



MARKETING IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

Email Marketing



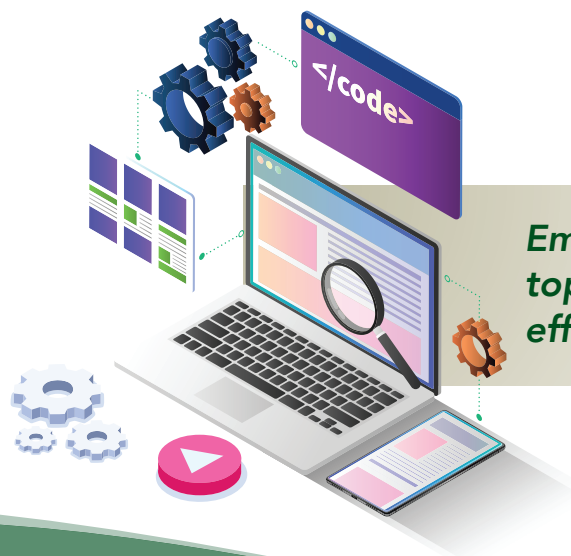
Fourth in a series of marketing strategy briefs from Fig Street Marketing Group to help ensure success in an uncertain future.

Stand Out in Every Inbox

A lot of marketing trends come and go, but email marketing consistently tops them all in terms of effectiveness and ROI.

Done properly, an email campaign that's as appealing as it is relevant and informative will complement your other marketing efforts and boost your sales.

That means that strategy is everything. Fig Street Marketing Group has the knowledge and tools to help you formulate a fool-proof plan for optimizing your email outreach by grabbing your audience's attention and keeping it so that you can make connections that truly count.



Email marketing consistently tops all trends in terms of effectiveness and ROI.



Some of the steps we recommend include:



Developing a marketing campaign brief

This will detail and define your audience and your goals, which will determine the context and voice you'll use to address them. It will also set the target schedule and budget to keep your program on track in every way.



Employing marketing automation software

The application of email marketing automation software has become standard practice over the last two years for companies who want to issue timely, targeted, relevant communications that will help them stand out from competitors. This software allows a degree of personalization to your email campaign that's never before been possible, leveraging segmentation and AI levels of reporting, analysis and prediction.



Using current best design practices

Research shows that customers are becoming desensitized to HTML rich, graphic-heavy emails. While visually engaging, too many of these loud, busy messages can overwhelm the senses and encourage passivity as viewers begin to "check out" of the noise.

We believe that in some cases, it's best to replace these design practices and, instead, create clean, simple communications featuring minimal graphics accompanied by brief text and perhaps a few buttons. The goal is a more peaceful aesthetic that encourages interactivity. Customers want to engage; they just want to choose how they do it.

Storytelling copy will draw them in and request their input via an embedded poll or survey that invites them to decide what type of content they'd like to receive from you.



Ensuring content relevance

Batching and blasting bulk emails is a thing of the past. Experience and analysis have proven that prioritizing relevance over volume is key when it comes to improving engagement and conversion rates. That requires targeted, automated emails to deliver the right content to the right person at the right time.

One way to do that is to set up email campaigns up in advance, targeting subscribers who have undertaken a specific behavior. For example, someone who just attended one of your company's events could be scheduled to receive a VIP invitation to the next event within a few days of the first, when they're most like to appreciate and accept the offer.

Other tools that are in continuous development to improve and ensure content relevance are data segmentation, which breaks your mailing lists down by behavior and demographic, and dynamic content, which changes based on a subscriber's unique data.



Some of the steps we recommend include:



Getting creative with personalization

Personalized email marketing is an easy tool to use and one of the most effective strategies out there for boosting engagement. But pulling your recipients' data into personalization fields in your email templates to greet them by their first names is no longer enough.

It may be time to reconsider the data you're collecting from your audience and how it can be used creatively to help you stand out among the robotic messaging your audience is used to seeing from your competitors.



Offering honesty as well as value

An email is only effective if it's consumed and your subject line is critical to enticing the reader to open the message. It should be clever and briefly allude to the value of opening the email to get the full story. But once they've done so, it's paramount that your content is true to what you "promised" so that your targets don't feel duped. There's no faster way to lose receptivity to your messaging than to make your audience feel as if you're trying to bait and switch them.



Implementing a call to action

Once you've earned your audience's attention, it's time to present them with your ask. Do you want them to visit your website? Subscribe to your newsletter? Like your Facebook page or register for your event?

While it's important to know how – and when – to create a sense of urgency via fear of missing out, experts agree that you should start slowly and earn their trust by offering them some value at low (or no) cost in exchange for a click before trying for more.



Implementing email marketing opt-in best practices

Your email marketing strategy only works if you have people to whom to share your message. But how do you go about collecting a large volume of willing, engaged subscribers? And how do you build your contact database without breaking laws, or trust?

Knowing your opt-in best practice is foundational to your email marketing success. Consent matters when it comes to opt-ins, so regardless of how worried you are about numbers, it's important to prioritize consent. That means the quality of your subscribers matters more than the quantity.

If your opt-in policy isn't clear, or you purchase lists, or send to contacts who opted-in to a different line of communications, you will likely see low engagement and a high unsubscription rate over the course of your email marketing campaigns. And you run the risk of alienating potential clients.



So what best practices should you put in place to make sure your opt-ins are fully consenting?

1. Always go with opt-ins on your forms, not opt-outs

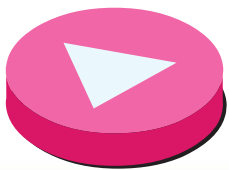
Some brands think it's clever to maximize subscriptions by making opt-in the default. This means a contact has to click a button or checkbox to opt-out rather than the other way round. This does not count as willing consent.

2. Be explicit regarding for what someone is opting in.

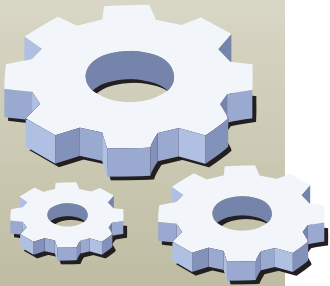
A potential subscriber is only a useful, engaged subscriber if they fully understand to what they're subscribing. Wherever your opt-ins are, make sure to include a brief sentence or two about the content they can expect if they subscribe.

3. Give your subscribers more autonomy by swapping the subscription form with a preference center

A Preference Center is far more sophisticated than a standard Subscription Form. In 2020, email marketing opt-in best practices will involve empowering your contacts by giving them the ability to customize their subscription strategies out there for boosting engagement. But pulling your recipients' data into personalization fields in your email templates to greet them by their first names is no longer enough.



Develop messaging that turns prospects into customers and buyers into fans.



Data, design and strategy aside, the current social environment has underscored the importance of inviting and fostering genuine human connections in an automated world in order to build relationships that last.

Fig Street Marketing Group has staff copywriters and designers who work closely with our marketing experts – and yours – to ensure that your brand's "personality" is front and center of your electronic communications. We can help you build thoughtful storylines that are on-brand and on-topic with a mindfulness toward building an inclusive community where your customers will feel welcome and valued.

Contact us to get the conversation started.