



# inbox

Email and Newsletter Direct Marketing

## 10 Rules you cannot ignore

### **The Ten Commandments of Opt-in Emailing**

**If you plan on using email communications to build an online relationship with your customers, you would do well to remember the ten commandments of email marketing – or suffer the consequences.**

Email and electronic newsletters are powerful tools for engaging and especially for retaining customers. Used correctly these communication and marketing tools can be used to mine the mother lode of customer goodwill, resulting in increased sales and a higher return on investment.

#### **1. Thou shalt not spam (Ever!)**

This is a big no-no for any marketer worth his or her proverbial salt. Spam is the scourge of the Internet. Sending prospects unsolicited emails only irks them and puts you in the same league as purveyors of porn and remedies for sagging libidos. Permission-based marketing is the only way to go. Only email those who have opted to receive your communications.

#### **2. Thou shalt make unsubscribing easy**

You can't hold people against their will. It doesn't work with lovers and it definitely won't work with customers. When the relationship has run its course, let them go – quickly and painlessly. Smile and thank them for the experience. Therefore, make your unsubscribe link very, very visible.

#### **3. Thou shalt welcome new subscribers**

You are trying to develop a relationship, remember? Thank new users for registering and let them know what they can expect. Remind them that they are in charge in this relationship and can opt-out at any time.

#### **4. Thou shalt be friendly but not chummy-chummy**

By all means address the person by their name and treat them as an individual, but always remain professional. The subscriber is not an old friend (you're working on it, but not yet) and may not welcome a high degree of familiarity. Be friendly but business-like. A higher degree of intimacy may very well develop as the relationship progresses.

### **5. Thou shalt be relevant**

If you want your customers to look forward to receiving your communications, it must be wanted. And for it to be wanted it must be relevant. Relevancy relies on accurate profiling, including demographic information and lifestyle preferences. Once you know who you are talking to, tailor your material to your audience's interests. Which brings us to the three C's of email marketing: content, content and content.

### **6. Thou shalt have a privacy policy**

Never kiss and tell. Make it absolutely clear whether you will be sharing the information with partners and other parties. If you promise not to share, be true to your word.

### **7. Thou shalt remain true to the brand**

An email or an e-newsletter is a piece of marketing communications and must be true to your brand values. As another customer touch-point, the tone, style and message must be consistent with what your brand stands for and how it is portrayed in other media.

### **8. Thou shalt craft thy subject line carefully**

Avoid words frequently used by spammers such as FR\*E, MONEY and S#X. At best you will be filtered out. At worst you will be labeled the no-good charlatan that you are probably not. If you are genuinely offering something of real value for nothing, then by all means use the word 'free'. Even after so much use and abuse 'free' remains one of the most powerful words in the marketer's lexicon. But first make sure the recipient recognizes you as the sender and trusts messages from that source.

### **9. Thou shalt be regular**

As with bowel movements, so with communication – regular is good. You have grabbed your intended audience's attention and persuaded them to subscribe now, it is up to you. Make sure you stay in touch - but only if you have something relevant to share with them!

### **10. Thou shalt treat every contact as an opportunity to learn**

Your list of addresses is the foundation of your email marketing efforts. Work hard to grow it and keep it current. Constantly learn about your customers' preferences and needs and tailor the communication accordingly. This way you build customer loyalty, increase retention rates and find new opportunities to cross-sell and up-sell.

Follow these simple (not to be confused with easy) rules and you are well on your way to e-marketing nirvana. Ignore them and you are more than likely to get burned!

At Inbox we follow these rules, and a few others, as a matter of course. To benefit from our expertise, fill out the [contact form](#), send an [email](#) or call +27 31 765 4370.

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