

THE GAME CHANGER

Master the one tool you shouldn't be without.

1. Introduction

- You've heard about this tool for years, but you don't know what to do with it.
- Everyone says it is critical for building a platform and it is the most critical element for publishers, but no one tells you how to manage it.
- Your readers want it, but you don't know what to give them.
- We're talking about email marketing.

2. Why is it so important?

- Everyone uses email** – more than half of the entire planet uses email. (Radicati Group)
- Allows you build brand awareness and appeal** – if they are seeing you on a regular basis, they get to know you.
- Can be targeted and personalized** – you can directly address them and present them with the information they are looking for.
- Builds relationships and credibility** – again... if they are hearing from you on a regular basis, they get to know, like and trust you.
- It is measurable** – you can easily see how well you are doing and make changes.
- Cost-effective** – free or nearly free depending on your list and the services you need.
- It has the purest reach** – no middle men. Search engines and social media networks are constantly changing their algorithms. You own the data. There is no one between you and your reader but their spam filter.

3. The numbers... Email Stats (Constant Contact)

- There are 4 billion daily email users.
- Across all industries, the average email open rate is 19.8%. Click through is 11.3% and the bounce rate is 9.4% (The average open rate in publishing is 15.51%. The average click-through rate for an email is 4.2%; it is a little better for faith-based groups – 41.5% open rate, 2.59% click through, 8.42% bounce rate)
- 99% of email users check their inbox every day, with some checking 20 times a day. Of those people, 58% of consumers check their email first thing in the morning.
- 59% of Millennials primarily use their smartphone to check email, while 67% of Generation Z scans their inbox on mobile.

4. Choosing a provider

- Look at your budget** – some offer free up to so many. Others start charging right away, but don't charge as much later on.
- Consider their training** – Do they offer webinars? Training videos? Anything? Some offer a lot. A lot offer next to nothing.

- c. **Check out their analytics** – what kind of information will they provide you about your campaigns? You need to know how your audience reacts to your emails so you can know what you are doing right and where you need to improve.
- d. **Check out their design options** - Do they have a lot of templates to choose from? Is it easy to make those customizations?

5. Content

- a. **Writing update/sneak previews**
- b. **Video message**
- c. **Character anniversaries, birthdays, updates**
- d. **Share curated content** – share a curated collection of new, high-value and relevant articles and videos from around the web. This allows you to send out more emails and engage your audience more often. Include your own content from time to time.
- e. **Teasers** – what is coming up?
- f. **Surveys** – which cover do you prefer? Have them help you name a character. Ask for their input on your nonfiction book... poll them with questions that will help you take a direction.
- g. **Birthday emails** – if you collect their birthday, make sure you send them a birthday card each year (you can automate this.)

6. Top Tips

- a. **Personalize and be personal** - it will help your email feel less salesy and more natural.
- b. **Write clear and compelling subject lines** - if a subject line isn't enticing enough to get your prospects to click on the email, then all of your efforts go to waste!
 - i. **Add a sense of urgency/scarcity** – use actionable language that tells them why they must act now.
 - ii. **Make them short and sweet** – aim for 30 to 50 characters.
 - iii. **Avoid spam triggers** like all caps, multiple exclamation points or spammy words like cash, quote, buy now, free or save to protect your deliverability.
 - iv. **Use emojis** – A clever emoji will help you email stand out in the inbox.
- c. **Use A/B testing** – They are a great way to see what strategies and offers work best for your large or small business. A/B testing involves testing two different variations of the same campaign against each other to see which gets the best results. Tests include...
 - i. **Subject lines** – to see what phrasing gets the most clicks
 - ii. **Calls-to-action – buy now verses see plans and pricing**
 - iii. **Sending time – are your readers more likely to open at 7 a.m. on Tuesday or 6 p.m. on Friday?**
 - iv. **Offer types – 20% off or free shipping**
- d. **Customize the templates** – Most email marketing services have pre-made templates you can use. No need to recreate the wheel. Grab one and customize it. Make it match your brand.
- e. **Have an onboarding sequence** – Welcome your new subscribers with a series of emails to introduce yourself and your writing, fulfill your lead generator promise or bring them into a sales funnel.
- f. **Time your emails** –

- i. Emails delivered on **Thursdays** had the highest open rate, followed by **Tuesdays**.
- ii. Saturday had the lowest average open rate.
- iii. Email open rates were highest between **8 a.m. and 9 a.m.**
- iv. After 6 p.m., open rates started to decline.
- v. The optimum number for getting emails opened is **2 to 5 per month**.

7. Get healthy

- a. **Keep your email list clean!** Regularly clearing your email list of people who never open your emails, will cut your overall cost and increase engagement. Your open rate and click through rate will also go up and your metrics give you a better idea of what is really going on with your target audience, so you can make more informed decisions. It also cuts down the spam complaints
- b. **Remove duplicate/invalid email addresses.** Check for typos
- c. **Identify your inactive subscribers** - your ESP will more than likely have a way to clean your list of subscribers who have shown now signs of engagement and are bringing the overall health of your list down. If nothing else, compile a list of subscribers who have not opened an email from you in the past 90 days and consider removing them. If you have only been sending out one per month, extend that out to six months.
- d. **Send a re-engagement campaign.** Before you remove any contacts off your list, give them one last chance to engage. Segment your inactive subscribers and target them with a re-engagement campaign. You have probably seen those emails in your own inbox.
- e. **Clean your list about once every three months.**

8. Stay healthy

- a. **Use double opt-in signups** - requires a higher level of engagement from new subscribers and helps validate email addresses.
- b. **Make it easy to unsubscribe** - it's a legal requirement of GDPR to provide contacts with the option to unsubscribe.
- c. **Segment your audience.** This will reduce the number of overall emails you send and make each one more relevant to your contacts.

9. Final thoughts

- a. Your audience will reward you with higher open rates and click rates if you don't send too many newsletters. Find the middle ground.
- b. Be consistent

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