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Small business training at it's best!

Email Marketing for the Small Business Owner!



The Technology Coach

Small Business Technology Service, Training, Coaching and Support.

<http://www.thetechnologycoach.ca>

info@thetechnologycoach.ca

Office 905-366-8234

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Getting Started Tutorials Accessed from tutorials.constantcontact.com

Getting Started

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Email Marketing 101® Webinar Series

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Saving Open and Click-through Email Addresses - 5 min

Other Tutorials

Constant Contact Pricing - 5 min

Take Advantage of Online Help - 1 min

Welcome Email



Welcome!

Welcome to Constant Contact!

-- Save this email as your handy reference guide

Thank you for signing up for a Constant Contact free trial! To get started, we need to verify your email address so that you can begin sending email campaigns from Constant Contact. It will only take a few seconds.

Click [on this link](#) to verify your email address.

Top of Form
Bottom of Form

With Constant Contact, the Do-It-Yourself Email Marketing™ tool, you can create and send professional HTML emails in minutes. Simply add your unique message to one of our many professional templates, and Constant Contact does the rest.

Reminder: Your Constant Contact Free Trial expires after 60 days or when you have exceeded 100 subscribers in your account. Payment will be required to continue use of the service at that time.

Account Information

It's easy to get started! Just login to your account to give it a try.

User Name: soundresolve Top of Form

Password: ***** Bottom of Form

Login URL:

<http://ui.constantcontact.com/sitehome.html>

Get Started Right Away!

It's easy to get started. Click our "Getting Started Tutorial" link and see how easy it is to add an email sign up to your website, import in-house email addresses and create compelling HTML newsletters and promotions...in minutes!



- [Getting Started Tutorial](#)

- [Email Marketing 101 Webinar](#)
- [Support & Answer Center](#)
- [FAQs](#)
- [Pricing Details](#)
- [Want a Custom Template?](#)
- [Advanced Editor User Guide](#)

Newsletter Archive

- [Email Marketing Hints & Tips](#)

Your Constant Contact® Command Center





[Click here for Getting Started Tutorial](#)

Questions?

We have an excellent in-house customer support team waiting to help you. Our support team is one of Constant Contact's best features! [Customer Support Contact Form](#)

We appreciate your business and welcome the opportunity to provide you with the tools necessary to promote your online business.

Sincerely,

Constant Contact Support

Click or call for help getting started

Click: [Support & Answer Center](#)

Phone (US): (866) 289-2101

Phone (Outside US): 1-781-472-8120

7 ways to get customers' e-mail addresses (legitimately)

If you're like most small-business owners, you need a generous supply of potential customers' names and e-mail addresses to effectively market your offerings online.

The good news is you don't have to deceive or spam people into getting them. The bad news is that too many others have already taken that route, giving online marketing a shady reputation. Unlike the offline world, where consumers get junk mail daily and simply toss it into the recycling bin, unwanted e-mail messages offend people and trigger nasty replies. People are more protective than ever of their e-mail addresses.

"Spammers have made it bad for the rest of us," says Derek Scruggs, founder of Escalan.com, a Boulder, Colo.-based marketing consultant. So you shouldn't be one yourself; there are enough already out there.

Scruggs is an expert on permission-based e-mail marketing, and has written a separate article for Microsoft Small Business, "10 rules for successful permission-based e-mail marketing," which I refer to in this article. (See link under "Related Articles.")

So, after following Scruggs' permission-based rules, how do you build your database of names and e-mail addresses? Here are seven tips to consider:

1. Be upfront: Put an e-mail sign-up box prominently on your home page. Why not just tell customers what you want? In return, "offer something of value, earn their trust, and build the relationship," says Jeffrey Graham, vice president at Dynamic Logic, a New York-based online research company. The offers could include free tips and advice, news alerts, newsletters and/or new product information. Be creative, but allow people to opt-out of these e-mails anytime they want.

Two online retailers that follow this strategy effectively are Health4her.com and BabyCenter.com. The latter site asks prospective mothers simply for their e-mail address and the date their baby is due. With that information, BabyCenter.com is ready to roll — it can offer pregnancy and child-rearing tips as well as cribs, car seats and other products up until long after the baby is born.

Similarly, Health4her.com, which sells health and beauty products for women, can directly reach the consumers who want to be reached, with recipes, health and beauty tips and special product offers. "It has been very successful; we get from 2% to 4% of those visiting our site to sign up," says Louis Jay, Health4her.com president. Putting a sign-up box on your home page, he says, "should be the first thing on anybody's mind when they start an online business."

2. Make your promotions and special offers worth the click. Contests for cash prizes or free trips will always attract lots of sign-ups, whether the offers are made through banner or e-mail newsletter ads. Make the offers worth the trouble. Yet also know that the jury is still out on the effectiveness of this strategy, because those signing up are often not long-term customers. Still, an incentive-based offer is a way to gather hundreds of names and e-mail addresses, which are especially viable if your site is frequented primarily by your target customers -- such as adult women for Health4her.com. "We give them a chance to win something, like a free cruise," Jay says. "It's a way to gather names and build relationships."

3.If you rent lists of consumer names, be forthright about it. I am talking here about marketing or industry lists where consumers have given their consent -- not the many other lists of names obtained deceptively or without the consumer's permission. Scruggs discourages buying even the opted-in lists in his e-marketing rules, though many other online marketers don't. That's because the potential for spamming still exists. Not every consumer who agreed to sign up for the particular list you bought will remember doing so, and certainly won't know where or how far his or her name is being spread. Complaints are all but guaranteed.

If you abide by this risky practice, make sure you indicate in your e-mails that you obtained a consumer's name from a complementary list and that you offer products and services you believe he or she would want to know about. "If you are not upfront with them about why they are getting your message, you're going to have a bad relationship," Scruggs says. One other note: The effectiveness of obtaining customers this way is also dubious. Your homegrown lists are a more solid investment, says Graham.

4.Put ads and links in specialized e-mail newsletters. What newsletters reach the audience your business wants to reach? By targeting your ads and promotions in specialized e-mail newsletters, you may get more promising sign-ups. "It builds credibility for you and your business," says Debbie Weil, a Washington, D.C.-based e-mail marketing consultant.

5.Do your own free newsletter too. So you hadn't thought of this already? Regular e-mail newsletters provide an incentive for people to stay in touch with you and your business, if you provide worthwhile content. What tips, advice, resources and other information can your newsletter provide — beyond simply touting your services? (Yes, that you could do in places throughout the newsletter.) A bigger question may be: Who could you get to write your newsletter, if not you? An employee? A spouse? A friend? A professional writer? Be creative. And don't be afraid to start small, Weil says. By following tip Nos. 1, 3 and 4, you can build traffic and acquire customer names. Even peaking at a subscriber base of 500 may be worth your while in terms of customer loyalty and industry visibility.

6.Think geographically (and think beyond ads). A common mistake among many small businesses today is that they fail to realize their best online customers are generally nearby. To that end, what are the online publications and Web sites that serve your geographic area? What are the e-mail newsletters that are geographic in nature? Here is where playing up your physical location is most helpful. "Think local, not global," Weil says. "Know what publications people locally read, where they hang out online."

Besides placing ads in these publications, write articles, submit letters to the editors, and send posts to discussion lists -- all including your business name and Web site address, Weil says. (Even a catchy blurb in your signature line will help people remember you.) Here is an inexpensive way to gain visibility and acquire names. If you have something thought provoking and worthwhile to say, you almost always will trigger a reaction, she says. "It can be a great tool. But you have to be tasteful as well as compelling."

7. Partner with other complementary businesses in e-mail and ad campaigns. Exchanging e-mail and online ads with other businesses in your industry or geographic region is often an effective way of targeting your customer acquisition efforts. The trick is to find such businesses that aren't your competitors, says Tim Choate, president, chairman and CEO of Aptimus, a Seattle-based online direct marketer. Co-registration pages, where those who sign up for an offer are then presented with a complementary offer from the partnering business, is one strategy proven effective, he says. Another is cross-promotion in each other's e-mail newsletters.

Alas, you still may be tempted to buy or rent that cheap list of names of people who haven't given their permission to be e-mailed. Resist. Think about the junk that comes into your inbox -- and whether your business should be regarded that way.

How to stay out of trouble with the US CAN-SPAM Act

Attention, those of you who send e-mail newsletters to your customers. You just might be in violation of US federal law.

The CAN-SPAM Act, signed into law in late 2003, imposes some significant requirements on mass e-mailers. Violations probably won't put you in jail. But if your recipients complain, you could be in for a hassle. And the local newspaper might have some fun with you.

The point of the law is to cut down on spam. Most of the people who send spam are irresponsible and untraceable. So it's unclear exactly how the law will stop them. But it could snag you as an illegal spammer if you're not careful.

Unlike many laws, this one is fairly easy to understand. Some simple changes can keep you out of trouble.

I send more than 3 million e-mail newsletters with tech tips and advice to subscribers weekly. I've had to make changes to my e-mail newsletters to comply with the Act. Here are six things to think about if you use this type of marketing.

1. You cannot use a phony return address. This is called spoofing. It is a favorite trick of spammers, because it makes them hard to trace. When you send out newsletters, you must use a valid return address.

Furthermore, you must include a valid physical address in your e-mail. Don't use a Post Office box number. The law requires a street address.

2. You must have a procedure for unsubscribing. My newsletters include links that people can click to unsubscribe. That isn't required by the law; you just need a procedure that works.

You may not send anything to the recipients more than 10 days after they opt-out. And your unsubscribe link or e-mail address must remain good for 10 days.

My unsubscribe link takes you to a page on my Web site. There you can unsubscribe to any of my three newsletters, or to all of them. After pressing the unsubscribe button, you'll receive an e-mail confirming that you are unsubscribed. There's a link there to re-subscribe, in case you made a mistake.

Even with all this, some people have problems. Some people send an e-mail with "unsubscribe" in the subject line or body. Others send letters. That's a pain. We have to unsubscribe those people manually.

3. The subject line must be clear. The other day, I received a spam e-mail with this subject line: "Re: STK, the fear somewhat." Well, pardon me, but I didn't have a clue about what that meant. Turns out, the sender was hawking an allegedly banned CD. Apparently, the government doesn't want me to see it.

Whatever, this subject line is unclear, so it is probably illegal under the law. Of course, the feds would have to hire Hercule Poirot to track down the sender. Amelia Earhart might be easier to find.

The subject line for my weekly newsletter says, "Kim Komando Show Electronic Newsletter." You won't have any problem if your subject line is equally clear. If you feel you must be sneaky, you might want to consider a new career.

Also, if you are sending explicit adult content, the subject line must say so.

4. Don't harvest e-mail addresses on the Internet. For years, spammers have trolled the Usenet newsgroups, collecting e-mail addresses. If you have used these groups, you've probably seen e-mail addresses in this form: somebody(NOSPAM)@somedomain.com. You drop the (NOSPAM) when you send an e-mail to this person. The idea is that most automated e-mail address collectors don't know to do that. I use the same trick in my newsletters.

Those automated address collectors are banned under the CAN-SPAM Act. Hopefully, you're not using them, anyway.

5. You can still send spam. Interestingly, the 2003 law does not outlaw spam. That is defined as any commercial message that is not requested. So you can legally send out millions of messages, asking people to buy your product.

You just have to follow the rules. Your subject line must clearly state the intent of the message. The recipient must have a way to opt-out from your e-mail. (Today's irresponsible spammers often include unsubscribe options. But they are generally used to qualify recipients' addresses as valid.)

And remember: You can't use a false return address. And you cannot use a computer for which you do not have authorization. Many private computers -- perhaps millions -- have been infiltrated by spammers. They are used to flood the Internet with spam, without the owners' knowledge. Don't do that.

6. It pays to be extra careful. In my earlier days on the Internet, I signed up anybody who asked. A person could subscribe up to eight friends. No more. Occasionally, people who are subscribed this way become enraged. Who needs that?

Today, my subscription process has two steps. I include a link in my newsletters that takes people to my Web site. There, they can enter their e-mail address, or the address of eight friends. Anyone who signs up receives a confirmation e-mail. They must hit the Reply button and send it back. Only then do they go into our database.

Friends who are signed up by others get an invitation to subscribe. If they follow through with the two-step process, they're in. Otherwise, they never get a newsletter.

This guarantees that people are not signed up as pranks. I have learned the hard way that when angry people complain to an Internet service provider, my work suddenly lands in the spam filter. I don't

want that, nor do I want to bother people who are uninterested in my newsletters.

The federal law supersedes state statutes. Enforcement is up to the Federal Trade Commission. Private individuals and Internet service providers cannot sue under this law. State attorneys general have some enforcement powers.

Internet newsletters are a wonderful way to connect with your listeners. The new law needn't cause you problems; most of it is just common sense. Take the time to do it right, and you should have no hassles from the FTC.

10 rules for successful permission-based e-mail marketing

Attention, online marketers. Do your part and adhere to these rules.

1. Send e-mail only to those who have "opted-in" to receive it.

Ideally you should use "confirmed" opt-in, in which a confirmation message must be sent to the recipient, who in turn must reply to the message for the opt-in to take effect. Avoid "opt-out," which forces the recipient to receive messages until he says no.

The widespread practice of opt-out appears to actually discourage e-commerce. A 2001 survey by the research firm Millward Brown IntelliQuest found that 63% of Web users agreed with the statement, "If I buy online, I'll end up getting junk e-mail." And the trend is up — IntelliQuest found only 58% agreed with that statement in 1998. Perhaps this is why many people use fake e-mail addresses when buying online; Shop.org found in a 1998 survey that 60% of surfers have given false information when filling out online forms.

2. Always honor user requests to opt-out.

Make it a simple process and include a Web site URL in every message that allows the user to opt-out. (A simple "reply to unsubscribe" does not always work if the user has multiple e-mail accounts, which can be extremely frustrating for the end user.)

For some companies, it might make sense to "down-sell" the end user. For example, a news site that provides daily deliveries may have success in offering the user an opportunity to "downgrade" to weekly digests. After all, many opt-outs are simply a natural reaction to too much e-mail in general; a reduced burden is often welcome.

3. Confirm everything by e-mail: The initial opt-in, orders, shipping notification and changes in the customer profile.

This blunts the problem of false information. If a fake e-mail address has been entered, the confirmation will either bounce or be delivered to someone who possibly has never heard of you, in which case he will contact you and let you know your database needs to be updated. Always include an opt-out mechanism in these messages. As an added bonus, use these messages as an up-sell opportunity. For example, an airline could offer the user a reduced rate for renting a car from a particular sponsoring vendor.

4. Allow users to specify their preferences.

What kind of information do they want to receive? How often? Encourage the user to give you as much information as necessary to allow you to effectively target them in your e-mail promotions and other e-commerce activities. But avoid asking for her life story. Instead, structure your program so that you gain more information over time — with her permission, of course!

5. Give and you shall receive.

Customers don't give you their e-mail address and other personal information out of altruism. They do it in exchange for something of value. It could be information (on your Web site, via e-mail or through some other media), a free gift, a coupon or a chance to win a sweepstakes. Be creative, but also follow through by delivering real value to the recipient with every message.

6. Your list is an asset that only you can use; do not sell or rent it.

If you want to realize incremental revenue beyond your own offerings, allow the users to opt-in to receive offers from your partners. If you do this, make sure you control the mailings, and that your brand "introduces" other brands. Example: "Because you opted to receive promotional offers from our valued partners, we at ABC Corp. are pleased to give you a special offer from XYZ Corp." Ask the company doing the promotion to give you an exclusive on the offer for a limited time; limiting the offer to only your customers increases the value of opting in.

7. Develop and post a privacy policy for your Web site.

It reinforces how valuable they are to you and reminds them that there are real, live people "behind the scenes" of your Web site.

8. Respond to customer e-mail inquiries promptly.

9. Don't use rented lists.

The only exception is vendors who use the method described in No. 6.

10. Always remember the network effect.

Bad news travels much faster than good on the Internet.

An angry online customer can broadcast his ire to millions by creating an "I hate [your company]" Web site, e-mailing the experience to friends, posting it on message boards and other ways. Remember, in this economy the customer is in control. Do not make the mistake of treating e-mail and the Web like the telephone and snail mail.

Spam Report Reduction Guide

What is a spam report?

A spam report occurs when one of your subscribers receives your email campaign and then reports it as unwanted. For subscribers, this can be as easy as hitting the 'This is Spam' button in their AOL account, or it can be as involved as finding the abuse reporting email address in your privacy policy and sending a complaint directly to Constant Contact or to another reporting service, such as SpamCop.

Why are my subscribers reporting my email as spam?

There are many reasons why a subscriber might report your email as spam. You can never precisely determine why a subscriber chose to take this action. But, many of the reasons are understandable e.g. they don't remember your company name, they are no longer interested in your products, they feel you send too many messages and become annoyed. Only you can review your practices to determine if there are some things you could be doing differently. This guide is designed to help you diagnose your spam report problem and find a way to reduce the number of spam reports you receive.

What can I do to reduce my spam reports?

What you should do to reduce your spam reports depends on your business, your customers and your practices. Below, we list some root causes of spam reports and some steps other customers have taken that help to reduce them. Read the various suggestions carefully and select the steps that seem most appropriate to your business.

Complaint Reduction Suggestion List List Collection Practices

Experience shows that list collection methods and list maintenance are the best ways to reduce the number of spam reports.

1. Your list and only your list

You should only have on your subscriber list individuals who asked to be on your list. No third-party lists of any kind are acceptable for use in Constant Contact. So, if you have ever bought, rented or swapped lists with another business, you simply need to stop mailing to those third-party names.

2. How old is your list?

Over time, people forget what they subscribed to, or change their level of interest in a particular product or service. So, reducing your list (by age and activity) is one of the most effective ways to reduce your spam reports. This is especially true in industries where interest might be transient like vacation travel, wedding planning or sports league participation.

How old is too old? That depends on the nature of your business and how frequently and recently you have mailed to this list of subscribers. If you have been adding subscribers to your list, but not sending emails, then any name older than 1-year should be removed from your list.

Even if you have been mailing regularly, list age is often a source of spam reports. So, you should consider cleaning out the older subscribers. Of course, some of your older subscribers may be your best and most loyal customers. Here are two different approaches to "aging" your

list without losing your best subscribers. First, you can choose to keep only the subscribers who have opened or clicked-through a recent campaign. This way, you know the subscribers want your emails and are responding to your messages. The second option is to confirm the older portion of your list. Confirming your list means sending subscribers a one-time message asking them to confirm that they want to receive future messages from you. If they respond, you know they are interested and will remain on your list. If they do not respond, they are removed from your list. You can learn more about this option in Constant Contact by clicking on the Subscribers and Lists Tab and selecting Confirmed Opt-in.

3. **Clear messaging on sign-up**

This is a good time to review your email list sign-up process. When a new subscriber joins your list, the nature and frequency of your planned email communications should be very clear. Even if someone has just completed a purchase, you should ask if they want to receive future communications from you. If you want a happy subscriber base with low spam report rates, you should never add anyone to your list automatically.

4. **No pre-checked sign-ups**

Do you pre-check the subscription box in your purchase flow? If so, you should change the subscription box to an optional, unchecked box. As the amount of junk email has exploded, customers expect that reputable companies will ask for permission, not presume it.

5. **No list collection gimmicks**

A few years ago, it was not unusual to see contests or giveaways used as incentives for subscription (e.g. 'give us your email address and you will be entered in a lottery for a free vacation'). These methods gathered lots of email addresses but also generated a high number of spam reports. You want to build a list of subscribers who are interested in your product or service - not a gimmick. If part of your list was built using an aggressive collection campaign like a sweepstakes, you should remove or cleanse that list.

6. **No co-registration**

Have you used partners or advertising services to gather email addresses? This is often called co-registration. The customer is signing up for something else and is asked if they also want to receive information about your product category. Often, they are not given your company name or brand at the time of registration. The customer does not know your brand and does not know how their email address ended up on your list - they just start receiving emails from you. For this reason, co-registration will increase spam reports, and use of co-registration names is not permitted in Constant Contact.

7. **Multiple sources**

If you have gathered email subscribers over time through different methods, you may want to do some detective work to determine which subscribers are complaining. You can do this by breaking up your list and then sending separate campaigns to each list source. Constant Contact can provide complaint data by campaign to assist you in determining the bad list source. Then, you can remove that list, or limit that list to subscribers who have opened or clicked through your campaigns.

8. **Permission Letter**

From time to time, it may be helpful to remind your subscribers that they are on your email list

and ask them if they wish to remain on the list. This can be done through a Permission letter. Constant Contact includes a Permission letter template. Your permission letter should remind subscribers how they originally subscribed to your list and encourage them to unsubscribe if they do not want to receive your future mailings. A permission letter also reassures your customers that you care about their permission.

9. **Confirmed Opt-in**

The most confident way to ensure your subscribers want to hear from you is to use a Confirmed Opt-in process with your subscribers. This process requires your subscribers to confirm their subscription by responding to an email before they can be added to your list. Many consumers do not understand the process and, therefore, do not confirm their subscriptions. So, your list will be smaller, but using Confirmed Opt-in, you can be sure the subscribers on your list want to hear from you. This process is described in detail in Constant Contact under the Subscribers & Lists tab, Confirmed Opt-in. This process can be used for a portion of your list and may be an appropriate choice for older lists or lists that were gathered using practices that are no longer acceptable.

Subscription Management and Branding

Another way to reduce spam reports is to make sure your subscribers remember who you are and why they are receiving the emails you send. This is also an opportunity to reinforce your brand and build customer trust.

1. **Use a permission reminder**

Add a short paragraph to the top of your emails to remind subscribers of their permission, emphasizing the value of receiving your communications and offering them a quick link to unsubscribe. This should appear at the top of your email before you begin your content. This type of permission reminder is becoming more common in email publications. Below is an example that Constant Contact uses for our Connections mailing.

You are receiving Constant Contact® Connections because you are a Constant Contact customer or have signed up for our free trial. We have created Connections to help you take advantage of the special offers on business services from our trusted partners. Connections will be sent no more frequently than twice a month.

To unsubscribe, please [Click Here](#)

2. **Company name familiar and consistent**

Did your subscribers join your list with the same company name or product brand that you are using today? Sometimes spam reports occur because there has been a transition in company ownership or product naming and, suddenly, your subscribers are receiving email from a company name they do not recognize. If you have made a transition, remind subscribers of your original brand as you phase in the new brand or new name.

3. **Consistent FROM address**

Using the same FROM address consistently is another way to ensure that your subscribers recognize your email campaigns. Use a FROM address that includes the brand or company name they subscribed to. Avoid using a FROM address that looks too casual or spam-like, e.g. a first

name. Your FROM address is the single most important factor subscribers use to determine whether to open your mail, or report it as spam. If you need to change your FROM address, notify your subscribers of the planned change. Ask subscribers to add the new address to their address book. This will help ensure that your email makes it past any local filters.

4. **Recognizable look and feel**

Subscribers who recognize your email campaigns are much less likely to complain. By using the same template with a familiar layout, color scheme and font selection; you will establish consistency with your subscribers. When they receive your next mailing, it will look familiar and remind them of their subscription to your list.

Mailing Content and Frequency

1. **Content**

Sometimes spam reports are simply a way for subscribers to tell you that you are not sending information or offers that are interesting or relevant to them. The more promotional the message, the more likely it is to generate spam reports. If you are experiencing a high number of spam reports, review your content. Does it look like spam? It is too loud or too busy? Does it look like a deal that is too good to be true? Consumers are receiving a lot of junk email these days. The more you look like the junk, the more spam reports you will receive.

2. **Targeting and relevance**

Is your content of interest to your entire audience, or only a subset? If you have a broad product line or a very diverse audience, it pays to segment your list and send messages that are relevant to a particular group. The less relevant the offer, the more likely a subscriber is to complain.

3. **Frequency**

Another complaint trigger can be sending too many mailings to the same group. While a subscriber may like your company, they may not want to receive multiple mailings per week about the same products or services. The appropriate frequency can vary widely by industry and by mailing type (promotions versus newsletters). Put yourself in your customers' shoes and ask yourself how frequently they think about or use your product or service. If your product or service is an infrequent purchase, send only periodic communications. If possible, you should set expectations about frequency during the subscription process and then be consistent with those expectations.

Export contacts from Outlook to Excel

The Import and Export Wizard in Outlook makes it easy to export contact information from Outlook into an Excel Worksheet

Note Before you use the wizard, it helps to understand the difference between the Outlook [Address Book](#) and Outlook Contacts. Both are part of Outlook. However, the Address Book is a compilation of the different address lists you might have stored in Outlook, such as a Personal Address Book (.pab), Internet directories or other third-party address books. Contacts is just one of the address lists that make up the Address Book. Only contacts can be exported directly from Outlook to Excel.

1. In Outlook, on the **File** menu, click **Import and Export**.
2. Click **Export to a file**, and then click **Next**.
3. Click **Microsoft Excel**, and then click **Next**.
4. In the folder list, click the **Contacts** folder, and then click **Next**.
5. Browse to the folder where you want to save the contacts as an Excel file (.xls).
6. Type a name for the exported file, and then click **OK**.
7. Click **Next**.
8. To add or remove fields to determine the way the contact information is saved in the new Excel worksheet, click **Map Custom Fields**.
 1. In the **From** box, drag the field you want to convert onto the Outlook field that is listed in the **To** box.

Note The **Name** field doesn't appear in the **From** box, because Outlook reserves the first row of a named range for field names. If the range that you import does not contain field names, the first row of data will be interpreted as field names and will not be imported as data. To ensure that all of the data in the named range is imported, use the first row for field names.

 - To see additional records in the **From** box, click **Previous** or **Next**.
 - To remove all mapping, click **Clear Map**.
 - To reset the original mapping, click **Default Map**.
 2. To display additional fields in the **From** box, click the plus sign (+) next to the field. For example, to display the **Business Street** and **Business City** fields, click the + next to **Business Address**.
9. Click **Finish**.

Importing email addresses from your computer into constant contact

You can import a text file or a .csv file (also known as a comma delimited file) to your Constant Contact account. You can easily save an Excel spreadsheet as a comma delimited file, for example, and then import the file to your Constant Contact account.

Here is some important information regarding the import procedure:

The import is done in the 'Subscribers & Lists' area, with the 'Add/Import' function.

Constant Contact allows you to import a list of email addresses for your use in Constant Contact. These email addresses **MUST BE** opt-in email addresses. An Opt-In email address is one in which the recipient of your emails has some previous relationship with you or your business. This may be done by acquiring their email address through a sign-up form in a store or website, through previous purchases, business acquaintances, or other personal relationships. Importing names that violate these rules will make you subject to our Anti-Spam Policy and may result in the immediate termination of your account.

For the purpose of importing to Constant Contact, your file will need to have the data for each subscriber on its own row. That means one email address per line in either the text file or the csv file. If you have demographic information such as first name, last name, address, etc., for each email address, then each piece of information would be in its own column. It is important to know that there are specific column headers (titles) that our program relies on in order to correctly recognize and import your demographic data to your account. Therefore the first line of each column needs to be a label for that column. Example: Email Address, First Name, Last Name, etc.

Our program also needs for the column header label to be spelled a particular way. The ones listed above are spelled in the way that our program requires. If you have other data that you intend to include in your file, such as street address, country, phone, etc., then please click on 'Subscriber & Lists' in your account, and then click on the circle next to 'Add/Import'. Once you get the "Add & Import Subscribers" page, click the link for the 'add instructions' found in the paragraph. We list all of the possible field headings there. You can also click on the "Help" link to get more information.

These are the steps for importing a file of subscribers to your Constant Contact account:

1. Make sure that the file you wish to upload is on a local drive of the computer you are using. The file should be either a text file, or a csv (comma separated values) file.
2. Log into your Constant Contact account.
3. Click "Subscribers & Lists" tab.
4. Click on the circle next to the activity 'Add/Import'. This will take you to the "Add & Import Subscribers" page.
5. Please notice the "add instructions" link in the first paragraph. Click on this link to get further details on how to set up your csv and/or text file so that it will be successfully imported. You can also click on the Help button in the upper right-hand corner for even more instructions.
6. Select which interest categories you would like to add the email addresses into. Then, use the "browse" feature to choose the file you wish to upload.

7. Click the "Add" button. If you are importing more than 100 email addresses then your request is sent to the 'bulk import' processor. You will be transferred to the "Activity List Screen" where you can monitor the progress of your job.

The 11th commandment: Thou shall not spam

Typically, "spam" is defined as unsolicited commercial e-mail from marketers that have no prior business contact with you. But as junk e-mail has intensified, so has the indignation about being spammed.

"Spam is now in the eye of the beholder," says Frank Catalano, co-author of "Internet Marketing for Dummies." "If the customer feels he did not ask to be contacted, even if you have an existing business relationship, you become one of the DVD-copying, Viagra-selling group," he says. "You are known by the company you keep."

Everyone's drowning in the tide of unsolicited e-mail messages. Consumers and companies alike are installing spam stoppers, which are now built in to online services and e-mail programs, like MSN and Microsoft Outlook. Anti-spam laws are on the books in a number of states and, of course, there's the federal 2003 CAN-SPAM Act.

But let's get something straight. If e-mail marketing didn't work, no one would be complaining. In its most recent five-year forecast of U.S. advertising and marketing, Forrester Research found that almost half of marketers were taking money from traditional advertising channels, like magazines, direct mail and newspapers, to fund increases in online ad spending. This year, total U.S. online advertising and marketing spending reached about \$14.7 billion, up 23% from the year before. By 2010, Forrester predicted that online marketing will account for 8% of total advertising spending, rivaling that of cable/satellite TV and radio.

So how does all this affect you? It's now critical time to get smart about e-mail promotions. Do not make the mistake of spamming — not once, not ever. Do not risk alienating your customers. Do not rely on low-rent, third party lists. "With so many over-priced, questionable e-mail lists available, anyone involved in direct marketing must be extremely cautious to ensure their offers are received positively," says Paul Soltoff, chief executive at SendTec, a marketing agency in St. Petersburg, Fla. By spamming, even one time, you risk losing your customer's trust and your firm's good name.

Your anti-spam action plan

What does work? Here's how to go about e-mail marketing in these sensitive times.

- Build your own list.** By creating your own database, you can be confident that everyone on the list wants to hear from you. "Your best prospects are your current, happy customers and people who've already heard of you somehow," says Philippa Gamse, a business strategy consultant in Santa Cruz, Calif. By relying on an in-house list, you can identify and target repeat customers, most loyal customers and special-purchase customers. It's called marketing.
- Deliver value.** Customers are more receptive if you provide something of value in exchange for his or her time and opt-in permission. Include free samples, offers, product news or discounts. For business clients, offer timely industry news, white papers, reports, surveys, market intelligence or research. Good content still rules.
- Do the legwork.** Find out more about your target. "You must invest in the market research that

identifies your customer base," says Walt Boyes, editor of "Control" magazine, an automation industry publication. "You can short-circuit the process somewhat by buying lists of industry associations. Associations are incredibly careful about their lists because they must answer to members." Spend time in the library to find membership lists for trade groups and organizations that would welcome your offers. Customer lists from like-minded businesses are also fair game.

- Prospect by phone.** Do not blindly send out e-mail offers. "It's far more sensible to prospect your customer list by phone first and then send an invitation e-mail," Boyes says.
- Customize the e-mail.** Don't abuse and lose your prospects' limited attention. Rather, invest in tools that let you target and personalize e-mail. Each message can then address the interests and habits of individuals or selected groups. With targeted offers, your response rates are likely to double.
- Use the subject line.** Put a customer benefit or problem-solver in the subject line of your e-mail. Don't get cute or personal. Don't use exclamatory punctuation (!!!) in the subject line. Filtering software will block your mail or customers will assume you're sleazy — or both.
- Get the timing down.** Send too many messages and you irritate customers. Too few and they forget you exist. The frequency of your messages depends on the type of business. Online retailers might send weekly special offers; a sales training service might rely on quarterly newsletters.
- Avoid the bells and whistles.** This may cause a message to load too slowly and/or cause glitches. Instead, post the fancy stuff on Web site, and e-mail the links and teasers for customers to click. You can also let customers choose whether to receive e-mail as text only or HTML.
- Vet the lists.** If you do buy third party lists from, say, special interest groups, don't accept opt-in addresses on faith. Always ask how and when the opt-ins were collected. "Too many times we find sites that have opt-in e-mail lists of 'IT professionals' who registered at a sweepstakes site. That's basically a useless list if a company is trying to reach serious IT professionals," says William Gaultier at e-Storm, a San Francisco Internet marketing firm.

"Double opt-in" is supposed to mean that a customer first registered interest. Then an e-mail went out to confirm the interest in receiving offers and he responded positively via return e-mail. Do you believe that every e-mail address on advertised "double opt-in lists" did that?

- One-time and you're out.** When sending to third-party lists, make sure to include an opt-in invitation and reward. If the customer declines to opt in, never send to that name again. Ever.

The secret to effective e-mail marketing is to put in the research time and effort before you hit "Send." Too many companies think they can worry about cleanup on the back end. Not any more. At Focalex, a Newton, Mass., e-mail marketer, chief executive Seth Lieberman has it right: "We see time and time again: Good creative with a good offer to the right list is a home run."

Keep spam filters from treating you like junk

Every day, the computers and T1 lines here at the headquarters of The Kim Komando Show are working overtime. They have a bundle to carry and send.

We send out about 3 million e-mail newsletters per week. There's a fine art to getting it all done.

A big part of it is making sure that your e-mail gets through to your customers. Send out your e-mail wrong and it probably is going to get snagged in a filter or a blacklist. Then it's agony.

Filters have been set up to stem the onslaught of spam. Billions of pieces of junk e-mail go through filtering systems each day. We all hate spam, but we also don't like it when our own permission-based e-mail newsletters land in a spam filter.

There are many ways this can happen. But there are a number of ways to alleviate the problem, too. Let's look at the problem and then some solutions.

Problem No. 1: blacklists

Numerous organizations maintain lists of Web addresses where questionable e-mail has originated. These addresses come from people who have been spammed, or think they have. They send the offending addresses to the blacklist organizations.

The addresses don't automatically get added, in most cases. Most organizations do at least some rudimentary checking to see that the alleged spam address is a true spam site. Spammers often use other people's addresses in the "From" line. Those people could end up on a blacklist if the organization running it isn't careful.

You too could land on a blacklist, no matter how legitimate or ethical your operation is. Let's say you have a newsletter. Joe Customer subscribes his friend Bill to your newsletter. When it arrives, Bill is surprised and angered. He immediately sends a complaint to his Internet service provider. The ISP, in turn, forwards your return address to one or more blacklists. Your name is mud.

Problem No. 2: Filters

Filters are usually part of anti-spam programs. Many derive from SpamAssassin, a program that is free to any filter. Filters look for the characteristics of spam and, well, try to assassinate the spammer's mailings.

It's pretty easy to get snagged in these filters. If you use a lot of UPPER CASE words, you're a candidate. A lot of exclamation marks(!)? Same problem. Writing a newsletter about drugs? It's probably dead. Even the word "unsubscribe" is a problem, since spammers often use an unsubscribe feature to confirm validity of addresses. You didn't think spammers were responsible enough to actually remove you from their lists, did you? ("Remove" is another problem word.)

You might get blocked with just this in the subject or body: VIAGRA!!!!!!

Most spam filters work on a point system. One problem shouldn't snag you. But when you pile up a series of problems, you could be blocked.

Some filters tag e-mail as junk and send it to a junk folder, where the subscriber can find it. Some bounce it back to the sender, so you at least know you have a problem. And some send it to a black hole, where it dies. If subscribers tell you they're not getting your product, it's probably going to a black hole. Complain to the ISP. And ask your subscribers to do the same.

What's a body to do?

Occasionally, I find my newsletters being blocked or filtered. My employees and I have become adept at sorting out these problems.

The big boys are pretty easy to deal with. MSN, America Online, Yahoo! and other huge e-mail organizations are very professional. We have had problems with all of them at one time or another. But snafus are uncommon today.

You generally won't be blocked by the big guys. They'll just send you to a junk or bulk folder. Your subscriber may delete you without checking to see what's in the folder. If that happens to you, call the e-mail provider. They'll probably have a number of questions about your e-mail practices. It won't take you long to figure out what is acceptable and what is not. This is a bit of a hassle, but you have to look at it from their standpoint. Spam is a terrific problem for big operators. They're just trying to protect their subscribers.

The itty-bitty Internet service providers are much different. They aren't very responsive. In fact, they often aren't very competent. In some cases, they don't seem to realize they are filtering. We call them and send them e-mail. But getting their attention and getting on their white or good list can be a real struggle. I can't afford to tie up my people, trying to solve a problem that affects just a few subscribers. So I ask the subscribers to call the ISP and complain.

Practice good subscription policies

Do you know what it's called when you send people things they don't want? Spam! So don't do that. If you put somebody on your subscription list, be very sure they really signed up. If you aggravate enough people, you'll end up on a blacklist.

I always include a sign-up address in my newsletters. But that really isn't enough. When I receive a subscription request, no matter from whom, I require a confirmation. So a subscription request is automatically bounced back to the address listed. That person has to hit reply and return it. This isn't foolproof — an autoresponder will send it back, too. But in general, it works well.

You're going to get unsubscribe requests. I always find it hard to believe that someone doesn't want my products. Nonetheless, I unsubscribe them right away. You should, too. Don't keep sending your product, assuming you can win them over. Dump 'em and move on.

When e-mail is bounced back a few times because of a bad address, remove the address from your database. The address isn't going to suddenly become a good one. Most likely, the recipient changed addresses and didn't notify you.

These struggles are not what e-mail promised us. It was going to make mass mailings easy — a frictionless way to communicate with our customers. But that's not the reality. Spam is a terrific problem. Maybe someday, programmers will find a way to bar spam without hurting legitimate businesses. But in the meantime, the best we can hope for is to hold our e-mail problems to a minimum.

Creating Original Content for your Email Marketing Campaigns

Coming up with fresh material for your Email Marketing Campaigns and newsletters can be one of the most challenging parts when it comes to a successful email marketing campaign. Luckily not everything needs to be created from scratch, although your introduction should always be fresh, original and creative, often coming up with articles that suit your business can be much easier.

Everyone knows that Google is one of the single best places to look for websites, news and images but there's one tool on the google news website that was almost tailor made just for email marketing.

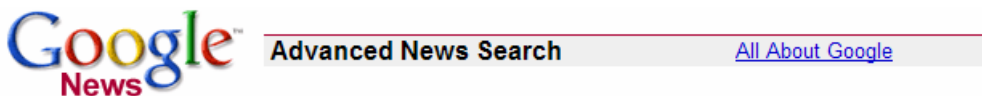
Google News Alerts is a free service that watches new emerging news stories from either all over the world or your own backyard and catches specific keywords that match your news search criteria, the best part of all is that once setup a Google News Alert automatically emails you these news stories (as they happen or in digest format once a week).

To setup Google News Alerts follow the steps below:

Visit news.google.com and click Advanced Search



Select the appropriate search options to fine tune your news search and results




Find results	with all of the words	"Small Business" Technology	Sort by relevance ▾
	with the exact phrase		Google Search
	with at least one of the words		
	without the words	microsoft	
News source	Return only articles from the news source named		e.g. CNN, New York Times
Location	Return only articles from news sources located in	canada	A country or a U.S. state
Occurrences	Return results where my terms occur		anywhere in the article ▾
Date	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Return articles published	anytime ▾	
	<input type="radio"/> Return articles published between	20 ▾ May ▾ and 19 ▾ Jun ▾	

From the search results page scroll all the way to the bottom and select the option to “get the latest news on... with Google alerts”

New! Get the [latest news on Small-Business Technology -microsoft](#) with Google Alerts.

[FAQ](#) | [Sign in](#)



Google Alerts (BETA)

Welcome to Google Alerts

Google Alerts are email updates of the latest relevant Google results (web, news, etc.) based on your choice of query or topic.

Some handy uses of Google Alerts include:

- monitoring a developing news story
- keeping current on a competitor or industry
- getting the latest on a celebrity or event
- keeping tabs on your favorite sports teams

Create an alert with the form on the right.

You can also [sign in to manage your alerts](#)

Create a Google Alert

Enter the topic you wish to monitor.

Search terms:

Type:

How often:


Your email:

Google will not sell or share your email address.

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A confirmation email is sent to you once you’ve entered your address, note that the emails won’t arrive daily until after you’ve confirmed your interest in this service.

[FAQ](#) | [Sign in](#)



Google Alerts (BETA)

Google Alert Created

Your Google Alert request ["Small Business" Technology -microsoft location:canada] has been created and a verification email has been sent to note2scott@hotmail.com.

You will not receive Google Alerts on this topic until you click the link in the verification email and confirm your request.

Return to the [Google Alerts](#) home page to create more alerts.

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Google News Alerts Frequently asked questions

1. [What are Google Alerts?](#)
 2. [What's the difference between 'News,' 'Web,' 'News & Web' and 'Groups'?](#)
 3. [How do I sign up?](#)
 4. [What kinds of topics make for interesting Google Alerts?](#)
 5. [How frequently will I receive alerts?](#)
 6. [I have lots of Google Alerts. How do I manage them all?](#)
 7. [Other than the "Manage Your Alerts" page, how can I remove or edit my Google Alerts?](#)
 8. [I'm receiving too many off-topic results. How can I refine my search?](#)
 9. [I've set up lots of Google Alerts, but suddenly I'm getting a message that says I have too many unverified alerts.](#)
 10. [I'd like to receive Google Alerts in plain text rather than HTML. Can I do that?](#)
 11. [Can I change my email address and still get Google Alerts?](#)
 12. [Is this just a way to get my email address so you can sell it to spammers?](#)
-

1. What are Google Alerts?

Google Alerts are emails automatically sent to you when there are new Google results for your search terms. We currently offer four types of alerts: 'News,' 'Web,' 'News & Web,' and 'Groups.'

2. What's the difference between 'News,' 'Web,' 'News & Web' and 'Groups'?

A 'News' alert is an email that lets you know if new articles make it into the top ten results of your [Google News](#) search. A 'Web' alert is an email that lets you know if new web pages appear in the top twenty results for your [Google Web search](#). A 'News & Web' alert is an email that lets you know when new articles related to your search term make it into the top ten results for a Google News search or the top twenty results for a Google Web search. A 'Groups' alert is an email that lets you know if new posts make it into the top fifty results of your Google Groups search.

3. How do I sign up?

Simply visit the [Google Alerts home page](#), enter your search, the type of results you'd like (News, Web, News & Web or Groups), how often you'd like us to check for results, and your email address. When you're done, click the 'Create Alert' button. We'll send you a confirmation email; clicking the link in this email will activate your Alert.

You can create and confirm your Alert in one visit on your "Manage Yours Alerts" page. To access this" page, you'll need a Google Account. To create your account, click the link at the bottom of the [Google Alerts home page](#) or visit the [Google Accounts home page](#) directly.

4. What kinds of topics make for interesting Google Alerts?

Well, if it's interesting to you, it's a good subject for a Google Alert. We've found that many alerts are set up by people who are:

- o monitoring a developing news story
- o keeping current on a competitor or industry
- o tracking medical advances
- o getting the latest on a celebrity or sports team

5. How frequently will I receive alerts?

The frequency you select when you set up your alert determines how often we check for new results, not necessarily how often you'll receive alerts. If you select "once a day," we'll check for new results once a day, which means you'll get a maximum of one email per day. If you choose the "as it happens," we'll check for new results continuously and send you an alert whenever we find a new result.

6. I have lots of Google Alerts. How do I manage them all?

On the 'Manage Your Alerts' page, you can view, create, verify, edit, and remove any alert you wish. To access this page, you'll need to create a [Google Account](#). Doing so requires only your email address and a password. For more information, click the link at the bottom of the [Google Alerts home page](#) or visit the [Google Alerts Sign in page](#) directly.

7. Other than the "Manage Your Alerts" page, how can I remove or edit my Google Alerts?

While the "Manage Your Alerts" page is the quickest and easiest way to manage your alerts, you can remove your

alerts one at a time by clicking on the cancellation link at the bottom of each individual Google Alert email. If you'd like to edit a Google Alert, you'll need to remove the old alert and create a new one with the settings you want.

8. **I'm receiving too many off-topic results. How can I refine my search?**

Try using advanced search queries for your Google Alerts. To learn how to refine your overall Google web searches, visit our general [Advanced Search](#) page. To narrow your news searches, try our [Advanced News Search page](#). Once you're happy with the results you get from an advanced search, copy and paste your advanced search query into the search box on the Google Alerts home page.

9. **I've set up lots of Google Alerts, but suddenly I'm getting a message that says I have too many unverified alerts.**

You can create up to ten alerts at a time using the Google Alerts home page. Once you confirm your alerts, you can create more. To view and manage all your Google Alerts in one place, you may want to use a [Google Account](#).

10. **I'd like to receive Google Alerts in plain text rather than HTML. Can I do that?**

Yes. To change the format of your emails from HTML to plain text, you'll need to [sign in to the "Manage Your Alerts" page](#).

11. **Can I change my email address and still get Google Alerts?**

Sure. But you'll need to delete your current alerts and re-enter them using your new email address.

12. **Is this just a way to get my email address so you can sell it to spammers?**

No. We value your privacy as much as we do our own. We don't like unsolicited email and we won't sell you out to those who send it, or anyone else for that matter. Your email address will never be shared, traded, sold, delivered, revealed, publicized, or marketed in any way, shape, or form. If you'd like to learn more, we encourage you to read our [privacy policy](#).

Creating Newsletter Content

Here's how to craft compelling e-mail newsletter content quickly and effectively.

You may take it for granted, but you know a lot about your business that customers would find interesting. You also bring your personality to your work. So you already have the foundation for the content and tone of your e-mail newsletters--you're ready to publish something that engages your audience and drives sales. It's really not that hard.

When faced with composing a newsletter, some business owners say, "I don't have time" or "I don't have anything unique to say." They get "writers' stage fright" when they stare at a blank screen. They feel that an e-newsletter has to be substantial and formal. But my opinion differs from all those notions. Every business owner has something to say. It's just the first newsletter that's the hardest, so let's get started.

First, you need to figure out just what interests your audience. How do you go about finding out what your customers want to read about?

1. Look to your customers for potential topics. What do customers ask about when you discuss your business? What are their frequently asked questions? You can use the answers as bits of "teaser" information--offering them free, valuable content to show them your expertise and bring them in for business.
2. Observe what your customers actually read. The fabulous thing about e-mail marketing is that everything is trackable. Once you get started, your reporting results will tell you which articles most interest your readers. Then you can experiment with placement and move items with higher click rates up "above the fold."
3. Give readers a feedback link. What else would they like to hear about? Throw out a theory and invite feedback. Stir up some controversy. Get the dialog going and invite readers into your process.

Rest assured: You don't have to divulge all your industry secrets and know-how in your e-newsletters. You do need to give away a little bit of free advice, however, to bring people into your world--and to convert readers into customers.

What you write about will depend on your business. If you're a landscaper, tell your readers what plants do well in our climate zone. If you're an accountant, share a little-known business expense people can write off on their taxes. If you're a scuba shop owner, report on a great dive site. Tell people things you think they might already have heard about but may need a refresher on. Then tell them a little more. Give people something to think about. Teach them something. You don't need to be the world's expert on a topic. Just be your customers' expert.

When you're writing, you need to feel comfortable using your own voice, your own personal style. You know how to talk to customers. So pretend you're sitting across the desk from them when you're writing your e-newsletters. Think about what you like to read. You most likely enjoy reading things that are fun, that have personality, stories that are brought to life with examples. Put yourself in your reader's shoes: When you open a dense or serious newsletter, you recoil. So keep things light and interesting and useful. And brief. Remember: Less Is more.

So just what things should you include in your newsletters? Here are a few essentials:

Features. Every newsletter should have one short feature. It could be a customer or employee spotlight, an anecdote, a short case study or a testimonial. Nothing makes your value come alive like showing what you did for a customer. Tell a story. Use humor. And keep it relevant. Each item should be a teaser to direct people back to your website, where they can learn more about your company and your products or services.

Short items. Digestible info-nuggets play well in e-newsletter format: Include such things as advice ("Hints & Tips"), training techniques, best practices or "News You Can Use" (information about store openings, events, new products or services). It's OK to include relevant promotional content. For example, if a landscaper writes about winterizing lawns, it's fine to recommend a product on sale that meets that challenge. But keep the ratio 75 percent editorial and 25 percent advertising. Readers who recognize ads disguised in an article wrapping feel tricked.

Link to other articles. You don't have to write the whole newsletter yourself--you can link to other authors' articles, if they're relevant. If you see something of interest, e-mail the author and ask permission to link to that article, citing the source. Most will say yes. By assembling articles by other experts, your audience will come to count on you to keep track of relevant business trends and ideas for them. It's about delivering value.

To stay ahead of the game, keep a tickler file for future issues. Write your ideas down whenever they come to you, and put them in one of two files, "Newsletter Ideas" and "Articles to Link To." Once you get started, you're sure to come up with topics no matter where you are: when you attend trade shows or networking events, when you're speaking with customers, while you're commuting to and from work. Next time you sit down to work on a newsletter, the ideas will be waiting.

Monthly is a good frequency to publish; quarterly is good if you're just getting started. And once you're in a rhythm, your e-newsletters will practically write themselves.

Prioritize Newsletter Content for More Clicks

The interests and habits of your newsletter subscribers are different. You can't write a special newsletter for every recipient, though, and developing extra content for particular interest groups is still expensive.

Fortunately, there's a neat trick that lets you personalize the newsletter for individual recipients with minimal effort. "Prioritization" is the magic word that turns one and the same newsletter into an optimized experience tailored at the single reader.

- To prioritize newsletter content for more clicks:
- Aggregate click-through data for each user.
- As soon as certain patterns are visible, move the content categories that garner the most interest to the top.

Newsletter prioritization makes it easier and faster for recipients to find the content they are most interested in. If certain categories attract no clicks ever from a particular reader, you may drop them from their newsletter completely.

How to put sizzle in your e-mail marketing

Many business owners by now have tried a round or two of e-mail marketing, and more than a few of you are less than satisfied with the results.

Perhaps you're worn out by doing labor-intensive e-zines or special offers. Staying on top of ever-changing databases also can be exhausting. Making sure you don't spam anyone is a concern. Then there are those dicey e-mail metrics. Figuring out what really works is a challenge.

Nevertheless, you should know this: E-mail marketing remains such an affordable and potentially cost-effective channel that it's foolish to let the whole thing slide. If you need convincing, check out these alternatives:

- Direct mail:** Response rates run 1% to 2% on mass-market purchased lists.
- Telemarketing:** Outbound calls are being met with ballooning customer resistance, while the rolls of "Do not call lists" keep growing. Increasingly, telemarketing is being tied to online programs.
- Banner ads:** Click-through rates (CTR) slid to less than 1% a few seasons back and are now inching their way back up to 3% to 4%.

By contrast, in a recent survey by New York-based Bigfoot Interactive, an email communications solutions provider, permission-based e-mails average 4.5% in retail, 11.6% for media and as high as 21% and 22% for financial services and automotive, respectively. Some business-to-business marketers, with highly-targeted lists and higher-end products, report CTRs of 40% or more.

Here are some ideas to revamp your efforts and net a stronger return on investment.

1. Offload the burdens.

Options for outsourcing the more tiresome chores of e-mail marketing have become a lot more effective than doing it in-house when you're a small shop. Offerings are flexible. You can harness software that offers customizable templates to create and distribute your content. You can outsource selected components, such as editorial services for content generation. Or you can hire outside providers to track visitor behavior patterns and preferences, including what kind of messages lead to higher conversion rates or which search engines lead to traffic likely to opt in and actually purchase.

You can get some automated help in creating, delivering and tracking your personalized e-mail campaigns with online services such as Constant Contact

2. Get focused on your message.

Effective e-mail marketing usually has one of three goals:

- Make special offers, such as discounts or time-sensitive deals.
- Send invitations to events, seminars or organizations.
- Keep in touch or make contact, for information, transactions or on behalf of a community or organization.

Before drafting messages or buying lists or meeting with designers, make sure you and everyone on the team is clear about the desired goal.

Figure out why you're sending the e-mail. Then define success. Is it when a recipient opens the message? Or clicks onto a landing page? Or is it a conversion measurement?

Slightly different messages can lead to very different results. For instance, one online retailer tested three messages, one all text, the other with the same text and an image of a young, sexy woman and the third with the same text and an image of a young man. Demographics for the marketer were young men.

The result? Click-through rates for the image of the woman were highest. Not surprising. But upon investigation, the message with the man, while lower in click-throughs, had the highest conversion rate — that is, more recipients actually purchased items. Peer persuasion, I'm guessing. But the moral is: Be clear about why you're trolling and then test, test, test.

3. Try some next-generation ideas.

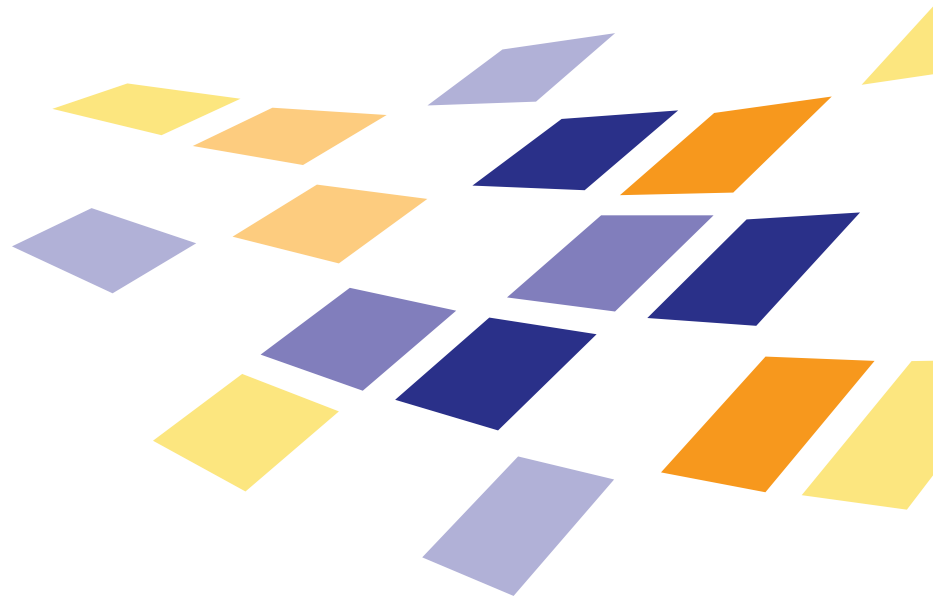
Once you decide on the strategic response you want, consider these mailing tactics.

- Cut through clutter.** Using Flash animation, streaming media with embedded audio and/or sound files and innovative HTML design can help you stand out. "If you can afford cable advertising, you can afford rich e-mail," says Tony Wright, VP, Interactive Marketing at Zürich Communications in Dallas. Of course, make sure you don't overload anyone's in-box.
- Make subject lines count.** Don't get cute. Don't be familiar. Don't trick people into opening a message — you'll make them mad. Promise a benefit or value in the subject line. Then make sure to deliver.
- Automate metrics and act on results.** Set up a seamless cycle that leverages the data you collect. For instance, New York interactive ad agency True North has a closed-loop system for each client. "An e-mail goes out, click-throughs go to a specially designed landing page that controls the flow of information and drives orders," says creative director Neil Feinstein. "Response data is then re-introduced into the database to enrich it with specific customer data. We don't just measure opens, click-throughs and opt-outs. We can look at conversion rates, sales and ROI. And we can tie these numbers directly to a consumer.
- Create a call to action.** Ask the recipient to do something — it'll get you a better response. Suggestions include: Click on a link for more information. Register to receive a special offer. Go a Web site to qualify. Download a white paper. You can also offer games or other Web download, including newsletters, screensavers and the like.
- Personalize, but don't scare anyone.** Inexpensive software now lets you identify returning customers and stay up-to-speed on buying history, likes and dislikes, geographic region and more. All that makes customers feel special — so long as you don't cross any privacy lines.
- Target the message.** Too many marketers send out messages with misspelled words, typographical errors or just plain boring stuff. "The e-mail should be written by a professional writer who understands the principles of human influence and the psychology behind how memory and eye movement through online pages can work," says Dave Lakhani at Bold Approach, a marketing agency based in Boise,

Idaho.

- Time the message.** When customers receive your message might make a difference, depending on the business. "People often e-mail for business products on Fridays," says Carrie Williams at FinancialAid.com, an online student loan consolidator. "But these e-mails get buried over the weekend and are often discarded."
- Invest in viral reactions.** Most markets include a group of influential users who will spread the messages you craft. Mine your customer database and spend a bit more for high-quality e-mail lists. Then test a few times to find the world-of-mouth folks who will spread your glad tidings.
- Make it easy to subscribe (and unsubscribe).** Don't ask for gobs of information on registration forms. People will click off. And make it just as convenient to unsubscribe. Then be scrupulous about keeping lists up-to-date. Never send e-mail to recipients who don't want it.

Getting Started Checklist



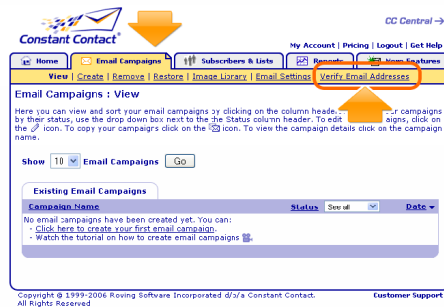
Getting Started Checklist

Welcome to Constant Contact!

We want to help you get started with Constant Contact as quickly as possible. This Getting Started Checklist is designed to give you an easy step-by-step process to getting out your first campaign. So let's get started!

Step 1 – Verify Your Email Address

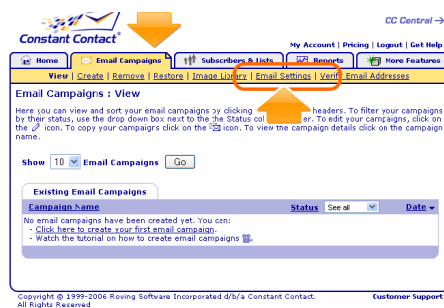
Where to find it: Under the Email Campaigns Tab then select Verify Email Addresses



- Why must you do this? While Constant Contact will be sending your campaigns for you, we send it on your behalf from your email address. Therefore we need you to tell us what email address you want the messages to come from. Once you enter the email address that your campaigns will come from, we will send you an email message to complete the process. Once you receive this message, all you will need to do is open the message and click on the link. Go ahead and try it now. It only takes a couple of minutes and then you will be done Step 1.

Step 2 – Email Settings

Where to find them: Under the Email Campaigns Tab select Email Settings



By completing some of these options you will make creating campaigns a little easier. There are three primary settings:

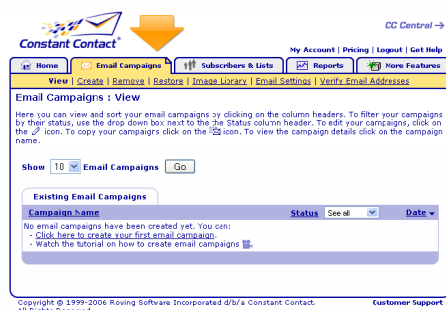
Getting Started Checklist

- Organizational Information:** Type in your company name, website address, phone number and upload your logo.
- Address Information:** Include a postal address for your organization at the bottom of all campaigns.
- Signature Information:** Insert the contact information for the individual your campaigns will be coming from. To add additional email addresses as senders, you will first need to verify these addresses using the Verify Email Address link on the menu bar.

You are now done with Step 2 and are ready to create your first campaign!

Step 3 – Create A Campaign

Where to find it: Under the Email Campaigns Tab then select Create.

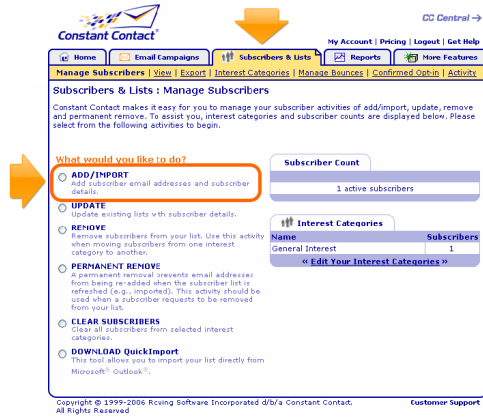


- Name Your Campaign:** This name is only used to help you organize your campaigns – it will never be seen by any of your email recipients. Pick one that you will remember such as Monthly Newsletter – January 2006 or March 2006 Promotion. Then click Next.
- Pick Your Template:** You will now see our template picker. Templates as different pre-set layouts of text and images. The templates have been put in categories to make the selection process easier. Spend a couple minutes checking out the different categories. Pick a layout that appeals to you and then click Next.
- Enter Your Content:** Follow the step-by-step process by clicking the Next button or use the navigation on the left side of the wizard. Remember to click Save from time to time as you build your campaign. Simply highlight the existing example content and type over it. You can customize the content using the formatting buttons, adding images, changing fonts, etc. If you want to see this portion live in action before you try it on your own, attend our free daily Live Product Tour online every business day at 2pm EST. To learn more visit the learning center: www.constantcontact.com/learning-center.
- Preview Your Creation:** Click the Preview button to see how it looks. From the preview button you can send yourself or one of your friends a test campaign by clicking on the test message link at the top of the page. Additionally, you can also click on the Anti-Spam Tool to determine if the email campaign you just created will be viewed as a SPAM campaign or not.
- Complete Your Campaign!** Congratulations! Save your work and now let's add your email list.

Getting Started Checklist

Step 4 – Adding Your List

Where to find it: Under the Subscribers & Lists Tab select Add.

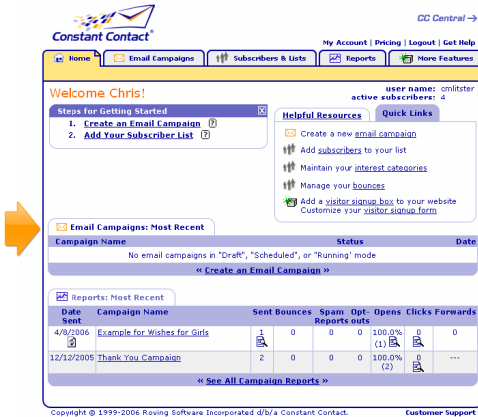


There are three ways you can add email addresses:

- Option 1:** Type or copy and paste your email addresses into Constant Contact
- Option 2:** Add your email addresses and additional information (First Name, Last Name, etc)
- Option 3:** Upload a list from a file. You can import from an Excel spreadsheet, .csv (comma separated values) or .txt (text) files. Pick the option you want to use and follow the step-by-step instructions

Step 5 – Send Your Campaign

Where to find it: On the Email Marketing Home Page



Getting Started Checklist

Select the campaign you want to send clicking on the name. Click on status and change it from draft to the date and time that you want to send your campaign. Congratulations! Your first campaign is on its way. It's that simple.

Other Resources

Our philosophy is that regardless of how you like to learn we have a program that will meet your needs. We have seen the tremendous impact email marketing has had on our customers' businesses over the years and we want to help you experience it, too. Help is always only a click, email or call away. We are here to help.

Learning Center – www.constantcontact.com/learning-center

Here you will find live and on-demand options for learning about email marketing and the various features of Constant Contact. They are all free and a lot of fun. Check them out today and you could be sending your first campaign tomorrow.

Customer Support – Our customer support includes a comprehensive searchable knowledgebase that is constantly being updated with the latest information. In addition, we have support consultants available for you for free via email and phone. Our toll-free support is provided every business day from 9am to 9pm EST. You can view all of our support options by clicking on the Customer Support link on the bottom right corner of every web page in our service.

Campaign Consultants – Our free campaign consultants are available to help you maximize your Constant Contact experience. They can answer all types of questions about how to get started with Constant Contact.

Professional Services – Our paid services for customers that need advanced assistance. These services include custom template design services, large list management, or our QuickStart program where a professional services consultant will spend a dedicated hour with you one-on-one to get your account set up, your list imported, and your first campaign ready to go.