

Change overload: an email marketing checklist

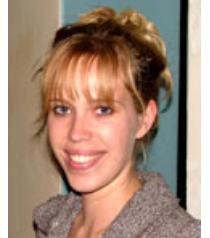
 By [Carmia Lureman](#)

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Remember the futuristic TV series Beyond 2000? We've wandered beyond 2000 and, while we were all either looking out for flying cars or the world to end, I don't think we've ever really stopped to consider how this technological boom is going to affect our business strategies. Or, for that matter, how digital would come to feature in our marketing tactics.

No doubt about it - our new dynamic marketing environment poses a challenge we've accepted. We all have to sell.

Email marketing came in with a swoop. A longstanding favourite among direct marketing channels, it's become an important tool in most marketers' arsenal. But digital never rests and, with drastic recent changes in our online environment, it's time to reflect on how to make these latest developments work in favour of your email marketing strategy.



So what exactly are we looking out for?

A strong foundation

The days of people actually reading their emails are over. It's no longer a replacement for snail mail, but more a quick way to say "Hi!" and let consumers know that your brand is still around. Its purpose, more and more, is to get top of mind in an over-crowded consumer mind.

Ultimately, you want your email to send existing or potential clients to your website, where they'll (fingers crossed) make a purchase, a booking or a donation - but in order to do that they'll have to open and read first.

And that's where we head back to basics: strong copy in your subject lines and the content of your email. It remains the basis of communication!

Keeping up

Naturally changes in the email industry have a great effect on how you approach your email marketing.

Major email providers (such as Gmail and Hotmail) are focusing more and more on giving users the ability to control their inbox by giving preference to emails from certain senders. Basically, they're monitoring users' inboxes by looking at how they're engaging with their emails, and sorting them accordingly, so it is increasingly important to work with these changes by sending out welcome emails (to get that crucial first interaction) and sending relevant, engaging content.

Another emerging trend to keep an eye on is the approach to video in email as it will raise questions such as which service providers are enabling it, how to go about inserting it and how to incorporate video into your email content.

The whole shebang

And then, of course, the infamous rise of social media. How many times have we cursed Facebook for unleashing the beast?

Yes, indeed, social and mobile media are extending our marketing sphere even further - we're now dealing with multiple communication channels that all need to be strategised appropriately.

If you're smart about it, you're finding ways to integrate all these different channels. Your email marketing service provider (ESP) should give you access to tools that enable you to integrate your mobile, social and email marketing.

Can never get enough

As we're pulled further into our online environment, we're signing up to and receiving more and more emails! Email volume is increasing continuously.

Make use of automated segmentation tool to create sub-groups of your mailing list - group your subscribers by common denominators such as age, gender or even interests. Then be sure to write targeted content that's relevant and valuable to these subscribers. It's the only way your email will take priority in a never-ending inbox!

Catch them if you can

By now, most of us also have more than one email address - your personal and your work email, and often an extra one or two thrown in for good measure. These addresses are also often changing quite rapidly as we move jobs and finish off projects.

Amid all these changes, it's quite easy for you to lose a subscriber because you're sending to an outdated email address. Be sure to remind your subscribers to update their details regularly and manage your mailing lists effectively.

When everyone wants it their way...

The way in which online interaction has developed has given users steadily more control of what information they want to consume, in what format and regularly. We've become acclimatised to having this kind of control and are increasingly selective in what we choose to consume.

Luckily, email marketing is permission-based, which is appealing to both marketers and subscribers. Allow your potential clients to manage what brand information they receive from you as easily as possible by allowing them to set up subscriber profiles and preferences.

Staying on track

More than ever, measuring and tracking your various marketing efforts are becoming increasingly important as the marketing environment expands. So, yes, you need to keep an eye on your email marketing reports and stats, but take note of your social share stats as well. These will tell you where, how and by who your email newsletter was shared across social channels.

A truly excellent way of seeing how your email campaign has affected your web traffic - if your ESP allows it - is to integrate your email marketing account with your Google Analytics.

Also remember that, if you practice mobile marketing, it is possible to track your bulk SMS sends.

Consumers have come to expect automated marketing that caters to their individual needs, interests and specifications across a range of channels. The good news is that email marketing is the perfect tool - you just need to optimise it accordingly.

ABOUT CARMIA LUREMAN

Carmia Lureman is a rapidly evolving online geek. A writer from a print media background who stumbled into the online industry by chance, she is embarrassingly enthusiastic about email marketing, integrated digital marketing and branding, social media marketing and online PR and reputation management. She currently works for GraphicMail and can be contacted at carmia@graphicmail.com

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