

Email Best Practices

Email remains one of the most valuable channels for communication and marketing, but it is important to follow best practices to ensure the long-term effectiveness of email campaigns, maintain customer trust, and prevent issues such as spam and being blocklisted.

Use Double Opt-In for Email Lists

- **What it is:** Double opt-in requires users to confirm their email subscription by clicking a confirmation link sent to their inbox.
- **Why it matters:** This ensures that subscribers genuinely want to receive your emails, reducing bounce rates and improving engagement. It also helps prevent fake or mistyped emails from entering your list.

LEARN to Scale Toolkit

This resource is part of the LEARN to Scale Toolkit. The toolkit is designed to support researchers and developers in using the Invent-Apply-Transition framework to create, test, and scale evidence-based educational products. Access the full toolkit at learntoscale.org.

Personalize Email Content

- **What it is:** Personalization involves tailoring your emails to individual recipients based on their preferences, behavior, or demographics.
- **Why it matters:** Emails that are relevant and personalized are less likely to be marked as spam. Personalization increases open rates, click-through rates, and overall engagement, keeping your email campaigns effective.

Maintain a Clean Email List

- **What it is:** Maintaining a clean email list means regularly removing inactive, unengaged, or invalid email addresses from the list.
- **Why it matters:** A clean email list helps you maintain a good sender reputation, which is critical for avoiding spam filters. It also reduces your costs if you are paying for email marketing software based on list size.

Comply with Email Regulations

- **What it is:** Email marketing regulations such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in Europe and the CAN-SPAM Act in the United States require you to obtain consent from recipients and provide easy opt-out options.
- **Why it matters:** Noncompliance can result in legal penalties and damage your reputation. Always include an unsubscribe link and be transparent about how you use subscribers' data.

Use Strong Authentication

- **What it is:** Email authentication protocols such as Sender Policy Framework (SPF), DomainKeys Identified Mail (DKIM), and Domain-based Message Authentication, Reporting, and Conformance (DMARC) verify that your email is legitimate and has not been altered.
- **Why it matters:** These protocols prevent phishing and email spoofing, which can harm your brand's credibility and land your emails in spam folders.

Send Relevant and Timely Content

- **What it is:** It is important to ensure your emails are relevant to the recipients and sent at appropriate times (e.g., not sending daily emails unless necessary).
- **Why it matters:** Sending too many emails or emails with irrelevant content can lead to high unsubscribe rates and poor engagement. A well-timed, valuable email keeps users engaged and loyal to your brand.

Segment Your Email Lists

- **What it is:** Segmenting means dividing your subscribers into different groups based on factors such as purchase history, engagement level, or demographics.
- **Why it matters:** Segmentation allows you to send highly targeted emails, which are more likely to be opened and less likely to be marked as spam. This practice enhances relevance and user experience.

Monitor Key Metrics and Adjust

- **What it is:** You can keep an eye on metrics such as open rates, click-through rates, bounce rates, and unsubscribe rates.
- **Why It Matters:** Monitoring these metrics helps you spot issues early (e.g., low engagement or delivery problems) and adjust your strategy to maintain email effectiveness.

Avoid Spammy Practices

- **What it is:** Practices such as using all caps in subject lines, excessive exclamation points, and misleading offers can trigger spam filters.
- **Why it matters:** Spam filters are sophisticated, and using spammy practices can prevent your emails from reaching your subscribers' inboxes. Focus on clear, professional messaging.

Provide an Easy Unsubscribe Option

- **What it is:** Every marketing email should include a visible and simple way for recipients to unsubscribe.
- **Why it matters:** Making it difficult to unsubscribe frustrates users and can lead to complaints, which negatively impacts your sender reputation. Offering an easy opt-out helps protect the deliverability of your emails and user trust.