



How to Get (and Keep) Email Permission

10 tips for maintaining email relationships





10 Tips to Maintain Email Relationships

In the world of email marketing: permission-based email marketers are the good guys.

They value the trust and privacy of each and every customer that walks through their door and thus, the trust and privacy of every subscriber that joins their email list. As a result, they have better open rates, less spam reports, and more opportunities to grow their business with email marketing.

Permission-based email marketing is the best route to developing long-lasting customer relationships that can drive repeat sales and valuable word-of-mouth for your business. And these practices also keep you in compliance with legislation such as the Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography and Marketing Act (CAN-Spam) and the Canadian Anti-Spam Legislation (CASL).

1. Collect email addresses the right way

If you're adding a new contact to your email list, it's important that you have consent, either implied or express.

Implied consent is inferred based on actions, such as having an existing business relationship (making a purchase or donation, for example). In order to maintain implied consent to comply with CASL a contact must take a business action with you at least once every two years. Under CAN-Spam there is no need to maintain implied consent, it is assumed until the receiver indicates they no longer wish to receive messages.

Express consent is obtained when you explicitly ask your potential contacts for permission to send them email, and they agree. Once you obtain express consent, it is good forever or until someone opts out.

When possible we recommend obtaining express consent.

2. Be straightforward at the point of sign up

When asking people to join your list, be straightforward about what type of content you plan to send. Special offers, promotions, and exclusive content are great incentive for people to join your list but if you don't follow-through, you could lose them as a reader and possibly as a customer.

DO YOU HAVE EXPRESS CONSENT? ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS

- Does your sign-up form have clear and obvious language asking for permission to send the contact future electronic messaging?
- Does your sign-up form clearly identify the person, business, or organization asking for the consent?
- Does your sign-up form contain a valid mailing address and either a telephone number, email address, or web address?
- Does your sign-up form indicate that there will be a mechanism for people to easily unsubscribe at any time?
- Do you have a process in place to document this express consent?

3. Give people the option to opt-out

Permission can be given, and it can be taken away. It is very important that every email you send has the option for the recipient to unsubscribe or “opt-out.” Interests may change over time and communications may no longer be valuable to a given subscriber.

4. Add a permission reminder to your emails

Whether they are a valued customer, a prospect who expressed interest or a client you want to keep in touch with — adding a permission reminder will add credibility and help provide context for your email.

5. Respect your audience’s privacy

Trust will play a big part in whether or not someone decides to join your list. Your privacy policy should be clearly posted. It adds credibility to your company and your email even if recipients do not click on the link.

6. Keep your contacts up-to-date

People change email service providers, jobs and email addresses at random. Often, you’ll be the last to know.

Ask for updated information and give subscribers an easy way to change their email address. This will ensure that your communications continue to be received if, and when, they make a change.

7. Don’t overwhelm your audience

Respect the privilege of communicating with your customers and prospects by taking care not to communicate too often. Think carefully and plan how many, and what kind of communications you send to your subscribers.

8. Be diligent

Some subscribers will reply to an email to unsubscribe instead of using the automatic unsubscribe link. Monitor your inbox for unsubscribes, and complaints, then make sure you remove unsubscribe addresses right away and take action on any grievances.

9. Watch your reports

Look at your reports! There’s a wealth of information just waiting to be discovered. Always pay attention to your unsubscribe rate — if you are losing more than 0.5% of your subscribers per month, you need to make adjustments. Opens and click-throughs can also indicate where you might be missing the mark.

10. Never buy or rent a list

Beware of strangers bearing lists! Permission is not transferable. Today, subscribers want to receive email from those companies they have subscribed to, not an unknown third party. Don’t be fooled by the false promise of ready-to-buy lists.

Be part of the solution!

Remember, permission-based email marketing is the best route to developing long-lasting customer relationships.

Follow these 10 steps and you’ll be on your way to better results from your marketing and your business.

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