



# 20 WAYS

to improve your  
email marketing  
metrics



# Introduction

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If you're reading this guide, you're probably trying to squeeze more out of your email marketing campaigns.

You've already learned all about the [key email marketing metrics to watch out for](#), and used the [latest industry benchmarks](#) to see how you compare against your competitors.

Now it's time to turn that knowledge into action.

Below, we've listed 20 ways you can improve your email marketing metrics, including:

- Email open rates
- Click-through rates
- Unsubscribe rates
- Complaint rates

But before you jump in and apply them to your campaigns, we want to ask you for a favor:

Test them out!

Your audience will tell you whether these best-practices work for them – or if you need to take a different approach.

No matter what answer you hear, you'll emerge much wiser!

So, develop a culture of testing.

When that happens, you can easily come up with other ideas to enhance your email marketing campaigns.

Good luck!

# 5 ways to improve your email open rates

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## 1. Start with your ideal customer persona

Every time you sit down to write your email, picture your ideal customer.

Think about who they are, their interests, and their needs.

Will they care about what you're sending?

Yes? Good, send away!

No? Scrap it.

It's quality that counts, not quantity.

Value their time, and you'll see every message you send gets more opens and click-throughs.

## 2. Become a customer

We all know first impressions matter.

But we often forget what the first experience with our brand looks like.

The signup page, thank you page, confirmation message, welcome email... are they still as relevant as when you made them?

Put yourself in your customers' shoes and make sure your signup process is frictionless.

Make it memorable and make it count!

## 3. Don't write subject lines. Craft them.

The subject line is often an afterthought.

But it's often the only thing your customers sees.

Be different. Craft your subject line. Treat it like a movie trailer that will make them pause what they're doing and pay attention.

Learn what your customer value, or what makes them laugh. Look at the words they use to describe those things.

If words aren't enough, try [using emojis and numbers](#).

Come up with several alternatives and run a test.

Remember: each result gets you closer to understanding your customers better.

## 4. Don't forget the preheader

You know the gray text next to your subject line? That's the preheader.

It might look like the perfect spot for your "view online" link, but why not use it for something better? Like to dazzle subscribers with your message, for example!

Don't waste this opportunity to offer something relevant.

What's unique about your offer? What makes it special and worth opening?

Add it to the preheader.

## 5. Time is subjective

When's the best time to send your emails?

Although our [report](#) shows there are several slots where your odds are greater, there's no one right answer – unless you send an email to one customer, who always opens it at the same time. Although for the sake of your business growth, I hope you don't!

Otherwise, use tools that adjust the send time to suit each customer – not you.

It's one of the simplest things you can do. And it can have the greatest impact on your results.

# 5 ways to improve the click-through rate

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## 1. Have fewer calls to action

As in many areas of life, less is more in email design.

If you use everything to try to catch attention, nothing will succeed.

So, choose one or two key actions you want customers to take after opening your email.

Use fewer calls to action (CTAs) and first focus on getting your customers to your page.

Still want to keep secondary offers in your email? Just make sure they don't compete with the main CTA.

## 2. Help your CTAs stand out

Don't bury your calls to action in your email.

Let them stand strong and proud. Make them visible and accessible.

What if your message centers on beautiful product photos and imagery?

Not a problem. Place your CTAs beside them. Use colors that complement the overall email design. And let negative space work in your favor.

Make your CTAs visible, but not distracting. And make sure they can be easily clicked on any device.

## 3. Spice up your copy

You compel someone to look at your subject line.

You convince them to open your message and go below the header image.

And then you ask them to buy now...

But where's the value in that?

Get creative with your CTA copy!

Consider using personalization, power words, or more descriptive words. Focus on value and spark subscribers' interest.

Make it irresistible to learn more, and see what's behind the curtain.

## 4. Overcome resistance

Sometimes creative copy and good design just aren't enough.

Something still stops some subscribers from clicking through to your site.

Maybe they think the offer isn't for them. Or it can't be trusted.

Whatever the block, you could overcome it by building trust. Here are some things to use:

- customer quotes and testimonials as social proof
- partner or customer logos to build credibility
- Your contact details and team photos, to show you're real and easy to reach

Reduce friction. Reinforce trust. Overcome doubt.

Then watch your clicks soar!

## 5. Segment and be specific

Students and professionals. Employees and business owners. Adventurers and homebodies.

Every email list has multiple segments: groups who like or fear different things.

So you can't expect them to respond the same way to your content.

Even if they use the same product or service, their reasons for doing so might be vastly different.

And so, you'll want segment your list.

Surprisingly, writing copy is easier when you write to a specific audience.

# 5 ways to lower the unsubscribe rate

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## 1. Improve your signup process

Managing expectations is one of the easiest things you can do to lower your unsubscribe rates.

So make sure people know what, when, and how often they'll hear from you.

Review your signup form, thank you page, welcome email, and onboarding sequence. And make sure you can keep the promises they make.

Remember: quality beats quantity.

It's better to have fewer, more engaged subscribers who are more likely to stay with you longer.

## 2. Nurture new contacts

We talked before about why it pays to make a great first impression.

So the next question is: what do you offer new contacts?

Is it your best content? Or just whatever's in the queue?

It's wise to warm up your fresh leads. Nurture them with your best-ever content.

This reassures them they made the right call joining your list.

## 3. Understand unsubscribes

Want to significantly lower your unsubscribe rate?

First, be aware not all people opt out at the same time, for the same reason.

So your first task is to figure out why and when they do unsubscribe.

Is it after opening the first email? Then perhaps it didn't give them what they wanted – or they didn't even realize they had joined your list.

Is it around holidays or another peak season? Maybe they're overwhelmed with seasonal offers.

Is it after a specific campaign? Maybe it just wasn't for them.

Also, look at who unsubscribes? Are they from a specific traffic source, landing page, or location? You might only need to fix one page.

Analyze the reasons why people unsubscribe, then try to fix it.

## 4. Offer an opt-down

Why do people typically unsubscribe from mailing lists? Because they either get too many messages – or irrelevant ones.

Any easy fix is to send fewer emails. Move from a daily to a weekly newsletter, for example.

Or let your recipients choose when to hear from you – using either a preference center or automation workflows.

Offering an opt-down (instead of an opt-out) can help lower your unsubscribe rates and keep your customers for longer!

## 5. Wake up sleepy subscribers

Often it's not one email that makes recipients opt out.

Typically, recipients tire and disengage with emails before finally cutting the cord.

To prevent this, you can run re-engagement campaigns to pinpoint signs of inactivity. And wake them up before it's too late.

You may need to offer an extra discount or free sample to lure them back. But it could be the only thing that does.



# 5 ways to lower your complaint rates

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## 1. Know why it happened

Having your emails marked as spam is perhaps the worse reaction a subscriber can have.

But it happens.

To lower the complaint rate, you first need to understand who reported you as a spammer – and why.

Usually you won't know specifically who did that. But you can see which message or campaign triggered it, and investigate what went wrong.

Perhaps it's a list that hasn't heard to in a while – or a database you collected at an event?

Know what's going on, and then you can take steps to fix it.

## 2. Set expectations

Don't assume your emails get marked as spam because they aren't interesting.

Maybe the contact didn't even open your email to see if it was relevant to them. They just assumed it was spam.

So the key is to let people know what happens after they sign up.

What will they get, when and from whom?

If you forget to set expectations and start emailing people you met a year ago at a conference, don't be surprised if some of them opt out.

### 3. Meet expectations

It's easy to go overboard.

To tell your customers you send a monthly newsletter, then deliver emails every other day.

Or promise they'll get updates about your business...then sneak in news about your other offerings.

Or say they'll only get your best content – then send everything you have.

This won't help you build strong relationships.

But it will spark spam complaints, and contribute to a poor brand image.

So be sure to deliver on your promises.

### 4. Automate list cleaning

We want to avoid subscribers becoming bored or fed up, and finally marking your emails as spam.

So look for clues that people have switched off.

Then try reactivating them – with email, SMS, or paid advertising.

If that doesn't work, you have two other options:

- move them to another list that only gets your most valuable campaigns
- remove them

The second option seems riskier. But if you're willing to take your chances, you know what to do.

## 5. Make it easy to unsubscribe

You'd be crazy to place the unsubscribe link above the header, right? Shouldn't you hide it at the end of your email?

Actually, it's better to lose contacts through a normal opt-out than risk spam complaints.

After all, spam complaints will hit your deliverability. Unsubscribes won't.

So make it easy to opt out. It's far better than your emails landing in spam folders – or being rejected by an ISP.

## Next steps

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These 20 ways to improve your email marketing metrics are just the beginning.

The real results come from giving them a go – and developing a culture of testing.

Once you and your team sees optimization pays off, you'll likely find other ways to win customers' hearts and inboxes.

And when you do, be sure to check how you compare to others in your industry in our [email marketing statistics report](#).

Rock on!