

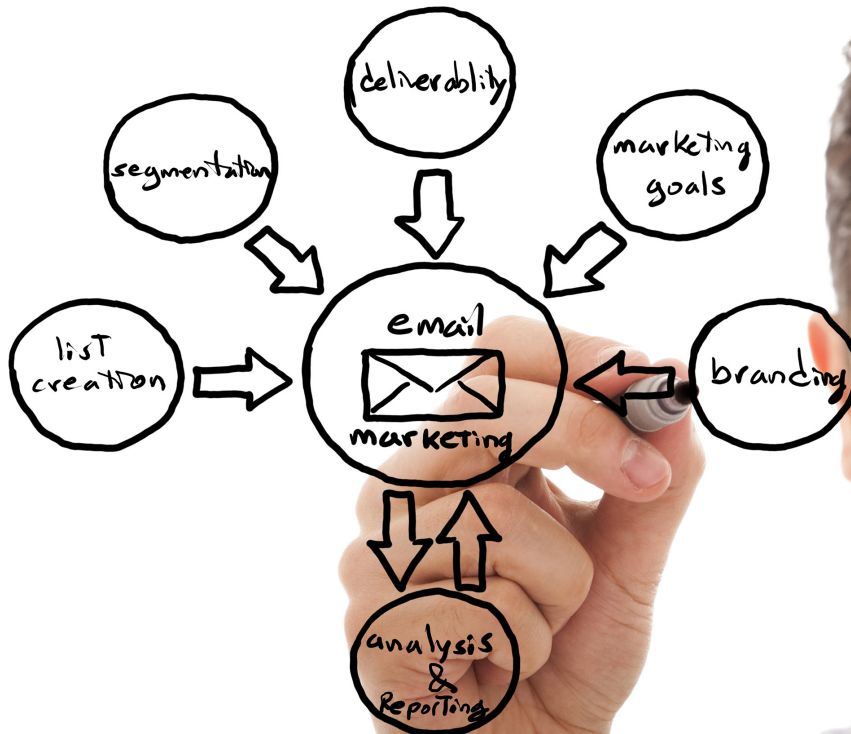
10

Most Common

# Email Marketing Mistakes

## Ten Most Common Email Marketing Mistakes

At Upper Case, we see very smart customers make mistakes that cause their email response rates to suffer. Here are the most common mistakes we encounter...



# 01

## **Not running the SPAM checker**

An email spam checker evaluates your email content and gives you a spam score and provides suggestions to help get your email to the inbox. Wise customers use it before sending any email campaign. Yet some customers don't run the spam check and confidently send their email campaign to thousands of recipients, only to learn that 25% of their emails were blocked or filtered by spam filters because their spam score was too high.

A SPAM score as close to 0 is ideal; below 2 is ok. A score of 5 is pushing the limits and a score of 19? Well let's say you won't be too impressed with your email campaign response rates.

# 02

## **Sending One Big Image**

Maybe your design team created a really cool direct mail piece and you want to 're-purpose' it and send it as an email campaign, so you get a .JPG or .GIF image of the design and send away. So the design looks excellent and you're confident your readers will love it. This fails on several levels. First, spam filters measure your 'Image to Text' ratio. Spammers often use large images to get around content filters; so you look like a nasty spammer. Second, more than 65% of business email inboxes will block images by default, so your recipient sees only a big blank email with a little red X. Either way, no one will read your email.

# 03

## **Forgetting the TEXT Version**

Every email campaign should have an HTML version and a TEXT version. Emails are sent to recipients in what is called a MIME format – the text and HTML version are packages up and sent together. The recipient's email program then displays either the text or the HTML version, based on the recipient's preferences. In business, we still see over 10% of recipients who view only the text version. More importantly however, is that sending only an HTML version will increase your spam score by 2+ points – increasing the chances your email will be blocked by a spam filter.

# 04

## Over-Zealous Design / CSS Styling

In a nutshell, many email clients forget to display HTML code. Outlook 2007 and 2010 for example don't even support basic CSS styles like alignment, image/table sizes or background images. Don't think about using an external CSS style sheet. And an embedded CSS style sheet will still be ignored by Outlook 2007, Outlook 2010 and Gmail (including business accounts hosted by Google.)

With Email design – code like it 1999 – use tables to structure the layout and be sure to inline your styles.

# 05

## Not Testing Enough

The top email feature request we see is for an UNDO button – as in 'Oops I found a mistake in the campaign I just sent to 25,000 recipients – how can I undo it? Before sending a campaign to your entire list, make sure to check that your images links aren't broken, each and every hyperlink works and that your unsubscribe link works.

# 06

## Ignoring SPAM Compliance Requirements

We are required to enforce spam laws because spam negatively impacts email delivery and our job is to ensure that your emails get delivered to the inbox. Sometimes you just make an honest mistake – you send a campaign and forget to check SPAM compliance, but more often, customers just don't take the time to become familiar with SPAM laws, which should be required reading for anyone sending email campaigns.

### **In a nutshell, the following need to be in every email:**

- > Valid send-from email address.
- > Nothing misleading. You can't 'pretend' to be someone else.
- > Physical address; a PO box is now acceptable but not recommended
- > Wording indicating that the email is an advertisement - if it is.

Include an unsubscribe link. If you forget – we'll automatically include one. Yes – this is a legal requirement; no, you can't work around it, even if you are sending email campaigns to your customers or company. We recommend adding a second unsubscribe link at the top of your email – so lazy people who don't want to get your future emails won't just hit the 'this is spam' button instead.

## 07

### **Deleting & Re-uploading Lists for Each Campaign**

Like all serious email marketing agencies, Forza keeps track of who unsubscribed from your lists and which email addresses bounced. We of course also keep a really great history of all of your campaign results, including links clicks and email opens. So if you upload a list, send a campaign, delete the list, then repeat all over again, you simply lose all that valuable data – including the list of contacts who unsubscribed!

## 08

### **Using Poor Email Structure**

The two top email structure mistakes are..

**a)** poor/bad subject line and..

**b)** not including a call to action or at least, not including a call to action within the first paragraph of your email. Here's what to do:

- > Keep subject lines short: 50 characters maximum works best.
- > Add a call-to-action in the first paragraph.

## 09

### **Not Designing for Blocked Images**

65% of all business email clients now block images by default. If you have a lot of images and if you are not using ALT text tags for all images, your email will simply look like a bunch of blank boxes with red 'X's, and you'll lose readers. You might be an exceptionally creative designer, but when it comes to email – limit use of images, and always add alternate text tags to all images (even though Outlook won't even display them!)

## 10

**Spam trigger words**

The very same qualities that make email attractive to genuine advertisers also make email attractive to spammers.

To combat the plagues of spam, Internet Service Providers, email marketing services, and even companies such as Mozilla or Microsoft, analyse millions of messages and compile lists of “trigger” words and phrases most often associated with spam. These trigger words and phrases are then used to filter incoming messages.

This is a good thing, as it helps reduce the amount of unwanted messages we all receive. But it’s also a bad thing, since it invariably snares legitimate messages from honest advertisers.

This means that seemingly innocent copy, especially in the subject line, can kill your email.

**Top spam trigger words:**

#1	Cents on the dollar
100% satisfied	Check Claims Click
4U Accept credit cards	Click Here / Click Below Click
Act Now!	Congratulations Cost / No cost
Additional	Dear friend
Income	Do it today
Affordable	Extra income
All natural	For free
All new	Form
Amazing	Free and FREE
Apply online	Free installation
Bargain Best price	Free leads
Billing address	Free membership
Buy direct	Free offer
Call Call free	Free preview
Can't live without	Free website
Cards Accepted	Full refund

Get it now  
Giving away  
Guarantee  
Here  
Hidden  
Increase sales  
Increase traffic  
Information you requested  
Insurance  
Investment / no investment  
Investment decision  
Legal Lose  
Marketing  
Marketing solutions  
Message contains  
Money  
Month trial offer  
Name brand  
Never  
No gimmicks N  
o Hidden Costs  
No-obligation Now  
Offer  
One time / one-time  
Opportunity Order  
Orders shipped by priority mail  
Performance  
Phone  
Please read  
Potential earnings  
Pre-approved  
Price Print out and fax  
Profits  
Real thing  
Removal instructions  
Remove Risk free Sales  
Satisfaction guaranteed  
Save Save up to  
Search engines  
See for yourself  
Serious cash  
Solution  
Special promotion  
Success  
The following form  
Unsolicited  
Unsubscribe  
Urgent  
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