



Five Tips for Increasing Email Engagement and Improve Inboxing

by Ivy Shtereva

Published on August 18, 2015



The rise in email volume has created a challenge for marketers. As subscribers become more selective, marketers have to create an experience and deliver quality to ensure continued email opens and high inboxing (inbox delivery) rates.

When brands don't consider the consumer expectation when developing their email campaigns, often the result is a struggling program with low inboxing rates and, consequently, low engagement levels.

To increase engagement and overall effectiveness of email campaigns, marketers need to focus on inboxing. Why? Because higher inboxing rates translate into higher open, click, and conversion rates, all of which ultimately affect program revenue.

Here are five tips to make sure your emails reach the inboxes of your subscribers and keep your email marketing engagement rates high.

1. Create an email schedule

Like all successful campaigns, a great email marketing program begins with a plan. Create a schedule with themed emails so your subscribers get in the habit of receiving content.

One successful way to introduce subscribers to your email program is with welcome emails that greet new consumers as part of a community, explain the benefits members will receive, and manage their expectations.

Consider creating a semi-monthly or monthly email series that provides valuable insights relevant to your audience. For example, an airline can deploy "travel spotlights" that highlight the most popular destinations or best restaurants in the world. This approach keeps consumers interested and opening, and it will encourage them to purchase when they're ready to do so.

According to a Yesmail case study, such welcome messages and survey campaigns achieve 50% higher open rates than typical promotional messages, proving the importance of a strategically planned email program.

2. Segment your audience

Savvy email marketers know that keeping active subscribers (subscribers who have recently opened or clicked) happy is critical for maintaining and improving both engagement and deliverability.

By creating audience segments based on subscriber tenure and engagement, you can use your primary domain to send messages to your consistently responsive segment and create a secondary domain to "activate" the less engaged.

Since more emails are being sent, keeping your audience satisfied with personal, relevant messages is essential. Segmentation can do so, and

can offer great benefits. Selectively sending emails based on segmentation can lead to 39% higher open rates and a 24% increase in revenue.

3. Introduce a secondary domain

By creating multiple sending domains, email marketers have a great opportunity to increase inboxing as a result of segmentation.

First, marketers can use multiple domains to mail different subscriber segments (more and less engaged) or different types of campaigns (one domain dedicated to marketing campaigns, another dedicated to support emails, a third dedicated to triggered, etc.)

Domain separation also helps maintain a consistent deliverability rate by setting the expectations for the type of frequency, volume, and engagement ISPs will be getting from each domain. Also, multiple sending domains offer a useful "Plan B" in the event that a deliverability issue—like a temporary block or blacklisting—impairs inboxing at one of your domains.

A Yesmail client increased inboxing 37% at its primary domain within a month of introducing the secondary domain. At the same time, the client's secondary domain, used for mailing less-engaged subscribers, averaged an 82% inboxing rate, and that number increased to 94% after deploying triggered messages.

4. Clean your data

Clean subscriber data and opt-in processes are essential for avoiding spam traps or invalid accounts (recipients with closed accounts, incorrectly spelled addresses and other issues) that can threaten deliverability.

A clear opt-in process enhances inboxing rates by protecting the integrity of your mailing lists and increasing visibility into the way recipient data was collected and validated.

Best-in-class marketers clean their data on a monthly basis, according to a study completed by Infogroup Targeting Solutions. Clean data is a major factor in inboxing.

5. Deploy triggered campaigns

Triggered campaigns' timeliness and relevancy assist in engaging the selective consumer. In fact, they garner 2.5 times the open rate of regular marketing campaigns and twice the unique click rate. Triggered messages are deployed based on an action or current event, like abandoned shopping carts, reservation/appointment reminders, and product reviews.

A best-practice for deploying from multiple domains is to have at least one triggered communication going out of each domain; in almost all cases, the triggered campaigns perform significantly better than the rest of the mailings and keep inboxing rates high.

Why should marketers care?

These tactics can go a long way toward ensuring engagement and high inboxing rates, but any one of these tactics alone isn't enough if inboxing rates are steadily declining. That's when you need an email marketing program that includes all five tactics.

* * *

Email marketing is changing. Consumers are receiving more emails than ever, causing selectivity when they're sifting through the crowded inbox. By establishing a relationship from the beginning, sticking to a plan, and organizing their subscriber base, marketers can engage even the most selective of audiences.