

Email

MARKETING BASICS



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Studies have repeatedly shown the most effective way to engage with customers is through email marketing. This might come as a surprise, with the constant attention social media and video get from marketers around the world, but email is the tried and true method to reach an audience. It all starts with building an email list and continues to develop through smart and consistent messaging. Read on and we'll get your email marketing efforts jump started!

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01

Building Your Email List

An email list is exactly what it sounds like: a list of email addresses you collect and send marketing emails too.

But how do you gather those email addresses? Generally, you'll do this through "lead generation," content that sparks someone's interest and inspires them to give you their email address.

***Pro Tip:** You should never buy email lists (they are most often obtained improperly and rarely yield genuine prospects).*

Instead, you should ask viewers for their email address and offer valuable content in exchange for them. These kinds of leads will result in better engagement with the emails you'll send and eventually lead to sales.

Capturing Contacts

It may not be apparent, but when someone gives you their email address, they're inviting you into their life. Connecting with someone through email will always be more personal than public social media posting. The emails they receive are in their personal inbox, to be viewed by that individual alone. You should take this into account and treat that user's personal information well.

Importantly, you should be upfront and clear when you capture their email address. A reader on your website might be interested in what they see, but an email capture box that just says "Sign up" may put them off. Sign up for what? If I put my email address in this box, will you be selling my information? Bombarding me with spam advertising? What is my incentive to give my information that makes it worth the risk?

Here are three proven and fair methods to capture email while rewarding your reader:

1. **Lead Gen Offer** – You can offer free content in exchange for an email address, perhaps giving away an ebook version of one of your books or even a short informative ebook about your writing process. Anything you have some expertise in can act as a piece of content, which you can then 'gate' with an email signup requirement. Trading an email address for free content is one of the stronger means of capturing new followers. If you offer content they like, you'll have them on your list for a long time. Content for Contact exchanges are a terrific way to earn followers through your own merits.
2. **Blog Subscription** – Another means of gaining access to someone's inbox based on your merits, you can capture email addresses from readers of your blog. All blogging platforms will offer you automated methods of capturing subscribers. There's no reason not to capture user's email when they're on your blog.

But you should be careful about what kind of emails you send these users. They signed up for your content, so hitting their inbox with a lot of marketing and sales pitch type emails might drive them away. We'll look at this in more depth during Segmentation.

3. **Social Media** – Your social media platforms will primarily be for creating more personal engagement and broadly promoting your work. But you can also get a little bit of email capture in there too! You could run a giveaway for a copy of your book using a free service like [Rafflecopter](#) that requires an email address to enter. These giveaways are easy to run, cost little, and can greatly increase the number of contacts on your lists.

These are just a few basic ways to start capturing email. You should experiment with different methods to see what your readers respond best too.

Note: *Always be sure to provide an opt-out in your emails. While it might seem counter-intuitive to offer subscribers an easy way to stop following you, not having this option is potentially annoying. Plus, if they don't want your emails, you don't want to be putting the effort in to sending them, right?*

Personalization

There are a lot of sophisticated tools you can use to personalize emails, but if you're an individual author trying to get a little more traffic on your website and blog, along with some additional book sales, it's unlikely you'll be investing in expensive marketing software.

So, then, what do you do to make your emails more personal?

One easy trick is to ask for a first name when capturing email. If you request a name and email address to subscribe to a blog or enter a social media contest, you're capturing a piece of data along with the email address that you can use to personalize.

Campaign Monitor, an email marketing company, found that personalized [emails are 26% more likely to be opened](#). That's a massive percent for a relatively low effort to personalize.

Frequency

You should always err on the side of caution when it comes to send frequencies. According to the [National Client email report](#), the majority of marketers send 2 or 3 emails a month.

As a self-published author looking to maximize your return from the time you spend, you should aim to send 1 or 2 emails a month and no more than 1 email a week. Note too that, according to a [MarketingSherpa report](#), 91% of respondents indicated they don't mind receiving marketing emails.

There's a sweet spot for email frequency, but finding it means carefully tracking data and trying different methods. Send emails on different days of the week, at different times, with different subject lines. There are too many variables to pin down any exact method, but by monitoring your email metrics carefully, you can identify trends and adapt to meet your reader's desires.

Segmentation

Early on in your marketing efforts, segmenting your email list is probably not necessary. But as your list begins to grow, you can look for specific groups that may benefit from more specific messaging.

For example, if you recently collected email contacts at a conference, you don't want your first email sent to them to be exactly the same as the email you'd send to people who signed up for your mailing list on your website. Segmenting lets you tailor the messaging and content to speak to specific groups of subscribers. You can speak directly about your experience at the event and in the future use this segment to promote your own speaking engagements.

Another effective means to segment your subscribers is to divide those who provided their email through a form on your blog or to download free content versus those who gave you their email during checkout on your site. You can provide different content to readers who have already purchased, maybe targeted toward getting reviews or sharing their thoughts about your work, while a subscriber who has not purchased is going to be better served emails that prompt them to make a purchase.

Mobile First

The [majority of emails](#) are opened, read, and sorted on mobile devices. Because mobile is the preferred device for viewing emails, you should keep in mind some best practices for email creation that favors mobile viewing:

1. **Sender / Subject / Teaser** – Mobile apps like Outlook or Gmail or Apple's Mail App all display emails with these three pieces of information first. Before anyone opens the email, this is what they will see. So, you'll need to be sure to write a compelling (ideally personalized) subject line and pair it with a teaser line that adds something to the subject or gives the recipient further cause to open the email.

Note that if you do not include a teaser, most email apps will automatically grab the first 50 characters or so from the body of the email and tease that content. Always send test versions of your emails so you can review the content exactly as your recipients will see it before you actually shoot it out to everyone.

2. **Layout** – For mobile, the best designs use square or rectangular images and text boxes. Try to organize your content such that your recipient naturally scrolls down, with high level, enticing content at the top, tapering to more pointed material and eventually the CTA.
3. **Call to Action (CTA)** – The CTA for your email should be a button or link that directs your reader to take an action. Whether it be reading a full blog post, buying a book, or leaving a review. Whatever the action is, be sure the button link is sized for mobile, as desktop buttons will often be smaller than is suitable for a mobile screen.
4. **Data Usage** – Mobile devices will likely use a data plan alongside wifi. Be respectful of your reader's data and incorporate images or graphics that do not overload their data plan and end up costing them money in overage fees. Do not assume users have ample data.

A good rule is to use images at 72dpi resolution and around 300 pixels wide, so they are light on the data consumption and fit will on most mobile screens.

02

Messaging

How you message to your subscribers is going to depend heavily on the segment they fall in, the reason they subscribed, and the goal of your email send.

You will need to think like a content marketer when crafting your emails—planning information that is meaningful without being pushy, and offering your readers something they want without any expectations of a purchase. Your ultimate goal is to get a reader to eventually follow an email link to your author platform, and from there to make a purchase; but you can't be too overt in making a request.

Email messaging is all about brevity and clarity.

Software for Success

When you first start capturing email addresses, you might be able to individually write emails to your subscribers. But after you amass even a dozen or more subscribers, writing individual emails is simply going to be too time consuming.

Luckily there are a number of great (and free) tools out there to help you send amazing emails, as well as assisting in segmenting and tracking how your subscribers interact with your emails. We'll discuss just a few here, but make sure you do your own research too!



Mailchimp

Generally regarded as the best email marketing tool on the market right now for individuals and small businesses, Mailchimp offers free-to-use tools good for up to 2,000 subscribers and 12,000 monthly emails. That should be more than enough to get you started, and if you find you need more, the \$20/month is very reasonable for the services they offer.

Free Features:

- Mobile App
- Automated Email sends
- Ecommerce integration to capture shopper's data and market to them
- Email and Landing Page Templates
- A/B Testing and Reports



Constant Contact

Offering a 60-day free trial before pricing kicks in, Constant Contact lacks the free options of MailChimp, but seeks to compensate with livelier email templates. If you intend to scale up or already have a large reserve of email addresses you'll be marketing too, Constant Contact is great for their Facebook integration and campaign suggestion tools.

Free Features:

- Mobile App
- Automated Email sends
- Ecommerce integration to capture shopper's data and market to them



Sendinblue

Sendinblue trims back on premium features to offer a more powerful free option with unlimited subscribers and up to 300 emails per day (9,000 per month). They also offer a pay-as-you-go plan that lets you buy exactly as many email sends as you need.

Free Features:

- Mobile App
- Automated Email sends
- Ecommerce integration to capture shopper's data and market to them
- A/B Testing and Reports

Email Fundamentals

At this point, you might be wondering what A/B testing, Automated Sends, and Analytics have to do with you and your book.

Email marketing terminology can seem complicated. Let's break it down:

A/B Testing – A/B testing is the practice of creating two emails with unique subject lines or body copy and splitting the email segment that will receive them, then tracking which does better in terms of open rate and click through.

Click Through Rate (CTR) – Your click through rate is a measure of how many of the recipients who received your email and opened it, also clicked on a link. The CTR is a great way to measure how effective your emails are.

Open Rate – A simple measure of number of recipients who actually opened the email, rather than consigning it to the Trash folder unread. This, along with your click through rate, are the two most important measures of success for your emails.

Subject/Teaser – The subject line appears after the sender when viewing an inbox. Generally, you'll want your subject line to be short (>60 characters), relevant, and amusing or catchy. The teaser can be a little longer (around 100 characters is best) and should elaborate on the subject line or provide some additional incentive to open the email.

Segmentation – With a number of email addresses in your list, you'll want to divide them up into Segments so you can better personalize the emails. The idea of segmentation is that you get more personal content, without individually writing each email. You also get to better target groups of subscribers with content they want or need.

Personalization – The more personal content can be, the more likely readers are to enjoy it and click on one of your links. The bare minimum should be using the name your subscriber added when providing their address.

Automation – Different email marketing providers may define automation differently, but broadly it means any aspect of the creation, layout, and sending of emails that software can handle for you.

Call to Action – The button in the email you want your reader to click. This is the long term, final goal of the email. The CTA is a request, however subtly, for that reader to take an action. Be it reading a blog or buying a book, the ratio of emails sent to CTA's clicked (your click through rate) will be one of your main measures of success in your email marketing efforts.

Please Don't Spam

Keep in mind the research from earlier. Most companies send 2 or 3 emails a month. That's it. You don't need to be sending emails daily or even weekly. If you do, there's a good chance your readers will find you annoying and unsubscribe.

Likewise, avoid subject lines that might mislead or offer something you can't deliver. Most email providers will filter this kind of email to user's Junk folder.

03

Getting Clicks

You have two things you're trying to achieve with your emails, in service of the end goal (someone buying a book).

1. The recipient opens the email
2. The recipient clicks a link in the email

If you can achieve a click, your email has been effective. Even if they don't end up buying, that burden is on your website and ecommerce tools to complete the sale. The email just gets them to the site.

What do your Open Rate and Click-Through-Rates Mean?

The first thing to appreciate is how this relationship between you and your readers is formed. They get content, you get an audience, and the relationship is sustained based on your ability to consistently offer that content. If you stop providing content they want, the reader will look for that content elsewhere.

The Open Rate is a measure of recipients who opened the email. Whether they read it thoroughly or glance at it and move on is not something easily measured. Still, the open rate is critical to measure as it represents the first major hurdle in a successful email: the reader actually opening the email!

The Click-Through Rate is a means of measuring how much your readers are enjoying your content. No, it is not a perfect measure, but it seems to be the industry's accepted way to measure success, and it does work better than any other method currently in use.

What these two measurements do is help you judge which emails are working and which are not. If you send an email one week to 500 recipients and 120 of them open it, you have a 25% open rate (a very good open rate [according to studies](#)). Now, of those 120, you might get 5 people who click on a link. That lands you a 4.16% click through, also quite good by most measures.

That means, of 500 emails you send, only 5 recipients clicked on a link or button in the email. Doesn't seem like much, does it? But in the world of internet marketing, those rates are completely within reason.

You shouldn't let this scare you either. If you send 2 emails a month and get 10 total clicks over to your site, then convert 2 of those 10 clicks to sales, your emails are technically making you money! Not a lot of money, but 500 subscribers isn't a huge number either. Imagine doubling it to 1000? Or 2000? Everything scales up as you build your email list.

Converting Subscribers to Buyers

All this leads to the million-dollar question: how do you get those clicks? How do you convert a subscriber to a buyer?

There are the immediately important elements to consider, those mentioned previously in this book:

1. Personalization
2. Responsive Design (Mobile Friendly)
3. Subject and Teaser that Spark Interest
4. Clear Call to Action links

But if you've got your head wrapped around these four pieces of the puzzle, your next step will be the actual content of the email.

Content, Content, Content!

Content Marketing is the idea that you are more likely to get a customer if you offer them valuable information. That means helping them make informed decisions, rather than just espousing the virtues of your product specifically. Or denigrating your competitor's products.

Getting valuable content into an email is a challenge due to the constrained space and interest from recipients.

Subject (50 Characters) – Hook their attention

Teaser (100 Characters) – Provide details

Body (500 Characters or less) – Elaborate on the subject with positive, active language that offers a complete thought or idea, but that promises more if they click.

This formula is a great starting point. The email becomes a funnel, channeling the recipient toward the CTA, which if everything is working correctly, they will want to click.

Appendix: Resources

Lulu Help Center and Knowledge Base

Lulu's Help Center features resources to help you publish your book. Visit the [Lulu Help Center](#) to learn more.

Email Templates

Every email platform you use will offer a range of templates. But to get a sense of what an email commonly looks like, download [a Basic DOCX template](#) from [CakeMail](#). This is a great place to start, and will give you an idea to build from.

For some additional free templates, check out [this great list](#) from [Colorlib](#).

Next Level Email Marketing: 8 Tips



1 Emotional Subject Lines

Step one is getting people to open your emails! Use emotional language in the subject line to grab your subscriber's attention. This adds to the personalization and is a proven tactic to increase your email open rates.

Get Personal 2

Segment your mailing list to target specific audiences. You can target your subscribers in many ways, such as demographics, purchase history, how active they are, and where they signed up for your mailing list. The more personal the email feels, the more engaged your subscribers will be!

3 Designer's Approach

Think like a graphic designer when creating your email. Make the copy easy to read and use eye catching imagery. The design of your email should draw the reader's eye to your Call to Action (CTA).

Take Action 4

You want your CTA to inspire your subscriber to take action, whether it is buying your book, reading your blog, or RSVPing for your event. Make them want to click!

5 Be Mobile

The vast majority of subscribers are going to view your email on their mobile device. So, make sure your emails are optimized for mobile viewing. Take the time to test and view your email on both mobile and desktop.

Stay Social 6

Make it easy for your subscribers to share content and stay in touch! Include social sharing buttons after key pieces of content in your email, as well as include social follow buttons in all email footers. Social media is a key part of your brand, so you'll want to consistently grow your followers whenever possible.

7 Don't Be Spammy

Subscribers want to hear from you, but they don't want to be bombarded with emails. Use relevant subject lines and choose an appropriate sending frequency. Additionally, make sure to comply with CAN-SPAM laws. This helps form a trusting relationship with your audience.

A/B Test 8

A/B test multiple versions of your email! Test multiple variables, such as subject lines, from name, content, graphics, and send time. A/B testing provides data to show which aspects of your email resonate the most with your audience. It allows you to build better emails in the future!