



Get Started with Email Marketing! 10 Ideas That Really Work

How to Reach New Customers, Increase Loyalty, and Do More Business



How are you reaching customers to create relationships that help you do more business?

You know that staying connected with your customers is crucial to growing your small business. You work hard to build customer relationships and rely on repeat business and word-of-mouth referrals.

When you consider the high costs and uncertainty associated with traditional advertising methods such as print, radio, and television and the ever-changing social networks that are now limiting your ability to reach your customers and prospects, you may be wondering how to make the most of your marketing efforts and see a real return on the money you invest.

Email marketing is a cost-effective solution that gives you the power to reach customers in a place most people visit every day — their inbox.

It's not that you should dismiss advertising and social networks altogether. According to a 2014 Constant Contact survey, small businesses that use multiple methods and channels in conjunction with email reported more customer engagement (73 percent), more new customers (57 percent), more website traffic (54 percent), more revenue (40 percent), and more referrals (39 percent).

Numbers aside, smart small businesses use email marketing because:

- It allows you to build relationships, loyalty, and trust by staying top of mind with customers and prospects that have given you permission to contact them.
- It helps you target your customers and prospects so you deliver the right messages at the right time.
- It gives you access to data — such as who opened and interacted with your email — so you can see what really works and make improvements over time.
- It drives direct sales and supports sales through other channels.

But don't just take our word for it. Consider these email marketing statistics:

- Email is almost 40 times more effective than Facebook and Twitter combined in helping your business acquire new customers. (McKinsey, 2014)
- 66 percent of consumers have made a purchase as a result of an email marketing message. (DMA, 2013)
- Email outperforms direct mail with more than four times the return on investment. (DMA, 2013)

So how do you put the power of email marketing to work for your small business?

With over 600,000 customers, Constant Contact has seen what works for small businesses. In this guide, we'll show you 10 proven ways email marketing can help you do more business. Whether you plan on doing email marketing yourself or having someone do it for you, you'll be set up for success.

Let's get started!

10 Keys to Email Marketing that Works

Use these important email marketing fundamentals to create an email marketing plan for your small business:

1. Only send email to people who know you

People open email from people they know, and they delete or mark as spam email from people they don't recognize.

This is why it's critical that you always ask for permission before adding a new contact to your email list.

Permission-based email marketing is the best route to developing long-lasting customer relationships that drive repeat sales and valuable word-of-mouth for your business.

These practices also keep you in compliance with legislation such the Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography and Marketing Act (CAN-Spam) and the Canadian Anti-Spam Legislation (CASL).

Learn More:

- [Build an Email List That Loves Hearing From You](#)
- [How to Make People Hate Your Email Newsletter](#)
- [Understanding the Power of Email Marketing Relationships](#)



Tip

Using software like Constant Contact makes it easy to grow your email list the right way. You can use online sign-up tools to give people the ability to opt in online, or ask people offline and get permission to add them to your Constant Contact account. You can also take advantage of mobile list-building tools to grow your email list on a smartphone or tablet.

2. Don't treat your contacts like names on a list, treat them like people

When someone joins your email list, they are opting-in to learn more about your business.

Some of these people will be completely new to your business and want to learn more about what you have to offer. Others may be repeat customers who joined your list to make sure they're staying up-to-date with everything you have going on.

Don't miss the opportunity to build these relationships the right way.

For new customers, you could send emails with additional information about your business and the different products and services you have to offer. For long-time customers, you can focus on generating repeat sales and reward them with a special offer.

Learn More:

- [4 Ways to Segment Your List to Get the Right Message to the Right Audience](#)
- [3 Tips for Keeping Your Contacts Connected](#)
- [All Contacts On Your Email List Are Not the Same \(And Why Their Differences Matter\)](#)



Tip

If you're a Constant Contact customer, you can group contacts into separate lists and create emails that are unique to their specific needs and interests. You can also create a series of automated emails with our Autoresponder tool to send to specific lists with information and offers relevant to them.

3. Send relevant content that has value to your recipient

Remember that email marketing isn't just about getting your information in front of current and potential customers. It's also about listening to what your audience is interested in and providing an experience that's relevant and valuable to them.

When you provide content that's helpful to your readers, you'll have more people opening and acting on the content you send out.

One of the easiest ways to tell what type of content your audience is interested in is to look at your email reports. Within your email reports, you can see how many people are opening your emails and which pieces of content are generating the most clicks.

You can also use a tool like an online survey to collect feedback from your audience and see what they want to hear about.

Learn More:

- [Should I Survey My Email Contacts to Find Out If They Liked My Email?](#)
- [I Can't Find Enough to Say In My Email, Where Do I Turn for Email Content Ideas?](#)
- [How Your Click-Through Rates Can Help You Create More Effective Email Content](#)



If you're not sure what your email audience is interested in, consider sending an online survey. Constant Contact's survey campaign makes it easy to collect feedback from your email audience and can help you better understand what makes your customers tick.

4. Engage your audience with the content you write

Once you've figured out what your email contacts are looking for in your email marketing, you need to create content that they will find engaging.

Creating great content can be challenging, but it doesn't have to become a full-time job. Great content starts with having a well thought-out content plan, a list of reliable content sources, and a commitment to knowing your audience.

When creating a plan, it's helpful to look at the calendar and think about the different activities you have going on and the ways you can help your customers throughout the year.

Your customers will be your best source for content ideas. Pay attention to what they are saying and the questions they are asking in-person and online.

Learn More:

- [How Creating a Plan Can Change the Way You Think about Email Marketing](#)
- [How Do I Get My Customers' Attention with Content](#)
- [5 Ways to Create More Engaging Email Content](#)



Tip

People do business with people who they know, like, and trust. Use your email content to show some personality and let readers get to know you and your staff. With Constant Contact, you can easily upload photos to use in your email marketing and give customers a more personal look into your business.

5. Maximize your delivery rate

One of the biggest benefits of using email marketing software like Constant Contact is that we take the necessary steps to make sure your emails are safely delivered to your recipient's inbox.

But there are also steps you can take to maximize your email delivery and make sure your emails get to where they need to go.

One of the best ways to tell if your emails are getting delivered is to look at your bounce reports. Emails can bounce for a number of reasons, including invalid email addresses, a full inbox, or out of office statuses. Keeping an eye on your bounces will help you to remove any addresses with ongoing issues and maintain high deliverability rates.

In addition to bounces, you can also look at your spam reports. If an individual on your email list reports your email as unwanted or unsolicited, it will be marked as spam. If you consistently have a high number of spam reports it may be time to review the content you're sending.

Learn More:

- [Why are my emails being blocked or bounced?](#)
- [5 Tips to Increase Your Email Deliverability](#)
- [6 Reasons Your Emails Have Bounced \(And What to Do to Improve Your Bounce Rate\)](#)



Tip

Use the Constant Contact Spam Checker tool while creating your email to avoid issues before you send. If you still notice a high number of spam reports, consider reducing your email frequency.

6. Never share your email list

If you're a business that respects the trust and privacy of your customers, you should never share your email list.

Sharing your list could damage your reputation, hurt customer relationships, and ruin the trust you've worked hard to build.

You should also avoid purchasing a list from a third-party vendor. These lists are full of people who don't know your business, didn't sign up to receive updates from you, and will likely ignore your emails or mark them as spam when they show up in their inbox.

Rather than sharing or buying lists, look for ways to partner with other local businesses or organizations to extend your reach. You can ask a non-competitive business to help you promote an upcoming sale or event, and in exchange, you can feature them in a future email campaign. Look to partner with trusted businesses that can provide additional value to your customer base.

Learn More:

- [How to Make People Hate Your Email Newsletter](#)
- [6 Compliance Terms Every Email Marketer Should Know](#)
- [How to Create Fruitful Co-Marketing Relationships](#)



Tip

Constant Contact's contact management tools make it easy to protect your customer's information. In addition to email address, you can also collect important details like demographic data, location, and even past purchasing behavior.

7. Set expectations (and follow through)

When someone signs up to receive your email communications, they do so with the expectation of receiving something of value. If you don't communicate clearly what that value is, your audience might lose interest quickly.

The best way to set expectations for your audience is to use your email sign-up page. Make sure your audience understands the value of signing up right from the start.

What can they expect to receive? How often will they hear from you? What have other people enjoyed about receiving your emails? You can customize your sign-up form to demonstrate the value of joining your list.

Learn More:

- [Guide to Long Lasting Email Marketing Relationships](#)
- [4 Things Your Welcome Email Must Do \(and Probably Doesn't\)](#)
- [What is the sign-up form and how do I edit it?](#)



Once someone joins your list, you can send them an automated welcome email. This is a valuable opportunity to reaffirm their decision to join your list and remind them what to expect from future mailings.

8. Look professional whenever you communicate

You don't need to hire a designer or have any technical expertise to create professional-looking emails for your small business.

With software like Constant Contact, you can access professionally-designed email templates that can be customized to match your brand. You can easily add text, insert your logo, and choose colors and fonts that fit your brand.

You can also upload photos, insert video links, and add customizable buttons to make it easy for people to take action.

These templates are designed to work across multiple devices — including desktop, tablet, and mobile, ensuring that your emails look great no matter where people are reading them.

Learn More:

- [How to Choose the Perfect Email Template](#)
- [7 Design Mistakes That Make Readers Trash Your Emails](#)
- [5 Simple Tips for Mobile-Friendly Emails](#)



Tip

In addition to our customizable email templates, Constant Contact also offers services to help you get started with an email template that matches your brand.

9. Regularly review your results

Your open and click-through rates will be the most effective metrics to determine how your emails are performing. These metrics can be influenced by the content you include, the frequency that you send, and whether or not people recognize your emails in their inbox.

Along with opens and clicks, you should also pay attention to metrics like bounces and unsubscribes. These metrics allow you to determine potential problem areas. If you're consistently seeing a large number of people unsubscribe each time you send (it's normal to see some unsubscribes as your subscribers' interests change), you may need to revisit your email marketing strategy and look for ways to make improvements.

Beyond your basic email metrics, you should also pay attention to other business results including traffic to your website, sales, foot traffic, event registrations, coupon redemptions, donations, and more.

Learn More:

- [How to Approach Your Email Reports with Confidence](#)
- [How to Figure Out if Your Email Marketing Campaign is Working](#)
- [Do You Know Why People Are Unsubscribing From Your Emails?](#)



If you're sending email through Constant Contact, you have access to helpful reports that show you how your emails are performing, what's working for you, and where you can improve.

10. Go beyond the inbox

You're likely already using a number of other channels to market your small business. Email marketing works best when it's integrated with these other communication channels.

Use sites like Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and LinkedIn to reach new customers and extend those relationships by encouraging them to join your email list. You can also use email to drive traffic to different social media platforms and generate engagement on these sites.

It's a great idea to add social media buttons in your emails so that people can connect with your social media pages.

You can also post your emails to all your social networks in just a few clicks, with Constant Contact's SimpleShare tool.

Learn More:

- [Social Media's Secret Weapon: Email Marketing](#)
- [4 Tools to Help You Integrate Your Social Media and Email Marketing](#)
- [3 Ways to Get Facebook Fans to Subscribe to Your Email List](#)



Tip

Make it easy for subscribers to share your email with their connections on social media. With Constant Contact, you can add a share bar to every email you send out, which readers can use to share your emails on sites like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.