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QUICK GUIDE TO EMAIL MARKETING

10 tactics to personalize your message for better results

Quick Guide to Email Marketing

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Author

Bobbi Dempsey, Editor, *Quick Guide to Email Marketing*

Contributors

W. Jeffrey Rice, Research Analyst

Jen Doyle, Senior Research Manager

Adam T. Sutton, Senior Reporter

Editor

Daniel Burstein, Director of Editorial Content

Production Editor

Selena Blue, Copy Editor

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TACTICS YOU CAN LEARN OVER LUNCH

Welcome to *Quick Guide to Email Marketing* – a resource from MarketingSherpa featuring bite-sized tips for busy marketers.

In this report, we show you how to use personalization to foster a better response to your email messages.

With consumers bombarded by so many emails every day, you need a way to ensure your message stands out. One effective strategy is to personalize your message, which attracts the recipient's attention and helps them feel more connected to your brand.

The MarketingSherpa Chart of the Week newsletter article, "[Marketing Research Chart: The positive impact of media personalization](#)," showed that the vast majority of B2B organizations use personalization in their marketing materials. And with good reason. Organizations using this tactic to a high degree benefited from a 47% improvement in open rates over organizations that had a low level of personalization, and a 72% improvement in open rates over organizations that did not use any personalization.

The benefits are seen not only in open rates but in clickthrough rates, as well. Organizations with a high level of personalization experienced a 42% increase in clickthrough rates over organizations with a low level of personalization, and an 81% increase in clickthrough rates over organizations that did not personalize any of their email marketing materials.

In this report, we'll show you:

- Creative ways to add a personal touch
- How to get just enough information from the consumer
- Why you should extend personalization to the landing page
- Tips on quickly personalizing a template

We know you're in a hurry, so let's get started. We're eager to share these tips on how you can benefit from personalizing your emails.

Bobbi Dempsey
Editor, *Quick Guide to Email Marketing*

About the *Quick Guide Series*

MarketingSherpa's *Quick Guide Series* is designed with you, the busy marketer, in mind. We provide quick, simple tips that you can put into action right away.

For each *Quick Guide*, we scour the vast MECLABS library of marketing research, from MarketingSherpa case studies and benchmark reports, to MarketingExperiments optimization tests and analysis. We highlight tips to help improve your marketing performance right now ... or, at least, by the time you're done with lunch.

Tactic #1: Tweak a template with a few personal touches

If you already have a template of your copy, it is often relatively easy to personalize it with a few changes. The MarketingSherpa blog post, "[Email Personalization: 137% increase in open rate from personal note approach](#)," gave a behind-the-scenes look at the email used to promote a MarketingSherpa webinar sponsored by Eloqua.

After creating a template of the email, the marketing team then developed a personalized version.

This email differed from the template version in the following ways:

- Personalized with full name
- Comes from an actual person ("From:" field)
- Signed by an actual person

While not a true A/B test (the personalized version was sent to people for whom the team had full name information, while the template went to a smaller group for whom the team didn't have that information), the results did provide a good example of the results you can get by sending different versions of an email to different segments of your list.

The MECLABS team was able to achieve a 137.4% higher open rate and a 128.9% higher clickthrough rate with the personalized version.

Related Resources

[Writing an Email Like a Human "Absolutely Crushed" A Traditional Marketing Send \[2 Min Video\]](#)

[Optimization Research: 3 key tactics for effective personalization](#)

[Email Marketing: Template test drives double-digit increases for Dell](#)

Tactic #2: Move beyond the "batch and blast" approach

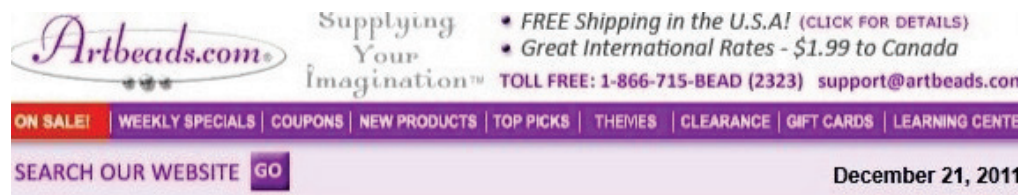
Many marketers fall into the pattern of sending general emails to an entire database over and over again—the so-called "batch and blast" technique—because they're unsure of how to move to a more targeted approach.

In the MarketingSherpa article, "[Email Marketing: 208% higher conversion rate for targeted emails over batch-and-blast](#)," the team at Artbeads.com wanted to try its luck at targeted marketing by sending an email to a group of subscribers who were one-time big spenders. The team planned to send this audience a one-time promotion to generate revenue and test the viability of the audience as an email segment. Instead of the generic, vague messaging that is common to batch-and-blast emails, the team worked for a personal connection.

Written as a letter from Devin Kimura, CEO at Artbeads.com, the email thanked customers for purchasing, and began with, "My name is Devin Kimura, and I'm the CEO of Artbeads.com."

The only image in the email is a large picture of Kimura smiling. The copy maintains a personal tone and is about 10 short sentences in length.

EXAMPLE: ARTBEADS.COM EMAIL



Cortney - My name is Devin Kimura, and I'm the CEO of Artbeads.com.

I'd like to thank you personally for your purchase on our website. It was among the larger orders placed in the last 18 months!

But we've noticed that you've only purchased one time! We'd love to earn your business again, and to become your first choice when it comes to beading and jewelry supplies.

So, I'd like to extend an exclusive 20% discount to encourage you to come back and purchase again! You are among a very few select clients (literally less than 10%) being offered a 20% discount during the Holidays. Simply enter the coupon code **ZZWCBTSP** at checkout to receive this exclusive discount.



The clock is ticking, however! Use this coupon by December 24 to jumpstart your supplies for a new year of creating!

Again, thank you for being one of our very best.

Happy Holidays,

Devin Kimura, CEO

Related Resources

[Inbound Marketing: How SAP drove 9 million impressions with targeted content campaign](#)

[Email Marketing: Extra Space Storage uses a customer-first approach for a 50% boost in email conversion rate](#)

[B2B Marketing 2016: How marketers used data and testing to nurture prospects through relevancy](#)

Tactic #3: Make recipients feel special

Both the subject line and greeting of Artbeads.com's email used the subscriber's first name. Since many consumers have seen this tactic before, the team took extra steps to ensure the readers realized that this email was especially for them.

The email said whom it was for in very specific terms:

- "I'd like to thank you personally for your purchase on our website. It was among the larger orders placed in the last 18 months!"
- "But we've noticed that you've only purchased one time!"

Tactic #4: Pay attention to the subject line

In the MarketingSherpa article, "[Email Marketing: 17.36% higher average clickthrough rate in 7 personalized subject line tests](#)," Amanda Gagnon, Education Marketing Associate at AWeber, knew that personalization in subject lines and greetings improved results at other companies. However, she and her team were skeptical that it could work with AWeber's audience, so the team decided to conduct a test to find out if personalization really made a difference.

Rather than testing one email, the team chose to test seven consecutive emails sent throughout the month. The team planned to send a basic A/B test on each of the designated days. A random half of its list would receive a normal, unaltered email (email A), and the second half would receive a test email (email B).

The team chose one part of the email to test: the subject line. The only difference between the emails was that the subject line for email B included the first name of the subscriber as the first word.

For example, here are the two subject lines for one pair of emails:

- Email A: "Email Marketing Advice From 2 Guys (Who Know What They're Doing)"
- Email B: "[First Name], Email Marketing Advice From 2 Guys (Who Know What They're Doing)"

The team could have personalized the body of the email, or tried variations on how the subscriber's name was referenced in the subject line. But that would have made the results less certain. By focusing on a single change to a single part of the email across multiple sends, the team could draw definitive conclusions from the results.

Seeing the personalized emails had a 5.13% higher average open rate than the regular emails somewhat surprised Gagnon, but she was *really* surprised that they also had a 17.36% higher clickthrough rate.

"Clicks actually blew opens out of the water," she says. "It turned out that was where the personalization seemed to have the biggest effect."

Related Resources

[Email Research Chart: Email opens trends on mobile devices in 2015](#)

[Email Marketing: Improve subject lines in 7 steps by using the right words, in the right order](#)

[Email Marketing: 4 tips for testing subject lines to help you win the inbox battle](#)



Tactic #5: Use a creative approach

In the MarketingSherpa article, "[Email Marketing: Helzberg Diamonds garners 288% sales lift with animated, personalized promo](#)," the team at Helzberg Diamonds used a creative approach to catch subscribers' attention with a marketing campaign promoting the company's charms jewelry.

The team designed a promotional email that spelled a subscriber's first name using images of Helzberg's charms. To make the campaign really sparkle, Helzberg animated the charms to swing back and forth on a necklace in the email. (The image below shows a static version of the email.)


The team emphasized the animation by making it the largest part of the email. Although designed to grab attention, the email had to include a compelling offer and a clear call-to-action.

EXAMPLE: HELZBERG DIAMONDS EMAIL



[GIFT GUIDE](#) | [ENGAGEMENT AND WEDDING](#) | [EXPRESSIONS](#) | [DESIGN YOUR OWN](#) | [CLEARANCE](#)

Hi there,





We have a jewelry collection with your name on it.

BUY 5 BEADS, CHOOSE YOUR **FREE BRACELET** [Learn More](#)

BEADS STARTING AT **\$24.99**

SHOP NOW

expressions 
FOR HELZBERG®



More ways to make it personal.

PERSONALIZED RINGS, NECKLACES, BRACELETS AND MORE!

GET STARTED

Tactic #6: Create a personalized landing page

Once you've personalized your email message, you can see even more benefit by following through with a personalized landing page. In the MarketingSherpa article, "[How Email Series + Personalized Landing Page Lifted Webinar's ROI by 2000%](#)," the team at Eloqua used personalization for its email campaign to promote an upcoming webinar. Eloqua wanted to personalize the experience as much as possible for the prospects and make it easier for them to sign up for the webinar.

Because its house list contained recipients' names, titles, companies, phone and email, the team was able to use personalized URL (PURL) landing pages, which ended with the prospect's name (e.g., ".com/johndoe") and pre-populate the registration page with that information so a recipient needed to only hit the "Submit" button.

The team also personalized the copy on the page, and greeted the recipients by name. In addition, a simply designed postcard was mailed to the in-house list at the same time as the first email, including all of the basic event information and directing the recipients' to their PURLs.

EXAMPLE: ELOQUA PERSONALIZED LANDING PAGE

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying `http://metrics.eloqua.com/shawndesouza`. The page features a blue header with the Eloqua logo and the text "Marketing Metrics: Learn from the leaders" and "How to use metrics to differentiate yourself in a challenging environment". Below the header, a red banner says "Welcome shawn". The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column contains a quote: "You can't manage what you don't measure." and a paragraph about measurement forces. The right column contains a form with fields for Contact Information (First Name, Last Name, Title, Company, Email Address, Business Phone, Company HQ State or Province) and a Questionnaire (What is your Company's Annual Revenue?). A red "Submit" button is at the bottom right.

Address `http://metrics.eloqua.com/shawndesouza`

Google Go

ELOQUA

Marketing Metrics: Learn from the leaders
How to use metrics to differentiate yourself in a challenging environment
A Webinar with Paul Farris, Phil Pfeiffer and Thor Johnson - March 14, 2007 2 pm ET, 11 am PT, 7 pm GMT

Welcome shawn

"You can't manage what you don't measure."

Measurement forces us to be clear and specific and to crisply define our terms. It is the great clarifier in a world of ambiguous and imprecise language.

Marketing often doesn't get a lot of respect and is seen as "soft," especially compared with operations, sales, finance and accounting. The language of the boardroom is quantitative and measurement-centric. Although gut, intuition, and instinct are important traits of the executive, there still needs to be some measurement to be able to describe a situation in enough detail to use those traits.

No wonder then, today's marketing metrics have more breadth, depth and power than ever before. The key is knowing how to use them to your advantage.

Join us for this live web conference, where two leaders in the field of marketing metric research and consulting - **Paul Farris** and **Phillip Pfeiffer** -

Required fields are marked with an asterisk(*).

Contact Information

First Name: *

Last Name: *

Title: *

Company: *

Email Address: *

Business Phone: *

Company HQ State or Province: *

Questionnaire

What is your Company's Annual Revenue? *

Submit

Related Resources

[Landing Page Optimization: 6 common traits of a template that works](#)

[Landing Page Optimization: An overview of how one site increased leads by 155%](#)

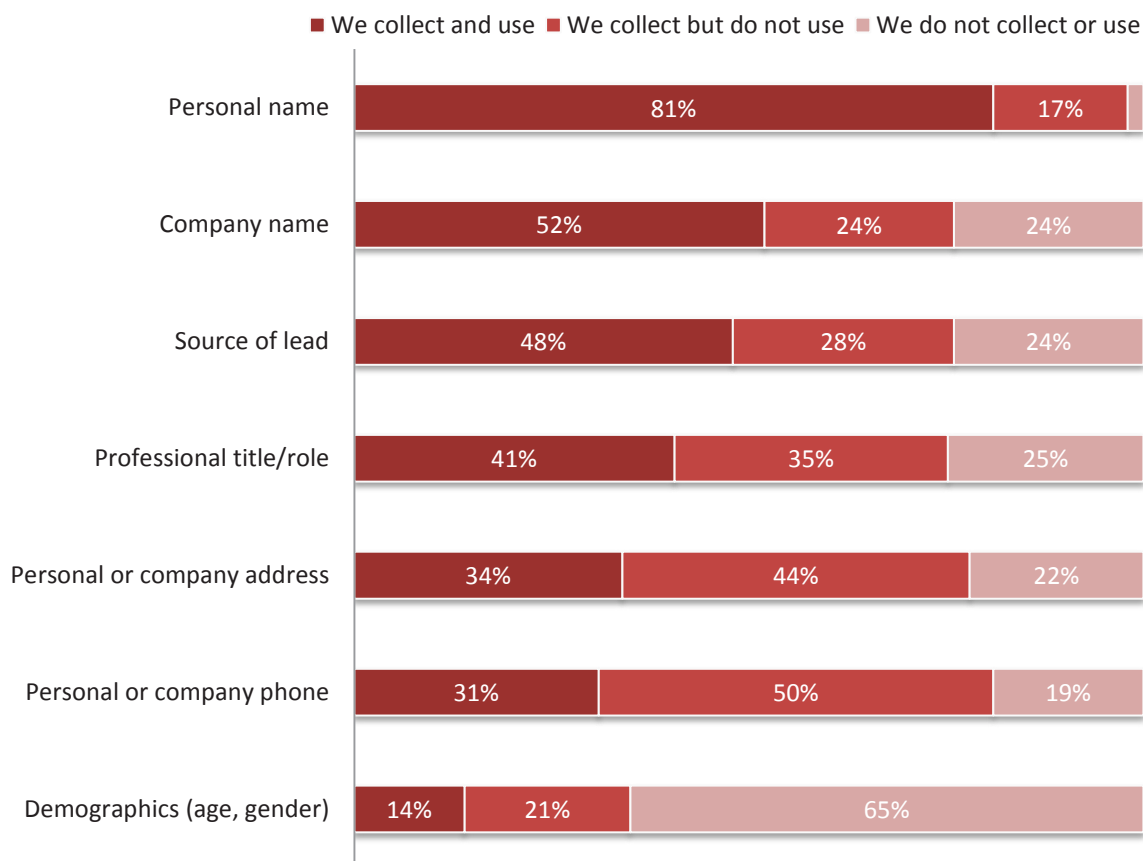
[Customer-centric Marketing: 3 landing page pitfalls to avoid](#)

Tactic #7: Collect just enough information

It's a delicate balance: obtaining customer information you as a marketer want but not asking for so much information that it creates friction for the customer.

For the MarketingSherpa Chart of the Week newsletter article, "[New Chart: What it takes to personalize email](#)," we surveyed more than 1,000 businesses about what data they collect and use for email personalization.

CHART: DATA COLLECTED FOR EMAIL PERSONALIZATION



Source: MarketingSherpa Email Marketing Benchmark Survey
Methodology: Fielded Sep 2010, N=1,115

For most companies, asking for a customer's personal name, company name and lead source is more important than title, physical address and phone number. However, each company must select its own criteria based on its industry and sales pipeline.

The industry channel determines the priority and usage of a subscriber's personalized data. B2B sales are typically complex, so marketers require company name, professional title, company address and phone number. Meanwhile, B2C marketers are more interested in age, gender or other demographic information to tailor their

communications. Both B2B and B2C companies find personal name and the source of the lead information key to successful email campaigns.

Tactic #8: Collect more information gradually

As we said above, marketers have a tough decision to make when signing up people for their email programs. How much information do you ask for? If you ask for too much, you can kill the conversion rate on the registration page. If you ask for too little, it can be difficult to segment your database.

One effective tactic is to gradually request information from the customer, as they become more comfortable with your company. In the MarketingSherpa article, "[Email Marketing: New tactics for display ads, segmentation and discount promos](#)," the team at Freshpair, an underwear and lingerie retailer, showed how it bypassed this challenge through "progressive profiling."

"We tried to keep the barrier to sign up as easy as possible," says Jason Scoggins, Senior Director of Email Marketing, Freshpair. "We only captured email address, and so until you've made a purchase and we can start targeting you on purchase behavior, we had nothing else," he says.

That was true until the team launched this new series of welcome emails:

Email #1. Capture product preference

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New subscribers first receive an email that asks them to select which types of products they prefer, men's or women's. That email gives Freshpair a key datapoint for segmenting its list, Scoggins says.

Email #2. Reassure subscribers

The second email is delivered four days later and mostly emphasizes the value proposition surrounding Freshpair's email program, Scoggins says. Emphasizing the value someone receives in the emails helps reassure the subscriber that they've made a good decision in signing up for the program, he says.

For example, the emails note that subscribers will receive:

- First notice of sales
- Product information and expert knowledge
- First notice of new products

Email #3. Discount offer

If subscribers have not yet purchased, they will receive the third and final welcome email three days after the second that offers them a discount.

Overall, the program has helped the team improve its segmentation without hurting the conversion rates on its registration forms, and the welcome series helps generate revenue, Scoggins says.

“We’ve definitely seen a strong lift. We’ve seen our welcome program have an increase of 27% in revenue per email.”

Tactic #9: Humanize email content

The MarketingSherpa article, [“Email Relevance: 8 tactics for leveraging timing, segmentation and content,”](#) discusses several factors that can help you increase the odds that your emails will find a receptive audience.

One of those is to add a human element to your email—which makes the email seem more personal, even if you don’t necessarily incorporate any personal information. With the rise of social media, your customers expect more than information; they expect personality. Providing value or a service to your email audience entails meaningful human interactions.

In the past few years, Moosejaw used “madness” campaigns centered on such things as a break-up service that made relationship-ending calls, a kissing service that helped lovelorn customers kiss their crush on New Year’s Eve, and a pizza bribe service that helped subscribers motivate friends and colleagues by feeding them.

And yes, Moosejaw actually performed these services for its customers. The break-up service was aimed at people who were too chicken to end their relationship on their own. To have Moosejaw do it, they had to send Moosejaw an email with the following information:

- The phone number of the person being dumped
- Three good things about the person (Moosejaw wanted to say a few nice things during the call)
- Three reasons for the break-up

With only that information, a representative made the call. Moosejaw posted several videos of real conversations on YouTube.

For Moosejaw, this approach is both human and reflective of the brand. The company tone mirrors the personality of the founders, and its electronic communications are a translation of the customer interactions and experiences that occurred in the first store.

Moosejaw’s metrics prove the campaign works. Disengaged subscribers open these “100% madness” emails twice as much as they do emails featuring product information or special offers.

Tactic #10: Don't go overboard

In the MarketingSherpa article, "[Email Marketing How-to: 5 steps to improve your email newsletter](#)," Joel Book, Principal, Marketing Research and Education, ExactTarget, shared tips on how marketers can increase the value and relevance of email newsletters—including personalizing content.

Book claims it all goes back to relevancy, "Effective email marketing is all about catering to the needs and interests of individual customers, and now it's possible to do that on a large scale. The information to personalize is critical. It should be the foundation of a marketing campaign."

However, the quest for personalization can be overwhelming with all of the data available to find use for and analyze.

"We're in an era now [that] is often described as the era of 'big data,' which quite simply means that now most companies have an enormous amount of data that is being collected about current, as well as prospective, customers."

Book advises that with so much information available, shrewd marketers make it a priority to know "which five or six pieces of information will actually be useful" when personalizing newsletters or email.

Scotts Miracle-Gro

Book cites an ExactTarget client, Scotts Miracle-Gro, a lawn and garden products company, as an example of a company that uses email to deliver locally relevant content to subscribers.

Once a consumer registers on the Scotts' website, Scotts invites the consumer to become a subscriber to Scotts' email newsletter, Lawn Care Update, so they can begin receiving expert advice and special offers from the company. The company then uses targeted information to deliver on that promise of value.

In Book's estimation, Scotts is best at focusing its newsletter on teaching consumers how to get the best product results. Different areas of the country can affect use in a myriad of ways, such as soil or climate. By one simple request of a subscriber's ZIP code, Scotts is able to provide countless tips and information that is essential to product success.

By providing specific links within the newsletter, the email can lead the consumer back to the website for further information or help, or even for advice from other customers using that product. This helps to solidify the connection between company content and solutions in the mind of the consumer, which will keep them reading your newsletter and visiting your website.

By utilizing other assets, such as social media, the company has been able to see, and share in future newsletters, the results of its personalized content: customers who are passionate enough about the company to send a caring message back.

Scotts' customers share pictures and results with the company, and, "Scotts sends updates; they actually share those photos. This phenomenon [that] Scotts has taken advantage of is called brand advocacy."

Useful Links and Resources:

[MarketingSherpa Blog: Email Marketing: The 5 goals of a successful program](#)

[MarketingSherpa Blog: Email Research: The 5 best email variables to test](#)

[MarketingSherpa Video: In the Year 2013: Email marketing technologies and tactics of the near future](#)

[Email Marketing: Ecommerce store sparks a 92% increase in email revenue with three automated series](#)

[Email Marketing: How triggered email sends helped grow ecommerce 53% for Zachys Wine & Liquor](#)

[Marketing Charts: Why the value chain matters to the marketer](#)

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Praised by The Economist, Harvard Business School's Working Knowledge Site, and Entrepreneur.com, MarketingSherpa offers practical, results-based marketing information researched and written by a dedicated staff of in-house reporters.

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- Annual Benchmark Reports featuring primary research and collected "best-of" secondary research, on statistics related to search marketing, email marketing, online advertising, e-commerce and business technology marketing

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MECLABS INSTITUTE

4315 Pablo Oaks Court
Jacksonville, FL 32224

meclabs.com