

# Essential Guide

## B2B Email Marketing



Learn how to use  
B2B Email Marketing  
to grow your business.

**marketlocation**



# Introduction

Welcome to our **B2B Email Marketing Guide** which looks at B2B email marketing in detail and the key things you should consider before starting on a new B2B email marketing campaign.

B2B email marketing is one of the most popular direct marketing channels as it is proven to be an extremely cost-effective way of generating new leads and sales.

Businesses of any size can and should use email marketing and we hope you find this guide a useful resource for improving your B2B email marketing knowledge. Continued advancements in email marketing make it extremely important to keep your knowledge up to date and in this guide we look at the following key topics:

- **Data and targeting**
- **Content and design**
- **Email testing**
- **Analysing results**

If you would like further information and help with B2B email marketing to grow your business, please get in touch with us free on **0800 955 8630**. One of our Marketing Consultants will be happy to speak to you about your business objectives and advise how email marketing can help you achieve them.



# Email Data and Targeting



**If you want to try email marketing to prospects for lead generation, you must start by obtaining accurate email data for your campaign. It's also very important that the email data you use is classed as "opt-in".**

## ● What does "opt-in" mean?

Opt-in lists are compiled from people that have "opted in" to appear on them. In other words, everyone on the list has voluntarily requested that their email address be added. These are the best quality email lists available because the recipients are expecting to get emailed.

If you send an email campaign to a non opt-in email list, you run the risk of not complying with the Data Protection Act and the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations, and having your email flagged by recipients as SPAM.

For more detailed information on these regulations we recommend visiting the Information Commissioner's Office website ([www.ico.go.uk](http://www.ico.go.uk)).

## ● What is SPAM?

The most common form of SPAM refers to unwanted email and it's also often referred to as junk email. It's extremely annoying to receive unsolicited email and recipients can complain about them. Most Email Service Providers (e.g. Yahoo, Hotmail) offer facilities that allow their customers to mark emails they don't remember opting-in for as SPAM.

You shouldn't really receive more than one complaint for every 5,000 emails you send to be within an acceptable level. If a lot of complaints are made about your email, ISPs will negatively adjust your sender reputation and may even blacklist you from sending emails altogether.

(Campaign Monitor, <http://www.campaignmonitor.com/anti-spam/>)



# Sourcing “opt-in” email addresses

These are the main ways in which you can obtain opt-in email addresses for your campaigns.

## **Build your own list of opt-in email contacts**

You can choose to start building your own list of opt-in email contacts by leveraging existing touch points with your prospects and customers. For example, if you have a “Contact Us” form on your website, you can add a tick box that individuals can complete if they want to receive email communications from you. Key issues with doing this are:

- It can be time consuming to build up any significant number of opt-ins.
- You are only capturing them from contacts you are already speaking to.
- You have to manage the email broadcast and ensure your data list stays up to date by managing unsubscribes (people who want to opt-out) yourself.

We would recommend still doing this, but also utilising third party email data to reach contacts that are not already aware of you.

## **Buy a third party opt-in email list**

There are many email list providers in the UK market that you can purchase a list of email addresses from. A reputable list provider will have ensured that all the email addresses they hold have opted-in to receive email campaigns from third party companies – giving you the opportunity to contact them.

However, you must bear in mind that you will not be the only third party to purchase these emails and they could be being contacted by multiple companies at the same time as you. This means your email campaign could still receive complaints and end up not delivering the results you need to achieve a positive return on your marketing investment.

Furthermore, you are responsible for broadcasting the emails and managing any unsubscribes (opt-outs).

## **Purchase access to a third party opt-in email list**

A very good alternative to purchasing a list of email addresses is to find a data supplier that holds third party opt-in email addresses, but does not release them in list form to their customers - thomsonlocal is one such supplier. By not releasing our opt-in email addresses in list form, we retain control over how many email campaigns are broadcast to them (just one third party email every four days) and can protect the integrity of our email database.

Email prospects that are not bombarded by multiple campaigns are much more likely to stay engaged and respond to the targeted campaigns they do receive. So although you will pay more for access to this email data it is likely to deliver you a much better return on your investment.

# Targeting your email campaigns



The key objective for most B2B email marketing campaigns is still to generate enquiries for products and services and deliver a positive return to the business.

In order to generate enquiries from prospects, the recipients of your email campaign must find the email content relevant – it must appeal directly to them. You will increase the relevancy of your email by segmenting your prospect email data and tailoring the content of your email to each audience.

For example, if you have developed a product aimed at a particular business type (e.g. Accountants) you should seek out opt-in email addresses for accountancy firms and design an email creative that will resonate with them. You can tailor your email creative by the imagery you choose, the content you write and the offer you highlight.

**A targeted email creative to opt-in email data is essential for maximising your response and ROI.**

## Email Data and Targeting Summary:

- ✓ **Only broadcast email campaigns to recipients that have opted-in to hear directly from you or third parties.**
- ✓ **Start your own opt-in email list by capturing an opt-in for any prospects and customers you are already speaking to.**
- ✓ **Be wary of buying email lists even if they seem cost effective – you won't know how many other companies have bought the same data.**
- ✓ **A managed email broadcast solution is a good option if you don't want to be responsible for sending out emails and managing the opt-outs yourself. The email data is also likely to be of much better quality.**
- ✓ **Make sure you identify who your target audience is for each email campaign, and tailor the email content to that audience.**
- ✓ **A good way to identify your ideal target audience is to look at who your best customers are.**



# Email Design and Content



According to Instiller, around 60% of emails are now opened on phones and tablets (February 2015) and this figure is only set to increase dramatically over the coming months and years. In fact, mobile email client usage is soon set to eclipse both that of webmail and desktop clients, meaning that providing a less-than-optimal reading experience on the small screen may not only inconvenience a few recipients, but eventually the majority. This could lead to diminished response rates.

**Bearing this in mind, it is important that any email designs you produce should be optimised to appear correctly on mobile devices. It's not safe to assume that if your email cannot be viewed on a mobile, the recipient will save it to look at on a desktop – in practise it is much more likely they will just hit the delete button.**

However it's not just about optimising the email itself for mobile, you need to ensure that it is easy for the recipient to act on the email on a mobile as well.

## Mobile Optimisation Design Tips

**So what can you do to optimise your email designs for mobile? Designing for mobile isn't simply a matter of writing mobile-specific CSS. Other things you should consider at the design stage are:**

- ✓ Single-column layouts work best.
- ✓ Keep your email design no wider than 500 to 600 pixels. They're easier to read on a small screen.
- ✓ Links and buttons should have a minimum target area of 44 × 44 pixels, as recommended in Apple guidelines. This is because finger-tips have to be able to click on the buttons and links and if they are too small this becomes difficult.
- ✓ The minimum font size displayed on iPhones is 13 pixels so use this as a minimum - anything smaller will be upscaled and could break the layout.
- ✓ More than ever, keep your message concise, and place all important design elements in the upper portion of the email, if possible. Scrolling for miles is much harder on a touchscreen than with a mouse.



**If you have no experience with coding up email designs in HTML and using CSS layouts we recommend that you seek to engage the skills of someone that can do this for you. Coding up email designs is not the same as coding website pages.**

# Email Content



Think about your target audience and write your message to appeal specifically to them. If possible, include personalised elements in the copy like their company name or location. A personalised email campaign should elicit a higher response.

We recommend sticking to one key message per email creative, so that it is clear to your recipients what you are trying to communicate.

Copy should always be short and scannable. You only have seconds to grab the attention of your recipients before they decide whether or not to delete your message. Don't use long paragraphs of text and use bulleted lists to pull out key points.

**The main aim of your email campaign should be to drive traffic to a specific web page so you don't need to include everything in your email - just enough to get your recipients clicking.**



## Call To Action

In any piece of direct marketing, it is very important you make it clear what you want the recipient to do next, so you get some response from your campaign. You can do this by including a "Call To Action" (CTA) in your email design. A CTA could be a button, some type of graphic or text which prompts action.

For example:

- **Enquire now**
- **Find out more**
- **Request information**
- **Request a call back**

Where you place CTAs in your design are important, so it's crucial to ensure that the principle messages are high enough to be seen without scrolling. Indeed, make sure you are clear in your intentions from near the beginning by including a CTA at the start of your message, but also have more in the body of the email.

You can add as many as you want, but try not to flood the page with them as it will water down the message you are trying to get across.



# Images in Email Design

**Sending HTML email designs with images can improve your response rates, but only if you include them appropriately. Many email programs by default block HTML images from being displayed, so it's very important you don't rely on images to convey your message.**

HTML messages that rely primarily on the strength of the text you provide, and supplement that text with graphics, will be more readable in an inbox and therefore deliver you a higher response rate. In fact, your email message should be clear with the images all turned off. Never use just one big image for your email design.

Another issue with including too many images, or very large images and not enough text, is that your email design may end up being flagged as SPAM. As a guide the text to image ratio in your email design should be at least 60% text, 40% images.



## Email Content and Design Summary:

- ✓ Make sure your email is designed to display well on small screens, such as mobiles and tablet devices.
- ✓ Hire an email design professional to help you if you don't understand HTML, CSS and how to host images.
- ✓ Keep copy clear and succinct.
- ✓ Make sure your email design indicates what you want the recipient to do next, with a clear "Call To Action".
- ✓ Your email design should not be too image heavy, as images do not always display.

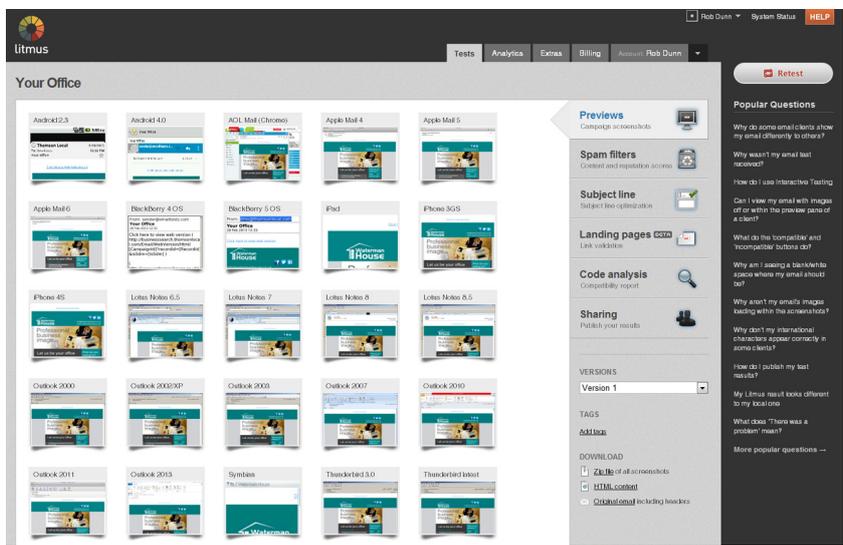
# Email Testing



## Design Preview

Before you broadcast your email design to your recipients, you should always test that it is going to display in different email clients as you expect. Different email clients render emails slightly differently, so you should send test emails to test accounts in all the common email clients (e.g. Outlook™, Yahoo™, Hotmail™, MSN™) to ensure they look as expected and are delivered into the inbox.

One way to test your email campaign across multiple email clients and devices all at once and save time is to use a tool such as Litmus.



(<http://litmus.com/email-testing>)

## SPAM Testing

As well as testing that your email will display correctly, you should also test whether it will get flagged as SPAM (also known as junk email).

We recommend running your email through a spam checker which will tell you if your email is likely to be considered spam or not. Our email broadcast system links with Litmus to give spam analysis before you send your email out.



# A/B Testing

The best way to formulate an effective email design is to A/B test (or split test) different creative variants to see what works best for you. Amending subject lines, offers, layouts, images and call to action messages are all things related to content and design that could lead to improved response rates and a higher return on investment.

The idea is that you develop two email designs which you label "A" and "B" to distinguish between them. You send each email design to a small number of your recipients and monitor which design generates the most number of clicks, enquiries and sales.

**The design with the best results is the winner and the one you should move forward with, broadcasting to a larger portion of your email data.**

It's important to remember to test only one thing at a time. For example, if you are testing two email designs, you should keep all other elements of the campaign the same (e.g. the "from name", the subject line, the written content and offer, the date and time of broadcast).

By doing this, you can confidently attribute any increase in response to the one thing that is different (in this case, the design).

## Email Testing Summary:

- ✓ Preview your design in all the major email clients and SPAM check your email before you broadcast it.
- ✓ Use a third party tool such as Litmus to make this easier for you.
- ✓ Test different elements of your email campaign to try and increase response.

# Analysing Email Results



## Basic Email Campaign Metrics

One of the significant benefits of email marketing over other marketing channels is that it is extremely trackable, so you can see exactly how successful your campaign has been for your business. By analysing your email results you can also identify things such as important trends, your most popular products and successful promotions.

These are the key metrics you should look at for each of your email campaigns, and what they mean for you:

## Opens

Opens are measured when a recipient loads images or clicks links within your email campaign. As such, this is very much a worst case figure – plenty more recipients are likely to read your email, but unless they load images or click a link we can't be certain. Opens may be measured as Total Opens and Unique Opens:

**Total Opens** - the total number of times your email was opened. A recipient may open your email more than once.

**Unique Opens** - the total number of recipients that opened your email once

If your subject line doesn't properly convey what prospects want to read then they are likely to ignore or delete your message.

A good open rate (usually 15% or more) indicates that your email campaign was well targeted and the subject line sparked enough interest in the recipients for them to open your email and read more.

## Clicks

Clicks show how many times a recipient has clicked on a link in your email, usually because they want more information or are trying to enquire. As before, clicks may be reported as Total Clicks and Unique Clicks.

**Total Clicks** - The total number of times each link was clicked. Recipients can click links more than once and each click is counted individually to give a total.

**Unique Clicks** - The number of recipients who clicked each link once.

The more clicks you can generate from your email campaign the better, as this indicates if the content was of interest to your recipients.

Studies have shown that click rates increase along with the number of links that are provided on a specific email. So, if you were to give more than 20 links for people to click through and read, your chances of success are greater than giving fewer URLs. The general rule of thumb is to ensure you provide at least five links to click on to.



# Analysing Email Results

## Bounces

A 'bounce' means that your email was sent to a specific address, but the mail server that received the email for that person has sent it back, saying it could not be delivered.

**Hard Bounces** - A hard bounce is an email message that has been returned to the sender and is permanently undeliverable. Causes of hard bounces include invalid email addresses, so this can be used as an indicator of email data quality.

**Soft Bounces** - A soft bounce is an email message that reaches the recipient's mail server but is bounced back undelivered before it gets to the recipient. A soft bounce might occur because the recipient's mailbox is full, the server is down, or the message is too large.

## Unsubscribe

The unsubscribe shows how many of the email recipients have requested not to receive future email communications from you. Of course you want this number to be as small as possible to prevent your email database shrinking too quickly. Plus a high number of unsubscribes means your recipients did not find your email relevant or interesting.

## SPAM Notification

If your email recipients think you have emailed them without their permission, they may flag your email as SPAM to their email service providers. Receive too many SPAM complaints against you and you could end up being prevented from sending out future email campaigns.

The best way to prevent SPAM notifications against you is to make sure you only email recipients that have specifically opted-in to hear from you via this channel.

# B2B Email Marketing from Market Location



At **Market Location** we've been offering email marketing services to businesses of all sizes since 2003. We've made considerable investment over the years to grow our database to 1.1 million opt-in emails which you can target for lead generation.

## Why choose us as your email marketing partner?

- ✓ All our UK email addresses are 100% telephone verified and opt-in to receive third party communications.
- ✓ Over 80% of our email database is for named contacts.
- ✓ Our opt-in email subscribers regularly receive emails from us into their inbox, so you don't have to worry that your email will be considered SPAM.
- ✓ Our customers include many large companies who use our service on an ongoing basis because we deliver the consistently positive results they need to justify spending their marketing budget with us.
- ✓ Offline data is available for targeted follow-up to increase response via telemarketing or direct mail.
- ✓ Our email broadcast platform and experienced Marketing Consultants make it easy for you to send email campaigns as we do all the hard work for you.
- ✓ Cost effective email design options are available.

## Some comments from our email customers:

*"I would like to thank you for a very successful email campaign we recently commissioned through you. Your friendly and professional approach to managing our campaign made it a pleasure to deal with you."*

**County Business Sales**

*"The service at has been very impressive from immediate follow-up to our initial query and a thorough introduction to their services. Every need has been met with efficiency and thoughtfulness and we gained a new client within half an hour of the email campaign going out."*

**Premium PA Ltd**

*"On average we broadcast 120,000 emails every week. Each email campaign contains around 40,000 emails, and we complete three targeted campaigns every week. Our open rates are consistently around 15 – 20%. In short, we continue to use the email service (after more than 10 years) because it makes good business sense!"*

**Windsor Telecom**

## Get in touch

To speak to one of our email experts please call us on **0800 955 8630**  
or email [enquiry@marketlocation.com](mailto:enquiry@marketlocation.com)

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