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EMAIL MARKETING

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DigitalBoost is delivered by Business Gateway in partnership with Scottish Enterprise and Highlands & Islands Enterprise on behalf of Digital Scotland. DigitalBoost is designed to help Scottish businesses:

1. Understand the benefits of using Digital Technologies
2. Introduce, or improve their use of, Digital Technologies to help grow their business

Visit www.bgateway.com/driving-growth/digitalboost for information on other services and a Digital 'Health Check' for your business. This will gauge your strengths and opportunities, and recommend services we can offer to help.

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SECTION 1
INTRODUCTION

This guide will provide a comprehensive overview of Email Marketing, and guidance on how you can successfully utilise Email Marketing to achieve your business objectives. The key stages in executing Email Marketing Campaigns will be covered, with advice on how to complete each stage effectively.

The content of this guide will help you:

- Understand the role email has in your overall Digital Marketing Strategy, and the essential components of an Email Marketing Strategy

- Identify the most suitable Email Marketing platform and tools to run an Email Marketing Campaign

- Integrate Email Campaigns with other marketing activities

- Learn how to grow and manage a database of relevant, high quality subscribers that are likely to engage and take action as a result of your Email Campaigns

- Develop effective Email Campaigns, and get more familiar with the planning and delivery process

- Measure and analyse results in order to improve future campaigns

- Understand the legal requirements of Email Marketing

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SECTION 2
THE ROLE OF EMAIL WITHIN A DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY

Email Marketing can play a vital role within your overall marketing strategy.

At its core, Email Marketing allows you to target different segments of your audience on a 1-to-1 basis, with carefully tailored and personalised messaging.

Until more ephemeral media, such as Social newsfeed where content is only visible for short periods, Emails exist in recipients' inboxes until they take an action on it; hopefully by reading it, click the link(s) within the email, and proceeding to your chosen website or webpage.

Key differentiators/advantages of Email as a marketing channel are:

- Emails directly communicate with audiences on a 1-2-1 basis

- Emails are permanent until acted upon, and so they can be used to amplify and prolong social media & website content

- Email campaigns can target various audiences, effectively & efficiently, with personalised messaging

- Analytical data on Email performance can be used across all marketing efforts

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SECTION 3

EMAIL MARKETING STRATEGY

When developing an Email Marketing Strategy, it is important to spend a good amount of time giving careful thought and consideration to 3 crucial areas:

1. Your Audience(s) — who are they, and what do they want to know?

2. Your Goals — what do you want from your audience(s)? what would benefit your business?

3. Your Email Content — what content tells your audience what they want to know, and sets them on a journey towards completing one (or more) of your goals

The keys to success in Email Marketing are similar to those of most other online marketing mediums. It is vital to understand 1) who you are trying to reach and their needs, 2) how you want them to interact with your business, and 3) what content will both meet their needs whilst encouraging your desired interactions.

YOUR AUDIENCE

Firstly, when planning your Email Marketing Campaigns, establish who your recipients should be.

Basis differentiating characteristics can be simple demographic information like age, gender, geographic location, and interests.

On a more detailed level, advanced demographic information such as purchasing habits, or an individual's stage in the buying cycle can significantly impact who companies choose market to.

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For example:
Online retailers such as eBay often select audiences based on their purchasing habits. i.e. emailing promotions on car care products to individuals who have previously purchased car care products on their site.

Insurers often select audiences for their Email Marketing based on their stage in the buying cycle. i.e. focusing on Emailing people whose insurance renewal dates are coming up shortly, rather than people 4 months into a 12 month policy, because the former are likely to be considering purchasing a policy in the near future and the latter are not.

YOUR GOALS

Secondly, you need to ask "What action(s) do I want my Email Marketing activity inspire from my audience?"

Immediate actions will typically be visiting your website. However, the eventual goal is generating something that is of benefit to your business.

For example:
- Product sales
- Service subscriptions or renewals
- Phonecalls
- Event or webinar attendance
- Contact form submissions

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YOUR EMAIL CONTENT

Once you understand who your audience are, and what actions you hope to generate as a result of your email marketing, you need to make an informed choice as to the content they may want to receive.

Consider what content your audience is likely to take an interest in, and how that content can be leveraged to set your audience on a path towards your website, and eventually towards completing one of your chosen goals.

This will be something you that becomes clearer over time once you have tested a variety of content with your audience. Campaigns are likely to take place over more than 1 email, with a mix of different content and visuals etc.

Task

Create Email Marketing Goals & Objectives

1. Outline your email marketing goals, what do you want to achieve? (increase sales by %, gain % more subscribers by a specific date e.g.)

2. Outline any new products/services to promote

3. Outline any upcoming events you have planned to promote

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SECTION 4
EMAIL MARKETING TOOLS

4.1   IN-HOUSE VS OUTSOURCING

IN-HOUSE VS OUTSOURCING

Pros
- Cost effective
- Control
- Team that knows the company's values & brand
- Full time team

Pros
- Access to a wide range of marketing experts
- Fixed monthly cost
- Reliable platform
- Less expensive than building an email marketing team

Cons
- Time
- Costly to hire marketing experts

Cons
- Lack of control
- Risk of choosing a company which isn't a great fit

There are numerous benefits in using an in-house team, and there are also benefits to the alternative of outsourcing your email marketing.

In-house means having your company manage your email marketing efforts from within your organisation.

Outsourcing, means to have your email marketing efforts managed by a third party sender.

Third party senders can develop your email marketing strategy to suit your goals, create and design the emails, include techniques and analyse your emails to improve your reach, engagement and return on investment.

By managing your email marketing in house, it's cost effective and your organisation has absolute control over what emails are created and to who. As your organisation knows your

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values and brand more than an outsourced team, having an in-house team creating emails increases the likelihood that the correct brand voice and values will be used. Your employees can also use email marketing to cohere with the rest of their marketing efforts.

A downfall of using your in-house team for email marketing is that is can be extremely time consuming and costly to hire marketing experts to carry out your email marketing efforts.

Outsourcing your email marketing efforts often results in to ongoing fees, or a fixed monthly cost, being incurred. It's less expensive than building an email marketing team, but usually means you have less control over your email marketing content, and you risk choosing a company which isn't a great fit your brand.

4.2   EMAIL CLIENTS & KEY FEATURES

Features
- Lists
- Schedule campaigns
- Connect your store
- Email Campaign Templates
- Automation
- Advanced segmentation

Price
- Starting Up - Free Plan
- Up to 2,000 subscribers and 12,000 emails per month

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little green plane

Features

- Infinite lists
- Postcode Plotter
- Subscriber management systems
- Free web forms

Price

- Unlimited free support
- Unlimited lists/contacts
- Pay for the amount of emails per month

dotMailer

Features

- Dedicated account manager
- best-of-breed platforms
- Training webinars
- Surveys & Forms

Price

- Start at £250 p/m

Campaign Monitor

Features

- Marketing automation tool
- Personalize each email using rich data
- Test, track & optimise tools

Price

- Start at £9 p/m

Features
- Customisable templates
- Email Tracking
- Image Library
- List Building Tools

Price
- Start at $20 p/m

There are lots of different Email Marketing platforms. Each has different features for various needs, as well as multiple price ranges.

MailChimp is simple to use, has hundreds of email campaign templates, flexible design features, advanced analytics, A/B testing and automation options, as well as hundreds of integrations with popular CRM systems like Facebook and Capsule. MailChimp also provides various features for eCommerce businesses, like the ability to 'connect your store', as well as multi user accounts to ensure your team can work seamlessly through your email marketing efforts. MailChimp provides a free plan with a limit of Up to 2,000 subscribers and 12,000 emails per month. Pricing can alter if your subscribers grow and the number of emails you send monthly increases. These packages start at $25 per month.

Little Green Plane is also relatively easy to use. With Little Green Plane you can have an infinite lists of subscribers, and other useful features including, do not mail lists, free web forms, export inactive and active contacts, as well as a post code plotter. Little Green Plane accounts include free support, and unlimited lists and contacts, but the cost of the platform varies as it is based on the number of emails you send per month. For example: 1,000 emails would cost ~£12.95 p/m, 2,500 emails would cost ~£19.95 p/m, 25,000 emails would cost ~£115.00 p/m.

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dotMailer provides you with a dedicated account manager to support you through the creation of your campaigns, and has lots of toolkits and templates. Further benefits include training webinars and high ease-of-use. The cost to use dotMailer varies, but it starts at £250 p/m.

Campaign Monitor focuses more on the customer journey, and optimising emails to each customer type. Various features like a marketing automation tool to trigger different emails depending on customer spend, and the products they purchase can be highly effective. Testing, tracking and optimising tools to measure your emails success and improve performance over time are also available. Prices range from £9p/m for their basic package to £129p/m for their premium package.

Constant Contact is simple to use, and has lots of features similar to the other email tools available. One of the great features of Constant Contact is that it has a free image library, as well as list building tools and customisable tools. Constant Contact starts at $20p/m.

Task

Which of the 5 tools best suits your business at this stage?

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SECTION 5
INTEGRATING EMAIL

YOUR BLOG

People like to consume content in various ways; some like to read blogs directly from a website, some prefer to be sent a roundup of content directly to their email account, and others stumble across content on social media channels. It's extremely important to make sure you have the capability to meet all of your readers (and potential readers') requirements. Your job is to make it as easy as possible for your audience to read your blogs and engage with you. Email marketing can play a major part in this, as part of an overall marketing strategy, which would also include sharing of the same content across social channels.

There are various ways to do this including setting up an RSS feed, to automatically send your blogs via an email campaign to your subscribers who have opted in.

Task

What content could you send out through an automated RSS campaign?

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SOCIAL MEDIA

- Add share/follow buttons to Email Campaigns
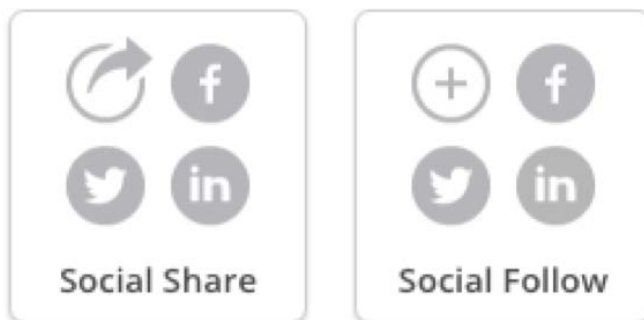
- Add a Subscription call-to-action to your website pages and on branded Facebook Pages
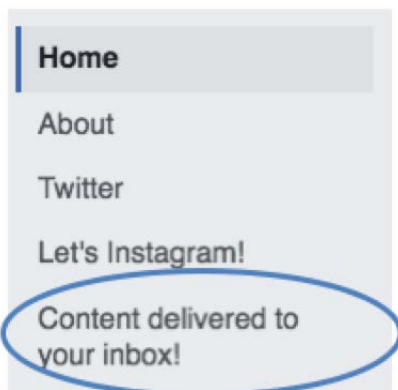
- Add 'Retweet this' options in Email Campaigns to allow recipients to easily share content on Twitter

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SECTION 6
DATABASE GROWTH & MANAGEMENT

6.1   CAPTURING QUALITY DATA

- Opt- In
- Tailored information
- Regularly update & clean your data
- EU Data Compliance

Quality email marketing lists are businesses no.1 asset. When customers sign up to receive emails they have demonstrated a commitment to your brand and a level of trust.

However, building quality lists takes time. You need to provide tailored information for each list you have. What did they sign up to? What do they want to receive? Make sure you stick by what you promised to deliver to ensure your customers continue to engage with your emails.

The most common consequences of poor email deliverability are the inability to communicate with subscribers (41 percent) and poor customer service (24 percent). However, poor email deliverability also results in missed opportunities from lost opens and impressions, as well as cascading negative effects on sender reputation, list health and ultimately sales. These deliverability issues can indicate that an organization is having trouble fulfilling consumer expectations.

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To maintain a healthy list and optimize deliverability, you must continually manage your email database. Effective database management can be achieved by:

1. Validating new email addresses
2. Regularly removing hard bounces, along with checks for duplications and honor opt-outs
3. Monitoring and tracking deliverability metrics to address any ISP or database issues proactively
4. Developing a strategy for contacting inactive subscribers that includes data-driven reactivation campaigns.
5. Following all local laws and governances as well as CAN-SPAM best practices.

The emails you collect during the holiday rush and throughout the year represent new opportunities to engage and connect with consumers. A healthy, well-managed email database will boost deliverability and the subsequent profitability of all of your email marketing efforts. However, following laws around the data collected is essential, knowing what data you can collect and what is not within the EU is vital. MailChimp is US based, you must check the legalities around this.

6.2 SEGMENTATION

By narrowing your focus and sending messages to targeted groups within your lists, your recipients will find your campaigns more relevant — and relevant campaigns get better results.

Divide your email lists into categories to easily create engaging content that is most relevant to them, to achieve the outcome and goals of your email marketing efforts. For example, categorising your lists by location, business type, industry, job title, past purchases etc. will ensure your content is specifically aimed at those audiences.

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Task

Create Email Marketing Goals & Objectives

1. Define who your customers are - what do they want to know?

2. Categorise your lists depending on your customers needs

3. How will you encourage your audience to subscribe to your lists?

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SECTION 7

DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGN

Choosing the right format & design tools

7.1   TYPES OF EMAIL

PLAIN TEXT & RICH TEXT EMAILS

Plain text emails have just text, they have no formatting, no hyperlinks and if you want to include images they need to be sent as attachments. One of the great benefits of sending plain text emails is that they are unlikely to get picked up my SPAM detectors, unlike HTML emails. Another reason why people send plain text emails is that some email clients do not support or display HTML properly, but plain text emails will display correctly. You will also find some people just prefer receiving plain text emails. By sending plain text emails within MailChimp, you can send a personal email to look like an everyday email to mass marketing. It has functionality of MailChimp, familiarity of a normal day to day email. To make plain text emails easier to read, use lots of whitespace to avoid having a huge grey blob of text. Leave space between paragraphs and after headings, and aim for paragraphs of four to five lines. Use short URLs wherever possible. Again, longer URLs can break up and become hard to click on, or copy and paste. Make your copy easy to scan by dividing it with clear headings. Sometimes though a plain-text style* email can actually perform better. If you have a very specific audience and a short, highly targeted message with a clear call to action then a simple email which focusses the reader on the message (rather than the branding) and emphasises the call to action can have dramatic results.

Rich text emails give you more flexibility than plain text emails, you can change the colour of text, make it bold, italic and change the size and font. But there are a few limitations, URL

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Links need to be inserted fully into the content, and images need to be sent as attachments. Rich text emails lifts restrictions of plain text emails, to allow you to be more creative with your designs.

www.campaignmonitor.com/dev-resources/guides/design/

HTML EMAILS

HTML emails are the most creative and flexible email types, every part of the email can be designed to a style that suits your brand, you can have a header, footer, logos, background colours and images can be displayed within your emails rather than attachments. HTML emails require lots of coding, but MailChimp provides templates that are already coded which you can edit. HTML emails are not a good idea for conversational emails as it can be difficult to get the formatting within your email server and the conversation gets extremely messy once the email is replied to. The best use of using HTML emails is single use emails. You can create strong marketing emails, that include call to action buttons, straplines, footers with your details in and it can be branded.

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Modern Henchman created a HTML newsletter which looks engaging and is easy to navigate.

Rip Curl drives sales with emails that show surf loving customers the content they want. This Bombshell Series email campaign showcases Rip Curl's incredible surfers, as well as the must-have styles from their Bombshell wetsuit line, encouraging subscribers to "shop now".

Birchbox uses HTML campaigns to showcase their monthly beauty box, engage with subscribers and promote their online shop.

Jaybird creates email campaigns with vibrant, edge-to-edge imagery to help Jaybird showcase the differentiating design of their earbuds, giving subscribers a larger-than-life look at how the products work in action.

BuzzFeed has developed over 20 email newsletters that are catered to subscribers' specific interests, like Health and Beauty. Email is one of the top 5 referrers of website traffic and visitors from email spend 3 minutes longer on their website than visitors from other channels.

HTML emails are very popular with big brands and businesses that need to visually engage their audience to tell a story. But, a lot of professional individuals use plain-text emails because they believe that text, not images, get straight to the point on the issue that they are addressing and send their core message.

www.campaignmonitor.com/best-email-marketing-campaigns/

Best Uses of HTML Emails:
Single use emails; Group emails; Marketing Emails; Newsletters; Track opens/clicks; Clickable links

MIME
Multi- part MIME is emails that send both HTML and plain text versions, once the email client receive the MIME it renders the HTML version but if it can't it will display the plain text version. Sending both types of emails suggests you will reach your maximum audience, by giving the email client receiver an alternative if it cannot render HTML.

7.2   IMAGE DESIGN TOOLS

There are lots of tools available to help you create and design professional emails.

Canva: Canva is a free design tool, with various templates including social media header's. Simply edit a template within Canva or upload your own images, the tool also allows you to use your own brand colours. You can also use Canva to create images to add into your campaigns too and throughout the rest of your marketing efforts.

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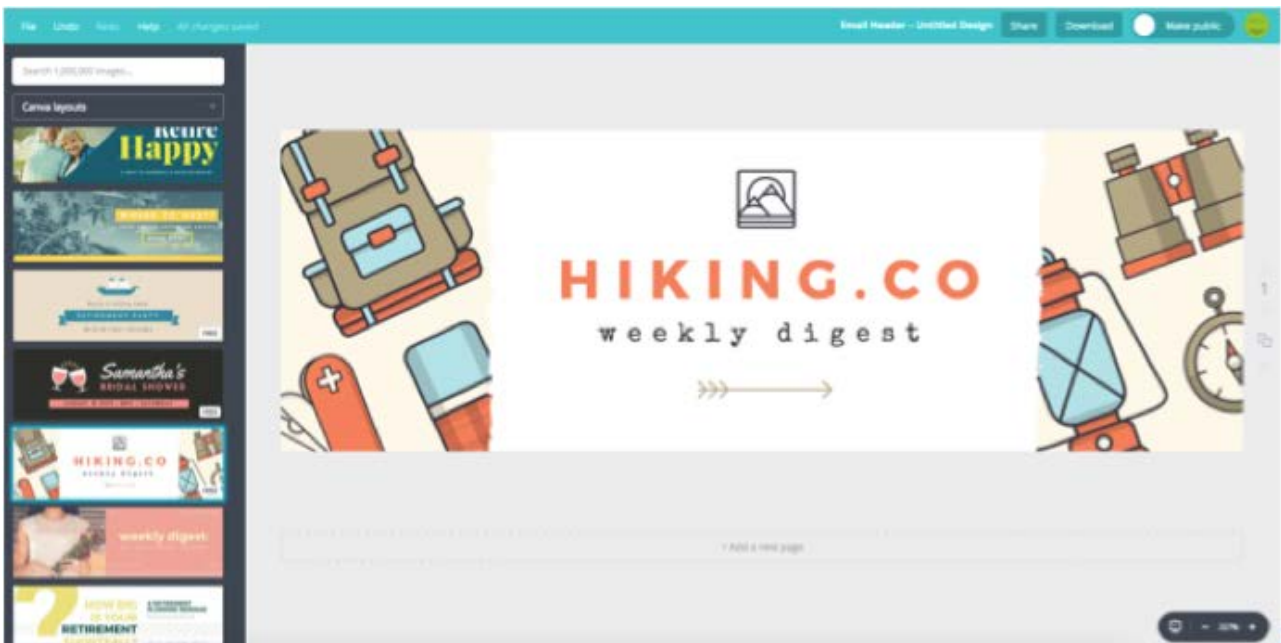
placeit.net: Place It, allows you to upload your own images on to mobile phones, desktop computers for example, it's free and will make a big difference in the design of your emails.

pixabay.com/: It's against the law to use images without your permission, including within your emails, but by using Pixabay, they provide royalty free images which you can include within your email campaigns legally.
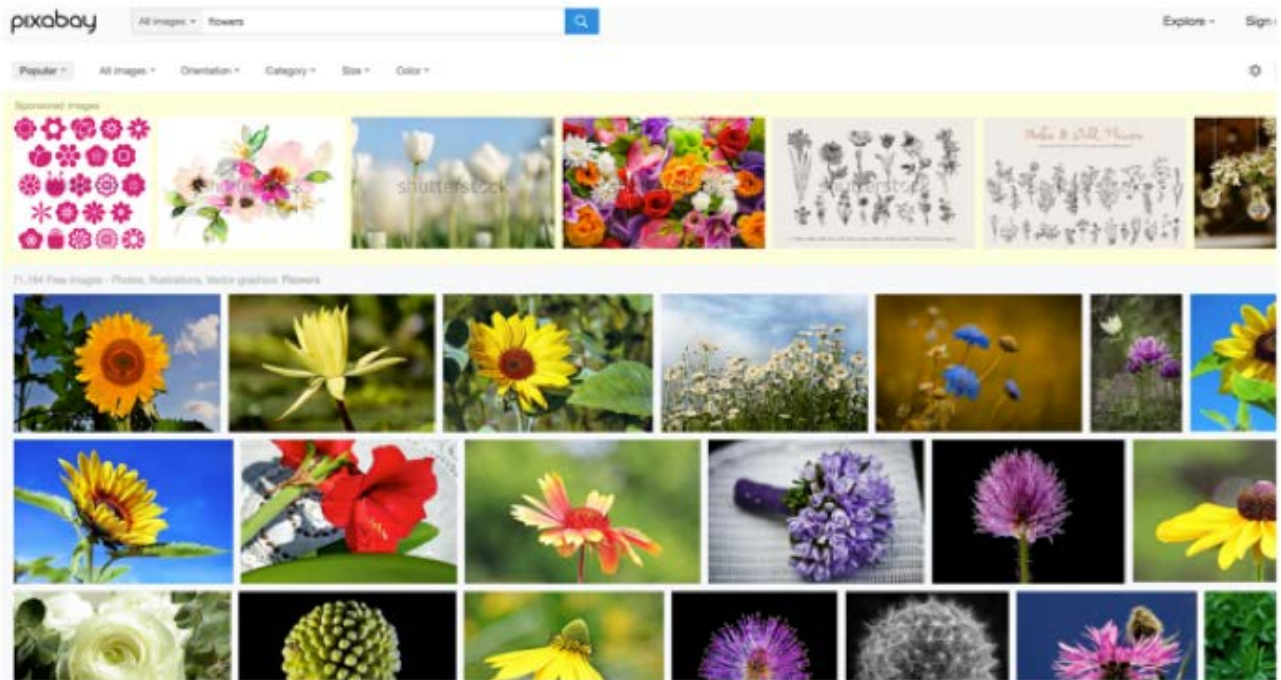
mailchimp.com/: MailChimp provides hundreds of email templates for you to use for various types of businesses and events that you can edit and personalise

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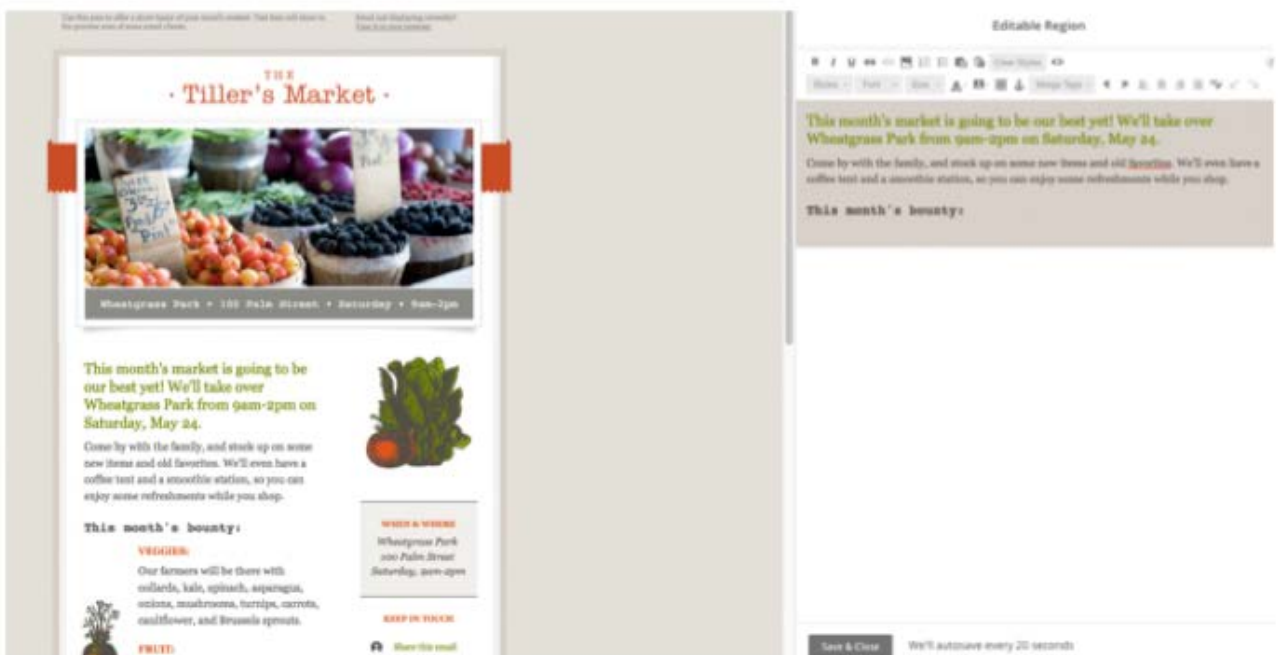
7.3 EMAIL DESIGN TOOLS

Templates: Email marketing tools have various options of email templates for you to customise for the different types of emails you could send, from events to newsletters. These templates are usually very simple to customise and use a drag and drop format, using these templates will ensure your email campaigns are structured in the right way and they are very simple to customise. Alternatively, most platforms have the opportunity to add your own coded web page which you may be able to get help from a web developer.
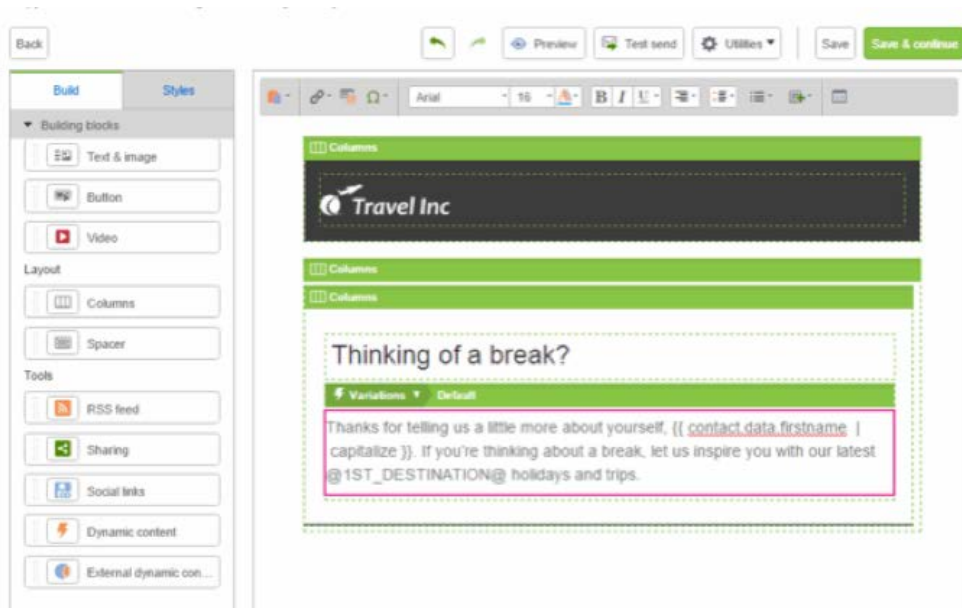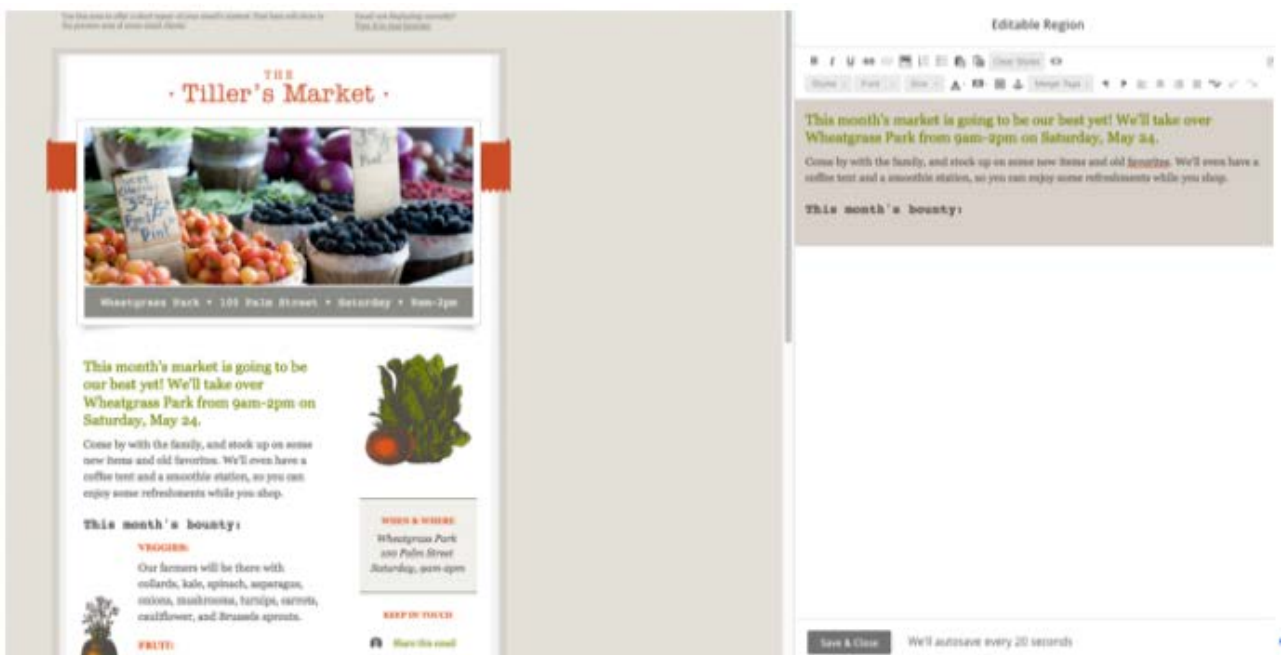
Call to Action: keep the Call To Action above the fold. Your subscriber shouldn't have to scroll to see it. Use a different colour to draw attention to it.
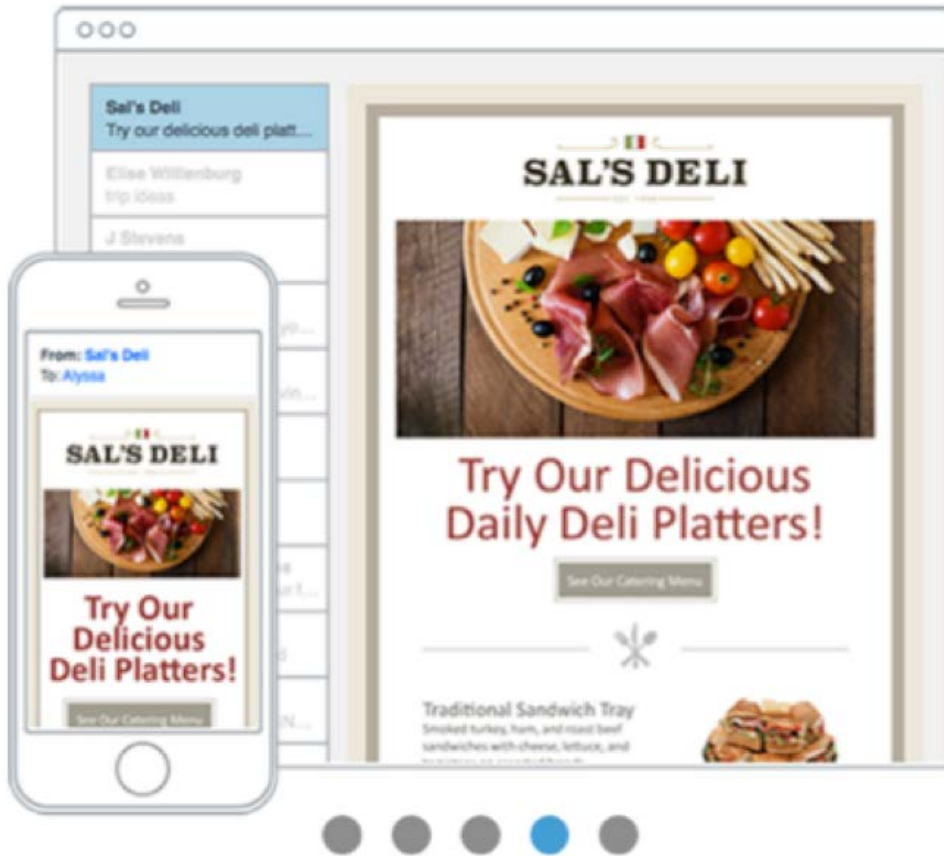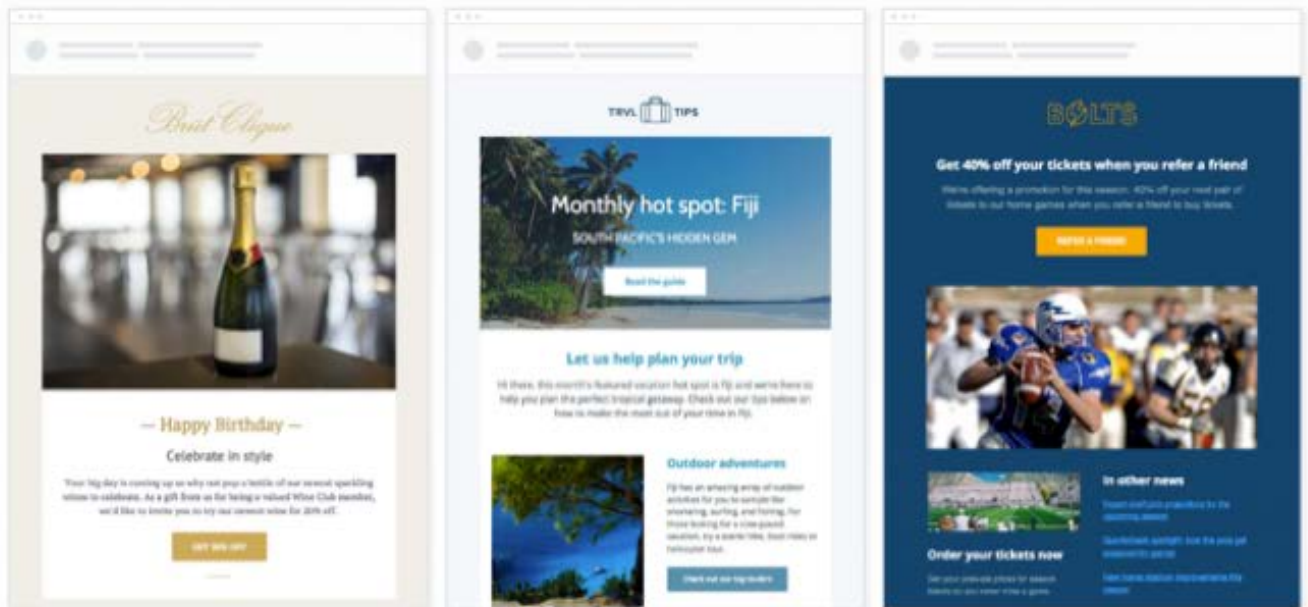
7.4 COMPOSING EFFECTIVE EMAILS & CASE STUDY

Once you begin sending email campaigns, you will understand what works and what doesn't depending on your audience.

An email may be extremely successful for one type of industry, but it might completely fail for another. However, there are a few pointers to follow. People are extremely busy; whether it's a B2B or B2C email, people want to know what the email entails quickly. They need to absorb the information as quickly as possible and to do this emails should have light content, your subject line must align with your email content and your email needs to be straight to the point.

So, three top tips for composing effective emails are:

1. **Get straight to the point** – keep messaging concise and direct. Avoid lengthy messaging and unclear messaging that may leave the recipient trying to work out what the point of the email is and what to do next.

2. **Use light content** – limit the number of words use. Generally speaking, the less words used the better, and as a rough guide anything >400 words is likely too lengthy and few recipients will read the entire email. Using too many calls-to-action (buttons or links) in an email, often referred to in Email Marketing as 'click opportunities', can reduce the effectiveness of an email too. As with the word count, the fewer click opportunities there is in an email, the more you are giving the recipient a clear indication of what they should do next i.e. one choice of button to click, rather than ten that each link to different places.

3. **Align subject line & content** – Get off on the right foot with your recipients. Make sure the messaging and expectations set by your email subject line matches up with the contents of the email. Subject lines that deceptive, or only relate very loosely to the content of the email are likely to confuse or even irritate recipients.

Case Study:

Hammock is a creative agency serving mainly B2B audience, which means they have their work cut out for them if they want to connect with subscribers via email. B2B clients already get a plethora of inbox-stuffing material from other creatives, account managers, project managers, etc. Such targets need a pretty compelling reason to read more.

Despite that barrier, Hammock managed to increase open rates by 48%.

Traditionally, Hammock focused on providing helpful value-driven content to their audience. They asked themselves every day, "is our email content authentically helping our customers?"

They wanted to show clients and prospects how to use things to solve problems and then present them with the solution to do that. I 100% agree that's the right approach.

However, Hammock admits that their newsletters were content heavy, and regular content-heavy emails will fatigue your contacts.

The team at Hammock wanted to continue that focus on helping subscribers solve problems while starting discussions, so they turned that content-heavy newsletter into what they called an "un-newsletter" and coined it their "!dea Email." It would be super light on content with just one helpful marketing idea featuring suggestions on how to best utilize that idea.

The team simplified design and content and customized the preheader to make everything less crowded.

Additionally, the team at Hammock wrote 3 headlines for each newsletter and conducted A/B testing. Whichever headline had the highest open rate in the first hour was used for the remainder of their subscriber list.

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The result was that 48% increase in open rates.

Giving people too much info can be a disservice, especially in an email. You're almost drowning the prospect if you feed them 20+ ideas with links to take action.

Instead, cut it down. Reduce it to 1 or 3 ideas they can do something with. That makes it memorable, valuable and more actionable.

blog.crazyegg.com/2016/04/18/4-shocking-email-case-studies/

To help subscribers to solve problems while starting discussions, the team turned their traditional, content-heavy email newsletter into what they refer to as an "un-newsletter."

This provides subscribers with just one helpful marketing idea, alongside suggestions of how to best utilize that idea.

The team simplified email content and design, and customized the email preheader text in order to meet their goal of a more helpful, less crowded newsletter. To bring focus to these changes, they decided to rename it "The Idea Email."

www.marketingsherpa.com/article/case-study/simplifying-email-content-increase-opens

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In the previous newsletter, the standard was five to seven articles, a blurb and a small thumbnail image encouraging people to click to see more information.

The current version of the newsletter prominently features the new name, "The Idea Email," and is made up of one landscaped image, a headline and the 350 words of copy.
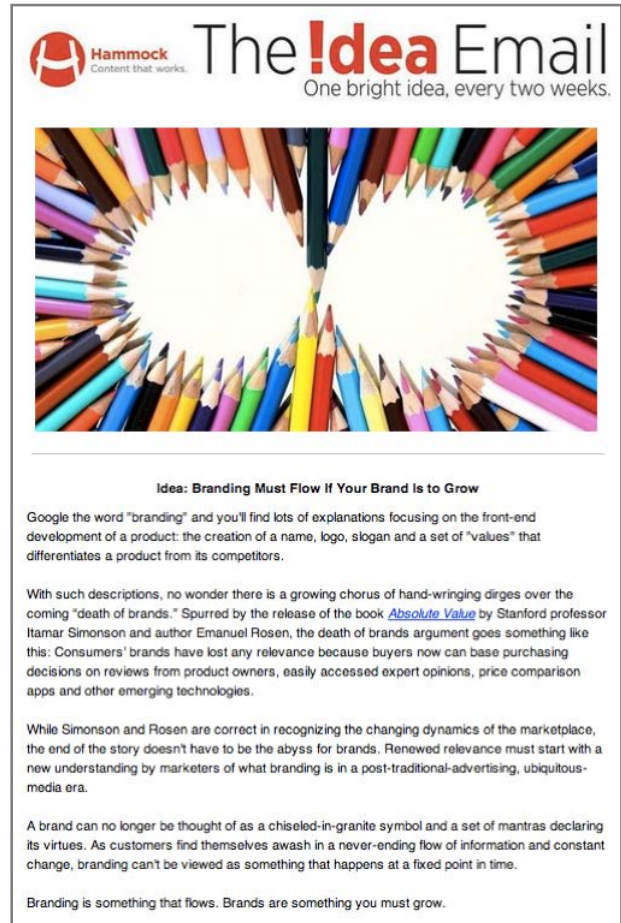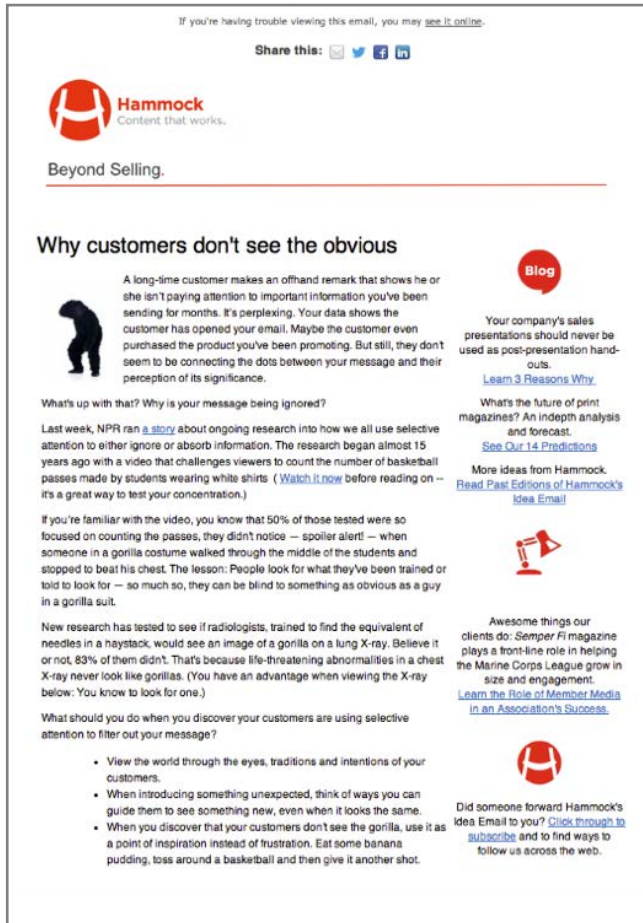
7.5   MAXIMISING CLICK-THROUGH RATES

Altering your email campaigns to maximise click through rates is a must, always create clear and relevant headlines to grab the reader's attention, grabbing their attention as soon as possible is absolutely critical to ensure your reader keeps on reading your email.

To keep your reader focused, paragraphs should be kept short to keep them interested but make sure you have included all the relevant information that they require. Try adding a deadline to your email. This will hurry your customers into buying and clicking through to your products/services, this could be a discount code for a limited time.

If your email contains lots of images, they may have trouble uploading. Keep images to a minimum and make sure you don't include any essential copy on images in case they don't load. Try to avoid over using spammy words and get more personal within your emails, you don't want to be too sales orientated and put off your readers. Don't over use copy that you have sent out in previous emails your readers will get bored of the same copy. Try to gain trust by including testimonials within your emails, keeping them close to the click can be an added bonus too. Reading emails on the go is how lots of people now read their emails, always check what your email campaigns looks like on a mobile device, your email might look clear and concise within a desktop but it may look completely different within a mobile device! Also, testing your email campaigns is essential! Test your subject lines, headers and content regularly to ensure your email campaigns are created to maximize click throughs.

7.6   AUTOMATED EMAIL CAMPAIGNS

"Companies who send automated emails are 133% more likely to send relevant messages that correspond with a customer's purchase cycle. – http://www.lenskold.com/content/LeadGenStudy_2013.html "

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An automated email campaign is created once, and automatically sends to the recipient when specific options are activated by that person. Once created, there is no need to do anything, the automated email will continue to send to those people meeting the specific requirements. Automated email campaigns ensure you don't miss sending important emails to new subscribers for example, and they save you a lot of time.

MailChimp provides lots of various automations from welcome emails to new subscribers, appointment reminders, gaining customer feedback, blog feed there are lots of options available to reach out to new and existing clients without having to constantly create and send emails to each individual.
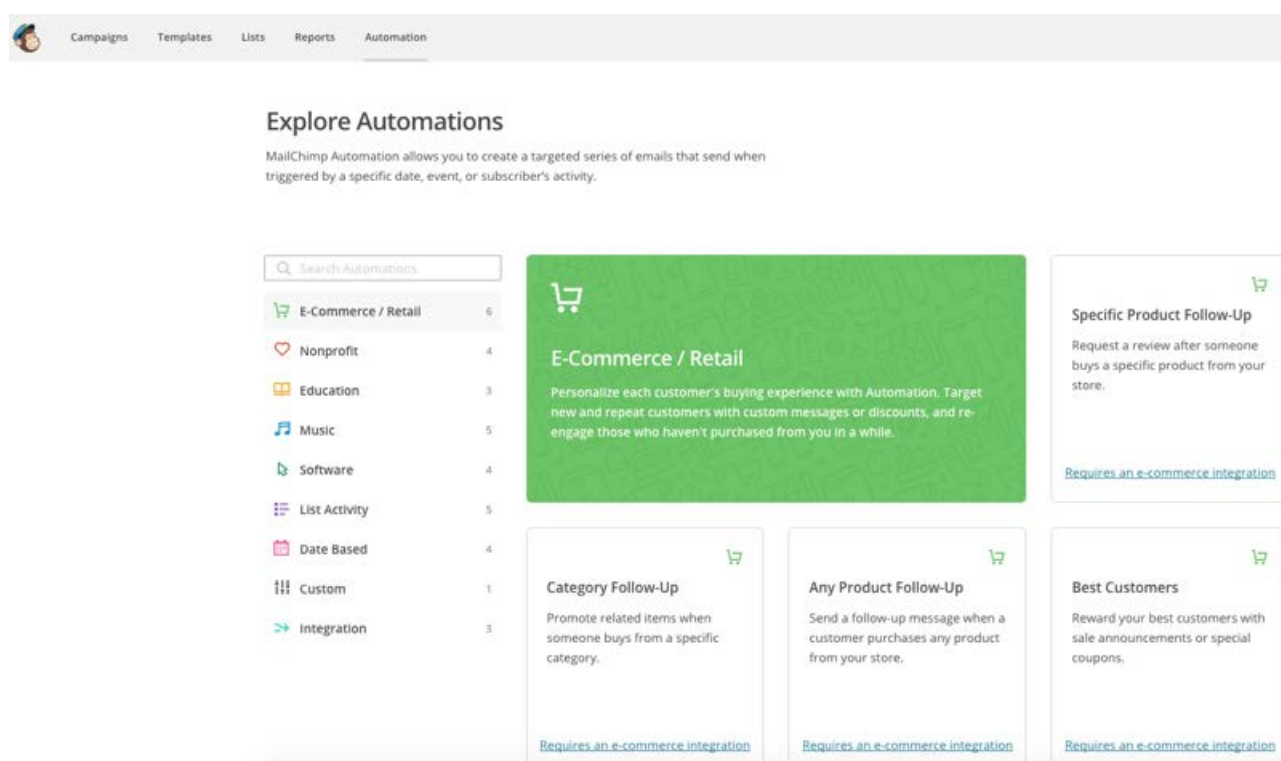
WHEN MIGHT YOU USE AN AUTOMATED EMAIL?

Automated emails should take into account what stage customers are at. They could be a new subscriber, they could have abandoned their shopping cart on your website, or they may already have purchased a product. The key is to provide

your customers with relevant information to purchase or purchase again. You will need to target each customer within their specific journey and build a strategy to target each customer.

You might use an automated email to….

New Subscriber: Send personalised emails to your new subscribers, welcoming them and even send helpful blog posts and discounts to make them feel welcome, which may lead into purchasing your products/services.
You want to provide your new subscribers with the best opinion of your brand, they have already built trust with you by subscribing to you, but you will need to keep on building your relationship to turn your subscriber into a purchasing customer.

Cart: Send automated emails to remind customers of the products they've left in their cart and encourage them to complete their transaction.

Birthdays: Send automated emails to subscribers who have birthdays coming up, provide them with a birthday present in the form of a discount code for example to spend within your company.

Purchase: Automatically follow up with customers after a purchase and recommend other products that they'll love. Surprise your best customers with a coupon triggered by their shopping behavior. Once they have purchased a product, you want to persuade them to buy from you again and keep them interested in your products/services.

Task **Consider automated campaigns your business could potentially send, and select two to add to your planned email activity.**

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7.7 BEST TIMES TO SEND AN EMAIL

Identify when the best time to post will be for your business, bearing in mind your offering and customer base. The best practice is to use your analytics to determine the best times for your audience.

Sources:

http://www.smartinsights.com/email-marketing/email-communications-strategy/best-times-send-email-2016-infographic/

http://www.webmarketinggroup.co.uk/blog/when-is-the-best-time-to-send-out-email-marketing-campaigns/

Seasonal Triggers:
There are lots of different industry statistics for the best times to publish content. If your email contains actionable messages, the best time to send is at the end of the week or the weekend, people have time to read their emails as they have the lowest volume of emails coming through. The best time for people to open your emails is between 12pm- 4pm, the main reason for this is because they have less emails coming through on an afternoon, which suggests they have more time to read your

emails. The best time to receive responses from your email marketing efforts is early morning and late evening, simply because people have less emails coming through at these times and more time to reply. BUT, the best practice is to use your analytics to determine the best times for your audience, all audiences are different for different industries and markets and just relying on industry statistics can be damaging.

The right timing is critical for B2B email marketing success. Look at the data to identify what makes sense for your customers. Data can help uncover the best day of the week or time of day that's most effective. While there are differences of opinion as to the best time to communicate through email with customers, relying on analytics and email operational reporting is the most accurate way to collect information to inform your campaign.

Timing also has to do with recognizing where in the customer journey the recipient happens to be to trigger appropriate follow-up email. For instance, if someone downloads a white paper or takes some action that shows interest, a timely follow-up phone call or email sent in response is a smart strategy. https://blogs.adobe.com/digitalmarketing/email/6-best-practices-for-b2b-email-marketing/

Task **Identify when the best time to post will be for your business, bearing in mind your offering and customer base**

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SECTION 8
OPTIMISING YOUR CAMPAIGNS

Once an Email Marketing Campaign has been composed, ensuring it is optimised for peak performance is essential. Follow the processes outlined in this section as they apply to your Email Marketing to optimised your campaigns.

8.1 OPTIMISATION CHECKLIST

Check each item on this optimisation check list is either correct, set up correctly, or has been carried out:

1. **Spelling/Grammar** – make sure your copy does not have any spelling or grammar mistakes.

2. **Hyperlinks** – hyperlinks links have been used in the correct place within the email, and all links used are active and will take recipients through to the intended website page (i.e. no broken links to 404 pages.) Before sending your campaign, ensure all of your hyperlinks and call-to-action buttons work on all devices.

3. **Mobile Friendly** - 53% of emails are opened on mobile devices (https://www.campaignmonitor.com/resources/guides/email-marketing-new-rules/) and 23% of readers who open an email on a mobile device open it again later (https://www.campaignmonitor.com/resources/guides/email-marketing-new-rules/.) Making sure your email campaigns are optimised for mobile devices is hugely advantageous. Within your emails stay concise in both your content and design, mobile devices screens means content needs to be limited to focus on the essentials of the email. Use a simple one column template, so the user does not need to zoom in and out of content they can continually scroll through out your email. Add one clear call to action, this needs to be as

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simple as possible to find. Strong contrasting colours are also a bonus to add, due to people changing their brightness within the phone, contrasting colours can easily be read. Always preview what your email looks like within a mobile device before sending.

4. Images - Images within your email campaigns need to be sized correctly to display within your emails, before sending ensure your images display correctly across all devices.

5. Appropriate Language - Ensure your language within your emails coheres with your emails goal, for example using persuasive language is appropriate for sales emails.

8.2   A/B TESTING

Testing email campaigns is vital for trying new layouts, content and techniques.

A/B testing options allow you to test numerous variables within your email campaigns, to ensure your campaigns are optimised effectively to reach your goals.

Before you start A/B Testing, it's extremely important to understand what variable you will test and how you will measure it's success.

For example, by testing your email subject line you could measure its success by how many people opened the email and the winner of your campaign would be the email with the most opens.

You could also look back at your past campaigns open rate percentage and aim to increase your open rate by a certain percentage, this would be an indicator of how successful your campaign is compared to past campaigns. Test large number of recipients and one variable at a time for best results and test often!

The first step in setting up an effective A/B test is to decide what you'll test. While you may want to test more than one thing, it's important to only test one thing at a time to get accurate results. Things you might consider testing include:

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Call to action

(Example: "Buy Now!" vs. "See Plans & Pricing")

Subject line

(Example: "Product XYZ on Sale" vs. "Discounts on Product XYZ")

Testimonials to include

(or whether to include them at all)

The layout of the message

(Example: single column vs. two column, or different placement for different elements)

Personalization

(Example: "Mr. Smith" vs. "Joe")

Body text

Headline

Closing text

Images

The specific offer

(Example: "Save 20%" vs. "Get free shipping")

8.3   PREVIEW TESTING

It's extremely important to preview your email before sending, within marketing campaign managers, you are able to preview your campaign in desktop, mobile and inbox mode, to know how your email will appear within various formats.

This is essential, an email may look and read great within a desktop email but it might be hard to read within a mobile device, in this case you will need to edit your email so that the email works consistently throughout the different formats.

Always check each 'Call to Action' are they clear to the recipient, are they in the best place within the email, are they easy to locate? Check each link within the email to make sure they work, as well as making sure any image or video displays correctly within all the formats.
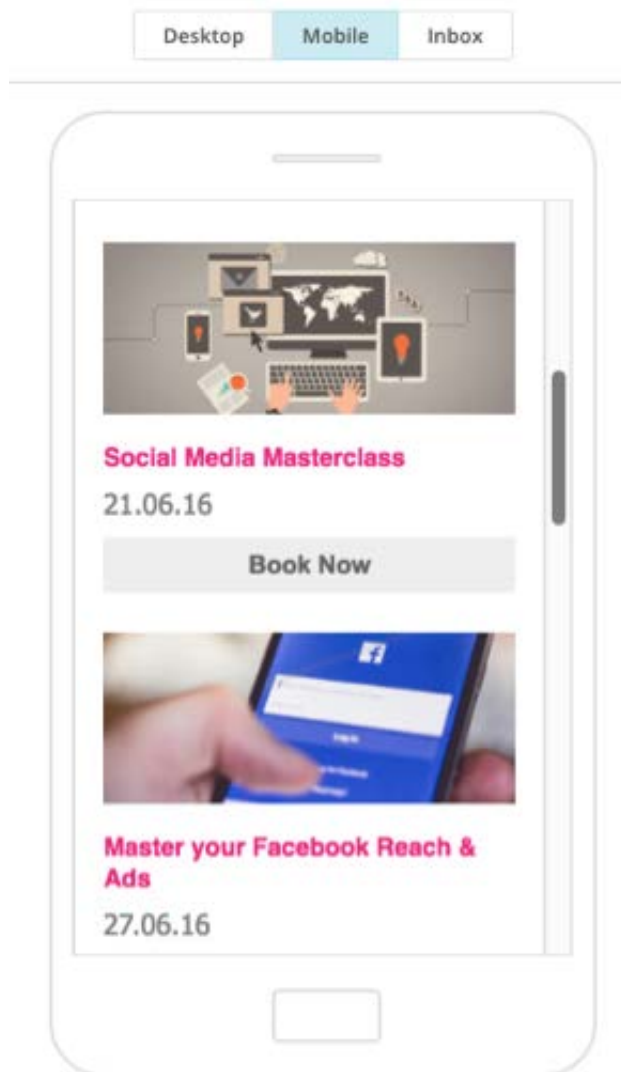
SECTION 9
MONITORING CAMPAIGNS

Measuring results & making improvements to Email Marketing Campaigns will allow you to ensure your Email Marketing becomes more effective over time, and your business is drawing the maximum benefit possible from Email as a marketing channel.

9.1   TRACKING EMAIL CAMPAIGNS

Tracking email campaigns is absolutely essential to know if your email marketing efforts are achieving your objectives and goals. There are lots of different options within email marketing tools to track your campaigns.

As an example, MailChimp provides each campaign with various options to include within your campaigns, and provides you with a report after the email campaign has been delivered.

Tracking

☑ **Track opens**
Discover who opens your campaigns by tracking the number of times an invisible web beacon embedded in the campaign is downloaded. Learn more

☑ **Track clicks**
Discover which campaign links were clicked, how many times they were clicked, and who did the clicking.

☐ **Track plain-text clicks**
Track clicks in the plain-text version of your email by replacing all links with tracking URLs. Learn more

☑ **Google Analytics link tracking**
Track clicks from your campaigns all the way to purchases on your website.
Requires Google Analytics on your website.

Title for campaign   37 characters remaining

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☑ **E-commerce link tracking**
Track visitors to your website from your MailChimp campaigns, capture order information, and pass that information back to MailChimp. Then you can view purchase details, conversions, and total sales on the reports page. You can also set up segments based on your subscribers' purchase activity. Learn more

☑ **ClickTale link tracking**
Gain insight to how subscribers interact with your email content.
Requires ClickTale on your website.

ClickTale tag (you'll see this in your ClickTale stats)

Digital Boost Campaign

☐ **Goal tracking**
Track where subscribers go on your site, then trigger automations or segment your list based on what pages they've visited.
First, enable Goal in Account > Integrations.

☐ **Capsule: Track member activity**
We'll search for contacts by email and attach a note with the campaign stats.

Track opens by selecting the Track opens option, MailChimp will track how many of your subscribers have opened your email, this is a great indicator in knowing whether your subject line is engaging enough for your subscribers to open your email.

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Track clicks by selecting the Track clicks option this enables MailChimp to track which links were clicked within your emails, how many times and who they were clicked by.

Track plain text within plain text emails you need to include full URLs within your campaigns, by choosing the track plain text options, MailChimp will replace all the links with trackable URLs, to know which links your audience clicks on most.

Google Analytics link tracking to enable this feature, it requires Google Analytics on your website

E-Commerce link tracking Track visitors to your website from your MailChimp campaigns, capture order information, and pass that information back to MailChimp. Then you can view purchase details, conversions, and total sales on the reports page. You can also set up segments based on your subscribers' purchase activity.

ClickTale link tracking Gain insight to how subscribers interact with your email content. From the instant visitors click on the links within your emails, you can literally follow their every mouse move, click and scroll. By watching the recordings of these visitors, you will be able to follow them all the way through to their online conversion or checkout. Likewise, you can learn from Clicktale Heatmaps and other behavioral reports, aggregating thousands of browsing sessions, to reveal what this segment of visitors are collectively doing within a webpage.

Goal Track Track where subscribers go on your site, then trigger automations or segment your list based on what pages they've visited.

First, enable goal in Account > Integrations.

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**Capsule integration feature, Capsule:Track member activity**
if you use the CRM system Capsule, MailChimp integrates with
the system. By selecting the option, MailChimp will attach a
note to the contacts reached out to via email which includes
whether they have opened or clicked through within the
email.

Urchin Tracker If you are using UTMs to track your
campaigns, make sure you use the UTM links when inserting
content into your email marketing campaigns.

This example is based on MailChimp but this is also available
through other email marketing tools such as DotMailer,
Constant Contact etc.

9.2   KEY PERFORMANCE METRICS

Metrics are used to measure and analyse how successful an
email campaign is, the information collected can then be used
to edit and alter email campaigns layout, content and calls
to action options for example, to optimise campaigns in the
future to achieve your goals.
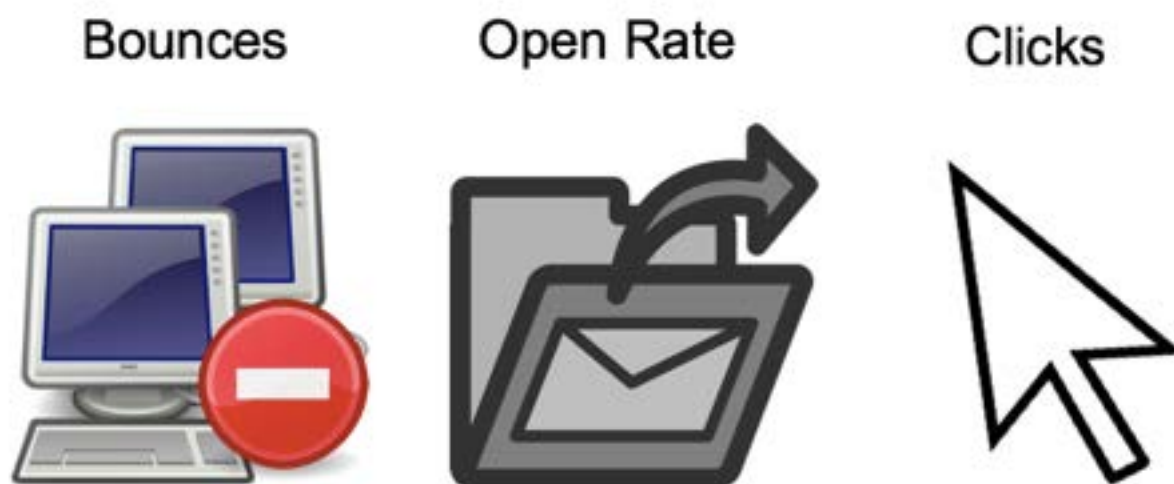
Bounces refers to the amount of email addresses within
your list that did not receive your email. Bounces affect your
deliverability and campaign results dramatically. If the same
addresses are constantly bouncing, the best practice is to
move them to an inactive list.

Open Rate is the amount of people that have actually opened your email from your list. Open Rate (% of recipients that opened the Email) can be used to gauge how well your subject line performed. When high Open Rates give no indication of how well your email performed in regards to sending recipients through to your website, it is a great indicator as to your subject line and its effectiveness.

Clicks is the combined number of clicks on any link within your email content. As an extension of clicks as an indicator of performance, Clickthrough Rate (% of recipients that clicked 1 or more links in a given campaign) is the best indicator to understand how successful the email campaign is. A high Clickthrough Rate means your content is highly relevant. If your Clickthrough Rate is low, it could suggest that your content isn't relevant to your audience.

9.3   ANALYSING RESULTS & TESTING

Once your campaign is finished, you will need to analyse the results. The specific metrics that it is most important to analyse will be influenced by the factors you are testing. The main factors are the Open Rate, Clickthrough Rate and Conversion Rate.

Comparisons that are commonly carried out are comparisons of one version of an Email vs another of the same email (previously covered in the A/B testing section), or a comparison of an Email compared to a previous Email in a sequence.

By comparing factors such Open Rate and Clickthrough Rate, platforms like MailChimp, DotMailer and Constant Contact can automatically provide you with the 'winner' of the campaign. However, such comparisons can easily be carried out manually, and it's essential to understand why a particular Email performed better than another in order to optimise your future campaigns.

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9.4   INDUSTRY BENCHMARKS

When analysing your Email Marketing efforts it is important to understand how your Email stats compare to other businesses in the same industry.

As an example, MailChimp provides an industry benchmark tool, which is a tool MailChimp uses to track millions of email data per month.

A great variety of businesses use MailChimp to send hundreds of emails every day. MailChimp's industry benchmark tools tracks the insights for all of the different types of industries using MailChimp, so that you can compare your data to others in your industry.

There are a lot of different factors for how successful Email Campaigns are, but one could affect your entire industry. It's a great tool to differentiate whether your success is due to industry factors, or down to your email marketing efforts.

To access the industry benchmark tool, navigate to your account and then settings, find your industry within the drop down bar.

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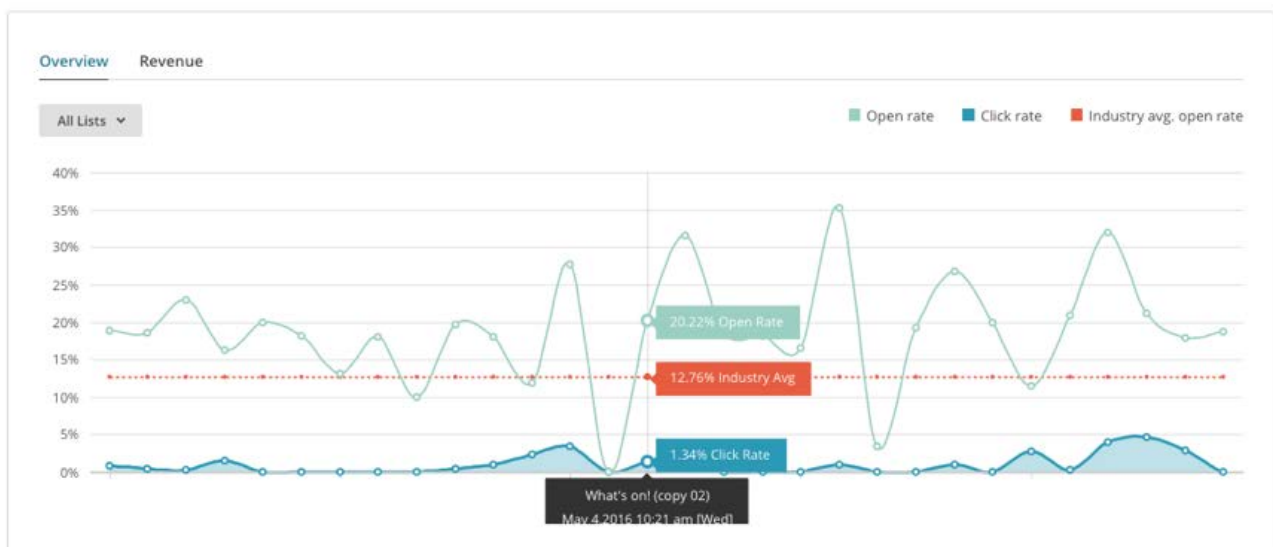
SECTION 10
NEXT STEPS

After sending campaigns (or an individual campaign), analysing your metrics to inform your next follow up emails is a must.

Analyse Campaign Metrics > Assess the Trackable Links within your campaigns > Use campaign date to create follow up campaigns

10.2 FOLLOW-UP CAMPAIGNS

One example of a follow-up campaign would be: for subscribers who haven't opened the email, send the email again, but change the subject line.

Another example would be including trackable links within your campaigns to assess the recipients journey, their next steps, and what their interests are, then using that information to create follow up campaigns for certain audience segments' interests.

For example, subscribers may have clicked through to a blog article link. It might be worth sending these subscribers a tailored campaign of other blog articles. Subscribers may have clicked through to a specific product; their next follow up email could be a campaign all about this product to remind recipients of the product, and further persuade them towards purchasing the product.

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SECTION 11
LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

On a practical level, the key steps that must be fulfilled in order to conduct legally compliant Email Marketing activity are:

- Must check if your customers want to be contacted by email
- Must receive permission if you want to send your clients other offers or promotions
- Must ask your customers if you want to share their information with other organisations
- Must allow your customers to opt out easily
- Emails must clearly state: Who you are, that you're selling something, what the promotions are
- Emails must give the option to opt out of further emails: Unsubscribe

The law within email marketing is extremely strict. By law you must give the option to opt-out of further emails. MailChimp, DotMailer, and other Email Clients typically provide templates that include an unsubscribe button as default. If you create a custom template within an Email Client, you must include an unsubscribe option to stay within legal requirements.

Within your Email Campaigns you must clearly state who you are, that you're selling something (if applicable), and what the promotions are (again, if applicable.) If using MailChimp, Lists also make it simple to state how you know the recipient, and why they receive your emails, as these fields are a requirement when creating a MailChimp list.

Finally, prior to any Email Campaigns you must have some stage asked your customer if they want to be contacted by Email, and only if they confirm should you send an email to them. Again, only sending Emails to customers who have opted-in to your Email list is best practice, and ensures you are within legal requirements.

A customer may sign-up to your Email list, but sending Email Campaigns that the user has not subscribed to is also illegal without their permission. Always gain permission first if you want to send your users other offers and promotions.

DATA PROTECTION

Data protection is highly strict and you must ask your customers if you want to share their information with other organisations. Privacy Shield: The new Privacy Shield framework introduced in July 2016, protects the fundamental rights of anyone in the EU whose personal data is transferred to the United States as well as bringing legal clarity for businesses relying on transatlantic data transfers. This new framework protects the fundamental rights of anyone in the EU whose personal data is transferred to the United States as well as bringing legal clarity for businesses relying on transatlantic data transfers.

The new Privacy Shield laws include:

1. Strong obligations on companies handling data
2. Clear safeguards and transparency obligations on U.S. government access
3. Effective protection of individual rights
4. Annual joint review mechanisms

Privacy Shield

The EU General Data Protection Regulation has been adopted this year also, however it will not apply until May 2018. But preparing for the new legislation is recommended. You must...

1. Prepare for data security breaches
2. Establish a framework for accountability
3. Embrace privacy by design
4. Analyse the legal basis on which you use personal data
5. Check your privacy notices and policies
6. Bear in mind the rights of data subjects
7. If you are a supplier to others, consider whether you have new obligations as a processor
8. Cross-border data transfers

EU General Data Protection Regulation

STOP SPAM

Emails are generally classed as spam if they containing advertisements and are sent on a large scale to receivers that have no interest in the email.

There are lots of different tools Email recipients can use to block spam, including Spam filters and automated spam detection within their Email servers.

Automated spam detectors, scan the emails before they reach the recipient and check numerous indicators and give each Email a score. If the score is too high, the Email will be flagged as spam. Email recipients can also flag Emails as spam themselves.

However, this can be an issue for many Email Campaign managers as spam filters often detect non-spam Emails as spam by various variables, and then send the Email directly to the recipient's Junk folder.

There are several techniques you can use to reduce the chances of your Emails landing in Junk folders. Building great lists is the most important, and knowing what content each list wants is essential in creating relevant content that your audience engages with.

Using white/light backgrounds, avoiding red fonts, using large headline sizes, including a large unsubscribe link (which is a legal requirement anyway), and using minimum images are all great ways to avoid being detected as spam.

Showing how you are connected to the recipient by including merge tags within your campaigns is also good practice. Further ways to prevent your Emails automatically being sent to a recipient's Junk folder are asking the recipients to add you to their address book, always including your mailing address, and never using misleading reply-to addresses.

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An important factor to remember is that if anyone sharing the same IP address has been reported as spam before, some filters will automatically flag your campaign too.

Using lots of embed code will increase the likelihood of an Email being flagged as spam, as well as copy and pasted text from Microsoft Word. To avoid this, use Email templates that are already formatted in your chosen Email client.

Finally, always test your Emails. Check your content and formatting, questioning whether or not it is likely to achieve the best possible engagement and delivery.

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