

# With thought and planning, email marketing can be a blast

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While 'email blast' is a term that comes with certain negative connotations, this can be reversed by sticking to the rules and following certain guidelines.



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Sending out permission-based emails to a targeted customer database with well constructed and perfectly timed messaging can be a powerful relationship building marketing tool that will not blow the bank.

## A clean database

We are finding that this is a growing part of our business and clients are seeing some excellent results. We are well aware of the pitfalls of this type of marketing and the potential for alienating customers, and even angering them when your marketing is unsolicited and thus considered spam. To avoid this, it's important to make sure your database is clean and you have permission from all of your recipients.

Never buy your list from an unqualified source, third party or related organisation, and if you have a list of clients and customers that know you, but they haven't specifically asked for communication from you, they should receive personalised email invitations asking them to join your list. Make sure your data is tailor-made and clean, and be wary of anyone wanting to give you a database of emails. Legitimate companies should be doing the delivery for you so that recipients will recognise the sender and you won't fall foul of spamming conventions.

This is not only a legal requirement - together with providing an option of 'opting out' or unsubscribing - but makes sense in protecting the reputation of, and goodwill toward, an organisation.

## Never assume

A good rule of thumb is not to make any assumptions about your intended audience. This includes the level of awareness they have for your brand, their openness to receiving messaging via email or even if they are interested in what you have to sell. Your database should contain emails of people in the right demographic, region and economic category, for example. Feedback from surveys looking at 'open and click' results will help ascertain the integrity of your database. Keep checking and refining elements of your email blasts such as how your message appears in different browsers and email accounts to help your message achieve maximum conversion rates.

Once you are clear on who your audience is, you need to be just as clear about why you are sending out the mailer. This is very important and a word to the wise is never have more than one intention. Know exactly what you want to achieve and make sure your messaging is crafted to gain attention and action from the audience. Your call to action should not include

too many elements such as making a purchase, subscribing to a newsletter and 'Liking' on Facebook. Ascertain what your audience needs and make sure all elements of the mail talk to that single need. Also worth noting is that you should pay attention to the quality and correctness of the email's end point, such as web pages or electronic forms.

## Timing

Timing is also a key element. Research shows that Wednesday mornings are good for email blasts in general. The timing of topical campaigns around special days such as retailers wanting to reach consumers for Mothers' Day is obviously vital too.

Finally, scripting, designing and formatting email blasts should be left to the experts. There are many considerations such as writing attention-grabbing headlines, directed messaging and creating a sense of urgency to get the desired action from your audience. There are many potential pitfalls such as using unrelated images, exclamation marks, capitals or key phrases which are picked up by spam filters and do not present a professional image.

There are many examples of email campaigns that have worked extremely well for B2B and retail clients. We have a host of case studies and responsible relationship building using well designed email blasts is becoming a real game changer for many of our clients.

## ABOUT LOUISE ROBINSON

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