Email Marketing Playbook
Smart Strategies for Winning Over Educators with Email
@ Strategy

Email Works

Email can be a conversation opener, a targeted pitch delivery system, a relationship nurturing workhorse, and offers unbeatable ROI for the price. All activities that are crucial to engaging educators with relevant, targeted, trust-building messaging.

So, why does email have such a poor reputation among marketers?

In a way, email is a victim of its own success. As more messages flood the channel, audiences tune out, ESPs introduce more delivery hurdles, and email campaign performance can suffer...unless you take action to counter these forces.

At MDR, we’ve never stopped believing in email. Our engagement rates have held steady despite these forces because we’re fanatically focused on the elements of email marketing that drive impressive and consistent results.

That’s why we created this Email Marketing Playbook to help you learn smart strategies for email success.

“Email consistently remains a critical channel as part of our multi-channel integrated marketing strategy. Email is successful for top of funnel lead generation and interest building and we have seen successful conversion and high ROI.”

— Associate Director of Marketing & Engagement, Professional Education
Higher Ed Institution
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Be a Clean Freak About Data

One constant in education data is that things WILL change. By some estimates the industry has a 20% annual churn rate. Imagine what that can do to email campaign results over time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes to the MDR database over the 2018-2019 school year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 million teachers names added to database</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 million teachers are new to their school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 million changed job function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,633 schools opened or closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7,640 schools shifted their grade range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 million emails added to database</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>486 thousand emails deleted from database</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whether you’re starting with your own customer data file, or purchasing data from a third-party provider, you need to be fanatical about the **quality of the data** and implement ongoing **data hygiene efforts** to keep it fresh and accurate. Time you spend creating engaging content and eye-catching images won’t matter if you don’t leverage the most current, accurate data to build your email lists.

**The Clean Bill of Health:** Data quality isn’t a fixed point; it’s the result of constant attention to the sources of your data, the completeness of your data, and the systems and processes you put in place to update your data and keep it accurate.
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Keep Campaigns Focused

Effective targeting is a given for email campaign success. The campaigns we deploy for clients have consistently shown that the smaller and more targeted the audience, and the more relevant the message, the higher the rate of success. Our Digital Trends Report, based on an analysis of nearly 400 million prospecting emails, actually identified a magic number for optimizing engagement rates: **50,000 emails or fewer is the most effective campaign size.**

![Campaign Size and Delivery Rate](chart)

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Take the Lead by Prequalifying Your Audience

If you want qualified leads to fill your sales pipeline at the end of an email campaign, start by prequalifying the audience up front. Data analysis and modeling techniques can suppress your existing customers, find similar prospective customers, and tailor an audience to fit the exact needs of the campaign. All before you send one email.

This strategy of upfront qualifying is why MDR is able to deliver an average cost per lead from email campaigns of $4.50, vs. the average cost for one email marketing lead of $53 according to the Integrated Marketing Association.

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*Average Cost Per Email Marketing Lead*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MDR cost</th>
<th>$4.50</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-MDR cost</td>
<td>$53.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We’ll run the numbers and show you!
Don’t Make Email Go It Alone

Let’s all confess: we don’t read every email that hits our inbox. It’s no different for educators, especially given the volume of promotional email they receive.

Educators are very active online which creates an excellent opportunity to give your message more exposure. By pairing email with a multi-channel activation campaign of display ads, social posts, sponsored content, and engaging in online communities where educators are active, your message can rise above the noise and make a connection.

Teachers are more active online than the general population:

- 76% said when they need information the first place they look is the Internet.
- 60% spend less time reading newspapers in print because of the Internet.
- 55% said they access the Internet more through a mobile/handheld device than a computer.
- 47% said they often click links posted by their peers on social media.
- 44% reported wanting to purchase something after viewing an online ad.

The average customer goes through at least 6 touchpoints with a brand before converting. – Marketing Week

Check out our must-have Best Practices Checklists for tips on how to incorporate content marketing, web advertising, and social marketing into your email strategy to boost your campaign performance.
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Don’t be Kept Out of the Inbox

Customers are feeling bombarded by email and Email Service Providers (ESPs), like Gmail, Yahoo, and Outlook, are taking steps to address their concerns. Every time you send an email campaign, ESPs collect valuable data that says whether or not you comply with CAN-SPAM regulations and proper sending practices.

Mail from IP addresses with a high reputation score is accepted quickly and at a higher rate than mail from IPs with a lower or unknown reputation score. Monitoring your deliverability and taking steps to protect or improve your IP reputation is one option. Another is to work with a partner for deployment, “borrowing” their reputation. BTW, MDR can boast an average delivery rate of 96%.

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Avoid the Easy Outs

Email marketing has been around long enough for a robust set of best practices to be identified, tested, and proven. It’s crucial to get the fundamentals right, from subject lines, copy length, and responsive design, to personalization, CTAs, and landing pages. We cover all that and more actionable tips in our Email Marketing Best Practices Checklist.

### PERSONALIZATION TIPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If it makes sense to personalize your subject line, do it!</th>
<th>Targeting a specific audience? Use it in the subject line!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personalization only works if it sounds natural, not forced or fake:</td>
<td>Geographic targeting – “If you teach in Mississippi, you’re going to appreciate this”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced: “Carrie: Open this for great information!”</td>
<td>Job title targeting – “5 Life-Changing Tips for 3rd Grade Teachers”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural: “Professor Smith, this might help your next lesson.”</td>
<td>Subject targeting – “You love math. You’ll appreciate this”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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If you’re wondering if email marketing still deserves a place in your marketing mix, trust us…it does, and the consistent results from our customer prospecting campaigns prove it:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Open Rates</th>
<th>Unique Open Rates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>6.36%</td>
<td>4.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>7.11%</td>
<td>4.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>8.24%</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>5.99%</td>
<td>4.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>5.89%</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whether you need to deploy one email or need a full-service creative solution, MDR’s innovative email marketing solutions provide the industry’s best:

- **Data** – Our dynamic verification process delivers data quality scores of 90+ from expert third parties.
- **Speed** – Our turnkey process lets you launch a campaign within 48 hours.
- **Delivery** – Our impeccable IP reputation gets your messages through to the inbox with an average delivery rate of 96%.
- **Reach** – Run targeted web and social ads to matched audiences alongside your emails for maximum exposure.
- **Leads** – Get a list of named responders with lots of actionable targeting data appended.
- **ROI** – Our clients consistently see an average cost per lead of $4.50 from email marketing.

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Let’s Connect