

# ***SPECIAL REPORT***

## **Permission-Based Email Marketing For Small Retail & Service Companies**

Learn How Every Small Retail and Service Company Can Use Permission-Based Email Marketing To Lower Costs and Increase Profits.

### **If You Don't Attract And Keep Customers, You Don't Have A Business.**

The premise of this Report is summarized by the famous business leader and author, Peter Drucker. He said, "Because of the nature of business, it has just two functions, and only two. Marketing and innovation. Marketing and innovation make money. Everything else is a cost."

The first problem with traditional marketing and advertising is that it all looks and sounds the same. The second problem is that it is too expensive. So how can a small business effectively market and innovate?

Frankly, the rising costs of marketing and advertising for small businesses is forcing them to innovate or die. It's one of the reasons email marketing has become a phenomenon that continues to gain momentum. To increase profits, there is no question that more small business owners will use email to provide a means for inexpensively marketing and selling their goods and services. In fact, if done properly, email marketing is often more appreciated by customers than traditional advertising, which clogs mailboxes and garbage cans.

### **Spam Emails Make People Mad And Are A Pain In The . . . Eyes**

The key to successful email marketing is to get the permission of the email recipient. However, most businesses don't get permission and millions of frustrated Internet users receive unwanted and obnoxious emails known as "spam." This spam has created a groundswell of anger from business owners, individuals and legislators who are screaming from their desktops that "enough is enough." When all is said and done, if the angry mobs get their way, we will soon have U.S. legislation

prohibiting the distribution of unwanted emails. Also, if the promises being made by legislators come to pass, there will be fines assessed against any who violate the rules. The authors of this Report support meaningful legislation.

Does this mean email marketing will soon be dead? Not at all. What will die is the unsolicited distribution of email to those who have not granted permission. What will be re-born is the use of email as a legitimate asset to both the sender and the receiver.

## **What If You Don't Know How To Use Email Marketing?**

Your expertise is centered on your business and not computers or email marketing. In fact, many small businesses have limited computer knowledge and usage. Even those with sophisticated management and inventory systems are usually at a loss about how to effectively use email for marketing. How then, does a small business avoid spamming and still have effective email marketing campaigns? You can do it yourself, or use a service provided like Gramations.com. Either way, here are three critical steps to success.

## **Three Simple Steps For Small Businesses To Use Permission-Based Email Marketing**

Whether you are currently using email marketing, or know you should, here are the steps to success:

### **Step 1: Grow Your Own In-House Email List**

The first and most important step for achieving effective permission-based marketing is to gather your own list of customers' email addresses. These addresses must be given to you by the customers and the customers must give you specific permission to email messages to them. Even though this task sounds difficult, it will be worth the effort. You cannot underestimate the value of such a list to the bottom line of your business.

For example, a successful Restaurateur spent several months collecting email address by having a collection card conveniently on each table. In the middle of November she sent an email through Gramtions.com to less than 400 customers to let them know that the restaurant was now accepting Holiday Banquet Reservation. In one week, the entire holiday season was booked. The cost of the email campaign was pennies on the dollar compared to any other method previously used. And the value of having a booked holiday season is priceless.

Marketers around the world report that in-house lists are, by far, more effective in terms of response, sales, open rates, clicks, etc. So, how do you get customers to give you their email addresses? Here are a few suggestions for how to collect your own list:

Provide Solid Reasons For Customers To Give You Their Email Addresses: Customers will not give you their email addresses unless you give them at least one good reason. As much as customers are wary about giving out their e-mail addresses, they respond strongly to even the most basic incentives. For instance, there is a health foods store that simply offered to email Free coupons as

an incentive. To-date, they have collected over 4,500 email addresses of people who have given their permission to receive email ads. *(Note: The cost to mail 4,500 letters four times a year would be \$6,660. You can send more emails at a fraction of that cost)*

Here are suggestions for enticements you can offer to customers who give you their email addresses:

- **Notices:** Promise you will email important email notices about your specific industry like housing starts and current average prices.
- **Gifts:** Offer a FREE gift that is easy and relevant.
- **Coupons:** Pledge to email them coupons for specific discounts on products and services.
- **Drawings:** Enter their name in regular drawings for FREE tires, oil changes or other relevant products and services
- **Reminders:** Offer to provide reminders for maintenance work such as oil changes, tire rotations, carpet cleaning or dental checkups, etc.

Make It Simple For Customers: Every customer who comes into your shop should be handed a simple card that asks for their name and email address. For instance, at some Discount Tires stores, when a customer is paying for tires or service, the counter rep hands a customer a small 3” by 5” piece of paper and asks the customer to fill it out so the customer can be notified in case of recalls. Over 90% of the customers fill it out and hand it back to the counter rep.

Here’s an example of a card you could use:

**Bob’s Tire and Repair Service**

**With your permission, we will periodically email you with special offers on oil changes, tires and other products and services. We’ll also remind you about maintenance on your car and contact you if we receive a recall notice on tires or parts you purchased from us.**

Please Print Clearly

\*Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

\* REQUIRED

Collecting the e-mail addresses of your customers will be smooth and successful if the process is simple and offered to every customer. You may place a collection box near the register or in another

part of the waiting area, but to successfully capture more useful data, ask the customer to hand the card back to the counter representative. This also gives the counter representative an opportunity to make sure the information is readable. The entire process should take no longer than 60 seconds.

As seen in the sample card above, make the "name" and "e-mail" required fields, but also minimize the number of other questions asked. All questions should be related to your store, products, service, or the customer's age, gender, etc. If you require too much data, you are going to get incomplete forms or garbage data. Worse, if your form asks for too much personal information, it may seem suspicious to the customer and they won't respond. Remember, keep it simple and you'll get good responses. If the card is handed to your counter rep, they can augment the card data with information that is visibly apparent.

Reassure Your Customers: Tell customers exactly what you intend to do with their e-mail address and other contact information. Guarantee that you will not use their information for any other purpose than to send special offers, coupons, recall notices, reminders and other critical industry-related communications. Put a strong, solid, privacy guarantee right up front. It's important to them, and will make them more willing to give you their email addresses.

In your privacy statement, you should first promise never to share, sell or rent the personal information of your customers. Second, promise never to send them frivolous e-mails. Finally, promise to allow them to opt-out from future mailings. Remember, nothing will hurt your e-mail collection rates more than a fear that you might sell their e-mail address, or inundate them with meaningless emails. Make promises and keep them.

Here's an example of an "opt-out" message you can use:

"You have previously given us permission to send you emails. However, because we have the highest respect for your personal privacy, we will not send you offers, coupons or reminders you don't want. To unsubscribe from our list, click [here](#) or forward this email to [optout@bobstire.com](mailto:optout@bobstire.com).

Send An Immediate Thank-You Email: Within a few days of getting permission from your customer send him or her an opt-in email, you should send the customer a polite thank you e-mail. The brief text e-mail should include a generous thanks, a reminder that special offers will be coming in the near future, and a reinforcement of the privacy policy.

Here are some examples of a thank you email messages:

"Subject" Bob's Tire and Service Welcomes You

Text of sample message #1:

Thank you for allowing us to minimize our marketing and administration costs by emailing you special offers, coupons, reminders and notices. It's good for us and it will be good for you. We promise not to send you frivolous emails and will do our best to make our communications and offers worth reading.

As a reminder, you can trust that we will follow our privacy policy, which prohibits us from selling, renting or leasing your email address or contact information to third parties.

If you have received this email by mistake, or if you have changed your mind and don't want to receive our special offers, coupons, recall notices or reminders, you can unsubscribe by clicking [here](#) or forwarding this email to [optout@bobstire.com](mailto:optout@bobstire.com).

Text of sample message #2:

Welcome to the opt-in email messaging of Bob's Tire and Service. As you were told when you signed up to receive our communications, we will periodically send you special offers, coupons, reminders and recall notices that may affect your car's safety and performance.

We promise not to send frivolous emails and to always adhere to our privacy policy, which prohibits us from selling, renting or leasing your contact information to third parties.

If you have received this email by mistake, or if you have changed your mind and don't want to receive our special offers, coupons, recall notices or reminders, you can unsubscribe by clicking [here](#) or forwarding this email to [optout@bobstire.com](mailto:optout@bobstire.com).

This sort of email increases the likelihood that customers will remember they signed up to receive emails and they will recognize future messages when they come. It also reduces spam complaints by people who often forget they gave you permission.

In fact, a quick thank you e-mail will not only set the tone for future emails, it will earn you customer relationship points for politeness, and increase your future response rates.

## **Step 2: Your Emails**

Once you have gathered a valuable list of your customers' email addresses, you are ready to begin sending them email. However, as with any marketing campaign, you should have a point and strategy for each email sent. The following represent ideas for what, why and how your emails should be used:

Identify Communication Objectives: There are many reasons to conduct email marketing campaigns, but the main objectives should always be to create regular, loyal and long-term customers. To accomplish these objectives, your communication should be focused on one or more of the following objectives:

Customer Appreciation – Everyone likes to be appreciated - especially when having to spend hard-earned money for products or services they wished they didn't need. In today's world, consumers also have numerous choices about where they can spend their money, so they really like to be thanked by the establishments they frequent.

Customer Assurance – When customers purchase products or services, they need to know that they made a good decision. Like any transaction, a certain amount of remorse sets in and it helps to assure customers that the product they purchased were a good choice, or the services they received were necessary and wise.

Customer Retention – The cost of obtaining and losing customers is high and so it's important to do everything possible to retain them. Email is a perfect, low-cost way to build customer relations and to provide a means for them to communicate back with you. When a product or service is purchased from your shop/store you should send an email thanking the customer for their business. The email should also include comments about your concern for making sure he or she is happy with the experience had at your shop.

Customer Rewards - Many studies have been conducted that prove the value of rewarding customers for their patronage. Discounts, coupons, gifts and other customer acknowledgements create goodwill, loyalty and additional business. Email is an inexpensive and effective way to send rewards and to entice customers to patronize your business.

Existing Business Expansion – The reality of business is that if you develop strong relationships with customers, they will continue to do business with you and even increase opportunities for you to earn money from them by allowing you to provide products and services they previously purchased from competitors. Email messages can help you develop the relationships that increase trust and satisfaction. An excellent way to obtain additional business is to email discount offers and coupons for products or services that the customer has previously not purchased from you.

New Business Development – There is simply no better or less expensive way to get new customers than to have your existing customers refer their contacts to your business. This type of marketing is often not promoted for fear of offending existing customers. There may be a handful of customers who won't like you asking for referrals, but the experience of successful businesses proves that customers are anxious to refer new customers to business they like. Email forwarding offers you and your customer a simple means of referring new customers. All you have to do is mention in your email that you give your customer the permission to share their special email offer with 10 of their friends.

It is interesting to note that the results of the above initiatives create multiple cross-benefits. For instance, when you express appreciation to a customer for their business, it often encourages them to tell others about you, which helps expand your client base. When you reward customers with gifts, discounts and important communications, they feel appreciated and return to your shop, increase the services they allow you to provide to them and they also refer new customers to your business. This interaction is the reason each initiative mentioned above needs to be regularly addressed.

### **Step 3: Your Email Campaigns**

Once you have gathered your email list and determined the objectives of your email messages, you need to plan a campaign. It is best to set a fixed schedule for sending your emails over a calendar year. You should also consider the objective of each email and the time of year it will be sent.

It is also recommended that you have pre-written and pre-built emails that are organized with specific formatted messages. Having pre-written and built emails saves time, and sends the right message at the right time.

Here are basic events and timing issues to consider when designing your campaign:

Holiday Emails: These can include both a generic message such as “Happy Holidays,” “Happy Independence Day,” “Happy Halloween,” etc. The message can also include a promotion Coupon. You give a personal message and also offer them a money-saving opportunity.

Special Promotions and Discount Emails: When you advertise specials on your product or service, email your customers and consider giving them even better discounts than those seen in your newspaper ads or mailed fliers

Service Related Emails: These are follow-up emails to show customer appreciation, assurance, service and to offer rewards or ask for their referrals.

Reminder Emails: People forget to rotate tires, check their teeth, come in for an appointment, etc. If you remind them via email, the cost will be minimal, your business will increase, and you will make your customers happy.

Informational Emails: These can include industry-related educational ideas such as the home care, how to drive in snow, the importance of regular maintenance, financial update reviews, etc. They can also include recall notices.

Message Timing: Develop an email schedule based on your audience’s reception to your message. Entertainment messages such as holiday greetings, are best sent in the late afternoon and later in the week. Business messages are best sent Tuesday through Thursday in the mid- mornings. You should also remember that all messages, especially seasonal messages, need reasonable lead time and require a follow-up message for maximum response.

## Gramations.com

We can help you all along the way. We can help you design collection methods for your particular needs. We can help you focus on specific communication challenges as well as broad opportunities by building custom Gramation.

Gramations: The beauty of email marketing is that you can send many different levels of quality. You can send simple text messages, or you can add real quality to your communications using Gramations, (animated personalized messages). Below are some examples of Gramation that other customers of ours have used. Visit our web site to see these and other Gramation, go to [www.Gramations.com](http://www.Gramations.com)



Targeted Delivery System: Sending a message to a select group of customers based on something that you know about them increases email marketing effectiveness. It is often called profiling. It starts by using what you know about your customers from demographic and psychographic perspectives. You can gather more information by surveys, observation or from your point-of-sale (“POS”) system. Once you have more customer information in your database, you can then selectively send key messages to a specific audience that is most likely to respond favorably.

Tracking & Management: As email is an online system, instant tracking is another feature that makes email marketing attractive. Our system allows you to track and review the activities of all email recipients you have engaged. As messages are reviewed, your database will automatically update to show you the latest statistics of who has viewed your email message. Email list management features allow you to keep your list clean.

No other service provider has our combined features. Remember: Marketing And Innovation Make Money. Everything Else Is A Cost. Our service provides the innovation and the marketing expertise. All you have to do is contact us.

**Gramations**  
Arvada, Colorado  
Phone: (303) 929-1447  
E-MAIL: [KentH@Gramations.com](mailto:KentH@Gramations.com)  
Web Address: [www.Gramations.com](http://www.Gramations.com)