

Email Testing: Six Steps for Success



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INTRODUCTION

Because of the immediacy of email data, testing should become an integral part of your email marketing efforts. Knowing what to test, how to test it and what to glean from the results will make your email initiatives perform to their fullest.

Use this workbook as a guide for your email testing efforts. If you can follow each of these steps within your email testing process, your email campaigns will most likely be effective and rewarding to you and your audiences.

For each step, we've included a few examples as well as space for you to write down your own specific challenges, ideas and action points.

KEY THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN TESTING

- Testing in email is crucial
- Start testing today- you don't need to have the master plan
- Establish a test protocol
- Be creative and thorough in your testing areas
- Test beyond the click and look at conversions
- Test and review frequency and timing
- Make sure you test accurately with lists
- Always have one change action as a result from a test
- Never stop testing

STEP #1- ASK A QUESTION

Start the testing process by asking a question. What are you hoping for? Determine a specific goal to accomplish rather than attempting multiple goals with one blanket approach. A series of small steps can be easy to test and analyze.

- I'd like to have more people open my messages
- I'd like to have more people click-through to my Web site
- I'd like to re-engage with historically inactive people
- I'd like to have people click on a specific area, topic or action

STEP #2- FORM A THEORY

Form a theory. Use your marketing experience and best practice knowledge to determine what aspects may make a difference in achieving the goal you've defined.

- I think people may be bored with my current subject lines
- I think that the placement of the specific content may drive more people to action
- I think that people may not understand this is from my organization, and therefore not interacting
- I think my calls to action need to be stronger

STEP #3- CREATE THE TEST

Set up your test, following best practices. Remember, you don't need to prove the obvious.

To optimize opens, I'm going to test: (one per test)

- From name
- Subject line
- Best day to send
- Best time to send

To optimize click-throughs, I'm going to test: (one per test)

- Creative/layout
- Copy
- Calls to action
- Subject lines
- From name

To optimize conversions, I'm going to test: (one per test)

- Landing pages
- Creative/layout
- Copy
- Calls to action
- Subject lines
- From name

STEP #4- SEGMENT THE LIST

Choose the best list or segment to test, and split it (for that specific test).

- I'm confident this list is the most appropriate to prove or disprove my theory.
- My list is only large enough to do an A/B split
- My list is large enough that I can break it into a control and other test segments
- My list is large enough that I can sample a percentage of my list to test

STEP #5- MEASURE AND ANALYZE RESULTS

Measure and analyze results to gain insight and prove or disprove theory. Accurately compile stats (to conversions). What does it all mean? Look beyond the numbers. Even small percentage differences can mean large gains in response rates.

- My opens increased ____%
- My click-throughs changed ____%
- My conversions changed ____%
- Traffic to my Web site increased ____%
- My click-throughs were more focused on specific area, topic or action
- My click-throughs were spread out across areas, topics or actions
- Sales calls increased ____%

STEP #6- MAKE CHANGES

Make changes. Commit to making at least one change in each campaign.

- I need to change my From Name
- I need to change my Subject line
Specific words
Subject line format
- I need to add content
- I need to decrease content and simplify
- I need to increase clickable areas or links
- I need to highlight actionable items more
- I need to change copy
- I need to modify layout
