

# The Basics of Email Marketing

Making Inroads Through  
Your Audience's Inbox





# Email Marketing Might Seem Overwhelming - But It's Actually Simple

**If you've ever let your email inbox sit still for a few days, you know how OVERWHELMING email can seem.**

Most every business sends marketing emails these days, and if you're like the rest of us, you're signed up to receive at least a few of them. Those emails (plus those from your colleagues, family, and friends) add up quickly. The sheer volume of them might make your inbox seem a bit oversaturated – and not like the best place to do some marketing.

So, even though you've downloaded this guide to email marketing, you might be a skeptic. You might think email will demand too much of your time for too little return. You might think it takes too long to design and send good emails, and that your messages will just get lost in your audience's inbox anyway.

But good, effective email marketing is actually simple, provided you learn how to do it right. And despite what you may think, email is still one of the best forms of digital marketing, because EVERYONE uses email.





# Everyone Uses Email - And Will See Your Message

Not everyone uses social media. Not everyone's going to see your Google Ad. But most every employed adult HAS to check their email inbox each day.

According to marketing guru Neil Patel, 85% of adults check their email at least once each day (and let's be real, most of us check it FAR MORE than that). So when you send an email, you know your audience is going to see it.

That's why **sending emails is still one of the (if not the most) effective digital marketing strategies!** Places like OptInMonster have found that sending emails often converts better than conducting social media outreach:

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According to OptInMonster, people who buy products marketed through email spend 138% more than those who don't receive email offers.

And the average order value of an email is at least three times higher than that of a similar social media campaign.

So if you can learn to do email right, by learning HOW to send emails correctly, WHO to send them to, and WHAT to send, you're actually looking at a great return on your investment. **And by the end of this guide, we'll have you ready to email market like a pro!**



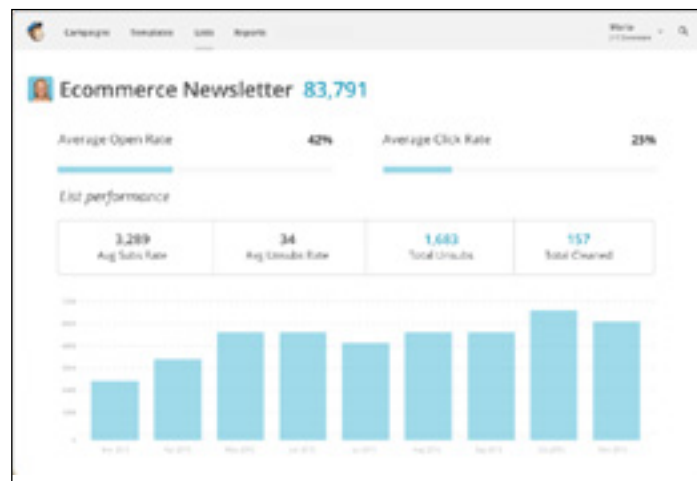
# The HOW of Email Marketing: What System to Use

**You might think that writing some killer content is the first step to successful email marketing.**

But if so, you've jumped the gun. Before you can begin thinking about WHAT you're going to send, or even WHO you're going to send it to, you have to think about HOW you're going to send your emails in the first place.

You likely already know this, but you absolutely DO NOT want to send your marketing emails from your personal email account. Part of the reason to conduct email marketing is to be able to track:

- Who's opening your emails.
- How many people are opening your emails.
- How many people are clicking the links included within your emails.
- Which emails (and thus what content, offers, products, etc.) are performing better than others.



**This sort of data is the true benefit of email marketing** – it allows you to see what emails are connecting with your audience and refine your efforts to market more effectively as you go (we'll cover that concept a bit more later on).

If you send marketing emails from your personal account, you might reach your audience, but you'll lose out on this treasure trove of data. So instead, you'll want to take advantage of one of the many email marketing systems available via the internet.



# For Beginners, We Recommend MailChimp

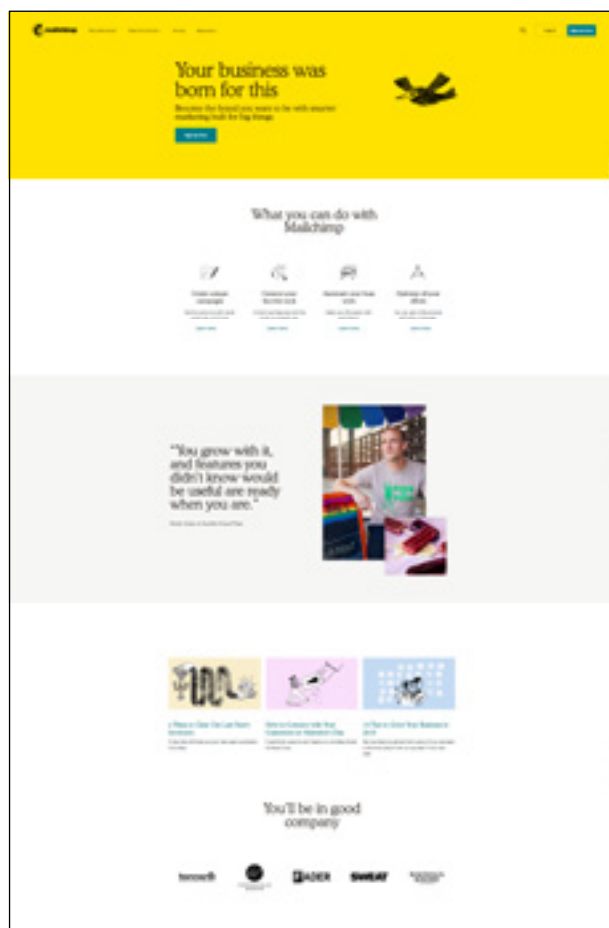
To start out, **we recommend you send your marketing emails using MailChimp.** We use MailChimp for both ourselves and a number of the clients we work with, most notably **because MailChimp has a Free-to-Use version.**

With the Free-to-Use version of MailChimp, you get:

- The ability to build a subscriber list of up to 2,000 emails (with more space available on paid plans).
- Great tutorials and guides like the one found here.
- Easy-to-use templates and functionality that will let you build great looking emails in no time.

However, if you're looking for something a bit more sophisticated (but also more expensive; there's no free option here), we recommend comparing MailChimp with:

- GetResponse.
- AWeber.
- Constant Contact.
- Drip.



From within these systems, you can easily (within fifteen minutes to a couple hours) create email templates, individual emails, autoresponders, and automated campaigns – all those fancy things that you might've thought required a whole lot of effort to set up. You can also track email analytics and, **MOST IMPORTANTLY**, begin creating your email marketing list.



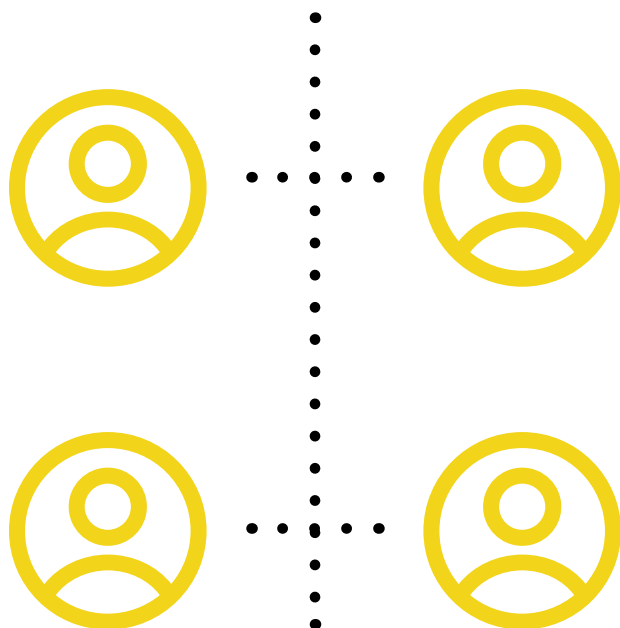
# The WHO of Email Marketing: How to Build Your List

**Now that you know HOW you're going to send your emails, you can start thinking about WHO you're going to send them to.** (Don't worry, we're going to talk about WHAT to send next.)

Most every business maintains lists of current and past customers, and it's easy to import those lists into MailChimp and start sending marketing emails from there.

But to get the most out of email marketing, you're going to want to **constantly be building your list**. This means creating touchpoints that allow you to gather email addresses from not just your customers, but ANYONE who's interacting with your brand. These are people who maybe haven't been convinced to work with you or purchase a product yet ... but could benefit from learning more about your business or receiving a special offer.

These potential leads' email inboxes are where your emails will shine – by winning your audience over after they've first interacted with your brand.







# Simple Ways to Build Your List

Your list of subscribers is what makes your emails worth sending. But how do you build a list? Here are some simple-yet-effective ways to gather your audience's email addresses:

- When attending trade shows or conventions, use a digital or physical sign-up form to gather emails. (Using a digital form that connects with your email marketing service is best, as new emails can then be added to your list automatically.)
- Add an unobtrusive pop-up window to your website, so first time visitors can easily opt in to your emails. (We've done this for a number of our own clients.) If your business sells a product, you can offer a special discount via this pop-up, to entice your audience to sign up.
- Offer free content (like this guide you're reading) in trade for your audience's email. But remember, you need to offer something of value, so your audience feels like they've gotten something out of the trade! And you also need to let your audience know you're adding them to your list.

When you can, **offer potential recipients something valuable and specific in exchange for their email address** – something they're likely to want regardless of receiving your emails. You're likely to get A LOT MORE email sign-ups if your audience gains something immediately when they hand over their information.

And if any of the above options seem daunting, remember – you don't have to try everything at once. You can just gather emails at trade shows, or just add a simple pop-up to your website. Your list will always be there and always be growing. So you can start small and add or change list-building tactics as you go.





# The WHAT of Email Marketing: What to Send (and How Often)

**Alright, you now know HOW to send marketing emails. You know WHO you're going to send them to.**

Finally, we can talk about WHAT sorts of things you'll send your audience - to increase brand awareness and/or make sales.

But before we get into specific email topics and templates, we need to establish some ground rules. In fact, we're going to lay down The Golden Rule of Email Marketing, which is:

**Send Only What You Would Like To Receive**

We all know businesses who have done email marketing wrong. Those businesses treat their audience's inboxes like dumpsters, sending any and all sorts of emails in the hopes SOMEBODY will click just one. Those businesses prefer email quantity over quality.

You don't want to be like those businesses - there's no faster way to shed subscribers from your list. As you start email marketing, you might be tempted to overdo it and send your list daily emails that offer "content" but not value. **Do not send these sorts of junk emails, as it shows you take your ability to reach someone's inbox for granted.**

Instead, put some care into crafting content that your audience will not only read, but be delighted to receive. Below, we'll lay out some simple rules and processes for doing just that.





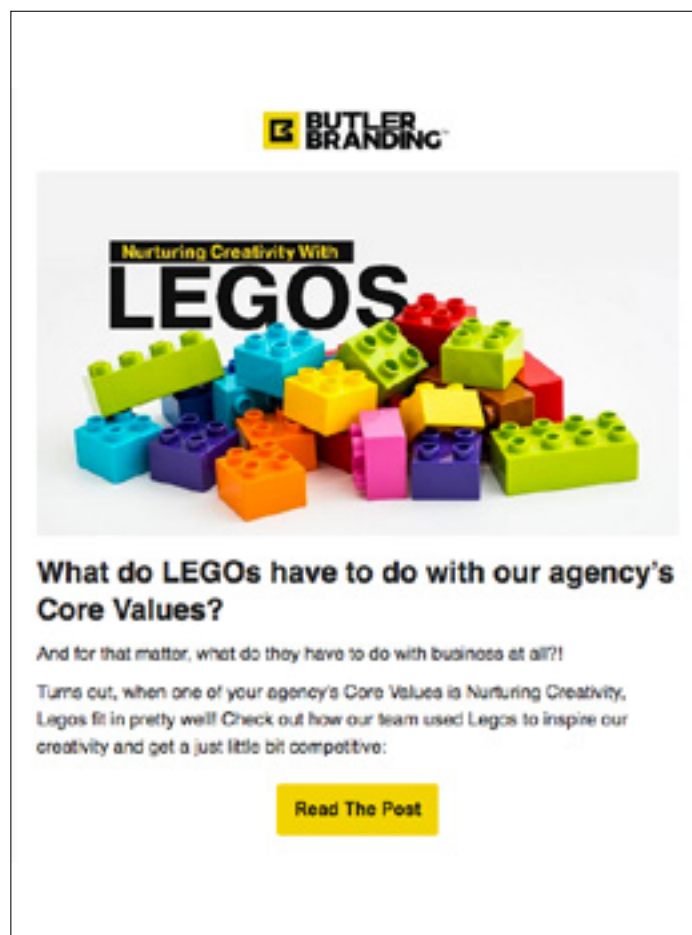
# How to Design Great Emails

Most beginning email marketers get lost in the weeds of email formatting and design (before even thinking about content). They think their emails need to look “unique” or visually distinct in order to capture their audience’s attention.

But overdesigning your emails is a trap – one that slows down even the most sophisticated email marketers. For your first set of emails, we highly recommend just modifying a simple MailChimp template to include:

- A branded header image.
- A catchy title and associated image, based on your content.
- Some content and an associated Call-to-Action.

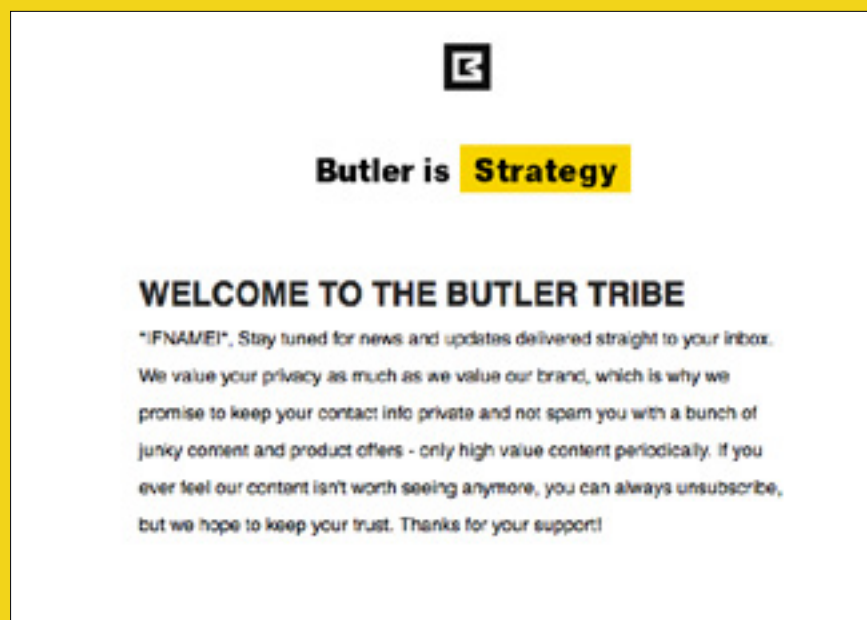
You can see a simple example of what we mean below, in an email we recently sent to the Butler email list:





**The above email was simple.** It was simple to concept, simple to create, and most importantly, simple for our audience to read and take action on. And many of them did, clicking through to read our full post about LEGOs, businesses, and creativity.

Your emails should be that simple. For example, when a new subscriber signs up for your emails, they should receive a simple, auto-generated email that thanks them for signing up and tells them what sorts of emails to expect going forward:



And if you're wondering how that "autoresponder" technology works ... well, it involves creating simple rules within your email marketing system to make sure the right people get the right emails at the right time. Assuming you took our suggestion and started marketing with MailChimp, this linked tutorial will walk you through automations as simple and complex as:

- Welcoming new subscribers to your list.
- Automatically blasting out blog updates.
- Sending monthly newsletters or coupons.
- Wishing your followers a Happy Birthday.

So *don't* get hung up on design, and do let your audience know what they're in for as soon as they sign up for your list. After you've done that, you can start sending the high-quality content that your audience expects.



# Your Content Shouldn't Be Complicated

Simplicity is key to not just successful email design, but successful email content. You don't need to wrack your brain thinking of unique ideas or offers to get your emails off the ground. Instead, do as MailChimp recommends and spend a few days:

1. Thinking of content, topics, and ideas related to your brand or business. This could be anything from "The Top 5 Ways to Identify High-Quality Real Estate" to a special, subscribers-only coupon code to a monthly newsletter highlighting your brand's efforts and achievements.
2. Writing out what you'd like to say on each topic.
3. Gathering associated images and other resources as needed.
4. Putting your emails together within your email marketing system (and scheduling them to send automatically when possible).

That's it! You can send basically any sort of content your audience's way, as long as you keep it simple and remember The Golden Rule of Email Marketing:

**“Send Only What You Would Like To Receive”**

That means sending content that is targeted, useful, and appropriate, and it means sending it on a schedule that won't overwhelm your audience.



If you're a financial institution helping customers manage stocks, you might be able to send daily email updates without annoying your amateur stock traders. But if you're a bakery sending pictures of new concoctions, once a day emails might be overkill.

If you're looking for more suggestions of what to send (or some killer email writing tips), we recommend you check out the following additional email marketing guides (from which we've borrowed some inspiration):

Neil Patel's Beginner's Guide to Email Marketing

OptInMonster's Definitive Guide to Email Marketing

MarketingLand's 12 Email Marketing Fundamentals

# As With Anything, Iteration Is Key

As you begin gathering contacts and sending emails, you'll be able to perform more sophisticated email marketing tactics. For example, using those analytics we talked about above, you'll be able to track which of your emails performed better than others – and then modify your content to send more emails with better performing content!

You'll also be able to see which emails cause people to unsubscribe ... and you might get discouraged when you see a particular piece of content didn't perform to your expectations.

However, no matter what you do, people will fall off your email list! When people leave your list, the most important thing to do isn't to try to win them back; it's to figure out why they left in the first place. If you do, you can fix up your content to avoid losing more subscribers in the future.

Eventually, you'll also want to segment your subscriber list (so you can target different members of your audience with emails suited specifically to their tastes) and maybe even begin conducting some A/B tests (to learn how different versions of the same content perform).

But that's all for the future! For now, get cracking on gathering those email addresses and sending great content to your subscribers. We promise that, if you do, you'll earn not just a place in your audience's inbox, but in their hearts.



**Want to get started with email marketing,  
but don't want to go-it-alone?**

Butler can help! Our team of strategist, creatives and marketers will work with you to put together a comprehensive marketing plan that will finally produce the results you've been looking for.

**Contact Butler today**

