



Best Practice Email Marketing 101

So you've decided to start marketing to your database via email. **Congratulations for utilizing this great tool!**

There may be a few or a lot of things you have questions about. **Don't fret.** Most of our clients have been there - you're not alone. We've created this handy guide to help you gain a basic understanding of effective email marketing.

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Sample Email

This is a sample of a very effective email format. There's a marked-up version of this email at the end of this guide, highlighting the terms discussed.

We use [MailChimp](#) to send out our email campaigns, and we'll talk about the advantages of using MailChimp later on.

* Your Logo

[Share on Facebook](#)

[Tweet this email](#)

[Forward this email](#)

Hello from the team at [YOUR COMPANY](#). This month we're talking about [YOUR CONTENT](#).

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Article 1

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[Read More...](#)

Call-To-Action



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[Click Here](#)

Article 2



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Email Rules!

We agree - email is pretty awesome. There are a few rules to stick to if you want your email to be best practice (and awesome).

1. Best practice email is permission-based.

This means that people **must give you their information** before they can receive your messages. This happens when people sign up for your email, like your Facebook page, or subscribe to your blog.

It is important that **people who are on your list know who is sending to them, and be able to easily unsubscribe** if they aren't interested in receiving your messages. To adhere to these standards, include your company name and address in each email, and include a one-click unsubscribe link.

2. Best practice email is not spam.

The last place your email message should end up is in the spam folder.

Spam differs from permission-based email marketing because the recipient hasn't signed-up to receive it. **If recipients haven't opted-into your list, they are more likely to click the "move to Spam" button.** This increases the probability of future messages being delivered to any recipient's spam folder instead of the inbox, or the worst case scenario – your email marketing platform disabling your account.

3. Best practice email tries to be best in every way.

Every element of a best practice email should be top-notch, including professional design and imagery, coding that maximizes email client compatibility, and good writing with proper grammar and spelling.

4. Best practice email uses a fresh list of email addresses.

Make sure that your initial list only contains addresses that you have collected in the past 6 months. People who gave you their email address more than half a year ago are much more likely to unsubscribe from your list, or mark your message as spam.

If you have older addresses on your list, you can always send an email from your personal email to these recipients with an "unsubscribe from my list" link. This gives people an opportunity to unsubscribe from your list without it affecting your list's integrity within MailChimp.

Keep three things in mind.

We've found three basic principles that make email marketing much easier to understand. Without further ado...

1. Keep it simple.

The last thing a good email marketer wants to do is scare off readers by including content that is more complex than it needs to be.

2. Keep it short.

This is really an extension of the first principle. Online readers have short attention spans. The last thing a good email marketer wants to do is scare away readers by sending a huge email. Short paragraphs, bullet lists, and "read more" links are all great tools to help you accomplish this.

3. Compose with your readers in mind.

If your readers aren't rocket scientists, don't write like a rocket scientist (we have it on good authority that even rocket scientists like to read the same email as everyone else). This applies to how you write, and what you write about.

These principles work like a thesis statement does in an essay, or like a mission statement does in an organization. If you stick to these principles while preparing your content, you'll be more likely to connect with your readers.

Application: If you're not sure about including a piece of content, ask yourself:

- Will my readers understand this?
- Does this matter to my readers?

What goes in my email?

Email marketers call the stuff that goes into your email **content**. The more content, the longer the email, and the longer the email, the less likely readers are to read the whole thing. For this reason, **we recommend that your email be as short as possible**.

There are two types of content that can go into an email, and they work best together.

1. Text

Marketers ([and Wikipedia](#)) refer to text content in publications as **copy**. You'll need **no more than 100-200 words** for the main content section, and 2-3 20 word blurbs to go in the sidebar of your email. This also includes links, which we'll discuss later.

For the main content section, we recommend using 1-3 excerpts from articles on your website or blog, and then adding "read more" links at the end of each excerpt. These link to the article in full, and are used to get readers of your email to visit your website or blog.

It is **very important** to make sure your copy is well-written, and without grammatical and spelling errors. We proof all our clients' email for spelling and grammar errors.

If you're having a tough time figuring out where to start, **think about what you want to sell, and write about that**.

If you're not a writer or just don't have the time, **we provide a range of copywriting services** where we do the writing for you. We're here to help you so you can get back to doing what you love to do.

2. Images

As much as people like reading things, they also love to see things. (How cute is that kitten?)

By adding rich imagery to your email, you'll be able to influence how your readers connect with the text.

Application: When you are thinking about which copy you'd like to use for your email, try to think about which kinds of images would help readers connect with your message.

Article 2



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Design

There are three things that should be present in the design of your email. If we're designing your email, we'll take care of these so **you don't have to worry**.

1. Your Brand

By including your logo and brand/website colours, you are able to establish your brand's presence throughout the email.

2. A Clean Look

This is a major factor in determining the readability of an email. Here are some things you can do to improve the readability of your email:

- Use only one font
- Make your fonts a minimum size of 14 pixels
- Use white space
- Use a dark font on a light background for the main content area
- Underline links
- Make linked text a different colour than the body text

3. Email Client Compatibility

Different email clients, such as Gmail, Yahoo, and Outlook, interpret your email's code differently. How compatible your email's code is determines how consistently the design of your email will be displayed in different email clients. Most of this compatibility is based in the way the email is coded.

The coding part is pretty complex, but there are, some non-code things that you can look out for that will make your email more compatible:

- Use web-safe fonts ([Don't know what these are?](#))
- Keep the width of your email no wider than 600 pixels
- Use a simple layout

Application: When you're designing your email, don't forget about the three principles, as **less is more**.

Links

Links are a key ingredient to email marketing. There are four kinds of links you should include in every email.

1. Quick Links

These are links at the top of your email that let the reader skip to the content that they want to see.

Quick Links



2. Website Link

Your website is the face of your business online. Of course you want people to visit it!

Connect

Visit our website at www.yourcompany.ca, or connect with us socially.



3. Social Media & Blog Links

If you have profiles on social media sites, like Facebook and Twitter, or if you have a blog, include links so your readers can connect with you on these sites.

4. Call To Action Link

This is the most important type of link you can include in an email. Sometimes, this link is preceded by text describing an action the reader can do to connect further with you (EG: contact me to book your session, follow us on Twitter).

If you're not sure about which call to action to include in your email, **think about what you want your readers to do, then tell them to do it.**

Call To Action



Still stumped? Have no fear - we can help you.

Application: Go over the links you've included in your email and make sure they take the reader to sites you control (EG: your website, your social media profiles, your blog). The last thing you want to do is drive people to other websites.

Send, analyze, then send some more.

When you're starting up your email marketing, it's easy to get hung up on the details. Sending the email, however, is the most important thing.

Unsubscribes

Readers unsubscribing is a normal thing when you start sending to your list. This is not a bad thing though, as it **increases the quality of your audience**.

What is a high-quality audience?

This means that a high percentage of recipients on your email list are actively reading and clicking on the links in your email messages. Having a high-quality audience on your list means your email marketing software will be more effective in sending your emails to inboxes, rather than getting spam-filtered.

Analyze

Once you have sent out an email with MailChimp, you can view a detailed report about how it did. With this information, you can analyze the following:

- Which subject lines resulted in more opens
- Which content readers liked or didn't like
- How effective the email's design and images are
- Which links readers clicked

MailChimp allows you to see **which users clicked which links**, so you can see who was interested in which service. This means that you can follow up with individual people about a service that interests them.

Update

Once you have gone over this report, it's important that you use this information to make changes to the type of content that you're going to put into your next email. If you're one of our clients, **we can help you with this**.

Application: If you aren't sure which things you need to change, change one thing per email. Compare the resulting stats with the previous email to see if your change made a difference.

Sample Email, Marked Up

Here's the sample email highlighting the terms we covered, plus a few others.

Header Image → * Your Logo (600 pixels wide, 200 pixels high)

Sidebar →

- Share on Facebook
- Tweet this email
- Forward this email
- Quick Links** → In This Issue
 - Article 1
 - Article 2
- Sidebar Item (20 words)** → Sidebar Item
- Call To Action** → OPEN
- Call To Action → Click Here

Main Content →

Hello from the team at YOUR COMPANY. This month we're talking about YOUR CONTENT.

Article 1 (100 words) → Article 1
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Article 2 (50 words) → Article 2
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Read More → Read More... (for Article 1)

Read More → Read More... (for Article 2)

Links (website & social media) → Connect
 Visit our website at www.yourcompany.ca, or connect with us socially.
 f t YouTube in

Mailchimp Footer →

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You are receiving this email because you signed up on our website or in our store to receive tips and updates from us.

Our mailing address is:
 Your Company Name
 123 Awesome Street
 City, Province N1N 1N1

[Add us to your address book](#)
[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update subscription preferences](#)

Next Steps

Woohoo! You've made it to the end, and hopefully learned something new.

If you have questions, or if you would like to learn more:

Give us a call at (519) 265-4933 or email us at info@intrigueme.ca.

If you're not a client, but would like some help with your email marketing:

Give us a call at (519) 265-4933 or email us at info@intrigueme.ca.

If you're already one of our clients:

To get the ball rolling with your email marketing campaign, we'll need the following items from you to get started:

- 100-200 words of text content
- Your company logo
- Any images you'd like us to use

If you need help with any of these items, just let us know.

About Intrigue

Intrigue Media is full service digital marketing firm. We help our clients with the following services:

- [Video Advertising](#)
- [Website Development](#)
- [Social Media](#)
- [Google Marketing & SEO](#)
- [Email Marketing](#)



Click on the above links to learn more.

Happy emailing!