

# 31 Ways to Supercharge Your Email Marketing



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Or, visit our website and blog at [www.multichannelmagic.com](http://www.multichannelmagic.com). You will find a treasure of information for managing and improving your business.

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# Introduction

The biggest challenge with email marketing is that it is so easy to be successful that marketers don't reach for the next level. After all, when something isn't broken, why invest time and energy in making it better? Most people won't make the effort to optimize their email marketing program. Good enough will serve them well enough.

Some marketers know that good enough doesn't serve company or customer well. If you are one of them, this guide is for you. The information in it will help you optimize your marketing strategy to maximize the effect and return. An optimized email program increases revenue, solidifies relationships, and expands horizons.

In 1996, I launched my first email campaign for a client. The experience continues to be one of the most exciting marketing times of my career. The many successes before and after rarely compete with the instant gratification of that first time.

The client wanted to know if emailing customers would generate revenue. Things were quite different then. Email service providers consisted of a few startups that wanted annual contracts and high monthly fees. It didn't make financial sense to jump in without testing the water. We decided to create our own email processor using Microsoft Office. The content was created in Word. Customer names and email addresses were exported to Excel. The two were combined and sent using mail merge and Outlook.

The process took time to run because each email had to be individually created and sent. The marketing team and I watched it run in an office with two computers. One had the email send process running. The other was connected to the website so we could watch customer activity.

There were approximately 11,000 email addresses in the file. Orders started arriving before we hit 500 sends. The email was very simple. It was text only and essentially said, "Hello. This is our first email and we are giving you 10% off

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everything in our web store.” When the promotion was over, it had pulled a better response than every other marketing tool!

Almost twenty years later, marketers are still seeing phenomenal results from their email marketing efforts. Things have changed in that time making the process more challenging. The creation and send process is much simpler but getting emails to the inbox of recipients most likely to respond is harder.

Today, email marketing teams have to deal with deliverability, opt-in, spam, and over-saturation issues. Even so, email remains one of the most effective and economical marketing tools available. Once a company has a list of customers and prospects, sending an email almost guarantees a cash infusion.

Having a tool that generates sales with little effort and cost creates complacency. When marketers can send promotional emails that consistently make their numbers, they are less likely to look beyond high level metrics. Everything looks good on the surface but there is danger below. The incoming sales keep marketers from seeing that they are creating a base of discount buyers that will shift their loyalty at the first sighting of a lower price.

Email marketing can be much more. It is the only tool available at this time that can economically create one-to-one relationships with thousands of customers. People want to be valued and respected. Emails allow marketers to automatically generate highly personalized messages. Most people respond to the messages by acting, not replying. They shop and share the information with their friends. The ones that do reply usually have comments that help the company improve.

The purpose of this book is to inspire people to dig deeper and use their email marketing program to create long-term loyal customers. The tactics included are proven methods that have been used by companies to grow their lists, keep customers coming back, increase sales, and provide better service. It is my hope that this will become a go-to resource for making your email marketing program the best it can be.

Most of the tactics included can be used for both business-to-consumer (B2C) and business-to-business (B2B) companies. The sale of products and services is ultimately dependent on the buyer’s trust of the offering company. Individuals and

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businesses selling services tend to do a better job at optimizing their email marketing program because discounting is rarely an option. Even so, there is always room for improvement. The demands placed by our highly competitive marketplace require every effort to be made to maximize the return every time a customer or prospect is contacted.

All of the tips in this guide have been tested and proven successful for the companies using them. You can optimize your email marketing strategy best by choosing the greatest pain point and starting there. If revenue is slipping, start with the tips in the Sales section. If customers are leaving, go to the Retention area. Every tip works by itself so you can implement one without completely overhauling your email marketing strategy.

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## Why invest in optimizing your emails?

There are four reasons to send emails to customers and prospects: Acquisition, retention, sales, and service. Simply put, send emails when you want to acquire new customers, keep the ones you have, increase sales, and provide service.

Most companies are very good at delivering on the increase sales objective but fail miserably at the others. People miss opportunities to acquire new customers, improve relationships, and increase satisfaction because email marketing is so good at generating revenue.

Adding the other three objectives provides a competitive edge while increasing sales. It is a classic win-win scenario. Isn't it time for your company to take email marketing to the next level?

The first step is to complete a mini review of your email marketing program to see how effective it is at acquisition, retention, sales, and service. Make a list of the emails sent over the last year and place them into the appropriate category.

What percentage of the emails was designed to acquire new customers? This includes all emails sent to prospects and those that specifically ask customers to share the information with a friend. (Placing a "Tell a Friend" button in the email doesn't count.) How effective were the acquisition emails at generating new prospects and customers? What changes made them better? How much did it cost to acquire new people?

How many of the emails were specifically designed to keep customers coming back? This question is often met with the response, "our promotional emails keep customers coming back." If your company is Walmart or you can effectively compete with low price leaders, this response is right. If your company is like most, you don't have the margins to guarantee the lowest prices and need to create loyalty based customer relationships.

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Do your sales emails consistently generate revenue or are you seeing peaks and valleys? Email promotional programs are very predictable once you have enough historical data. Peaks and valleys that are not seasonal suggest that there may be underlying issues affecting your revenue. Subscriber fatigue is one such issue. It happens when people receive the same type of emails over an extended period of time.

The first sign of subscriber fatigue is a decline in open rates. If there is nothing new, then why open the email? The second sign is a higher click-through rate on opened emails. When people are ready to make a purchase, they look for a discount. The combination of lower open rates and higher click-throughs indicate that your emails may have become a coupon mecca.

Are your service emails a statement of facts or a conversation with your customers? Order and shipping confirmation emails can be much more than “here’s your information, thank you for your order” notices. They can be entertaining like the one from CD Baby that colorfully explains that the order has been shipped:

*“Your CD has been gently taken from our CD Baby shelves with sterilized contamination-free gloves and placed onto a satin pillow.*

*A team of 50 employees inspected your CD and polished it to make sure it was in the best possible condition before mailing.*

*Our packing specialist from Japan lit a candle and a hush fell over the crowd as he put your CD into the finest gold-lined box that money can buy.*

*We all had a wonderful celebration afterwards and the whole party marched down the street to the post office where the entire town of Portland waved “Bon Voyage!” to your package, on its way to you, in our private CD Baby jet on this day, Friday, June 6th.*

*I hope you had a wonderful time shopping at CD Baby. We sure did. Your picture is on our wall as “Customer of the Year”. We’re all exhausted but can’t wait for you to come back to CDBABY.COM!!!”*

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Derek Silvers, the founder of CD Baby, says this is the most successful email he has ever written. The recipients shared it with friends, posted it on blogs, and ultimately introduced thousands of new customers to the business. If the fun content doesn't fit your brand, find the words that keep your company's image and entertains your customers. They will share it too.

A good email marketing strategy increases sales. A great email marketing strategy increases sales, introduces the company to new people, and keeps customers' happily coming back for more. The only way to move from good to great is to optimize every email sent to customers and prospects.

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## About the Author

Debra Ellis is a business consultant, author, and speaker. She specializes in showing companies how to improve customer acquisition and retention using integrated marketing and service strategies. Her engineering background provides statistical insight to finding actionable data that can be used to grow companies and reduce costs.



She is recognized as an expert in marketing from direct mail to social media, customer behavior, and strategic planning. Her expertise is often tapped by media sources including: *The New York Times*, *CNN/Money.com's Small Business Makeovers*, *Target Marketing*, *Multichannel Merchant*, and *MarketingProfs*.

Debra loves the art and science of multichannel marketing. She is a student and teacher of the methods that transform shoppers into buyers and buyers into lifelong customers. In 1995, she founded Wilson & Ellis Consulting, a boutique firm specializing in creating strategies that make channels and departments work together to optimize the customer experience. Since then, she has worked with over a hundred distinguished clients such as Costco, Edmund Scientifics, Jacuzzi, Ross-Simons Jewelry, and The Body Shop.

Prior to founding her firm, Debra was instrumental in the record growth of Ballard Designs, Inc. while serving as Chief Operating Officer. Today, she uses her experience and expertise to show executives how to successfully navigate marketing channels and integrate activities to profitably grow their business. Her practical approach maximizes the return on investment.

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