

E-MAIL MARKETING WHITEPAPER For E-Commerce

Email Marketing for E-Commerce

In our highly digitized world, email is often the only form of communication that businesses have with their customers - outside of the firm's website, of course.

If email is the primary (or only) form of communication with your customers, then you've got to make every email count.

[This is where we come in.](#)

At Newsletter2Go, email is our obsession. We're constantly working to improve the quality of email communication that businesses can have with their digital customers. This means making it easy to deliver email newsletters that inspire your customers, newsletters that help them see how great you and your company are.

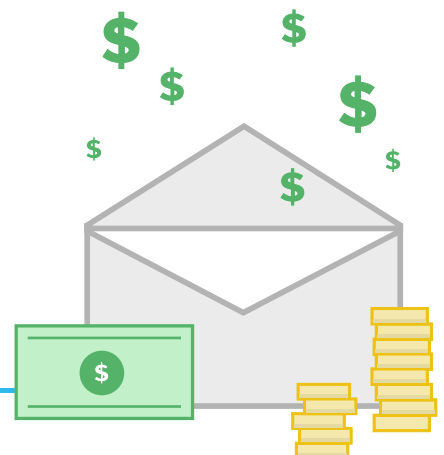
Inspired customers are happy customers, and happy customers come back again and again. Doesn't that sound great?

To help get you there, we've put together a 6-Step Guide to how you can get started with email marketing. Whether you're completely new to email marketing, or if you're an old pro looking for fresh inspiration, we think that you'll find something to like.

Thanks for reading, good luck from all of us here at Newsletter2Go, and happy email marketing!

Best,

Ian Roderick
Communications Manager – [Newsletter2Go](#)



Make a Plan

Before starting your email marketing campaign, it's important that you have specific goals about what you want to achieve. Email marketing is a very adaptable and customizable tool, meaning that no two email marketing strategies look exactly alike. This gives you and your business a lot of flexibility, but it also means that you need to sit down and spend time developing a plan that works for you.

While there's no rigid roadmap that works in all situations, there are some variables that you definitely need to be thinking about:

Communication Style

You already know how to speak to your target groups. Make sure that your newsletters strike the same tone. You want consistency of message, of tone, and appearance.

B2B or B2C?

While B2C newsletters often contain flash discounts and seasonal products, B2B newsletters tend to be sources of information and resources. The devices on which your newsletters are opened will also be quite different: More than half of B2C newsletters are opened on mobile devices, whereas the majority of B2B newsletters are opened via desktop.

Purpose. You should be clear about why you are sending newsletters. To distribute information? To drive traffic to your website? To drive sales? All of the above? All of these goals require slightly different strategies (e.g. frequency and content). It's very difficult to achieve all of these goals through a single newsletter, so consider segmenting your overall email marketing campaign into distinct tracks: sales newsletters, information newsletters, etc.

Setting specific, measurable goals at the beginning of the process will focus your activity and ensure that the email you're sending has a clear purpose. You'll want to set clear benchmarks before you start your campaign. Numbers don't lie, which means you'll be able to objectively measure how your campaign is doing.



Build a Contact List

Building a contact list is the essential ingredient in email marketing - after all, you'll need recipients to whom you can send your newsletters.

Legal Requirements

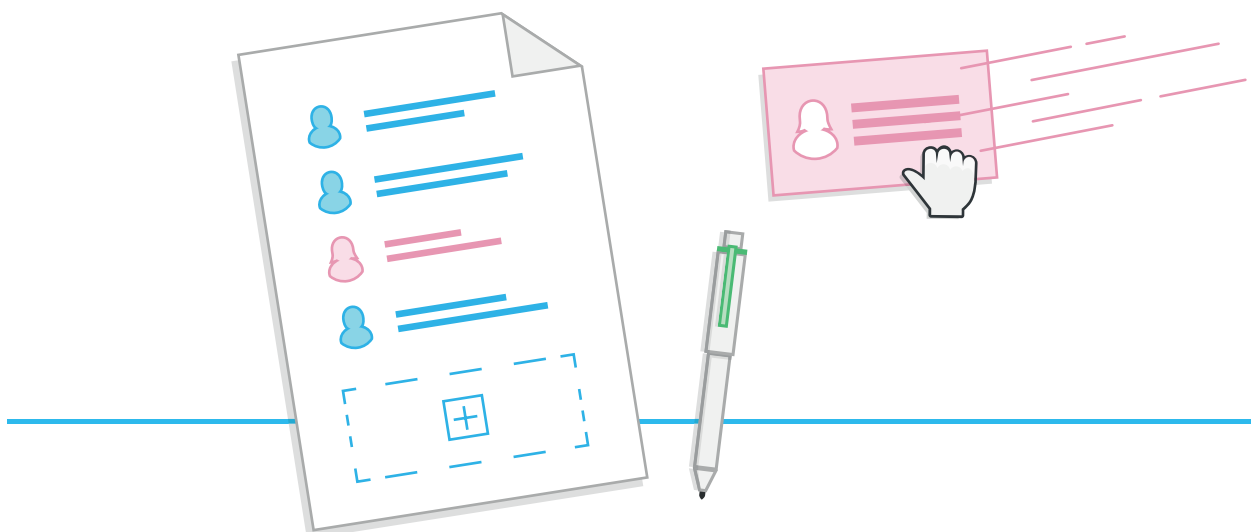
E-Commerce platforms have a lot of email addresses and other contact information, which means that your job will be a little bit easier. Just make sure that before you start sending emails, you're in compliance with your jurisdiction's policy regarding direct marketing messages.

How to Build an Contact List

A few strategies to build your contact list:

- registration form on your company's homepage
- include a checkbox during the purchase sequence that says "I would like to receive occasional updates..."
- give users more than one chance to register (i.e. at more than one step during the checkout process, or on more than one page of your website)
- use special offers (sign up for our newsletter for a chance to win an iPad, or a 5€ discount for B2C firms)
- registration form on your facebook page
- a box for business cards in your local store (if you have one)

Hint: Don't ask for too much information in the signup form. If you make the registration process too burdensome, people will give up.



Segment Contacts

As you're uploading contacts into your recipient management system, don't forget to add as much identifying information as you can. Basic information like gender, age, and location can provide unique opportunities (we'll discuss later on).

Use Plug-Ins

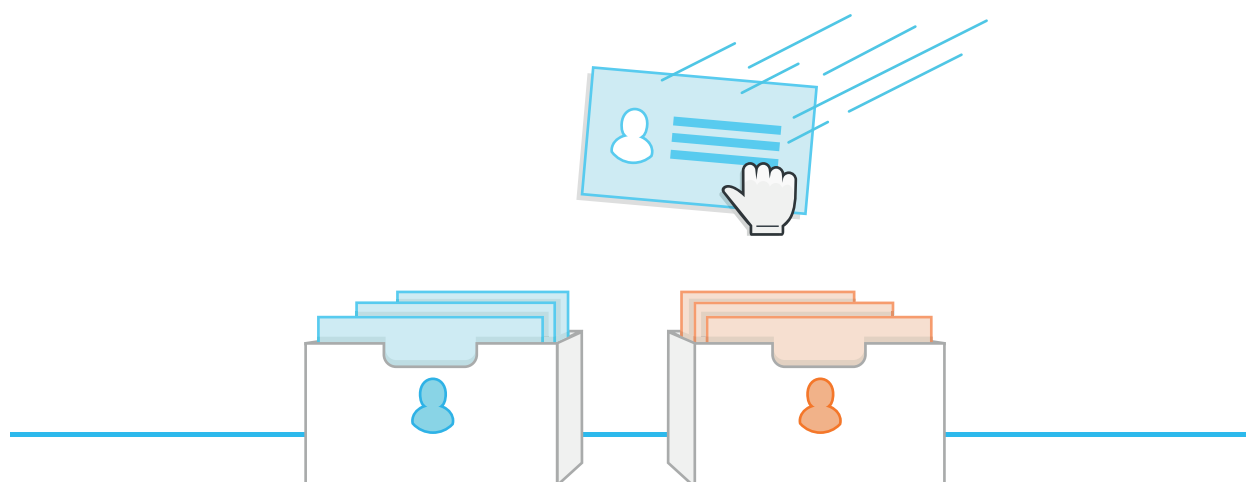
The most effective strategy here is to integrate your e-commerce system with an email marketing software solution via plug-in or other interface. This integration will automatically synchronize your contacts – their basic contact information and demographics as well as purchase information and other identifying information.

Segment Groups

Once you've imported your contacts and you're sure that you've got data assigned to each one, you can start creating segmented groups. Creating groups based on criteria of your choosing – such as gender, size, purchase history, etc. – will allow you to send more relevant newsletters to your contacts.

At Newsletter2Go, we believe that creating so-called dynamic groups is the most effective strategy when segmenting your users. Dynamic groups are created by establishing conditions (or really a set of if/then statements) that automatically include contacts with certain traits. Dynamic groups, in contrast to static groups, are updated continuously and automatically to include all users with a certain trait(s).

For example, all contacts who are labelled as “female” will be automatically added to the dynamic group “female customers.” If you only use static groups, you would have to manually add each new contact with a specific trait to the static group. Dynamic groups save you a lot of time and effort.



Design Awesome Newsletters

Designing a good newsletter can be tricky. You want to be helpful without being intrusive, and you want to display your best products without seeming too pushy. There's no such thing as the perfect newsletter, so what follows is a list of best practices.

Subject

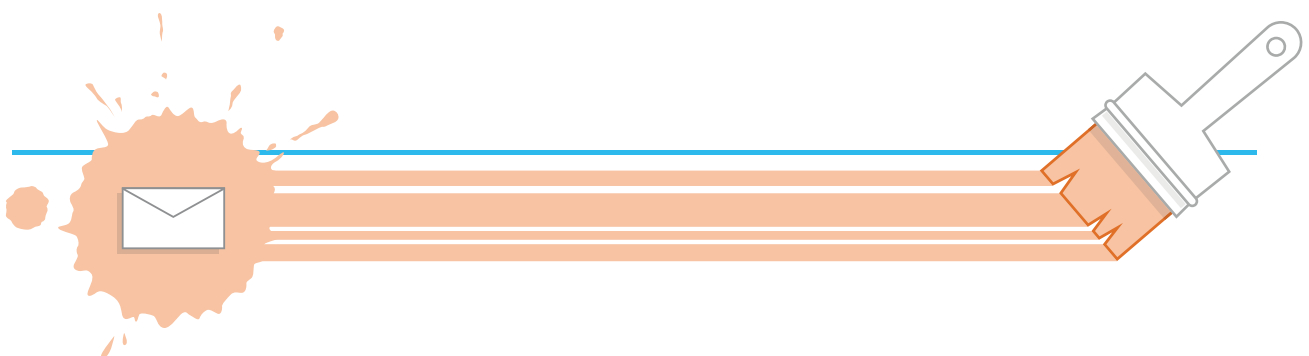
The subject is one of the key factors of whether your newsletter is opened or deleted. Relevance is more important than word count. Make sure that your recipients know exactly what your email has to offer, and why they should read more.

Design

Professional newsletter software offers more extensive design options than regular emails. This gives you flexibility when designing the newsletter. Keep these factors in mind when designing your newsletter

- Responsive Design. Use responsive design templates to ensure that your newsletter will automatically display properly on mobile devices. Most email marketing software providers include this automatically.
- Personalized greetings. Personalized greetings lead to more clicks and opens than generic greetings. Personalized text are also possible, with special content or other greetings.
- Above the fold: you want your best content to be at the top of the newsletter. It's ok to make longer emails that require scrolling, but make sure that the content that you need your customers to see is at the very top.
- Images: include a lot of images, and make sure the images are hyperlinked. Important: don't forget to include "alt-text" that will display if the image does not load.
- White Space. Don't be afraid of white space. Clutter doesn't work on your website, and it won't work in your newsletter.

Reminder: Most jurisdictions require that you include an Unsubscribe option in every newsletter that you send.



Automate, Automate, Automate

Email marketing software offers powerful automation tools. You can set up automated campaigns that do a lot of the work for you. Spend some time towards the beginning of your email marketing activity to think about what kinds of automated campaigns you'd like to create.

Broadly speaking, there are two kinds of automated campaigns:

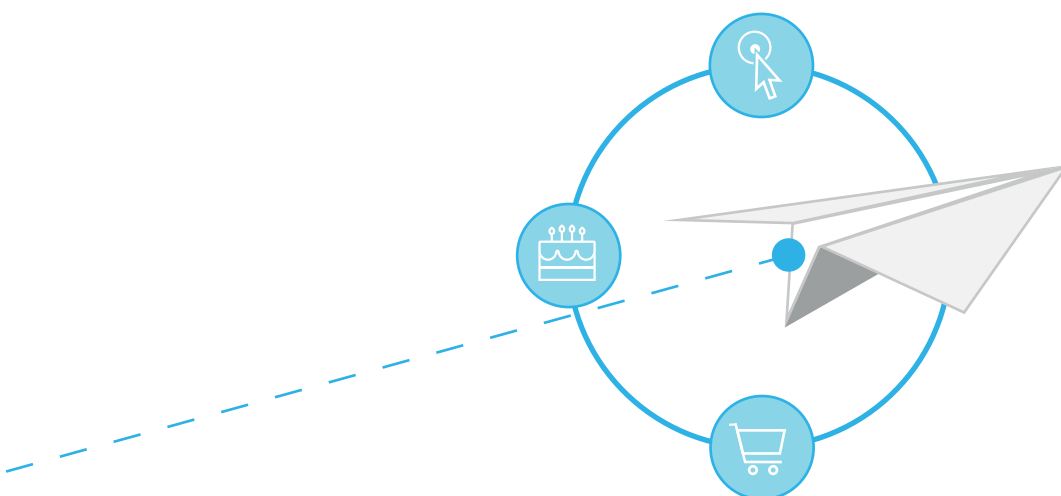
Lifecycle campaigns

Tailored to individual characteristics of individual customers. Sends emails over the customer lifecycle: after the first purchase, during a birthday, on holidays, on the anniversaries of purchases “it's been six months!”

Trigger campaigns

Send emails automatically based on triggered behavior. For example, a customer visits your website but doesn't purchase anything. Or another customer puts items in a shopping cart but doesn't buy anything. Or a customer has been inactive for 60 days. Any kind of customer activity that can be quantified can be turned into a triggered email campaign.

Spend some time at the beginning of your email marketing activity to think about what kinds of automated campaigns work for you and your business. Set everything up, and then sit back, relax and let the software do the work for you!



Analyze the Data

Email marketing provides a lot of data that you can use to continually measure, track and optimize your campaigns. There are a range of data points, but the KPI's are as follows:

- Delivery rate. Just what it sounds like. The percentage of emails that you send that are delivered to inboxes. This can be affected by incorrect email addresses and/or spam filters.
- Open rate. The number of people who open your email
- Click rate. The number of people who click on something in your email
- Click Through Rate (CTR). The number of people who click within an email as a percentage of the total number of opens.
- Unsubscribe rate. The number of people who unsubscribe from all future mailings
- Conversion-rate (CR) The number of people who bought via the newsletter

But KPI's are only the beginning of what you can measure with the analytical tools provided by email marketing software. There's so much more. Including:

A/B Tests

Test different versions of newsletters to see which performs better. Use this knowledge in future mailings. Or run the A/B test on a small (representative) subset of your recipients, and then use the more effective version in a newsletter to the rest of your contacts.

Clickmaps

show you exactly where people clicked within the newsletter. This helps you learn what your best content or products are.

Geolocating

shows exactly where, geographically speaking, your recipients opened and clicked their emails.

Cluster Analysis

allows you to view the KPI's sorted by identifying traits. For example: you can look at the open rates for only males or for people who opened your last newsletter.

This is by no means an exhaustive list. Email marketing software provides all kinds of powerful analytical tools. The best way to learn about them, though, is to try them yourself! We've heard that Newsletter2Go is pretty great...





Emails That Make People Happy
