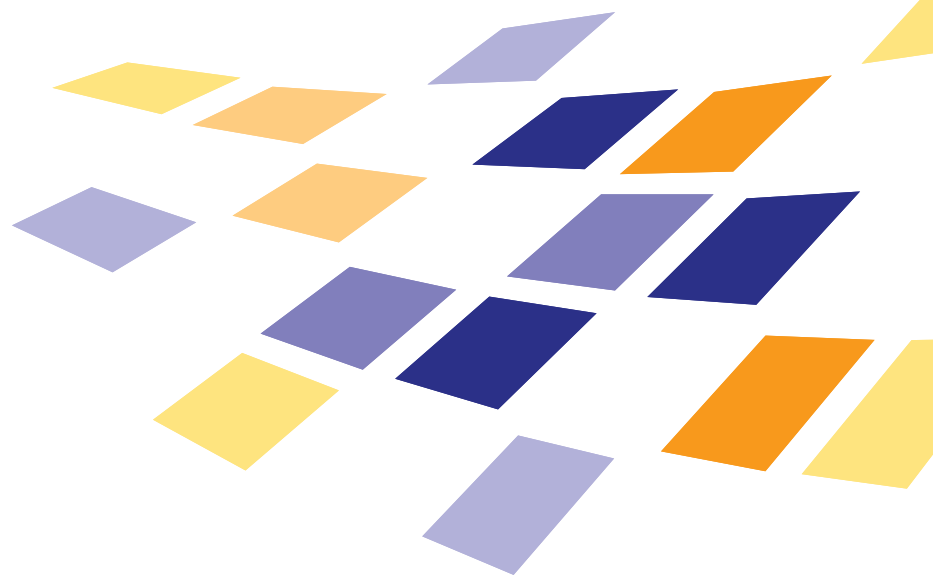


The Top 10 Reasons You Need an Email Marketing Service



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Email marketing is one of the most powerful marketing tools available for communicating and developing relationships. **But, email marketing can only be that powerful when it's done well.**

Using your standard email client (e.g. Outlook®, Eudora®, Hotmail®, AOL MailSM, Yahoo® etc.) to send a Bcc text or HTML message to your list **is not doing email marketing well.** Why not? Because your standard email client is not designed for email marketing and therefore has significant limitations that can actually undermine vs. aid your email marketing efforts.

The good news is - you do not have to go it alone. There are Web-based email marketing services that are inexpensive and designed to make email marketing simple for the non-technical user. By using a good email marketing service, you can just as easily avoid common mistakes and truly get the most out of your email marketing efforts.

Here are the top ten reasons you need an email marketing service. Coincidentally, these are also the top ten critical email marketing benefits that you will never get from any standard email client.

The Best Email Marketing Services:

1. Are Approved as Bulk Mailers

Many email clients and most ISPs limit the number of emails that you can send at one time. Further, most ISPs guard against bulk emailing, as it is often spam. Legitimate services typically have strong relationships with ISPs and are able to send bulk email.

With many services, while your email address is listed as both the "from", and "reply to" address, the email is actually being sent by the email marketing service's server which is recognized by the ISPs.

2. Follow Professional Mailing Practices

For those of you using Outlook or another email client, mistakes can happen. Perhaps the most common mistake is exposing your entire list in the To: line, which violates all of your list members' confidentiality and exposes their email addresses. In addition, failure to include unsubscribe instructions, an unsubscribe link or a physical mailing address is now against the law. Services provide an automatic unsubscribe that is often effective immediately, and require inclusion of a physical address in every email.

In addition, a good email marketing service provides continuous education on email marketing best practices through free newsletters, Web seminars, tutorials and in-product guidelines. Topics that are frequently covered include best days to send, how to write a good subject line and more.

3. Provide List Hosting and Management

An email marketing service hosts your email list and automatically performs critical list management functions. These functions can include signup for new subscribers, editing capabilities so that

The Top 10 Reasons You Need an Email Marketing Service

subscribers can edit their own profiles, and the ability to unsubscribe with one click. Because you are required by law to process an unsubscribe request within 10 days, the unsubscribe functionality alone is critical to successful email marketing.

In addition, an email service usually handles the bounced emails for you. If you are using your email client, you probably are overwhelmed by the bounces that you receive in your email box. A service will manage bounces, differentiating between reasons for the bounce (including full mailbox, vacation message, nonexistent address or blocked).

Managing these critical list management functions using your standard email client is almost impossible.

4. Require No Technical Skill or Support Staff

Whether you are using your email client (and going it alone), or using a bulk email software package, you will find that an email marketing service can save you precious time and money. With a service, the bandwidth, power and flexibility are “built-in.” You do not have to worry about the technology or infrastructure required to send your email campaigns. In addition, better services include HTML templates and a simple, wizard driven user interface. Most email marketing services do not have set-up costs, and many provide free ongoing support, so that you can focus your dollars on your business, not on the logistics of email marketing.

5. Handle Formatting

Email services usually send emails in multi-part format. This means that your emails will be delivered to your subscribers in the correct format every time. Standard email clients can't tell which email format each recipient is able to receive - HTML or text. If you send HTML from your standard email client, some of your recipients will get gibberish that they can't read. In addition, the size of your email may exceed the requirements of the ISP or corporate domain, making it more susceptible to blocking and filtering. If you send only plain text, you'll be missing out on response rates of up to 35% higher with HTML.

6. Create Great Looking Emails

Some email marketing services provide professional HTML templates to make email creation easy by eliminating the need for any HTML skill. Templates are pre-formatted to help you organize your content. They include appropriate fonts, colors and placeholders for graphics and company logos that are easily customized to create a look that matches your company's Web site or brand.

For the technically savvy marketer, many services allow for complete customization of an email campaign in HTML or XHTML.

7. Get Higher Email Deliverability

A good email marketing service maintains strong permission policies and has an active anti-blocking team working with receiving ISPs on your behalf to ensure that your email is delivered. A service delivers your emails with proper protocols, develops relationships with ISPs and is white listed to be sure your permission-based email gets through.

The Top 10 Reasons You Need an Email Marketing Service

An email marketing service monitors all outgoing email to ensure that all major ISPs and corporate domains are successfully accepting your email. If you are using your email client, you may not know if your email is being delivered. Often ISPs will just “drop” emails without sending a bounce message. With a service, you will know which emails were delivered (or not) and why, or why not. If there is a “blip” on the receiver’s end when your email campaign is being sent, an email marketing service makes continued attempts to send your email while quickly addressing the problem with the ISP.

8. Deliver Measurable Results

An email marketing service enables you to measure the response of each email campaign. Many services report the number of emails sent, opened, who opened, who clicked through and which links they clicked on.

Reports also show new subscribes, unsubscribes, bounces and formal spam complaints. These reports help you track and measure your success, target more effectively, determine warm leads and improve your results over time. By understanding the individual and campaign results, you will know your subscribers better, and build more effective future email campaigns.

An important note: What you don’t know can hurt you. If you send your email from a standard email client and it generates spam complaints, you won’t know about them. To follow, if your email is perceived as spam by ISPs, you run the risk of having your entire corporate email server blocked. Businesses need to go through email service providers that can help them stay on the right side of the ISPs.

9. Include Frequent Updates and Enhancements

Using an email marketing service guarantees that you will always have the most current tools available to meet the changing requirements of the industry without having additional updates to install - as required in the case of most purchased bulk email software.

It is critical to keep up with email marketing legal compliance and new technology on the spam elimination front. Most new technologies that are being employed by ISPs to eliminate SPAM will require changes in both how you send email, and what you send. A good email marketing service provides regular updates and new features to enhance functionality, comply with the law, and optimize email delivery through ISPs.

In addition, many legitimate email service providers are members of The Email Service Provider Coalition (ESPC). The goal of the ESPC is to provide unique and effective spam-fighting solutions that will optimize your email delivery and response and minimize the spam in your subscribers’ inbox. New technologies like email authentication (e.g. Sender ID, SPF and Domain Keys) will be integrated into your service provider’s offering with no effort on your part.

10. Comply With Email Laws

As email marketing matures, so do the laws. An email marketing service will ensure that your email campaigns are compliant with legislation. For example, the U.S. CAN SPAM law that went into effect in January of 2004 required that every email campaign sent include the physical address of the sender, and that unsubscribes be honored within 10 days of the subscriber’s request. Because email marketing service providers are responsible for ensuring their customers’ compliance, they worry about the law and ensure that their services are up-to-date on compliance.

The Top 10 Reasons You Need an Email Marketing Service

11. Added Bonus - They cost less!

When you add up the costs of your current method of sending email campaigns, you may find that a service is less costly in terms of the resources and time required, and in real dollars. If you are spending your time trying to format your email for delivery, or handling bounces in your inbox, time may be your biggest savings. The technical resources to support in-house email operations can be expensive. An email marketing service allows you to use email marketing without technical resources or an infrastructure to support it. And, most services charge only a small monthly fee, without set-up or support costs. This keeps your investment small.

For any business that uses email to communicate with customers and prospects, following email best practices, following the law, and keeping your email practices up-to-date with changing standards, is of the utmost importance because this is the only way you can realize the true power of email marketing. Let an email marketing service help you solidify existing relationships, initiate new ones and convert your one-time visitors, (buyers, members etc.) into repeat business and long-term customers. Find an email marketing service that has the important features listed above. This way you can spend your time doing what you do best - promoting your own company, product, service or cause.