant Contact is a paid ESP and one of the top email marketing services that are considered easy to use and beginner-friendly. You can manage your email lists, contacts, email templates, access tracking and reporting, use the built-in social media sharing tool, and an image library. It also provides a support function with live chat, email, community support and online training.

GetResponse: Another popular paid ESP, GetResponse comes with a drag and drop builder where you can create campaigns, segment contacts, send content designed for specific groups, create responsive forms and landing pages, carry out A/B testing, track, and include auto-responders. It also integrates with third-party lead generation software like OptinMonster, SalesForce and ZenDesk. Support is provided by phone, live chat, and email. Their help section is full of free learning material including videos, webinars and how-to guides.

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MailChimp: Offering a forever free plan where you can have up to 2,000 Subscribers and send 12,000 emails, Mail Chimp is another popular ESP that offers an easy to use interface with great tools and thorough support. Its features include an email creator, merge field tags, auto-responders, segmentation contact lists, email testing and simple tracking and analytics. The support is offered by email, live chat, and a knowledge base with how-to videos and tutorials.

Using an Email Service Provider can maximize the productivity and efficiency of an email marketer. However, many marketers still use their own email clients, such as Gmail, to send marketing emails, even though these are not specifically designed for creating and executing email marketing campaigns.

So what are the advantages of using ESPs over an in-house email system?
1.ESP provisioning, domain, and IP setup: you will want to send emails from your company's domain name instead of a free one such as Gmail or Hotmail. To use your own domain you have to configure the IP setup with both the ESP and domain service.

2.Deliverability reporting: this gives you insights into how your email campaign performed, such as who opened or unsubscribed, and a break down of what links were clicked.

3.Enterprise MTA (Mail Transport Agents) configurations: free email domains like Gmail have a limit on how many emails you can send (100-150 per day). ESPs allow almost an unlimited amount to be sent while also managing large campaigns that send to millions of users.

4.Bounce and complaint handling: an ESP will automatically check if an email address bounces and remove them from future campaigns while also managing any complaints that users may have.

While there are many advantages to using an ESP, there are also a few limitations:

#1 Cost: many ESPs can be expensive and the cost can increase with the more subscribers you have and how often you email them. It may be cheaper to develop your own in-house system or send from a free email address.

#2 No control over rate limits and sending volumes: ESPs control how many emails you can send per hour/day and while this might be OK for small campaigns to have just a few dozen recipients, it may be an issue with larger ones who may have millions of recipients.

#3 Restricted to their reporting and user interface: While this is not a major limitation, you will have to learn the ESPs interface and you won't have the option to customize the reporting and UI.

Action Point
PS:I know you might agree with some of the points that I have raised in this article. You might not agree with some of the issues raised. Let me know your views about the topic discussed. We will appreciate it if you could drop your comment. Thanks in anticipation.

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