

DWHSA
DESTINATION WEDDING & HONEYMOON
SPECIALISTS ASSOCIATION

DWHSA Webinars

The Best Practices for Email Newsletters

The biggest myth about online marketing

Email is dead ...

Email isn't cool ...

Email is for old people ...

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The big truths about email marketing

- Finding new customers via email connections has increased fourfold over the past four years. (Only organic search is more powerful.)
- Those customers who connect with you via email tend to shop more and spend more (11 percent above the average).
- The "lifetime value" of these customers is higher than for clients who come to you via social media networks.

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The big truths about email marketing

- Your clients and prospects tend to miss a lot of content in their social media networks (when's the last time you didn't see a close friend's Facebook Newsfeed item?) – but, **they'll scan (at least) every single headline in their email box.**
- People check their email constantly!** 72 percent of email users check their inboxes at least six times every day. Email is the # 1 activity on smartphones [55 percent of users], and it's the # 1 activity on computers [94 percent of users, versus 61 percent checking social media].



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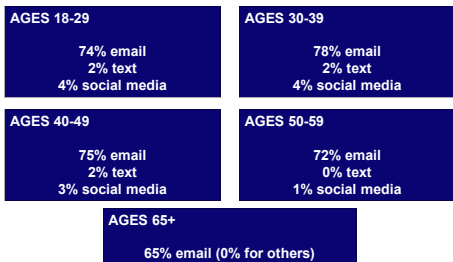
Why is everybody wrong about email marketing?

- Email IS dying - when it comes to personal communications** (down 21 percent since 2008, in favor of text messaging and social media).
- But, **consumers' preference for permission-based email messages has actually gone up 5 percent since 2008.** (77% of consumers prefer hearing from businesses they support via email.)
- Across all types of marketing messages (from travel alerts to polls), email remains the top channel for consumers in terms of acceptability.
- Percentage of total time spent using email that's devoted to commercial email: **17% in 2005, but 30% in 2011 ...**



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Commercial email usage by consumer age groups



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The secret to email marketing's attraction?

PERMISSION

Your clients know that it's you sending them stuff,
they find your stuff valuable,
they've given you the OK to send it,
and (as long as it remains valuable) they want to keep receiving stuff
from you!



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Step # 1 in getting that permission is ...

**You can send emails lawfully
only to those
clients and prospects
who've expressly given you
their OK to contact them.**



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Build and maintain a great email list

- Start with your current client base. They've bought from you in the past, so basically you have their permission for sure!
- Then, add all prospects with whom you have an excellent connection that means they'll be OK with getting email from you.
- Always ask for email addresses at every point of contact and at every point of sale.
- Offer free information or resources in exchange for email addresses.
- Add a sign-up box on your web site and sign-up links in your social media accounts.



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Build and maintain a great email list

- Set up a contest with prizes for email addresses submitted as entries.
- Conduct a poll or survey, and ask for the email addresses that way.
- Encourage social media followers to give you their email addresses.
- Network constantly – make it a game to collect email addresses.
- Quality is more important than quantity.
- Remember to "calendar in" time every three to six months to "clean" your lists (e.g., check bounces with your email services provider).



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Why use an email services provider?

- They've already built the systems to help you store your email addresses, build professional-looking newsletters, and analyze the results from your "sends."
- They're very "user friendly," with support that's readily available to help you.
- They do the "heavy lifting" to get your emails delivered (past the spam filters of your clients' and prospects' ISPs).



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Why use an email services provider?

- They'll help you integrate social media into your email messages.
- They'll confirm that your emails are formatted properly.
- They make it easy to maintain and "clean" your lists (e.g., bounce reports.)



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Common email services providers

MailChimp

<http://www.mailchimp.com>

\$0 to send up to 12,000 emails to up to 2,000 contacts each month (or you can pay to send unlimited emails to up to 500 contacts for \$10/month and on up from there)

No trial (because you can use MailChimp for free)

Constant Contact:

<http://www.constantcontact.com>

\$15/month (0-500 contacts); \$30 (501-2,500)

Free 30-day trial



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Common email services providers

AWeber

<http://www.aweber.com>

\$19/month (0-500 contacts); \$29 (501-2,500)

\$1 30-day trial

iContact

<http://www.icontact.com>

\$14/month (0-500 contacts); \$29 (501-2,500)

Free 30-day trial



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Common email services providers

Campaigner

<http://www.campaigner.com>

\$10/month (0-1,000 contacts); \$25 (1,001-2,500)

Free 30-day trial

GetResponse

<http://www.getresponse.com>

\$15/month (0-1,000 contacts); \$25 (up to 2,500)

Free 30day trial



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What should you write about in the newsletter?

- **Romance travel news** (use the items in DWHSA's two weekly newsletters!)
- **Your best tips and secrets about romance travel**
- **Trip ideas** for romantic travel
- **Testimonials** from your clients
- **Offers and specials** (but, keep this at about 20 percent of your content or less!)

Also – don't go crazy! Again, quality is better than quantity ...



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How often should you send your newsletter?

It's a judgment call! If you send newsletters too frequently, you'll risk "burning out" your clients, they'll be more likely to hit the "spam" button, and you'll waste your time and energy sending emails that don't get read!

But, if you send newsletters too infrequently, your contacts will have to get "reacquainted" with you every time they get an email, they may forget who you are and hit the spam button, and their email addresses could change and lead to more "bounces."

The general answer: Not less than once a month – and, if you can do it, every other week works out great ...



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When should you send out the newsletter?

Mondays and Fridays are rough – Monday, everyone's getting back into the new week, while Fridays they're focused on the weekend ...

So, **Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays** are always good ...

Now, though, **Sundays can work too** (as email grows more and more popular on mobile devices, and those mobile devices get a lot of use on Sundays) ...



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When should you send out the newsletter?

Best advice: **Pick the same mid-week day – or, if you want, shake things up by throwing in the occasional Sunday ...**

What about times of the day? Emails get their most opens within the first hour after delivery (5 hours later, the results drop more than 90%) – so, **emails sent in the afternoon have greater chances of being noticed, opened, and clicked!**



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The secrets of subject lines

- **“The best subject lines TELL what’s inside – the worst SELL what’s inside.” (Mail Chimp)**
- Avoid **ALL CAPS**, **spammy words** like “free,” and **punctuation** like exclamation points.
- Be **very useful** and **very specific** in your subject lines.
- **Phrase your subject line as a question.**
- **Work in local mentions** if you can.
- **Keep subject lines short and sweet** (28 to 39 characters have the second highest open rates but the highest clickthrough rates).



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Make your newsletters mobile friendly

- **Keep the design very simple.** Put the most important news items at the top (“**above the fold**”). Break up your newsletter into **shorter paragraphs**, and use **bulleted or numbered lists**.
- Pay special attention to **the first 6 words in your subject line** (“front load” it with the key words).
- Use **fewer and smaller images** – and, make sure you have “**alt tags**” for each image.
- **Include hyperlinks** in your newsletters – but, don’t crowd them together.
- Have **clear “calls to action”** in your newsletters.



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Final tips

- **Tell your contacts and new subscribers what they can expect** from you with the newsletter (what will be in it, when will they get it and how often).
- **Send new subscribers a welcome email** when they sign up.
- **Make your emails "scannable" in a quick look**, because that's how people "read" today, especially on their phones. Break up the text, add images, and use "read more" links.
- **Keep a regular publishing schedule.** It's better to do a newsletter once a month and stick to that than promise twice a month but miss a few issues ...



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Final tips

- **Check out what your newsletter looks like on different mobile devices.** (70% of consumers will give up on your emails if they look bad on their phones.)
- Each newsletter should have (a) **social media buttons** for sharing, (b) **a public link to the web version** of your email, and (c) a **"forward" or "share" button** so subscribers can send a copy to their friends.
- With consumer email newsletters, **stick to HTML rather than text-only versions** – HTML versions have response rates 35% higher.
- **Write like a human being.** Be friendly. Read your newsletter drafts as if you're a client. Are they fun?



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Final tips

- Ask your contacts to take the extra step of **adding the email address from which you'll be sending the newsletter to their address book** (a step called "white listing").
- **Use your company name alongside your own name in the "From" line** – and, keep that practice consistent for every issue.
- **Never make your newsletter a single image** – if you do, your issues will be blocked by many contacts' email systems like Outlook.
- Remember the formula **"80% text, 20% images."**



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