



DeliverySuccess.com

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E-mail Publishing Optimization 2006

Design

Subject Line

- Over 50% of all email users have their preview panes turned off and only see their e-mail headers.
- If your subject line doesn't get a user to click the email open, it will never be seen and ends up being deleted immediately.
- Choose your subject line carefully and test what helps you get open rates.
- Do not use all capital letters – spam filters will stop it from being delivered.
- Do put a date in your e-mail subject line.

Top 3 Inches

- 63% of all e-mail users spend 2-3 seconds scanning the top 3 inches of your newsletter and don't scroll.
- If a user doesn't see anything that makes them click, they immediately move on and your campaign is deleted.
- Always use the crucial top area for a TOC (table of contents) which includes "action items" and utilizes your best effort to get them to click and read more of your newsletter.

Images

- 39% of all e-mail users have their images turned off.
- If you use images in your newsletter, keep them limited and place them at least 3 inches down from the top.
- Use alt tags with clear text that tells the user what that image is.
- Never send one image as the entire newsletter. The user will usually delete it immediately.

HTML

- Less is more.
- Never assume the user wants to spend 20 minutes reading all of your articles and helpful links.
- Eye tracking studies show that users feel overwhelmed with too much content and click out quicker.
- Give the user what they want – fast glance and to the point details of what you are trying to promote.
- Consider splitting your content up into multiple sends in order not to overwhelm the user.
- Use fewer images for a cleaner look – never go over 650 pixels in width.

Body

- Do not overuse punctuation (just one !).
- Do not overuse hyperlinks – always use http:// with your hyperlinks.
- Always send a text version of your e-mail.
- Do not use the word remove – use unsubscribe
- Do not use the phrase "Click Here" – use "Go Here"

- Size matters – keep your e-mail between 20k and 40k.
- Be conservative on colors. Too many colors (or certain colors) can trigger spam blockers.

Delivery

Do use a reliable Content Checker.

- Trigger Checker - Check for trigger words and phrases. Many people mistakenly believe individual words catch spam filters, but more often than not, it is the phrases that will prevent your email from being delivered.
- Rephrase tool – Offers suggestions on how to rephrase your e-mail to achieve a lower “spam score”.
- Bounce Back Checker – It is crucial that you know who is and who is not receiving your e-mails.
- Blacklist Auditor – Many IP addresses are black listed and unjustly associated with spammers and you may not even realize it.
Verify if your IP address is on one of the several hundred blacklists in use today.

Know what is keeping your e-mail from delivery.

- Test.... Test.... Test... Use a spam checker to test your e-mail before sending it to your subscription list.
- Verify the deliverability of your e-mail.
- Confirm your opt-in subscribers. Send them a confirmation e-mail to verify they indeed signed up to receive your mailings.
Use these e-mail notices to promote your services by including special offers.
- Don't use the same e-mail software that Spammers use. You can add as many as 3 points to your spam score by using programs like jpfree and Stormpost.
- Your hyperlinks should always contain the domain name.... NOT the IP number.
- Do offer options- HTML/Text/RSS feeds.

Follow-Up

Know what sells and what doesn't.

- Use data information and reporting tools to track your campaign success.
- Track how many opens you're getting and who is opening them.
- Track your click-throughs.
- Market to what your subscribers are clicking on and not what they are skipping past.
- Segmentation is crucial. Send specialized offers to those who are clicking on your links.

Useful Statistics

- Never pay for a *non*-top position ad in an email newsletter. Research shows at least a 50% drop off in clicks from lower positions. Unless the newsletter's reach is exceptionally on-target *and* the lower position is a lot cheaper than the top, it's not worth your time.
- Top 2 Easiest Ways to Improve Email Responses
 - ❖ Place an email opt-in form near the top of your home page.
 - ❖ Send all new sign-ups a special welcome.
- Optimizing your e-mail ads
 - ❖ Ads in the right column do *not* work very well. They are often cut off with readers who use their preview pane.
 - ❖ Graphical ads do *not* work very well. They are great for brand awareness, but do not use them as a click through.

- ❖ Best placement – Place your ad directly above the first article in the newsletter. It's where the reader's eyes naturally go when they are looking for content.
- ❖ Use text-only or majority for your ad.
- ❖ Place the link for the ad at the bottom of the paragraph. It is much easier for the reader's eyes to find it there.
- 88% of online shoppers polled in a 2005 study said they're willing to spend time answering questions about their tastes and interests in exchange for personalized email content.