Daniel Hall Presents

Episode 56

Best Practices Checklist for Email Marketing

With Daniel Hall

In spite of the fact that email deliverability has become more difficult, emailing your list can still be a very potent and effective marketing tool. Be that as it may, the use of "best practices" will help ensure that every email stands the best chance of hitting its intended mark.   Accordingly, what follows is a checklist designed to be used before sending any email.

Use it yourself or provide this list to whoever sends your email. Some of these suggestions may seem like common sense, but I found this list to be very useful, ensuring that nothing is forgotten. Let's get started.

1. **Re-read and spell check.** Obviously your email must be understandable and professional. If you want your emails and messages to be taken seriously, they must be free of misspellings and grammatical mistakes.   So re-read your emails several times. To catch more potential mistakes try reading your messages backwards. This will give you more focus and you will be less likely to "read" a word that is not there. As writers of the email, we are likely to input the missing

word, even if it's not there. Finally, do either a spell check with a word processing program or write your email in a browser program like Mozilla Firefox which has a built-in spell checker for one last check for possible errors.

2. **Double check dates and times.** A common email mistake are errors in times and dates. The most frequent trip-up is in calculating time zones. In fact, the day I am writing this report I made a two-hour mistake in calculating Pacific time to Central time. It happens… even when you are double-checking things. The rub is (hopefully) mistakes happen less frequently.

3. **Format at 45 or 50 characters.** Ever get an email from someone that looks like this?

> Hello Subscriber -
>
> Ever wish you could make money while you
>
> sleep? Well now
>
> you can with with our new Clickbank product called
>
> ClickBank Slumber
>
> Party.

This funky formatting makes you look like an amateur, not a professional.   It results from improper formatting. Generally speaking, your emails should be evenly formatted at either 45 or 50 characters per line. You could do this by hand (which I don't really recommend) or you could use a formatting service.

A good and free web-based formatting service can be found at www.formatit.com . With this service, you can simply write your email in any word processing program you like – and use its spell checker as above. Save your email. Then just copy and paste your text into www.formatit.com and set the characters per line at either 45 or 50. Click the "submit" button. The service will then format it. Now copy and paste the newly formatted email into a .txt document using something like Notepad or Wordpad and save it for your archive. Now paste the newly formatted email into whatever email service you use.

That's it. Now your emails will look fantastic!

4. **Check against spam filters.** Deliverability today is a constant problem. To the extent you can you want to mitigate this problem by checking all your emails before you send them against a spam check. Most all the email services have a spam checkers built in. I know for example that with each of the email services I have accounts with – namely [My Kick Start Cart (a private label of 1 Shopping Cart)](#), [iContact](#) and [aWeber](#) – they all have built in Spam checkers. Use them and make any corrections that these applications recommend.

5. **Recheck any links within your email.** In most, cases emails are sent to drive traffic to one of your sites. Double check every link in your email BEFORE sending it to make sure it works and the link takes your subscriber to where you want them to be. Also, links sometimes break for no apparent reason so even if you recognize the link or you have sent it in the past ALWAYS re-check before sending to insure that it is working today.

6. **Double check that links or forms on landing pages work.** As a close corollary to rechecking your links you must also recheck the landing site to make sure it is working properly. That is, just like links spontaneously breaking sometimes pages break as well.   For example, your email may contain a link that sends your subscriber to a squeeze page form. The link may work but the opt-in form on the page may not. So double check opt-in forms, "add to cart" buttons or any other link or mechanism of action you want your subscriber to take.

   Case in point, recently I did not recheck a webinar replay page (which was where the link in my email was driving traffic to) and people could not watch the replay because of an errant opt-in pop-up that flew in, stopped right over the video and could not be closed. This prevented my subscribers from doing what I wanted them to do. That is, watch my webinar replay and then invest in my product.

7. **Make sure that your emails are CAN-Spam compliant.** Obviously you do not want to ever be perceived as a spammer or get into hot water with the FTC. Most legitimate email services won't let you send a message that is not compliant. Be that as it may, it would be helpful to know what is expected. Accordingly, the following is a brief list to follow to insure all your email is compliant.

   a. **Don't use false or misleading header information.**

   b. **Don't use deceptive subject lines.**

   c. **Identify the message as an ad.**

   d. **Tell recipients where you're located.**

> **e.** **Tell recipients how to opt out of receiving future email from you.**

> f. **Honor opt-out requests promptly.**

> g. **Monitor what others are doing on your behalf.**

If you wish to have a further explanation on insuring you are CAN-Spam compliant check out this FTC link: http://business.ftc.gov/documents/bus61-can-spam-act-compliance-guide-business

8. **Consider using a HTML or MIME to better track statistics and open rates.** Most email services can only track deliverability and open rates if you are sending your emails in html formatting (versus plain text). Of course, this is really not that difficult to do. All it takes is simply using the free WYSIWYG html editor that most email service providers have built in (you can usually toggle between html and visual editors) or by using an editor like NVU available free from this link: http://www.nvu.com/ Obviously you should make sure that each line is between 45 to 50 characters and that all your links are in fact hyperlinked so that when a subscriber opens your message the displayed link will actually be clickable.

   Additionally, be mindful that some of your subscribers have set to their email preferences to NOT view html emails. In this case I would recommend you send your messages as a MIME which basically means you send both a text and html formatted email messages. Then if a subscriber has chosen not to received html messages your email service will serve up the text message version.

9. **Preview and/ or put yourself on the list so you can see what your subscribers see preferably BEFORE you send the email.** Again most email services like My Kick Start Cart (a private label of 1 Shopping Cart), iContact and aWeber have a way to preview your message before sending it. ALWAYS take advantage of this capability. I cannot tell you how many times this step alone has saved my bacon.

   Don't try to send emails when you are in a hurry. This step alone may be the most important step you take before sending an email. Even though you are using this comprehensive checklist, you are much more prone to making mistakes when you are in a hurry. Slow down. Make sure you are doing things thoroughly and correctly.

That's it. Use this list until it becomes second nature to you. To make it easier to use you may want to use this abbreviated version. Perhaps make a post-it and stick it next to your monitor.

- ⚑ **Re-read and spell check**
- ⚑ **Double Check Times & Dates**
- ⚑ **45 Characters**
- ⚑ **Spam Checker**
- ⚑ **Recheck links**
- ⚑ **Recheck landing pages**
- ⚑ **CAN-Spam compliant**
- ⚑ **HTML &/or MIME**
- ⚑ **Preview before sending**
- ⚑ **Slow down**

Enjoy… and happy email marketing.

Links:

Real Fast eMail Marketing Course

Real Fast Affiliate Profits Course

www.formatit.com

My Kick Start Cart (a private label of 1 Shopping Cart)

iContact

aWeber

CAN SPAM Compliant FTC Link:
http://business.ftc.gov/documents/bus61-can-spam-act-compliance-guide-business

http://www.nvu.com/

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