



This is the eighth in a series of articles intended to help chapter marketing teams maximize their “bang for the buck”, particularly when faced with a limited budget. Last time we took a close look at Color Models with some tips and tricks for preparing your artwork. This time I want to share some research I’ve done with respect to email marketing, with insights that many experts in the field find to be effective.



How to Write an Email That People Will ALWAYS Open

Most of us go through our email like we go through our regular mail: junk mail, junk mail, catalog, something for me! We do the same thing with our email inbox: business: someone wants something ... someone spelled my name wrong ... Nigerian prince leaves me an inheritance ... ooh something for me.

If you want someone to open and engage with your email, it’s gotta feel like it’s something for them.

How? You master the art of the EFAB!

An EFAB is an Email from a Bestie, an email written in the tone that you’d use with a friend. So, here are a few quick steps for creating that effect:

1. Start with an informal subject line.

For starters, don’t put your subject line in title case -- that’s where the first letter of each word is capitalized. Put effort into the subject line, making it intriguing and also informal, as if it’s from a friend.

2. Pay attention to the preview text.

There’s easy html code to put in so those first few lines they see in their inbox can be different from the first few lines of the email. That can make all the difference in whether someone opens the email.

3. Use an informal greeting.

Write your greeting the same you would use if you were leaving a message for them on their voice mail. “Hi so-and-so” is always a safe bet, as opposed to “Greetings” or “Hello” or “Dear so-and-so”. You want to stick with “Hi” or “Hey” or “Hey there”, depending on your relationship with the person.

4. Have a friendly opener.

Try to use something personal like a compliment or an in-joke to get the person interested in reading the rest of your message.

5. Read your copy before sending.

If it sounds like writing, rewrite it.

6. Most importantly, write conversationally.

In other words, write like you talk. Be breezy; picture an actual human on the other side of your email. Write as if you’re writing to ONE friend, not formally, to a group. Remember, in the end, even if it’s a work or business email, you’re never a business writing to a business; you’re a person writing to a person, and now more the ever being treated like a person goes a long, long way.

But first and foremost, you’ve got to ensure that your emails are being delivered.

Your email bounce rate matters. Why? Without proper delivery (and the accompanying low bounce rates), no

one will ever see that amazing copy you've written. And, perhaps even more importantly, consistently high bounce rates can get your IP blacklisted. When that happens, your open rates will plummet.

If your email bounce rate is giving you trouble, you're right to be worried. A high bounce rate means people aren't hearing from you, so your entire email marketing is under-performing. However, finding the cause of your bounces and reducing them isn't that hard.

Four Tips to Reduce Email Bounce Rate

1. Hard vs. soft email bounce rate

Before addressing any issues that may be causing a higher than average email bounce rate, it's important to understand what a "bounce" actually is. When it comes to email marketing, we need to distinguish between so-called hard bounces as opposed to soft bounces.

A hard bounce is a permanent delivery failure.

This can be caused by any number of issues: for example, an old domain or an expired email account. There's no hope of ever reaching a hard bounce account, and you shouldn't attempt to send another message to it.

Soft bounces, on the other hand, are a temporary form of delivery failure.

Like hard bounces, they can occur for a range of different reasons. The recipient's email server might be down temporarily; their mailbox could be full; or, the message you sent might be too big.

2. What's a "normal" bounce rate?

According to a recent study, hard and soft bounce rates vary by industry. However, when combined for each industry and averaged across the board, a total bounce rate of roughly 2% is considered average.

If the percentage of undeliverable emails in your campaigns is significantly higher, you've got work to do!

3. Build an opt-in list.

When you were first starting out and beginning to build your email list, you probably encountered the occasional website offering to sell you a list of subscriber emails, or tools that allow you to "scrape" contact information from various websites. These are known as "opt-out" lists that use the approach of building the list first, and then letting people unsubscribe if they are not interested.

Simply put, sending out emails to a cold (opt-out) list that you've purchased is going to result in a high bounce rate. Instead, you want a list that's comprised of people who have actually requested to receive content from you. These subscribers are highly valuable.

4. Verify your list regularly.

No email list is perfect. Even if you've built it up yourself, there will still be undeliverable addresses. People mistype their email address when filling out your opt-in form. Or, they close an email account, or allow it to fill up such that it can't receive any more messages.

No matter what type of business you're running or how you've put together your email list, using an email verification service such as *ZeroBounce* is far and away your best bet for reducing your bounce rate.

With email verification, you'll know in advance which addresses are undeliverable, and you can remove them from your list before you send out your next email. Cleaning your list regularly should be a routine task if you want to maximize your delivery rate.

By understanding the difference between hard and soft bounces, using an opt-in system, and verifying your email list you'll be on your way to low bounce rates—which means more clicks, and more positive results from your email campaign.