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No matter what industry your small business is in, there's one form of marketing and communication that you're guaranteed to use: email.

Used right, email is one of the biggest, and best performing forms of marketing that you'll ever use as a small business – without costing you a lot of money. That's what gives it one of the most [lucrative ROI \(Return on Investment\) of 4400%](#). So, if you spent £1, you could earn £440 back. That's powerful.

What's more, email isn't just for the big dogs. It's something that can be harnessed and effectively used by businesses of all sizes, from one-person start-ups to mega-corporations. And to help get you started, we've rounded up the best small business email tips to turn your strategy from zero to email hero.

Ready to open the secrets we've got in store for you? Read on.

What is email marketing?

Email marketing is a form of marketing using email. Basically, it's when you send out a commercial message to a list of customers, subscribers or leads that have agreed to receive emails from you.

Email marketing can take many shapes and forms, including:

- **Promotional emails**, which might tell you about a new item in the store, a special sale going on or a new service that you offer. These emails are actively selling to your customers.

Promotional emails usually have a specific CTA (Call To Action) that you want users to take. For example, a promotional email about a new line of hats will have a CTA to get customers to see the new hats in-store and purchase.

- **Informational emails**, which could include regular newsletters to promote company news and updates, or one-off announcements to let your customers know of a big change.

Informational emails don't actively sell to your customers but are designed to keep them in the loop and establish a relationship with your customers.

- **Transactional emails**, which are usually automated emails to confirm orders, provide shipping updates or provide booking details.

Transactional emails are the most functional emails to send as a business but done right they can establish great relationships with new customers and encourage repeat business.

In our top small business email tips, we'll show you how to master these types of emails to build your customer list and increase your revenue.

Is email still important?



One of the biggest questions and criticisms that email marketing receives is around its age. Although it may seem hard to believe, email was invented in 1971. Since its invention, technology has advanced at superhuman rates.

The email was a faster way to communicate with people than sending mail. But thanks to instant messaging and social media, we have even faster and more convenient ways to communicate. So, is email an outdated medium – and should

small businesses put their money and effort into advertising or [social media marketing](#) instead?

So, we're going to answer that one very quickly before we delve out our small business email tips.

Email marketing is very much alive and incredibly important for all businesses. We may communicate and use technology in different ways, but email is something that we've clung to for 50 years. And trust me, we're not going to let go of it anytime soon.

And to put it into perspective just how important email is, let us share some astounding statistics with you:

- In 2020, [there were 4 billion email users](#) around the world. This number is only expected to grow.
- In the same year, approximately [306 billion emails were sent out every day](#). By 2025, we're projected to send out over 376 billion emails a day.
- Email isn't just used by older generations. In fact, [millennials spend around 6.4 hours scrolling through their inbox a day](#), which is more than any other generation.
- Most generation Z audiences have multiple email addresses, using email for school, one for social media and promotional material and one for professional and work purposes.

And if the sheer use of email isn't enough to convince you, remember that users actually prefer to see promotional material in their inbox than any other form. In fact, one study showed that given the same piece of promotional content, [72% of consumers preferred to see it in their inbox than on social media](#).

Convinced yet? Great. Now let's get you started with our top small business email tips.

The top 11 small business email tips

Ready to master your email marketing? Get stuck into these top 11 small business email tips...

1. Build a strong list first

In order to have an email marketing strategy, you need someone to email. And if you want to be successful, you'll need to build an email list of customers who actively interact with your brand and want to buy your services.

So, how do you get that list?

Although it's tempting to just save up the email addresses of every single customer you've had – there's a lot of rules on who you can and can't email. Yep, sorry, this is a small message about GDPR.

Everyone that you email needs to have given express permission to receive marketing communication from you. **So if you need to start gathering email addresses of willing customers, there's really one solution: a form.**

You can add this form to your website, to your social media, and anywhere that your customers will find relevant and be willing and happy to give over their email addresses. If you want more information about how to make your forms more compliant, check out [this great guide from Sendinblue](#).

2. Valuable lead magnets get you the right emails

People won't want to give out their information for free.

They'll do it for something in return, like a free ebook, or great industry tips in a weekly newsletter, or access to a discount in your store. This brings us to lead magnets.

Lead magnets is the name for a free item, service or discount that businesses give out in exchange for contact details. Basically, it's a tool used to attract email addresses.

Lead magnets can be anything from:

- Trail subscriptions of a software;
- Industry white papers or ebooks;
- A free quote or consultation;
- A special discount on your store;
- Or more.

Basically, lead magnets are something that your customers find valuable. And it's important to emphasise your customers here.

If you make your lead magnet too open, you'll get lots of emails. But they won't be your customers. So any emails that you sent to this list will be wasted – as these people will never buy or use your service.

Think about the last time you gave out your email online, what did you get in return? Why did you sign up for a particular newsletter? Answering these questions can give you a valuable starting point to figure out what things work in your industry, and what you can use to your advantage.

3. Plan out your emails in advance



Once you've got a list going, you need to think about the types of emails that you want to send out and create a plan.

Emails are not something you send out without a thought. **They should be carefully thought out to provide value and serve a purpose.**

As we mentioned earlier, there are several types of emails that you can send out, including:

- Promotional emails;
- Informational emails;
- Transactional emails.

As a general rule, we'd always recommend setting up transactional emails for your business. Providing more than just a receipt or status update for your customer, well designed transactional emails can establish long-term relationships and encourage more sales.

For example, if you just brought a nice porcelain tea set, the transactional email for this purchase could include care information for the product, who to contact if there's a problem with the order, and potentially upselling opportunities to cleaning solutions or a matching coaster set as well as a receipt.

4. Map out your email frequency

Once you know what to send, you have another big hurdle to handle: how often do you send an email?

If you're contacting customers too often, they'll start to ignore your emails or unsubscribe from your list. Or, worse, their inbox will start picking them up as spam so your customers don't even get a chance to see them.

On the other end of the spectrum, if you don't email customers often enough, they'll forget about your brand. If you're not likely to recognise a company if you visited their website a month ago, neither are your customers.

There is a happy medium here that you need to decide, but unfortunately, that depends entirely on your business and the types of emails that you're sending. If you're opting for a more traditional 'newsletter' approach, you may want to consider sending them once a week, or even once a month if you're running longer, more detailed newsletters.

If you're running a promotional email campaign for a new product, you might want to consider sending several emails over a short space of time.

For example, if you're having a summer sale, you might want to send:

- An email leading up to, and then announcing the sale. For example, 'Our sale starts next week!' and 'The sale is NOW ON!'
- Several reminders during the course of the sale. If it lasts two weeks, you could send one every 2 days or so as a gentle reminder of the

promotion and to give recaps of the current deals they might have missed.

- Towards the end of the sale, you can increase the frequency again. For example, '48 hours left of the sale!' 'This is your final day to save!' 'QUICK! One hour until it ends!' etc.

If the promotional campaign you're doing isn't time-limited, you'll be best scaling back the communication to every couple of days or longer.

5. Draw them in with the subject line

The subject line will make or break your email. And well, we wouldn't be sharing very good small business email tips if we didn't include this.

The subject line is the small amount of text that you see on your email next to the sender. And it's this line that will convince people to open your email or ignore it entirely.

Don't stress too much, there is a knack to them. And by following these tips, you'll be on to a winner.

Create intrigue

You want your customers to click on the email. So give them a reason to. Don't reveal everything in your subject line, but give just enough information so they can see the value and want to know more. Lists often work well here. "The top 4 MUST-have products of the season". "Get the first look at our new line"

Push the biggest benefit

If you're doing promotional campaigns, your subject line isn't the place for nice poetic language. Cut straight to the point and give them a reason to open. "Save 40% on your new lawnmower".

Make them personal

Personalised emails get the best open rates, so include names when you can. "Jessica, your discount expires soon!" "Ruffles is due for his flea treatment!"

Slow down, on the punctuation; Buddy!

Too much punctuation or special characters in your subject line can activate spam filters. So keep it relatively clean.

Don't shy away from emojis

Emojis are a good way to add character and personality to your emails – without using a lot of your word count. Just don't overuse them, as they could also trigger the spam filter. "🤔 Top gardeners biggest secrets: revealed".

Remember, you don't get much space for subject lines, particularly on mobile devices. So make them short, snappy and enticing so your customers will want to click on your email to find out more.

6. Get visual



Getting people to click and open your emails is one thing. But getting them to read it is a whole other ball game.

If your customer opens your email and just sees paragraphs of plain text, that might be where they leave you. Although email started out as written communication, visual aspects and images have become just as important in this modern age.

Images make your email look more exciting and inviting to read. But more than that, they help break up information in a way that's easily scannable to your customer. So even if they don't read the whole thing, they'll still take away the main message and hopefully click your CTA.

If you're not good at designing, don't worry. There's plenty of free email templates that you can use on websites like [canva](https://www.canva.com/). It's perfect for small businesses to save time and money while being able to send out professional-looking emails.

7. Optimise for mobile

Emails are frequently opened and accessed on mobile phones.

Most people have their emails synced to their mobile phones, which means it's often the first place they'll get notified of your message and the place where they're more likely to interact with it.

One of the biggest mistakes a business can make is not optimising their email for mobile. And it's an easy one to do. You write it on a computer, look at it on a computer, and assume that everyone will see what you see.

However, mobile devices will load your emails in different ways, repositioning and moving your text. They'll shrink images, or perhaps not even load them if they're particularly big. And if a customer is faced with an email that doesn't load or cuts off the text, then they're not interested.

After all, how can they build trust with a company that can't send an email right?

8. Don't ramble

Emails are not blog posts. Although you might be able to talk about your subject all day, your customers don't want to read about it.

Unless you're making a specifically long email, like a monthly newsletter, less is more when it comes to emails. For best practice, keep them short, snappy and easily scannable. You want your customer to be able to understand and take away the biggest piece of information in seconds when they open your email.

So, don't ramble. Cut back and send.

9. Make it shareable

This is a big one for newsletters or announcement style emails.

Although email is still widely used, it's not our main method of communication. So if a user likes the information that they see, or want to send it to a friend, they don't want to forward the email. I'd actually be hard-pressed to remember the emails of any of my friends.

Customers are looking for a way to easily share your email in other formats. This could be social media buttons that copy a particular image or part of your email by pressing a certain button or having a downloadable version that they can share with others.

And the more people share, the more your company name gets out there.

Although this might sound technical, don't panic too much. A lot of automated email platforms will be able to add this functionality to your emails for you.

10. Always, always, send a test email first



No matter what the email looks like in your draft, you must ALWAYS send a test email to your users. This will flag up any glaring errors, like images that don't load properly, text that appears in the wrong locations or an obvious misspelling that you didn't catch the first time around.

Sending test emails also allows you to open it up on your mobile or other devices to make sure that it's correctly optimised for mobile, which was our small business email tips #7.

11. Look at your metrics

Like any piece of marketing, you need to keep a track of your performance and see what impact your emails are having.

For this, it's a good idea to focus on metrics such as your open rate, which will show you the % of people that opened your email. For example, if you send an

email to 100 people, and you have an open rate of 30%, 30 of those 100 people have opened your email.

And just to prewarn you, this is not going to be 100%. In fact, it's average for businesses to see an open rate of 15-25%, or even lower.

As well as open rates, you want to be looking at your conversions. This will be the number of people that not only opened your email, but also took the action that you set out for them.

No matter where these rates are now, it's important to measure and see which emails are performing best, which ones are being read more and which ones are causing customers to act. From there, you'll be able to hone and perfect a winning email marketing strategy.

Want more tips to market your business online?

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