

eMail Marketing: a quickstart guide to marketing success

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Why email marketing?

There are more ways to get the word out about your company or product now than ever before. **Social media** is everywhere, **websites** have evolved beyond mere electronic billboards to become fully interactive marketing vehicles, and **videos** are a mainstay of all manner of advertising. But, the 600 pound gorilla of marketing is an old-school technology: **email**. While social media is indirect and diffuse, email is direct and targeted. It requires participation and permission on the part of the recipient, which is really the reason email marketing is so effective. The recipient has bought in, expressed an interest in your company or product. It's not hit or miss, fingers crossed, hoping for a response marketing. You know these people want to hear about you.

The trick is to use email to drive sales and increase your customer base. With email, you do that by being relevant to your target market. Cultivating an interest expressed by current or potential customers into an active relationship requires more than just sending out emails with sales and special offers. Certainly, you can get some traction that way and make sales, but there is a lot more room to maneuver in the email marketing field.

How I came to email marketing

I have worked in various aspects of marketing for more than thirty years. When I started college, there was no such thing as a personal computer, and the little Apple that

revolutionized the graphic design world was still just an idea in Steve Jobs's garage. By the time I graduated and took my first "real" job (in customer service in a cellular company), desktop computers became commonplace—even though the one on my first desk was only a black-and-green CRT screen, and had only a keyboard, no mouse! I heard rumors that the engineering department at the company had Apples and that Marketing had both Apples and PCs. Amazing! I had to get there!

For some reason, I felt somehow qualified (I was not) to send memos to the director of marketing services, Frank, four floors above me. Inexplicably, he read them. My detailed thoughts on promotions, our competitive dis/advantages, market feedback from real customers, ways to make more sales our market areas struck him as insightful. What made me think I was positioned to do this is a mystery to me now. But, the younger me just dove in headfirst to most things. One day, Frank came down to the cubical farm in which I worked to see who this kid was. He offered me a job the next day, and I moved upstairs. And I got a new Apple computer. Pretty cool!

I was lucky and bold—and maybe a little arrogant—enough to believe I had something to say back then. I've always had a natural talent for marketing strategies and tactics, and my natural curiosity and, unfortunately, obsessive work habits led me to be successful despite my lack of educational background. Frank told me that he would almost never hire a business major for a marketing job. He preferred people who studied liberal arts and could think on their feet AND who knew how to do research.



I was fortunate that so early in my career I was able to work for one of the three corporate owners of the Cellular One brand. We developed a lot of what became commonplace in the cellular industry, even through to today. When we launched new programs, we were making it all up, feeling our way along in

the dark down paths that no one had treaded before us. It was exciting, demanding, thankless work. My work week spilled over into evenings (and midnights and 2AMs) and weekends, 80-hour weeks were the norm. I was paid what I thought was the staggering sum of **\$18,000 annually**. Salaried! I know. I was a sucker.

But, I did learn a lot—more than I might have in business school and much more than my college friends did in their telemarketing and sales rep and waiter jobs.

Our biggest marketing secret weapon was a **database of nearly one million names**, some purchased, some culled from various programs and customer initiatives, plus addresses. All this we augmented with lifestyle and demographic information resulting from surveys and extrapolations of our own and other people's research. We



segmented, split A/B tested, measured and tracked everything. My boss always said, **“If it’s worth doing, it’s worth measuring.”** I’ve lived by that ever since.

Those principles of database use and research- and tracking-based marketing formed the core of the marketing methodologies I would develop over the years. I ultimately called what I do **“integrated marketing.”** I was never sure if that term was an actual thing or if I made it up, but it certainly described what I have always done. All aspects of marketing feed each other in a matrix of methods, themes are interrelated and carry from one medium and technique to another, and all the information is tracked and measured for effectiveness. When the World Wide Web became a viable platform for business, I added that to the mix. Emailing lists of clients was something I had started to do well before that, way back when AOL was the big dog on the block.

Years later, the buzz is **Hubspot** and **marketing funnels**. That’s generally what I have been doing for ages, using a variety of tools for Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and tracking of program success, client value, and purchasing triggers. Had I been super smart instead of just clever, I would have packaged it up and sold lessons on how to do it!

Using **email as a marketing tool** became just plain obvious. One of my main reasons for using it was that I worked with a lot of start up small businesses that bootstrapped themselves off the ground. Email was cheap. There was no real tracking systems at first, so that had to be done in Excel with whatever little feedback became available.

Eventually, web- and desktop-based software appeared that tracked data from emails in real time. I loved it! And it made me an even more enthusiastic advocate of email marketing.

And that brings us to today.

While I love email marketing, I have **a few caveats** that I will throw out there immediately.

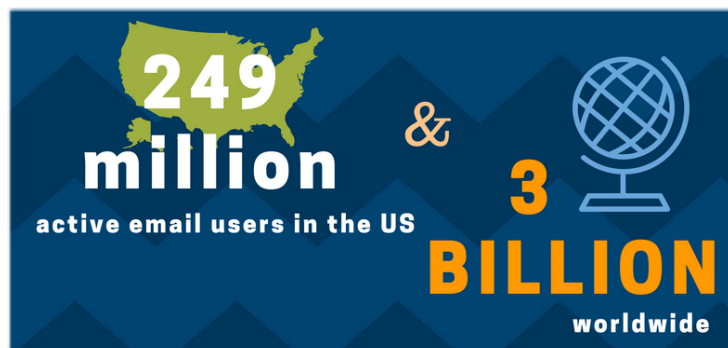
- First, I think it is a terrific tool, but it is **not a standalone**. It has to be integrated (back to that term!) with other really useful tools like websites and social media. We have some great case studies on our website that illustrate how important the right marketing mix is to get your message out. Check www.backburnermarketing.com, our full-service marketing site, and look for the case studies featured on the front page and in the menu bar.

- Second, it is also **not a magic bullet**. It will not solve all of your marketing problems overnight—or at all—if, like a real bullet, it is not aimed properly.
- And third, it is a little like plumbing or electrical work: fun to dabble with but, when it's really important, it's probably better to **hire a professional**. I know that flies in the face of all the MailChimp and Constant Contact ads you will hear on the radio and on YouTube, but it's just true. I also don't think you should make your own website, logo, or brochures. Copywriting is also best left to the writing professionals. What do YOU do for a living? Do that. Let others do what they do. **Amateur work stands out from the crowd in all the wrong ways!**

All that said, **to be an effective marketer, one must know all about how systems work**. Whether it's email marketing or making landing pages for social media promotions, you have to know what the heck you are doing, especially if you are hiring someone to do the work for you. There is nothing more liberating for a design or web professional—or auto mechanic or furniture salesman—than someone who doesn't know the first thing about what he is buying or hiring someone to do! Liberating, that is, money from the client's pocket.

Email as a marketing tool

Email marketing is a fantastic solution to some of the most common business marketing and promotional problems. If your company is in search of new clients, increased traffic to your website, and improved revenue from repeat and referral customers, the answer could be the medium you use every day.



In fact, email marketing is so effective because it is the medium that *most* of us use every day. Studies show that 89% of Americans check their email at least once a day. Smart phone users most often have their email accounts available at all times. That makes email as easy to use—and as effective—as a telephone call.

Worldwide, email is king. Back a few years, faxes were the way to

do business outside of the United States. Today, it's email. Worldwide, email adoption is at a staggering **3 billion users**. If you want to find a common medium with someone in Hong Kong and Honduras, it's going to be email.

It's also effective because your recipients have to take a step on their own to opt in to receive your messages. That initial buy-in is central to the success of direct email campaigns. SPAM doesn't work, at least not in the long run, but an opted in customer is worth his or her weight in gold.



While anyone can send an email, email marketing isn't quite as simple as just typing up some words and pushing SEND. You already know the basics of how to email, so you could start sending out emails today. However, to be truly effective and efficient, email marketing should be approached like any other high-end marketing program. While cost is typically much less than traditional print advertising and "snail mail," **the returns of a professionally designed and administered email**

marketing strategy can be far more effective.

Let's take a quick look at how email marketing can help a typical business.

Your marketing mix (and why you might want to add to it)

People who are into marketing on more than a basic level will often talk about their "marketing mix." Some people don't really have a marketing mix...some companies barely have marketing. Recently, I met a restaurant owner who told me his sole marketing method was having his wait staff give a take-home menu to people who stop at the restaurant. I tell this to other marketing people and they laugh, however the restaurant owner laughed at *me* for suggesting that there is a better way to do it!

To be fair, he does have a mix. I don't think he would have called it that, but nevertheless, it's there. Relying on drive-by traffic *is* a marketing technique. He has a Google website (stock and simple to a fault) and a Facebook page, both of which are poorly managed and not particularly compelling. I explained that email marketing has a potential reach and acceptance levels that completely dwarfs Facebook. I explained that our average restaurant client makes an extra \$35,000 the first year. He was unimpressed.

Of course, he had already made up his mind before I even spoke with him that he had no interest in what we do. Why? Because people settle in their ways. And they have preconceptions on how something is done. Both of these reasons can be deadly to a company's growth and long-term success. Maybe he doesn't need an extra \$35,000. Lucky him. Given that he has lots of empty tables, I am thinking he is not seeing the picture the way someone else might.

But, my current marketing works

What if your current marketing is working? First, define "working." Is it bringing you all the business you can handle? Probably not. At best, it's bringing you enough business to make you feel like you are successful. And you may well be successful...

...but you can be *more* successful. Promise.

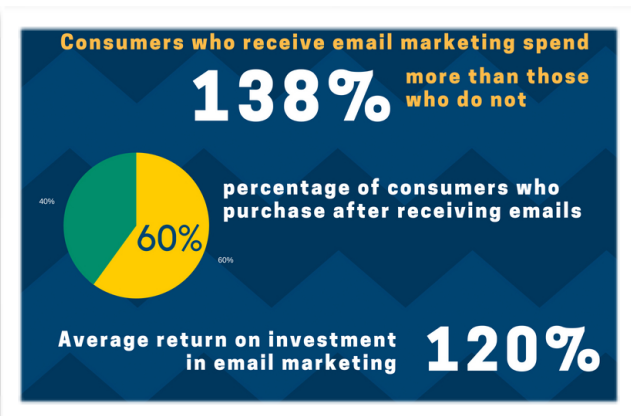
Sometimes, even a successful marketing mix can get stale. Very often, it goes unnoticed. This is, in part, because the metrics used to evaluate "success" is subjective, non-existent, or not comprehensive enough. If revenue is the sole measure of success of marketing, then the details of individual programs and strategies are missed. Underperforming—and potentially expensive—strategies continue despite their low returns. Worse, trends are missed that could make a huge impact on the bottom line.

In any case, be careful of using revenue as the sole measure of marketing success. Revenue may stay roughly the same over time, so business owners are often happy with what seems to be a successful status quo. Too often, though, they don't notice that their marketing is not pulling its weight. After all, who says staying the same over time is actually *good*?

A business may maintain static revenues despite an increase in actual number of sales. That indicates a shift in revenue per sale, and that demands some investigation. Once found, trends like this can be addressed easily through marketing. Promotions that boost revenue-per-transaction and/or increase traffic can be implemented.

Why email?

The huge popularity of email marketing is attributable to three major characteristics of the medium: cost effectiveness, speed of deployment, and ease of measurement. But, scrape away these bullet points, and the real reason for email marketing's popularity is



simple: it works. Once we are past the hype and commissionable motivation, it is effectiveness that always wins in real marketing.

Cost-effectiveness - there is virtually no marketing technique, short of passing out handbills in the mall, that costs less than email marketing

Speed of deployment - Picking up a phone and calling or texting someone is the only faster method of getting your word out. As far as mass marketing and

communications, email marketing really is the quickest method. Okay, you can argue that making changes to a website and going live instantly is equally quick, but that's not targeted, so email still wins out. Alright, AND you can say that you live-stream on Facebook or Instagram, but that requires people will not only be on hand when it's happening but also willing to sit there and watch.

Ease of measurement - Email is electronic. You can see how effectively an email or campaign is working in real time with the click of a mouse.

Results...In short, it works.

Results - And then there are the results. You can Google all manner of statistics on the effectiveness, open and click-through rates, and industry averages of email marketing. It's impressive stuff. Anecdotally, I can tell you that my own clients have seen an average of about 35% open rates, above average click-through rates (this is so wildly varied by industry and type of email, offer, and strategy, that statistics are, for practical and comparative purposes, meaningless), and very low unsubscribe rates. The latter should not be too big a surprise given the ethical manner in which we have them assemble their email lists. The real litmus test is whether their emails produce the kind of results that the client is looking for. And, the answer is yes. Revenues go up. Web visits become more frequent. Sales total per customer goes up. Referrals happen. It's all the stuff we want to happen.

Why? Well, I think the biggest reason is that our emails are written by someone with thirty years of marketing experience and advertising copywriting expertise. I am certain that our own positive results are in part due to the medium itself but, even more than that, result from a lot of experience in speaking persuasively to target audiences

The rise of email

Years back, direct marketing was done by mail. US Mail. Snail mail. You know, the kind of mail that many of us never use these days, and only slightly more of us even receive it today—well, except for Capitol One credit card advertisements. Vast databases of consumer addresses were bought and sold for equally vast amounts of money, and catalogs and endless envelopes of unwanted offers were sent daily. Bulk mail was popular, as was direct first- and second-class mail. Post cards, catalogs, and all manner of enveloped marketing materials made their way from mail houses to our homes daily. Then, mail costs went up, and it became cost-ineffective to send unsolicited mail.

More importantly, email became not only commonplace but ubiquitous. In the late 1980s, almost no one had an email address. AOL (America On-Line, for those of you under the age of 30) exploded in popularity, followed by Hotmail and Yahoo Mail, until today Gmail is everywhere. Now, even elementary school kids have their own Gmail accounts. Many high schoolers have never received a letter in the mail. High school seniors are amazed at the arrival of recruiting information that shows up at their homes! However, they are more likely to open—and trust—an email.

Email is king

So, email is king.

In fact, here are some amazing statistics:

- 89% of Americans check their email at least once daily
- There are 249 MILLION active email users in the US and 3 BILLION worldwide

What about social media?

Depending on the statistic you read, Facebook is used by up to 60% of Americans. That's a lot, to be sure. The downside is that the bulk of Facebook users are adults. Kids, tweens, and teens don't touch it. People in the early twenties use it very little. People in their late twenties do, but its more out of habit than anything else. Facebook was the first social media they used, particularly after MySpace effectively became uncool and vanished.

So, email isn't cool. It's not trendy. But, it's entrenched in world culture. Facebook may well go the way of AOL and MySpace, but email is likely to remain. People always need a way to send a message or attachment directly to someone else, often carrying attachments that a text cannot handle.

Social media is a great way to reinforce the marketing message carried by other media, such as traditional print and email. Email can drive traffic to websites, brick-and-mortar stores, or to social media. Nearly 90% of Americans will check their email tomorrow. 18% of Americans will use Twitter. It's a lopsided statistic, to be sure. Where do you want to put your money?

Cost-effective marketing

Depending on their organization, budget, and structure, most companies choose email marketing because it is so inexpensive compared to other media. Ads in local newspapers can run into the hundreds or even thousands of dollars and rely on the chance that your target market is reading that section of the paper that day. Magazines are not much better. There are a host of direct mail solutions for certain industries that have reasonable returns on investment, but can be wildly hit or miss for the wrong type of business in the wrong geographic location (TheHomeMag or ValPak, for example). Other online media, like Angie's List/Home Advisor are "free" only until you really want to get much out of them as a vendor. We get lots of business from companies who used to advertise in some or all of these media.

Accountability

My first marketing boss and erstwhile mentor always said, "If it's worth doing, it's worth measuring." And he was both prescient and correct. I've applied his maxim to my work ever since. We worked in direct marketing, using large databases of current and potential customers combined with real and extrapolated demographic and lifestyle data. This was in the late 1980s, when this practice was not unheard of but certainly not done in a small, entrepreneurial office like ours. Our constant monitoring of results and trends from sales and churn made us appear almost psychic in our prediction of and reaction to market trends. It was really cool stuff for a 24 year-old kid to find himself immersed in.

Email marketing software that is accessible to most people in the US and other countries is very powerful. Constant Contact (full disclosure, I am a certified Constant Contact consultant) and MailChimp do some pretty amazing data analysis right out of the box. No expertise is necessary. At BackBurner Marketing, we used a not-so-

common boutique software program that was even better than these two. It offered more data and drill-down depths that were even more impressive than anything typically available. As a data geek, I loved opening that program up and seeing the level of information that it provided in almost voyeuristic detail.

Direct email marketing as a quick reaction tool

One of the biggest advantages of email marketing is that a campaign can be quickly put into place. That is, if there is an established database of emails on hand. (More about getting a list later in this ebook.) The speed of deployment, so to speak, makes email a fantastic tool for:

- quick response to a situation, trend (e.g. negative revenue or visitorship), or competitor threat
- rapid testing of new ideas
- inexpensive, fast way to promote a last-minute sale
- Specials of the day

Speed of turnaround is important in today's fast-paced business environment.

Creating an email list

The one thing that you absolutely have to have to do email marketing is a list of emails. I know, this is obvious, but many people, believe it or not, decide they are going to do email marketing only to realize they don't have any way to email anyone.

I will give you three main ways to acquire emails for email marketing. Do not do the first two. Just because I'm telling you they exist, doesn't mean they are a good idea. They are not. But, you have to know that each is an option and why they are not the option to choose.

First, you can buy a list. Mailing lists have been available for years in all shapes and sizes, and at all price ranges. Back in the day, an email list was worth its weight in gold, if it had good addresses and the people at those addresses respond to direct mail. There is no restriction on what you can send through the regular mail, as we already told you. There is a restriction on what you can send through email and to whom. The key part here is "to whom" because that is what's covered by the CAN-SPAM act. (You can read about it here: <https://www.ftc.gov/tips-advice/business-center/guidance/can-spam-act-compliance-guide-business>.) Just because the email address appears on the

list does not necessarily mean that that list is filled with addresses that want emails. I know that sounds impossible, but it's very common. It also sounds like you could say that you bought the list with the understanding that everyone on it would want to receive emails. According to the CAN-SPAM act, that doesn't matter. They have to want your emails.

The problem with lists is obvious. The email addresses may not be valid. That's the same as street addresses. Information is only good if the sources of information are accurate.

I once worked as marketing director for a well-regarded marketing data company. They compiled and sold data in list form. The business is very complicated, believe it or not, and the way lists are put together, checked, and sold can be an extremely convoluted and hard to follow process. Not all vendors do due diligence and check the list properly. Not all vendors make the list they sell. Many lists are sold with email addresses that are valid, but whose owners do not wish to receive emails from just anybody. Others have valid email addresses that are for accounts that are owned by people who don't necessarily respond to the emails they receive.

That's not to say there are no list of email addresses that are vetted and populated by recipients that want to receive emails. They do exist. They are extremely expensive. And even then, they may not be tailored to your business.

The second method of getting email addresses is called data mining. This is where you, or someone who has more time on his hands than you, haunts bulletin boards, chat rooms, Facebook or LinkedIn profiles, or any other place on the Internet where they might find an email address. The found email addresses are copied and pasted into a database. This can be very targeted, and you can get a good list of people who are in a very specific market niche. The problem is, again, these people did not ask for your emails. It's not impossible to get a ton of complaints and be flagged for CAN-SPAM violations. But even beyond that, you run the risk of ruining your reputation in your target market.

I recently did some work for an entrepreneurial start up in the medical equipment sector. The CEO told me that a marketing staff member, who had one year of actual working experience and one year as an intern in college, put together an email data mining plan and direct email program to that database. I explained to him that not only was that not following best practices, but it was actually illegal. Amazingly, the CEO did not care. He chose to believe the 22-year-old, not coincidentally pretty and blonde, new marketing assistant with a two-year professional resume over someone with 30+ years experience in the business. I resigned that relationship immediately. It is not worth sullyng one's reputation over bad management practices.

The third method is the way you should do it. Ask your existing customers for their emails. It's really that simple. If you see them regularly, as in a retail or service industry, just ask him. If your service workers carry laptops or tablets, have them input the information right away into either your customer contact database or a database of email addresses hosted by one of the major email marketing programs, such as MailChimp or Constant Contact. Both services allow you to install forms on your website or social media. There's really no excuse for not doing this!

The obvious drawback to doing it the right way is that you do not have email addresses to work with immediately. There is no workaround for this. You're just out of luck! However, in a very short amount of time, you could get 1000, 2000, five Thousand email addresses if you have an aggressive social media, web presence, and in personal collection system. It's not hard. You could start your email marketing program today with one email address if that's what you have. You will soon get more.

Increase and improve brand recognition

The term "branding" is one of the most often tossed around—and misused—business buzzwords of the past decade. Branding has become, by mis-definition, just about everything and anything in the world of marketing. There are even arguments between "branding people" and "marketing people." Let's not be silly. Branding is part of marketing; marketing is part of branding. I subscribe to the idea that all of your marketing creates your brand. Your brand influences your marketing.

Here are a couple of decent definitions of "branding" from two online sources.

[BrandingJournal.com](#) offers this slightly academic definition: "**Branding** is the process of giving a meaning to specific company, products or services by creating and shaping a brand in consumers' minds."

From [entrepreneur.com](#), we get this more energetic and descriptive definition that I like even better: "Simply put, your brand is your promise to your customer. It tells them what they can expect from your products and services, and it differentiates your offering from your competitors'. Your brand is derived from who you are, who you want to be and who people perceive you to be."

Yes! Both are correct, but the latter is a better view of the concept. Your brand is everything you do, the impression you make on the market, and the quality of your products and services. Back in the 1980s, KLM Dutch Airlines maintained what they called the Thousand Points of Contact philosophy. They looked at every place their

organization touched the public—ticket desks, flight attendants, baggage handlers, phone answering in every department—and decided that each was a marketing opportunity. The impression of the company is not derived from a TV ad or the ticket person but rather from every exposure the public has with the company.

Email marketing can give you at least one more medium with which to connect to the marketplace. Obviously, your message is important. Your company is represented in a very personal manner via email. Make it count! Make sure your message is positive, market-friendly, and meaningful.

Spelling counts. That's obvious, right? But, in these days of autocorrection and instant spell-checking, weird accidents may occur. Most often today, it's not a misspelling but an entirely wrong word that shows up as the ghost in the machine plays word games with your content.

Your emails should be “branded” with your logo, colors, and overall look and feel of your marketing materials. This is one of those other meanings of the term “branding” that people often misconstrue. Yes, your brand identity includes your logo, but that is hardly the extent of your brand identity. Don't confuse branding with your brand identity or with your corporate identity elements.

Frequent emailing will help make the graphical elements of your brand identity stick in the minds of recipients. And that can never be a bad thing!

How to raise revenue with direct email



One of the things that direct email does best is help raise revenue. There are three main ways you can do this. First, you can get current customers to come more often. Second, you can get current customers to buy more. Third, you can get new customers who will, most likely, match the buying habits of existing customers.

Restaurants succeed particularly well at getting more frequency from existing customers. Email reminders about the restaurant is often enough to increase business. Another tactic is to convert daytime/business/lunch customers to evening/family/dinner customers. Converting in the other direction works, as well. What email marketing does well is keep your business in the forefront of the consumers mind. Suggesting coming out on Wednesday, if that is your slow day, can boost revenues

substantially when the email was sent to the typical Monday or Friday crowd. Converting lunch customers to dinner customers can often be a little bit trickier, because many times people don't live near where they work, and workers tend to eat close to the office. Now, you have to get them to come from home or come immediately after work to go to dinner. The right message in an email can certainly do that.

For some businesses, getting larger sales per transaction is something that is easier to do. Service industries, for example, don't necessarily have the ability to increase the number of visits or calls. There are only so many customer contacts that, say, an air-conditioning company will have. However, suggesting maintenance plans or a check up can be an effective way to increase frequency. Offering sales or specials on equipment or services, can increase the per contact revenue. In most businesses both scenarios work to a greater or lesser extent.

Getting new customers is not necessarily the best role for email marketing. The obvious reason why is that unless someone is a customer, you probably will not have his or her email address. That doesn't make it impossible, but it's just less likely. This is where social media is an excellent accompaniment to direct email marketing.

This is where your integration comes in. You want to have your Facebook page, Twitter feed, Instagram account all pushing the same theme, all directing people to your website. Your website then acts as a conduit for collecting email addresses. The email address is going to your database, and those people become recipients of emails just like all of your other existing customers. The difference is that these people may never have come to your business at all. Good social media can drive traffic to the places you need. Social media is not the best sales tool, but it's great for awareness and frequency marketing.

Email marketing as frequency marketing

Most small businesses cannot afford true frequency marketing. Advertising repeats over and over and over in front of the target market is free marketing. For example, radio and television ads, and to a lesser degree newspaper ads. Most newspaper ad sales people don't let on that newspaper ads are actually frequency marketing. One placement rarely does any good, but multiple placements overtime sink into the mind of the consumer.

Frequency marketing requires, well, frequency. If you do not repeat your message over and over, the marketing doesn't work. Frequency marketing is closely associated with brand marketing. You're stressing the features, the strong points, the essence and reputation of the brand. An event doesn't benefit from this style of marketing, and is rarely marketed through frequency.

If you've been around the advertising business at all, you know that television and radio are extremely expensive. Newspaper is far from cheap. Print used to be less expensive when people actually looked at print, but newspapers are poorly subscribed to these days and that has driven up advertising prices. I rarely encounter a client who wants to advertise in newspapers. I don't recommend it because, except for certain demographics and for certain types of products or services, newspapers generally under-perform.

Email marketing is a reasonable substitute for frequency marketing. It doesn't have the same repetitiveness as a radio ad, but it is very targeted and appears in the customers email inbox with enough frequency that it will sink in. Yes, there is always a risk that you can email too much, thereby pushing clients away. However, some businesses email daily, sometimes more than once a day, with specials or new product alerts. I receive several that are high-frequency like that, but they are for topics in which I have a particularly strong interest. Some companies provide an option for reducing the frequency. If not, and the content is not relevant, I simply unsubscribe.

I hadn't really thought of email marketing as a substitute for frequency until I was at a trade show representing a tech company. A potential customer came up and introduced himself. He said that he remembered our company name and product line from the emails he said he received. He went on to say, "It seems like I am always getting an email from you guys." The truth is, he never got more than one week, and even that was during special campaign periods when the frequency went from 2-3 per month to 4. Nevertheless, that was the same. That client had no brand recognition when we started, but after 8 to 10 months of coordinated direct email marketing, the company's brand was easily recognizable.

There's nothing that says you cannot experiment with the frequency of your emailing. Some consultants say to email once a month, some three times a month, some, but not many, suggest emailing more. If, however, you run a restaurant or shop where specials change daily, then your emails can reflect that. I have daily emails from vendors whose products I've never purchased, but that I am interested in. I get emails from them all the time. I click through. I don't buy, but one day I will. I don't mind the high frequency from that company.

Special event marketing

If you have an established database of email addresses, special events are perfect scenarios for email marketing. You already have a captive audience that is interested in what you do. Run a promotional event, send out enough emails in advance to alert the

customers, make sure you write in such a way that it entices them, and you assure it will be successful. This is exactly what email marketing is geared to do. Call attention, ask for a response, track the results. If it doesn't work, and your writing is solid, and your email frequency plan is good, then there's something wrong with the event itself or your list.

I like to have a three week lead time on events. That gives me time to set up an email program, and send three emails before the event. I then send one the night before. If it's a multi-day event, I send a recap email after each day.

Take photos. Send them out! People like to see photos of events, even if they didn't attend. First of all, it makes the event seem more real; second, it shows people that they actually *missed* something. People who did go want to see themselves. Consider putting a gallery on your website photos from the event. Let people go look at themselves. People love that!

Sales work the same as events. Obviously, you can and should use photos of products that are on sale. It's the same general idea, though.

Referrals

I said earlier that email marketing is not a good way to acquire new customers. This is the exception to that rule. Establishing and maintaining a referral program for your business can be an outstanding way to get not only new customers but good new customers. These are people who are referred by your existing client base. In theory, these people are known by their friends and associates to be people who would like or need your products or services. They are valuable.

A referral program can be as simple as asking an existing customer for the name and email address of someone who might benefit from your services. Better still, set up a spot on your website (a form on the front page, a link to a form, or a landing page) where you can host a referral form. Direct traffic from an email to your website with the theme of something along the lines of "refer a friend!" It's not rocket science.

This doesn't have to be complicated. Really all you're doing is asking your current clients if any of their friends or people they know would benefit from buying from you. That's it. You send them an email after the referral and say they were referred. They have the option of opting out.

If your client base is really in love with you, they will refer their friends without any incentives. If you are in a competitive market, reward people for the referral. Give them



a coupon for some percentage off and you will get more referrals. You may lose 20% on one sale, but you're gaining 100% from the referral. That's not bad. You're trying to build a relationship, that's the idea behind email marketing, and starting a referral program.

Improve your street cred

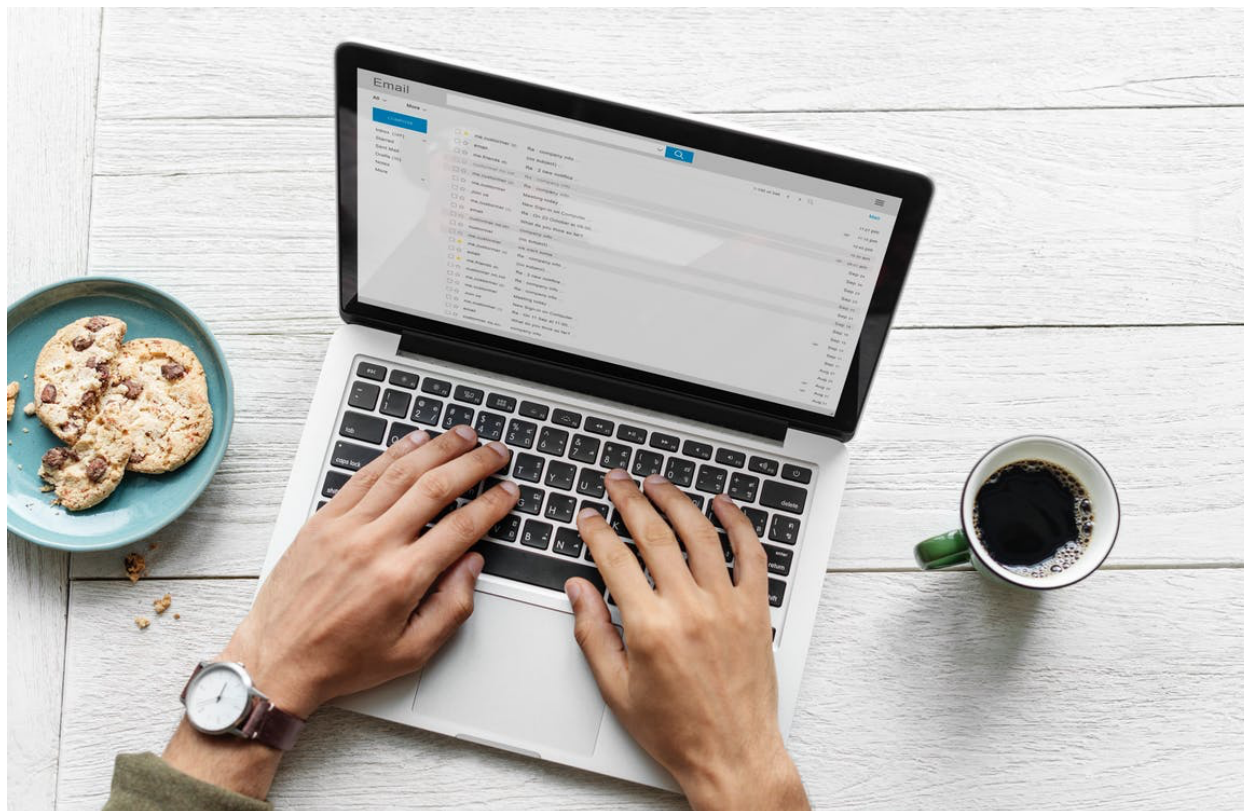
Emails do not always have to sell. In fact, they shouldn't *always*. You can do a lot for your company's street cred by sending emails that do not sell but rather inform or offer useful tips. When your target market starts clicking on your emails to learn more about their own lives or, at the least, how you can help them by telling them why they should consider your services, you've gone a long way to building a powerful reputation. Believe it or not, you can get a lot more sales by not always selling. Building trust between your company and your public can be enormously effective.

Here's something else to think about. YOU are an expert in your business (ideally, anyway). Your clients are not. Why not keep them up to date in what is happening in your industry? if you can de-mystify some aspect of your business, that would go a long way to making your company more approachable and your clients make better informed buying decisions. They will be thankful you helped them know more about what they will be paying you to do or give them!

If you link to a blog, provide useful articles, and/or regularly email a newsletter, you can develop your company (or your self or employees) into local experts in your field. That's incredibly useful when the media is in need of someone who knows your business. ANY media contact is a huge boon to your business. Bottom line, appear in an article or news feature on your specialty area and you most likely will get business. That can launch you into a new level that goes beyond your core industry. Partnerships, tie-ins, and joint ventures can spring from this kind of exposure.

Top of mind

If you are frequently and effectively showing up in your customer's inbox, they will probably not look elsewhere when it comes time to hire someone for your service, go somewhere for lunch, or buy a product. Emails, even when they are not read, are making an impression. Keep your product, business, or service in the front of the market's mind, then you will benefit from the immediate reaction to their need for whatever it is you do. No thinking required.



Make me an offer

Of course, one of the easiest ways to drive business using email marketing is to send a special offer. It can be a discount, two-fer, date-driven, or any other kind of offer you can think of that you can put into words or pictures. Email is timely, so if you have a sudden special or last-minute deal (like the fresh wild mushrooms are just in) then email is perfect. Offers can be for that day only, for the next visit, or for whatever term is appropriate. As long as you are offering valuable deals, people will read your emails. If you are sending them useful information AND a great deal periodically, then you are going to have strong open and click-through rates.

The value of professionals

There *is* a difference between professionally written ad or email copy and that of even the best amateur. I can do basic plumbing, but if it's a serious job, I call a professional. I

tell that to my clients regarding graphic design and copywriting. Don't do it yourself if you can afford to hire the specialty talent out. You will get the money back with good results.

In the marketing world, there are lots of people who are experts in various aspect of the business. We've even gone so far as to give the various fields names: graphic design, web development, public relations, copywriting. The list goes on longer than you can imagine. There are agencies and there are freelance specialists. Beware the specialist who does everything...yes, it's an oxymoron!

I saw on Facebook recently someone in a town near me was looking for someone to do social media for his store. Immediately, two graphic designers posted their info. One was just average as a designer and one was quite good. Both had websites that described themselves as freelance *designers*. Nowhere did they advertise their skills as social media experts. Personally, I would not hire them without a lot of really good references from knowledgeable business people.

I started my career as a designer. I went to school for graphic design and writing. As I described earlier, after college, I went to work in a large corporation and wound up a national *marketing* manager. I didn't get that job because I was a graphic designer. I got it because I knew marketing. Later, when I left that company and started my own business, I went back into graphic design as a way to respond more quickly to customer needs. Honestly, I would hire me as a designer or a marketer or writer. I would not hire myself as a videographer, even though I can make and edit video. I am not an expert. I can make websites, but I am not an expert in WordPress. People in my company *are*, though.

This is not to say there are not people who are talented in more than one area. There are. It's just that you have to be very careful in finding them. Watch out for the graphic designer fresh out of school who is also an "expert" in social media, marketing, web design, flaming axe juggling, and pet sitting. When I was young, I had to make enough money to pay rent, too, and I was much more likely to say, "Yeah, I can do that." Today, I will tell you when you need to find someone else. Come back to me for what *we* do well.

How to get it done

While you can send a slew of emails from your desktop using your normal email provider, you may run afoul of your email administrators or provider for blasting out heaps of messages. More importantly, the typical email program is not built to manage the large-scale list and database that the dedicated email marketing providers can. You

also won't get the detailed reporting that will allow you to measure the success of your campaigns.

There are two main choices for the small (or large, really) business email marketer: Constant Contact and Mail Chimp. I work with both programs daily. I do have a preference, though. I am a Constant Contact Certified Consultant because I prefer that platform's features. Its reporting is a little more comprehensive and its email design system is more flexible. I know others who swear by Mail Chimp. Try them and see which you like.

A few things to keep in mind when sending your first email blast.

- **Be personal.** Talk to your audience. Personalize your message. Your database will contain their first name, use it! They won't think you actually wrote to them individually, but they will appreciate the gesture.
- **Segment.** Use the smallest common denominator you can to speak to your audience. The narrower the audience, the narrower—and more relevant—the message.
- **Have a call to action.** That's a market-y way to say "tell them what to do." Call? email? Sign up for a newsletter? Tell the audience what you want. Don't make them guess!

So...do it!

There's your overview. Now, just jump in and get started! Okay, that's probably a bit cavalier. You really need to think through your message and strategy before you send out your first email campaign or collect your first email addresses. Like any marketing method, it's best to have a strong overarching plan in place, clearly defining how email marketing can fit into the marketing mix you already use.

Here are a few final thoughts:

- **Plan.** The more you plan and think through your email campaigns, the better and more effective they will be.
- **Hire help** if you can't devote your attention to this. There's nothing wrong with getting an expert involved. The truth is, you will make money faster with someone who knows what he is doing. (We are always available at www.80TwentyConnect.com)

- **Be daring.** Try things you might not otherwise do. Email is cheap. While you have to write and design the emails, you are not paying bags of money to print them, so you can afford to test the waters from time to time.
- **Write excellent copy.** By copy, I mean words. A well-crafted email is all about the words. If you aren't a wordsmith, hire one. It's money well-spent.
- **Make custom graphics and photos.** If possible, make your own stuff. There's a place for stock images (we used them in this ebook, along with graphics we made in our design studio.) There are times when the slick look of stock photos is appropriate, and there are times when it's not. Our go-to philosophy on this is to be as close to your real self as possible, particularly if you are a local company. Look local. It's not a bad thing. In fact, many consumers would rather buy local than from a giant chain.

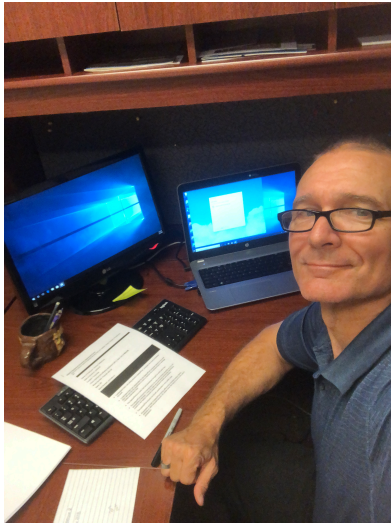
Email marketing can be a fantastic addition to your marketing arsenal. Done well, you can simply and easily engage your existing market and raise revenue or get new customers.

And if you need that expert help, we are here! Email us at [**info@80TwentyConnect.com**](mailto:info@80TwentyConnect.com).

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Richard Williamson started his first company while still in college. Formally trained as a graphic designer, he went on to climb the corporate ladder to be a national marketing manager at a large cellular company. He was the first marketing and media director at the start-up Florida Gulf Coast University before opening his own marketing media agency in Fort Myers, Florida. As a consultant, Richard has worked with companies as varied as robotics and restaurants, sports organizations and startups of all kinds. He is a Certified Constant Contact Consultant and has been using direct email as a marketing tool since the early 2000s. He has won numerous local, statewide, and national awards for his design and copywriting work. He appeared on a reality TV show, was a deputy sheriff and bomb squad team

member, and was named 2017 Lacrosse Coach of the Year in his part of Florida. When there is free time, he often spends it playing lacrosse, doing artwork, and relaxing with his family and dogs. But there is rarely free time!

Richard operates 80TwentyConnect.com, an email marketing brand under his consulting firm, BackBurner Marketing (www.backburnermarketing.com). He and Michelle Williamson are also principles of The Logo Design Group, the branding-oriented design wing of BBM (www.logodesigngroup.com). Richard attended the University of Bristol (UK), and is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. He is originally from Western New York and lives in Southwest Florida.