



E-Mail Marketing

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Weigh the value of using a distribution service for e-mail marketing campaigns

E-Mail Marketing

You Can Do It!

If your customers have a computer at work or home, chances are they have e-mail. If you look at your own e-mail inbox, how many messages do you receive each day? How many do you send? Do you read everything you receive or do you just glance at them?

In one sense, every e-mail that you send and receive is a piece of marketing. Your company domain is in the address and is also hopefully included in the signature block in the e-mail. You might even have a tag line in those e-mail signatures or a link to your website or your Facebook page. If you have a customer service representative who replies to online inquiries by e-mail, those replies are a marketing opportunity too. They might offer to send a coupon, send free information, or simply extend a sincere message.

A Cautionary Note

If you send out e-mails to a list of people, you should not be doing so from your personal e-mail address! When you send a message to a large list of people, your own e-mail service will tag it as spam, and then your subsequent messages also get flagged as spam or even get blocked entirely. Once your e-mail address is blacklisted, it is extremely difficult to work your way back into people's e-mail inboxes. Save your personal e-mail for messages to one person or a small group of people. Use a distribution service for reaching out to people in your database for marketing and commercial purposes.

A **distribution service** can help you to generate some of the more sophisticated looking newsletters, articles, and white papers that are part of the marketing mix. Many of these distribution services come free of charge, which will allow you to experiment and see what works best for you. It will also keep you from being blacklisted.

In some countries, you are unable to market commercially unless the people you are e-mail have opted into your e-mail list. This is called **permission-based marketing**, and means that everyone on your list has asked to be included in your contact list, or has at least given you permission to add them to the list. They can do this automatically with links on your website or on your e-mail list, and your distribution service will help you do this.

Getting Your Message Out

Distribution Services

You've probably already received marketing e-mails that come from distribution services. You will know which services are being used by looking for their logo at the bottom of your e-mail (although some companies will not appear there at all).

When you are choosing an e-mail distribution service, you need to make sure that they can offer you some important support to your marketing efforts. You want to make sure that they can:

- Maintain a list of your contacts (including their name and e-mail address) in a secure database
- Merge your existing contacts into their database by importing a list from wherever you currently have them stored
- Manage people who want to opt in and opt out
- Provide easy to use and attractive templates
- Include an easy to use unsubscribe button on the bottom of each e-mail
- Offer distribution that takes place on time
- Generate reports that tell you the number of e-mails that get opened (the open rate), bounced e-mails and the related e-mail address, links within the e-mail that are clicked, etc.

Whether you are using a paid or free service, you'll have some peace of mind when you know that your subscribers' information is kept private and that you are in complying with the range of spam laws in effect in different countries.

Some companies that you can review include:

- Constant Contact (www.constantcontact.com)
- Mail Chimp (www.mailchimp.com)
- Vertical Response (www.verticalresponse.com)
- iContact (www.icontact.com)

NOTE: These links were accurate at the time of printing. We are not affiliated with the sites and companies listed, nor do we accept any responsibility for the information provided on any third-party site.

Keep it Rich

We cannot emphasize enough that, just as your website needs to have rich content, your e-mails do too. Give your visitors something to think about, talk over, and gravitate toward! You should always be offering the receiver something, whether it is a resource, a tidbit of information, a strong visual, or links to these things.

One mistake that businesses continue to make is that their e-mail marketing always repeats a similar "buy me" message instead of giving people reason to click a link within that e-mail that takes them to your hub site for more information, a map with directions, or even your product page and shopping cart. Give them a compelling reason to engage with you, and they will.