

SO YOU WANT TO SEND A MARKETING EMAIL? (Email Best Practices 101)



It's no secret that email is a powerful marketing medium. It's cost-effective, customizable, measurable, and proven to generate results. According to a [Direct Marketing Association report](#), 83% of people use email in their promotional campaigns with a Return on Investment (ROI) that is *four times higher* than direct mail.

But your campaign is only as strong as your marketing strategy. If you want to give yourself the best shot at success, take a look at some of these **email marketing best practices**.

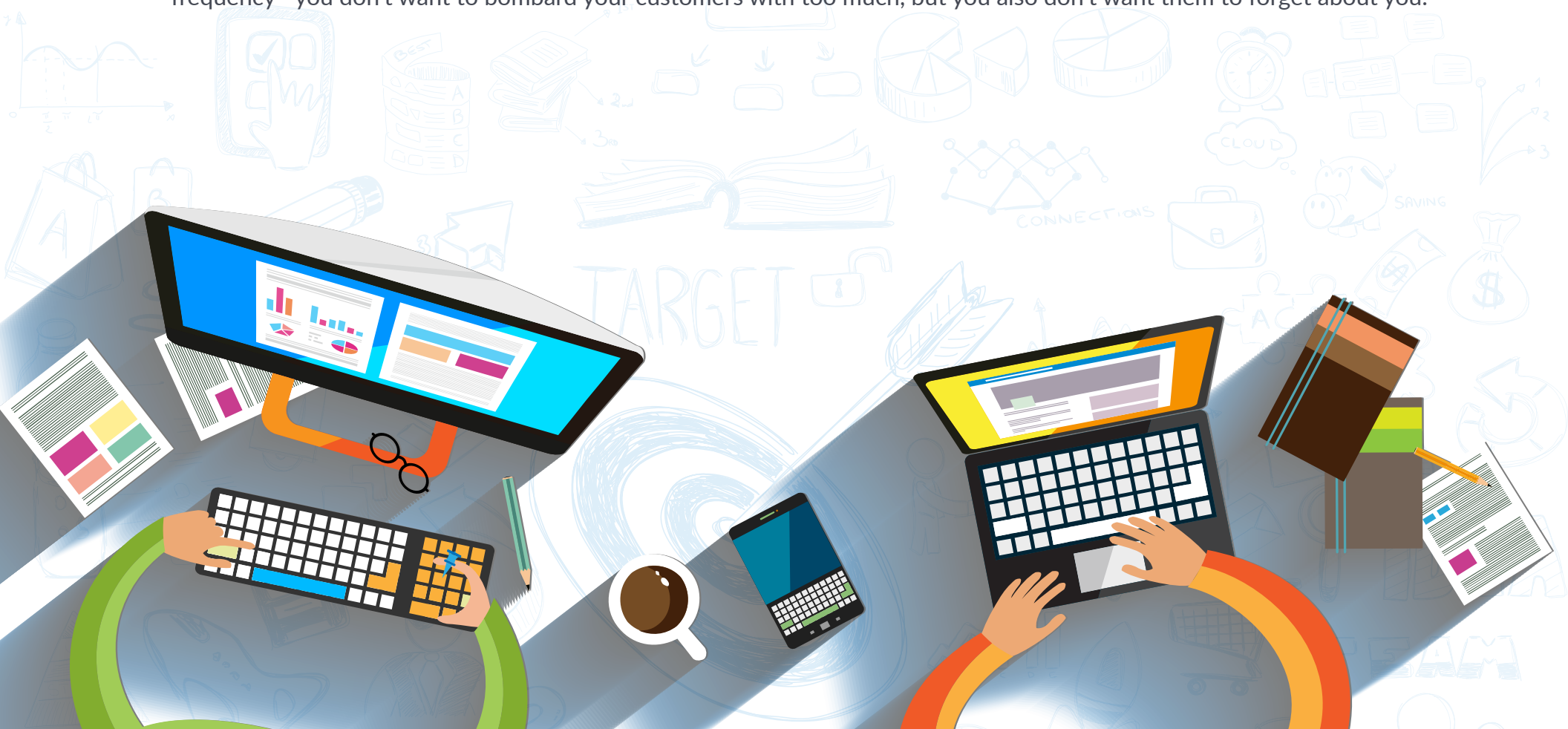
GETTING STARTED

Launching an email marketing campaign seems easy enough; grab an email address, draft a message, and hit "send," right? *Not exactly*. If you want to position yourself in the best light, you first need to know where to stand.

Here are a few pre-game warm-ups to help you prepare:

- **BUILD YOUR EMAIL LIST** – One of the most important aspects of any successful marketing campaign is having a viable email list. Without recipients, *you have no campaign*. Take steps to [build a strong list](#) of current and potential customers who are interested in your product or service.
- **CLEAN HOUSE** – [Studies show](#) that *nearly half* of a typical email list is inactive. That's a lot of wasted effort! If certain recipients never open your messages, *remove them*. If it's been a while and someone still hasn't confirmed their account, try contacting them another way (phone call, text message, alternate email) with a friendly reminder. A clean, active list will reduce bounce-backs and spam complaints.

- **BECOME A TRUSTED SENDER** – Email clients are the first line of defense for a customer’s inbox. Providers like Gmail and Microsoft® Outlook® use spam filters and virus scans to keep the junk mail out (and their customers happy). The easiest way to avoid the dreaded **blacklist** and maintain favor is to become a trusted sender. Encouraging your subscribers to add your email address to their approved list will ensure your messages are delivered and your images are displayed properly.
- **MAKE A (MARKETING) PLAN** – Every business has its ebb and flow; so should its marketing efforts. Outline the different campaigns you want to run throughout the year and when you plan to implement them. But pay attention to your timing and frequency—you don’t want to bombard your customers with too much, but you also don’t want them to forget about you.



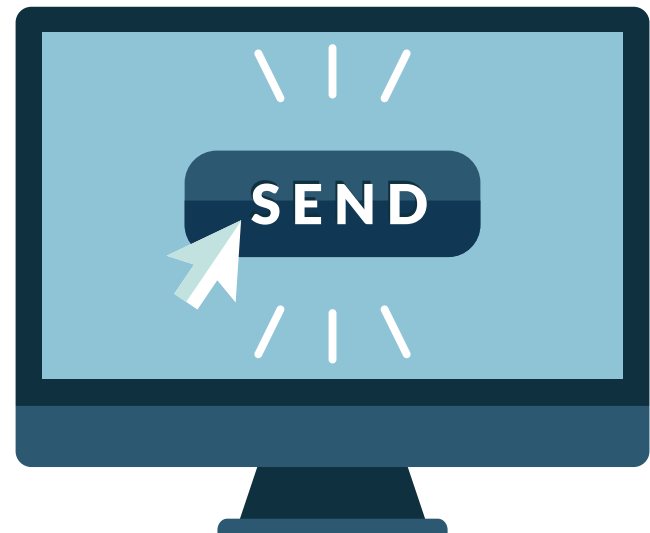
GETTING IN (THE INBOX)

You've got a strong list and a plan; all that's left is to spread the word, right? *Almost*. Even the most incredibly written and beautifully designed email won't help if you're missing one key element of any campaign: **deliverability**. In order to generate leads and sales, your messages have to be *delivered*.

Ready to bypass the filters and enjoy a smooth landing in your customer's inbox? Here's how you can increase your chances of doing just that:

- **IDENTIFY YOURSELF** – Your subscribers know and like you; it's why they signed up for your mailing list in the first place. So leave the guesswork at the door and let them know up front who's sending the message. By including your company's name in the "from" line (Joe@JoesHardwareDepot.com), you're reducing the odds of getting deleted.

In fact, according to a DoubleClick survey, **64% of respondents said the most important factor motivating them to open permission-based email was the "from" line.**



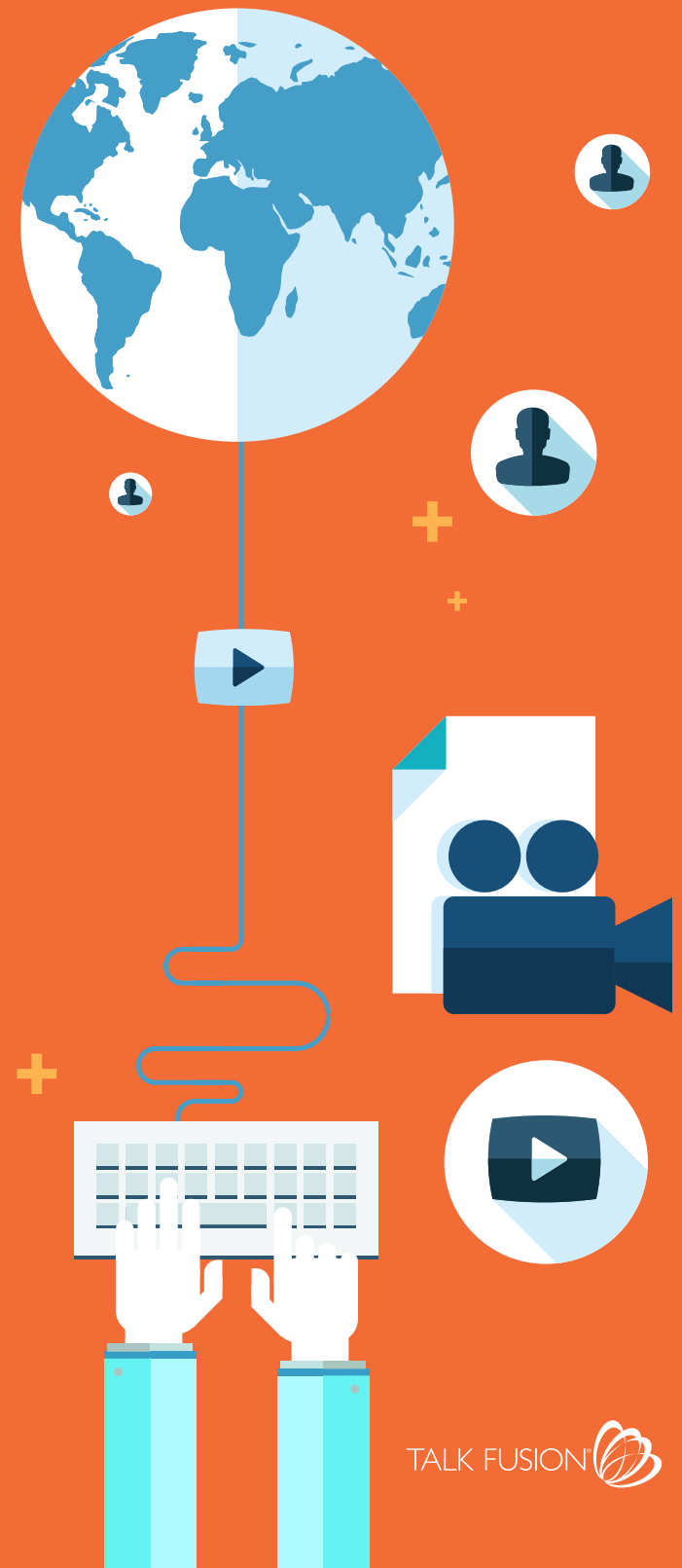
- **UNDERSTAND SPAM FILTERS** – Filters work hard to separate the virtual treasure from the trash. Unfortunately, the actions of overzealous spammers have resulted in a [long list](#) of words to be avoided at all costs – because using them could cost your deliverability. You may already know some of those phrases (free, guarantee, work at home) and tactics (excessive punctuation, caps, symbols), but it's important to keep your content solid – and off the spam radar. Remember: the filters don't always get it right. Some reports suggest that [70% of spam complaints](#) are actually a result of marketing emails.
- **CRAFT A STRONG SUBJECT LINE** – The sheer volume of emails your customers receive on a daily basis is staggering. The fact is, for many, the subject is the deciding factor in whether a message is opened or deleted. If you want to obtain the highly sought-after double-click, you must spend time perfecting that first line of text. It should reflect the content of the email while avoiding those spam trigger-words. You want it to be engaging enough to prompt your customers to open, but not too cryptic so as to miss the mark. And, according to Return Path [studies](#), subjects that created a sense of urgency were actually the top performers. So consider using phrases like “there's still time” when reminding customers of an ending sale or approaching expiration date.

GETTING READ

So you've passed the spam test and your message is nestled safely in the New Mail haven where it's sure to be read. *Well, not necessarily.* Getting to the inbox is the first hurdle, but your email's next challenge is to get opened.

If you want to stand a chance in the delete-first-ask-questions-later arena, try some of these strategies:

- **TARGET YOUR AUDIENCE** – Customer segmentation is a wonderful thing. By dividing your email list into subgroups (based on things like demographics, purchase history, and lifestyle) you send the *right message* to the *right person* at the *right time*. Targeting your audience this way can result in higher click-throughs, lower unsubscribe rates, and better deliverability.
- **PERSONALIZE IT** – Everyone likes to feel special; we enjoy hearing our own names and we embrace the idea that large companies want to know us personally. That’s why customizing your emails can make such an impact on your marketing. According to Aberdeen Group, [personalizing your emails](#) can increase your click-through rates by 14% and improve your conversion rates by 10%.
- **JUST ADD VIDEO** – Addressing each customer by name is a simple (and well-known) way to pique their interest, but it shouldn’t be your only move. [Incorporating video](#) into your messages can drastically change the future of your company. [Studies](#) show that adding video to email can increase your click-through rates by as much as **300%** and reduce your unsubscribe rates by 75%. And with Talk Fusion’s [Video Email](#), Video Newsletters, and video auto responders, [personalizing your campaigns](#) (and increasing their effects) has never been easier.



- **PROVIDE GREAT CONTENT** – Successful marketing is a balancing act. You'll want to find the happy medium between your promotional and informational emails in order to get the best results. Rather than bombarding your contacts with endless waves of sales promos, create the kind of exceptional content subscribers *want* to read. Send timely and engaging articles that pertain to them or offer professionally written white papers they can use as resources. Following this guideline will maintain your relevance, establish yourself as a knowledgeable source, and increase customer loyalty.
- **BE (MOBILE-) FRIENDLY** – Gone are the days of PC-only web browsing. Today, more people are using mobile devices to accomplish just about everything they once did from their desktop. According to [Experian's Quarterly email benchmark report](#), 54% of all opened emails transpired on a smartphone or tablet. Creating emails that shine on both screens (large and small) has never been so important. Make sure your links are easy to find and click—you don't want to lose a sale because your call to action wouldn't load properly.

GETTING RESULTS

Congratulations! Your cleverly crafted message has been received *and* read. Surely *now* you can sit back and reap the rewards of your hard work? **Not yet; but you're so close!** While you may quickly see an upswing in sales and click-throughs, there are still just a few more steps if you want to keep the momentum up—and to ensure your efforts are put to the best use.

- **GIVE THEM WHAT THEY WANT** – You want your subscribers to take action—so [give them something in return](#). Email marketing campaigns are the perfect avenue for providing special discounts, offers, and promos. What better way to advertise your upcoming Buy One Get One Free (BOGO) sale than a direct line to customers who have purchased those products in the past? Sending freebies (even small ones) is also a great way to continue building brand loyalty.
- **GET SOCIAL** – You know that great BOGO deal you just told your email contacts about? Don't forget to share it across your company pages, too—Facebook, Twitter, Instagram... Pushing content both through email *and* social media encourages users to easily share your info with their networks. Plus, an active social media presence engages customers and helps [turn them into advocates](#).

GET GOING

These are just some of the many ways you can use the power of email to strengthen your marketing efforts. By combining the cutting-edge products of Talk Fusion's all-in-one Video Marketing Solution with proven strategies and due diligence, you can boost profits, reduce costs, and gain new customers. *So, what are you waiting for? Get going!*