

M LOCAL BUSINESS MARKETING

The Marketing Guide for Local Business Owners

February 2021

11 Techniques to Improve Email Opt-In Rates in 2021 and Beyond

10 Blogging Mistakes to Avoid on Your Business Blog

4 Ways to Support Small Businesses

10 Damaging Email Marketing Habits You Need to Avoid

10 Problem Solving Strategies for Business Owners

10 Tips to Make Meetings More Productive

Infographic:
Social Media Trends
of 2021

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Welcome to this month's edition!

Thank you for taking a few minutes to read through this month's issue. Our hope is that the information you find in our magazine will help you achieve (and exceed) all of your goals.

Once again, we've packed this month's issue full of interesting articles and tips that you can apply immediately to help you grow your business.

In this issue, you'll find another variety of articles covering many topics that are important to business owners. We hope you enjoy the articles on Blogging, Email Marketing, Meetings, and other topics.

If you're not already receiving this magazine regularly, we suggest you add your email to our subscriber list. We have some exciting articles already in the works for the upcoming issues. Don't miss out!

If you find the magazine helpful, and know other local business owners that could benefit from receiving our magazine each month, please do us (and them) a favor by forwarding a copy to them.

As always, we welcome any comments or questions you might have, as well as the opportunity to explain how we've been able to help businesses just like yours.

Be Well!

David Akers
President / CEO
LMS Solutions, Inc.

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Inside This Month's Issue

- 4 Marketing Calendar
- 5 10 Problem Solving Strategies for Business Owners
- 9 11 Techniques to Improve Email Opt-In Rates in 2021 and Beyond
- 14 10 Tips to Make Meetings More Productive
- 17 10 Blogging Mistakes to Avoid on Your Business Blog
- 20 4 Way to Support Small Businesses
- 23 10 Damaging Email Marketing Habits You Need to Avoid
- 26 Fun Facts
- 27 Infographic: Social Media Trends of 2021

A Little About Us

Local Business Marketing Magazine is proudly provided by LMS Solutions, Inc.



LMS Solutions was developed to give businesses of all sizes the ability to leverage the same cutting-edge marketing platforms that the Fortune 500 organizations use, at extremely affordable rates.

We offer an extensive catalog of cutting-edge Local Online, Mobile, Social, Pay-Per-Click, Video, Web and Direct Marketing Media Programs. Whether you're a small business, medium business, or non-profit organization, our programs can help you find greater success.

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Marketing Calendar

Plan your marketing messages around these upcoming holidays and proclamations.

February

African American History Month
Heart Healthy Month
Responsible Pet Owner Month
Cancer Prevention Month
Children's Dental Health Month
Spay/Neuter Awareness Month

February 14th - Valentine's Day
February 15th - President's Day

1st - National Freedom Day
1st - Change Your Password Day
1st - Car Insurance Day
2nd - Groundhog Day
3rd - International Golden Retriever Day
4th - Facebook's Birthday
4th - World Cancer Day
5th - Wear Red Day
7th - Super Bowl Sunday

8th - Boy Scout Day
10th - Flannel Day
11th - Inventor's Day
12th - Lincoln's Birthday
14th - Autism Sunday
16th - Fat Tuesday
17th - Random Acts of Kindness Day
17th - Ash Wednesday
18th - Drink Wine Day
20th - Love Your Pet Day
20th - World Day for Social Justice
22nd - Wildlife Day
22nd - Washington's Birthday
22nd - World Thinking Day
25th - Pancake Day
25th - Chili Day
26th - Bacon Day
27th - Polar Bear Day
29th - Superman's Birthday

March

Irish American Heritage Month
Women's History Month
Employee Spirit Month
National Cerebral Palsy Awareness Month
Save Your Vision Month
Multiple Sclerosis Education and Awareness Month
Red Cross Month

March 14th - Daylight Savings Begins
March 17 - St. Patrick's Day
March 20th - 1st Day of Spring

1st - Compliment Day
2nd - Dr. Seuss Day
3rd - Simplify Your Life Day
3rd - World Wildlife Day
4th - Hug a G.I. Day
4th - Pancake Day - IHOP
5th - Employee Appreciation Day
6th - Dentist's Day
6th - Oreo Cookie Day

9th - Crabmeat Day
10th - Pack Your Lunch Day
11th - Popcorn Lover's Day
12th - Alfred Hitchcock Day
13th - Good Samaritan Day
14th - Potato Chip Day
15th - National Napping Day
18th - Awkward Moments Day
19th - Client's Day
20th - Day of Happiness
21st - Common Courtesy Day
21st - Poetry Day
22nd - Goof Off Day
23rd - Puppy Day
26th - Purple Day
26th - Spinach Day
28th - Mom and Pop Business Owners Day
30th - Take a Walk in the Park Day
30th - Doctors Day
31st - Crayon Day
31st - Tater Day



10 Problem Solving Strategies for Business Owners

Nobody likes being faced with problems. But sometimes, running a business can seem to be nothing but a series of challenges. So, business owners must develop problem-solving strategies to help them resolve issues fast.

Some say that problems are an opportunity to learn and grow. However, holding onto that positive philosophy can be hard to do when faced with a mounting heap of challenges. If you try to tackle all the issues you meet simultaneously, you

will invariably make some bad decisions.

So, the first strategy to adopt is to tackle your problems one at a time. Here are ten more strategies to help you become a highly effective business problem-solver.

1. Define the True Problem

Merely knowing that one of your most important customers is dissatisfied is not enough. You will also need to understand why they are unhappy, what caused their dissatisfaction, and how the immediate problem will be resolved. And you will need to decide what steps will need to be taken to ensure the same situation never arises again. It would be best, then, to clearly define what a problem is before you attempt to resolve the issue. Gather all the facts, analyze the figures if appropriate, and try to look at the problem you face from a detached, objective perspective.

2. Summarize Problems

Once you have gathered all the relevant information about a problem, you will need to get to the crux of the issue at hand. The data you collect will help you understand the magnitude of the challenge and help you find a solution. However, too much data can be overwhelming. So, distill the problem you face into a summary and

bullet-point what action is needed to rectify the issue.

3. Decide if You Are looking at the Problem or a Symptom

Fixing a symptom will only provide a short-term fix if there is a more significant underlying issue. So, consider if the challenge you face is merely the result of a far deeper problem. Suppose the unhappy customer mentioned above was dissatisfied with one of your products, for example. If that were the case, a refund and an apology might placate the disgruntled customer. But, in due course, you will likely face further complaints from other customers about the same product if the root cause of the complaint is not fixed.

4. Consider all The Ramifications

When faced with a problem, try to avoid making hasty decisions that could make the situation worse or lead to other issues. Faced with a shortage of cash, you might make the knee-

jerk decision to withhold all payments to vendors, for example. But, while paying suppliers late will ease the immediate cash flow issue, it will probably cause further problems later. It is best to take your time resolving business problems whenever you can. Even the most pressing business challenges don't usually need an instant solution.

5. Break Down Problems

Some business issues are multifaceted and too big to handle all at once. The cash flow issue mentioned above, for example, might have been caused by a combination of overspending, poor credit management, and low sales. So, the challenge you face is not the lack of cash in the bank. It is the root cause of the cash crisis and the problems that a lack of liquid funds will cause that will need addressing. Breaking problems down into smaller parts makes it easier to find and implement a solution. It also has the psychological benefit of making a challenge seem less formidable.

6. Keep Calm and Pace Yourself

Sometimes, the best way to resolve a problem is to give yourself time to think. It can help to put the issue to one side for a while or sleep on it. Probably the worst thing that you can do is panic and try to address the problem immediately. When you are feeling stressed, you can find yourself forced into making a wrong decision. So, give yourself a break and time to think, and a solution may come to you that had not initially been apparent.

7. Enlist the Help of Experts

No business owner can solve all their business problems on their own. Sometimes, you will need the help of experts, like your accountant or your business lawyer. You might also find it helpful to discuss your business challenges with other people in your network. And don't forget to talk to your team, too, because the people who work at the sharp end sometimes know things that their supervisors do not. Ultimately, the decision

will be yours. Even so, getting input from others will often help you find the best solution.

8. Don't Be Afraid to Think Outside the Box

The best solution to a problem may not always be the most obvious. So, don't discount any ideas until you have thought them through. It can be helpful to consider all the solutions to a problem, however impracticable they at first may seem. You can then filter out the non-runners once you have weighed up all the options and potential outcomes.

9. Trust Your Abilities

If you are running a successful business, you must have made the right decisions in the past. So, don't allow one major problem to make you lose faith in your judgment. If you have gathered all the facts and considered all the options, it's time to decide and act. Use your experience of dealing with past challenges to help you solve the current issue. One thing that is for sure is that problems don't solve themselves!

10. Implement and Monitor

Once you have decided on a course of action, you will need to plan and implement your solution. But problem-solving doesn't end there. You will also need to ensure that your solution has the desired outcome. Monitor the progress of your problem-solving plan through to the end. And don't be afraid to change course if you need to. There is nothing wrong with admitting that you didn't get it right the first time and learning from your mistakes.

The first rule of problem-solving is don't panic. Gather all the facts, consider all the options, and seek advice if needed. Of course, it is also advisable not to ignore business problems because they rarely go away if not tackled head-on. On a positive note, a challenge solved often leads to a strengthening of the business or business growth--so, perhaps, problems should be viewed as opportunities after all.



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11 Techniques to Improve Email Opt-In Rates in 2021 and Beyond



According to email marketing statistics from Sumo, the average rate of visitors who subscribe to an email list is only 1.95 percent (1). Is your business suffering from low email opt-in rates? If so, it's crucial to start thinking about how to design and deploy opt-in forms to maximize conversions. Whether you're creating your first sign-up form or your fiftieth, here are 11 techniques to attract more subscribers.

Emphasize the Benefits in the Headline

If the benefits of signing up aren't immediately clear in the headline, you're going to lose many potential subscribers. What benefits will people get from opting into your email list? Clearly and concisely state what you're offering and how you will help new subscribers.

Tip: Don't write about your business; write about what your target audience wants and needs. Below the headline, briefly expand upon what you offer in a sentence or two, or a bulleted list.

Offer an Immediate Incentive

What can you offer immediately to encourage potential customers to give you their email address? A discount, loyalty points, or an exclusive guide are all worth considering.

Tip: Try offering free shipping or a gift card. According to a Zettasphere consumer research study, these were the top two most influential offers, with

67 percent of participants saying they would sign up if one of these things was offered (2).

Offer Exclusive Content

As already mentioned, useful, relevant content is a great way to encourage subscriptions, but you need to have something ready to deliver immediately. For example, a product guide, a cheat-sheet, a white paper, or an industry report.

Tip: Explain the specific benefits subscribers will get from your content and emphasize that the content is unique.

Check Your Tone of Voice

When using the previous three techniques, it's crucial that you use language that is clear, consistent, and appropriate for your business. Make sure your style of writing matches your other online content and use easy-to-understand words and phrases that your target audience will be familiar with.

Tip: Most businesses benefit from using a more conversational tone of

voice. When you sound more approachable, readers are more likely to trust your business and subscribe.

Use the Two-Step Opt-In Process

Many people are reluctant to immediately click on an email subscribe button as it feels like too much of a commitment. However, if you use a CTA button first, such as "Want a Discount?" or "Save 10 percent on your next order," it doesn't involve an immediate commitment from the visitor. Then, you can re-emphasize your offer in a popup opt-in form or subscription page. Because users have already taken a positive step toward receiving a benefit, they're more likely to complete the process.

Tip: Insert the CTA button in the header of your homepage or in a box near the top of your homepage to make sure more people see your offer.

Optimize Button Text

The words you use on opt-in form buttons can make

all the difference when it comes to your conversion rates. Avoid using generic terms like “Subscribe” or “Submit.” They just don’t convert as well as more informal language. Instead, try “Let Me Join” or “I’m In!” When appropriate, make sure the button text relates to the actual benefit subscribers will receive. For example: “Send Me My Free eBook.”

Tip: Using first-person pronouns like “my” and “me” helps readers feel the personal benefit of clicking.

Use Design to Maximize Conversions

The most successful opt-in forms are concise and visually appealing. It sounds obvious, but if forms are unattractive, difficult to read, or confusing, conversion rates will decrease. Only ask for the minimum amount of information - using fewer form fields generally results in more conversions. For most brands, just asking for a name and an email address is enough.

Tip: Try using a bold color palette and larger font to

make your form stand out. Also, use high-contrasting colors for the sign-up button to make it clearly visible.

Optimize Popups

Popups can annoy some people, but you can make them more engaging if you emphasize the benefits of subscribing and get the timing right.

Tip: Most form builders allow you to time your popups. Check your analytics to determine the average time people spend on a certain page, then set your popup to display at around half this time. At this point, visitors are more likely to be engaged with your content. Test different popup frequencies and track the results.

Experiment with Form Placement

Apart from showing sign-up forms at the right time, the location of forms is also key. For example, fewer people will see a form that is tucked away in the page footer. Consider using a combination of the following:

- Include a floating bar at the top of the page that remains in view at all times.
- Place a form at the top of your sidebar.
- Add a form to your “About” page - it’s one of the most frequently visited pages.
- Try a scroll triggered opt-in form, which appears when users scroll down a specified percentage of the page.
- Insert a CTA button in the author box at the end of blog posts.
 - Use exit-intent popups that detect when users are about to leave your site.

Tip: If you have a checkout page, highlight the benefits of joining your email list and include a simple “yes” or “no” checkbox to subscribe.

Set Clear Expectations

When potential subscribers know what they can expect from your email content, they’re less likely to be apprehensive about signing up. From the outset, make it clear what kind of content you’ll deliver, and how often subscribers will receive it.

Tip: To build trust, state clearly on your form that you don't share subscribers' details and that anyone can unsubscribe at any time.

Use Social Proof

People are more likely to trust your business and give you their email address if they know other people have already signed up. For this reason, highlight how many other subscribers you have next to your sign-up button. For example: "Join 5,247 other subscribers to receive exclusive deals and more."

Tip: If you have a strong relationship with an industry expert, try to get a testimonial from them about your business and feature this on your sign-up form.

Optimize Your Opt-In Forms for Long-Term Growth

Email marketing is still one of the best ways to build a loyal customer base, but to maximize results you need to find out which forms improve email opt-in rates for your specific business and target audience. For best results,

use a combination of sign-up forms and don't worry about asking visitors more than once. Sometimes, people need to see an offer multiple times before they're ready to commit.

The above techniques are a good place to start, but it's important to experiment with different opt-in forms and track the results. Test different designs, change the language you use, and vary your offers to see what works for your unique business.

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10 Tips to Make Meetings More Productive

Meetings can go one of two ways. A meeting can be a productive forum where great ideas get shared and good decisions get made. Or it can be a long, drawn-out affair that achieves nothing at all.

What many people seem to forget is that meetings cost money. Everyone who is sitting around the table at a meeting is earning a salary. And, while employees are sitting there, they are not doing the job that they are getting paid to do. You can't ditch meetings altogether. You can, though, make sure that meetings are effective.

Here are ten tips on how to manage meetings to make them more productive.

1. Only Hold Meetings When it is Necessary

Always ask yourself if a meeting is the most efficient way to achieve your goal. Could you achieve the same goal with emails? Or would a quick, informal meeting at someone's desk suffice? Formal meetings can take up an inordinate amount of time. Speakers will need time to prepare. Someone will have to arrange the meeting. And someone will need to take the minutes of the meeting. If an email will have the desired effect, it will be much cheaper and less time consuming than a meeting.

2. Only Invite Relevant Personnel

Only invite people to

a meeting if they have something to contribute or something to learn. There is no point having twenty people at a meeting if the topic is only relevant to five of those people. Keeping the numbers down will make most types of meetings much more productive.

3. Keep Meetings Short

Meetings that last for more than one hour will get less productive as more time goes by. In fact, people's attention will wander after only fifteen minutes. If there are lots of topics to discuss, it would be better to schedule several short meetings.

Short, very focused meetings will also allow you to invite only the relevant people.

4. Have an Objective Focused Agenda

Write an agenda for every meeting you hold, and make sure that you stick to that agenda. If the meeting strays off-topic, it will waste time and you may not achieve your goals. The agenda should list all the items for discussion and have time allotted to each topic. Attendees should have a copy of the agenda in advance of the meeting. There should also be minutes taken at a meeting that include assigned action points. All those who attended the meeting should receive a copy of the minutes.

5. Enforce a No Phones and No Laptops Rule

Attendees at a meeting should switch off their phones and leave their laptops at their desks. That rule should apply to the senior members of the team as well as the junior ones. If people are multi-tasking, then they are not paying attention. Phones and laptops are a distraction that will make meetings less efficient and more time-consuming.

6. Hold the Refreshments

The only refreshments that anyone will ever need a short meeting is water. So,

skip the coffee, muffins, and pastries. Refreshments cause delays and they distract people from the business at hand. In the time it takes for everyone to get their coffee and snacks, you could have ticked off an item on the meeting agenda.

7. Put the Important Topics at the Top of the Agenda

In the first fifteen minutes of a meeting, people will be more alert and paying more attention. So, when you are preparing your agenda, make sure that the most important topics are at the top of the running order. Covering the important topics first will also ensure that those topics are not missed if other topics overrun their allotted time.

8. Don't Allow Grandstanding

A meeting should be a collaborative event, not a one-person show. Some people are not as confident as others, but they may still have valuable points to make. Every meeting should have a chairperson who controls the proceedings. It is the chairperson's responsibility to ensure that everyone gets an opportunity to contribute to the meeting.

9. Do Not Disturb!

If a meeting is going to last only an hour or less, there should be no need for anyone to interrupt the proceedings. If a person gets called out of a meeting, it wastes everyone else's time. So, make a rule that meetings are do not disturb events. Meetings should only get interrupted if there is a real emergency.

10. Lead Meetings

Meetings need direction, so someone needs to lead the proceedings. The chairperson should keep the meeting running to the agenda and to time. If the meeting is not controlled, the discussion will wander off-topic. If that happens, the meeting will overrun, and important agenda items may get missed.

Meetings do have a part to play in the efficient running of a business. But meetings are not always the most efficient way of communicating with a team. So, you should ask yourself first if a meeting is necessary at all. If a meeting is the best option, then keep the meeting brief, controlled, and to the point. And keep the attendee list down to those who need to be there.

2020



2021

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10 Blogging Mistakes to Avoid on Your Business Blog

There is no doubt that a blog adds immense value to a business website. A business blog provides a platform for you to share your expertise with readers, post news about your business, and

bring more traffic to your website. And what could be simpler than writing a few articles a month on such a familiar topic? Well, blogging on a business website is not quite as simple as it first may seem.

Indeed, there are many traps that the unwary can fall into with a business blog.

Here are ten mistakes you will want to avoid making on your business blog.

1. Being Way Too Formal

One of the most common mistakes people make with business blogs is that the content is far too formal. Demonstrating how knowledgeable you are in your field will indeed help you generate trust in your brand. However, it would be best not to let your attempts to shine out as an authority in your industry turn your blog into a long-winded textbook. The crucial thing to remember is that a blog of any kind should not be hard work to read. One or two authoritative posts will be OK, but you will also need some light reading on your business blog as well.

2. Too Many Sales Pitches

A blog should be informative and entertaining. There is no harm in directing readers of your blog to your sales pages via hyperlinks. However, it would be advisable not to make every blog post a sales pitch. Think of your business blog as being a part of your sales funnel rather than a hard-sell tool. The purpose of your blog is to engage readers, attract new visitors, and get them interested in your brand. The selling comes later when visitors

to your blog take the next step by visiting your product or service description pages.

3. Not Proofreading Content

It can be easy to make spelling and grammatical errors when rushing to get new content posted. But even the smallest mistake will be noticed and will reflect on the quality of your brand. So, it is advisable to take the time to proofread all your blog articles before posting. It can also be helpful to use a grammar checking tool, like Grammarly.

4. Forgetting Brand Personality

While some business blogs are too formal, others try to be too cute. And, in trying to appeal to a broad audience, they lose the personality of the brand. Some sectors lend themselves to a light-hearted tone, but some do not. Posting comical or flippant content on an accountant's blog, for example, would not do much for the image of a professional financial advisor. When writing a blog post, don't forget what your customers expect from a business like yours. Consistency of brand personality is as crucial in blogging

as it is in any other communication format.

5. Not Posting Regularly

Not posting often enough is a mistake that you want to avoid on any blog. If a business blog looks like it has been abandoned, it will reflect poorly on the company. If there are no new posts on your business blog, it will look like your business is stagnating. Some visitors might even see a lack of recent posts as a sign that your business is failing. You don't need to post daily or weekly to keep a blog fresh. Once a month will do if you don't have the time for more frequent posting. If you regularly give visitors something new to read, people will be more likely to return to your site periodically. And every time someone returns to your blog, it is another opportunity to convert that person into a customer.

6. Failing to Include Keywords

Before you write a post for your business blog, you should consider what keywords your target audience might be using in their online searches. Then, include those keywords in your text so that people can find your post in search engines.

If you use the right keywords, your business blog will play a crucial role in elevating your entire website's ranking. However, it is best not to over-optimize posts for keywords, or your content will become unreadable, and you may incur Google penalties.

7. Too Much Information

It is important to remember that internet users are generally looking for a quick read. So, keep your blog posts relatively short. The optimum length of a blog post is in the region of one to two thousand words. If you go over two thousand words, you run the risk of people not reading any of your content because the page looks too daunting. If a topic demands a lengthy post, it would be best to split the content by sub-topics over different pages. Or, for in-depth technical articles, you could offer a free PDF download, which would also provide an opportunity to collect email addresses.

8. Lack of Images and Video

Using visuals to illustrate the points you make in blog posts will make the content far more appealing. Images, graphics, and videos will

break up the text and get your message across far better than only words. There have been many studies that have proven that visual content gets more click-throughs and lower bounce rates. Blog posts containing images and videos are also far more likely to be shared.

9. Not Sharing Blog Posts

Posting content on your business blog is not enough. You will get more visitors to your blog if you share your new content on social media platforms, like Twitter, Facebook, and Pinterest. It will also help to generate more traffic if you send your blog posts to email subscribers. The sharing of blog posts can be automated. The Jetpack plugin for WordPress sites, for example, has a social media sharing tool that automatically sends new posts to Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and more. You can pin content on your Pinterest business boards via your blog's RSS feed. And you can automatically email blog posts to subscribers using email marketing apps like Mailchimp.

10. Not Monitoring Progress

If you do not track the visitors, leads, and

conversions that your blog posts generate, you will never know what types of posts work. So, install an analytics tool, like Google Analytics, so that you can track the interactions with your blog. Track the bounce rate for your blog posts, as well as the visitor numbers, to discover what types of posts hold your reader's interest. And monitor the shares of content to learn what kind of content is most likely to get shared. Then, use your findings to guide your choice of the topics and types of posts for future content.

Using your business blog for content marketing is an inexpensive way of reaching a broad but relevant audience. However, as you can see from the above, if your blogging efforts are to yield results, you must take your blog seriously. Think about what topics will interest your target audience. Research the keywords and write content that is not too formal but is consistent with your brand. Then, monitor the results and publish more content of the type that generates the most interest. If you keep posting content that people want to read, you will see a steady increase in visitor numbers to your site.



4 Ways to Support Small Businesses

Small business is often referred to as the engine of economic growth in America. Unfortunately, small businesses are closing at a faster rate than they are being created - which is bad news when it comes to local jobs and communities. For example, when you shop at a big box retailer, very little of your money stays in your community. Luckily, there are some easy ways that you can show small businesses big love and support.

1. Shop Local Online

Shopping local doesn't mean that you have to visit a brick-and-mortar store in-person.

That's because many locally-owned also have websites to take online orders - just like big box retailers and e-commerce sites. For example, some smaller grocery chains let customers order groceries online and offer delivery services.

In addition to shopping for goods, you can also order takeout or delivery food online from some of your locally-owned restaurants. The next time you consider buying something online from a large retailer, try to find a local small business in your community with an e-commerce site to shop from instead.

2. Promote Your Favorite Small Businesses to Others

Many small business owners say that word-of-mouth advertising is still one of the best ways to promote their products or services to others. In fact, many small restaurants and stores survive off customer referrals - especially in the beginning. Therefore, you can help support your favorite small businesses by telling friends and family about your happy shopping experiences.

For example, if someone asks you about a certain product/service category, you could recommend a

small business that serves that particular niche. You could also tell others about your favorite locally-owned businesses on social media - especially Facebook.

3. Gift Small Business Gift Cards to Friends and Family

Gift cards have become a very popular gift in recent years. However, you don't have to just give gift cards for big retailers. Instead, you can likely find a small business in your community that sells their own gift cards. For example, you can probably find a gift card for locally-owned restaurants, gift shops, flea markets, and even some grocery stores.

Of course, you will want to try to find a small business that you think the recipient would enjoy shopping at.

4. Buy from Small Amazon Sellers

Lastly, there are actually two ways that you can support small businesses when you shop on Amazon. First, when you buy from a small seller - instead of purchasing something sold by Amazon or another large retailer - you are supporting a small business. Secondly, if you read product descriptions, you can also learn about where products were made - including the companies that make

them. Therefore, with a little research, you could buy products made by small businesses.

In short, since small business is the backbone of the American economy, consumers should do their part to support them to promote stronger communities and more local job opportunities. Remember, when you spend money at a locally-owned retailer, more of your money stays in your community. You can help support small businesses by telling others about them. For example, when a new store or restaurant opens in your community, encourage others to give it a try.



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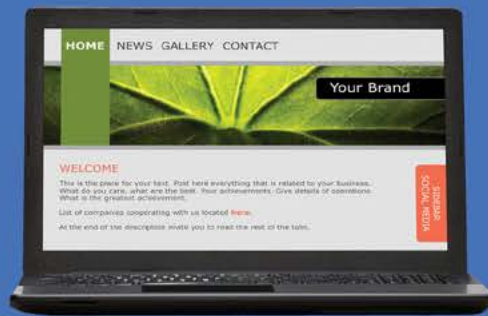


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10 Damaging Email Marketing Habits You Need to Avoid

While email remains one of the most effective marketing channels, the competition is greater than ever before. Consumers are also spending less time scanning their inboxes and have less patience when reading emails from businesses. To maximize engagement and boost conversions, it's therefore crucial to avoid any email marketing bad habits. If you've noticed less engagement or more unsubscribes, here are 10 habits you should quit to improve your email marketing results in the coming year and beyond.

Overlong Emails

Are your emails longer than they really need to be? Reducing the length of an email and writing more succinctly is sometimes all it takes to increase engagement.

According to a Boomerang study, emails with 75 to 100 words had the highest response rate at 51 percent. If you need to give more detailed information, include a call-to-action (CTA) button that readers can click to find out more.

Tip: Ruthlessly edit every email. Cut down sentence and paragraph lengths and choose more punchy words and phrases to give your messages more impact.

Bland CTA Button Text

Every CTA button is an opportunity to encourage subscribers to take action, so you need to make the button text as engaging as possible.

Conventional, ordinary, and formal language won't inspire readers to act.

Sounding Like Other Businesses

It's easy to fall into the trap of writing in a vague and formal way. Many businesses do it. While coming across as professional is important, if every email you send sounds stiff and just like every other business, it's boring for subscribers.

Tip: Work on your tone of voice. Unless your business is more formal or traditional, write in a more conversational way, like you're talking to a friend.

Sticking to the Same Routine

When you have to produce email content week after week, it's not always easy to come up with something new to say. However, if you do the same thing again and again, you're unlikely to make progress. Going forward, you need to experiment.

Tip: A/B test your emails, changing one factor at a time. Start with the subject lines. Then vary the CTAs. And finally, test delivery times. Combine the best aspects of each test email to optimize future email campaigns.

Planning Too Far in Advance

The Covid-19 global pandemic demonstrated how unforeseen events can force businesses to reassess their priorities. Planning too far ahead can damage your email marketing return on investment (ROI), because if you spend time planning and creating content that later has to be reworked or even scrapped, you're wasting valuable time and resources. What's more, your business goals may change from one month to the next.

Tip: Plan your email content for about two to three months in advance but leave spaces in your editorial calendar so that you can adapt to changing circumstances.

Not Listening

Many businesses slip into the habit of sending out promotional messages and company updates, but consumers get tired of companies that only talk about themselves. It's important to ask your subscribers what they think about your company, products, and email content. If your audience feels like they're being listened to, they'll give your messages more

attention in return.

Tip: Cut back on promotional emails and deliver more meaningful content. Ask subscribers what they would like to hear from you and act on the feedback.

Delivering Emails to Everyone

Most businesses understand the importance of list segmentation, but some continue to use poorly segmented lists or don't segment their lists at all. Unfortunately, this leads to low conversion rates and increases unsubscribes.

Tip: Segment your list into different groups, based on origin of capture, purchase behavior, location, or other factors that are relevant to your business and current marketing goals. You can then deliver more personalized messages to boost engagement.

Using Old Newsletter Templates

If you've been using the same email templates for a few years, they might look outdated and could be difficult to read on smartphones. According to a 2019 Aedestra report, 62 percent of email opens occurred on mobile devices even then, so it's

crucial to optimize emails for mobile.

Tip: Some email clients won't display your entire subject line text. Keep your subject lines to 40 characters or less to make sure smartphone users see more of your message. Also, use a larger font size of 13 or 14 pixels to make it more readable on a small screen.

Not Regularly Cleaning Your List

Continuing to email outdated or inactive contacts increases spam reports and unsubscribes and reduces email open rates and click-through rates.

Tip: Remove email addresses that are inactive for a certain period of time or move them to a "re-engagement" list for future emails. Ultimately, this will increase your ROI per email sent.

Overlooking Analytics

Most email marketing platforms provide analytics data, but many businesses still fail to track these important metrics. Regularly monitor your email click-through rates and other metrics to understand which emails perform best.

Tip: Email open rates can be a misleading metric. If the reader's email client isn't capable of

displaying HTML with images, or users have enabled image blocking, it won't be recorded as an open. You can use open rates to compare successive emails you send but try focusing on improving click-through rates.

It's essential to regularly review your email marketing strategies and try to avoid bad habits that may be contributing to poor results. Are there any damaging habits featured in this article that you recognize? If you can stop making these errors from now on, you'll strengthen your reputation, improve email engagement rates, and achieve more of your marketing goals in the months and years ahead.

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FUN FACTS

Groundhog Day, celebrated on February 2, came about because of a German superstition. They thought if a hibernating animal cast a shadow on February 2nd that winter would last for another six weeks. If there was no shadow, spring would come early.

- Feb 2, 1653 - New Amsterdam (now the City of New York) was incorporated.
- Feb 4, 2004 - Facebook launched as "TheFacebook.com".
- Feb 6, 1952 - Queen Elizabeth II succeeded to the British throne.
- Feb 7, 1964 - The Beatles first arrive in the United States.
- Feb 8, 1998 - The first female hockey game in Olympic history took place. Finland defeated Sweden 6-0.
- Feb 11, 1928 - The La-Z-Boy reclining chair was invented by Ed Shoemaker.
- Feb 14, 278 - Valentine, a priest in Rome in the days of Emperor Claudius II, was beheaded for performing (illegal at the time) marriage ceremonies.
- Feb 18, 2001 - Race car legend Dale Earnhardt was killed in a crash in the last lap of the Daytona 500.
- Feb 22, 1956 - Elvis Presley debuted on the music charts with Heartbreak Hotel.

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66.5% of users are from ages 12 - 17, where **81.3%** of users are ages 18 - 24



63% of all Twitter users worldwide are between 35 and 65.

40% of Twitter users carried out a purchase after seeing it on Twitter



LinkedIn has more than **722 million** user profiles

76% of LinkedIn's users live outside the U.S.

40 million people use LinkedIn to search for jobs each week



1.63 billion users visit Facebook every day

86% of US marketers are using Facebook for advertising

58.5 minutes is the average time users spend of Facebook each day



Over 1 billion people use Instagram monthly

200 million users visit at least one business profile on Instagram daily

58% of people say they have become more interested in a brand or product after seeing it on Stories



Youtube is the **2nd most popular search engine**, generating over **1 billion** hours of video each day

More than 70% of all YouTube views are on a mobile device



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