

Three Email Marketing Mistakes That Could Be Hurting Your Sales

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Email marketing, when done properly, is an extremely strong tool for converting consumers into customers. With other forms of digital marketing, such as social media or your website, your customers have to come to you. Email marketing allows you to go to them – you're putting your messaging directly into their inbox. In fact, email marketing has a higher return on investment than any other form of marketing and is more likely to drive sales than social media (according to Constant Contact). Email engagement has continued to increase during the pandemic, with 78% of marketers reporting increased engagement over the last year (Hubspot).

This marketing channel has proven to be highly effective when done correctly. Avoid the following mistakes to ensure your business isn't missing out on results.

Forgetting to Set Up an Automated Welcome Message

Did you know that three out of four consumers expect to receive a welcome message immediately after signing up for a 'business' mailing list, but only around half of businesses actually send a welcome message? Not having an automated welcome message is a huge missed opportunity, as these emails make a first impression, have higher open rates and drive more revenue than other promotional emails.

Most email marketing platforms allow you to set up automated emails, or emails that are automatically sent to a customer or potential customer when they reach a certain point in your sales funnel. Use your email marketing platform to set up an automated welcome email that will automatically be sent to anyone who

signs up for your mailing list.

There are a few key components your welcome message should contain. The first is a "thank you." By signing up for your email list, a consumer has voluntarily agreed to receive direct communication from your brand – and this is a big deal! Welcome your reader and thank them for signing up to be a part

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of your brand's email community.

Next, you'll want to clearly and consciously convey what the reader can expect from your emails. *What is in it for them?* This could mean telling your brand's story or explaining what you stand for. It could also be giving a summary of your product and service offerings and showcasing these with beautiful imagery. Your reader should understand what they've signed up for, and feel excited to receive another email from you.

Finally, you'll want to include a special offer or discount in your welcome email. Don't forget – welcome emails convert to sales. This is a great place to give an excellent offer, such as 20% off a purchase or a BOGO offering. Be sure to include a strong call-to-action to entice them to take advantage of the deal.

Not Using Enough Stand-Out Calls-To-Action

Calls-to-action (CTA) are one of the most important parts of any email campaign. Your call-to-action buttons or links are the vehicles that transport

someone from being an email reader to an online shopper, a social media follower, or an event attendee. Because they are the most important part of an email, calls-to-action need to stand out. CTA buttons should be in a contrasting color from the rest of your email so they "pop." Use a bold font or all uppercase letters to amplify this effect.

You'll also want to make sure you have enough calls-to-action. A common mistake is using just one, typically at the end of the email. Try to include 2-3 CTA buttons throughout the email, and make sure one is "above the fold," or located close enough to the top of your email to be visible to a reader before they need to scroll to see more.

Finally, the copy you use in your call-to-action is extremely important. Go above and beyond a simple "click here" and think about what would really resonate with your target audience. Do you offer custom orthotics that prevent foot pain? Your call-to-action might be "Start Getting Relief" or "Relieve Pain Today." Did you just launch a new, higher-end product line? Try "Treat Yourself" or "You Deserve It" as your CTA. Note that all of these CTAs include a verb or an action the reader can take. Adding words focused on urgency or scarcity, such as "Shop Now," "Start Today," or "Limited Offer" make your CTA even stronger, encouraging your consumer not to wait.

Not Optimizing Your Emails for Mobile

More than half of all emails are opened on phones. This means you should always be designing emails with mobile use in mind. Always make sure you're choosing an email template that is mobile-responsive, meaning it automatically adjusts to fit on the screen on which it is being viewed. Most modern email marketing platforms, such as MailChimp, Constant Contact and Robly, offer a variety of mobile-responsive templates to choose from and customize with your own branding.

Keep your email design clean and simple. Be sure to let your images shine. A good rule of thumb is to always start your email with a power image or hero image to make a first impression that grabs attention. The quality of your images are representative of the quality of your brand, so be sure to choose high-resolution, well-thought-out imagery that represents your business and product offerings. You'll want to make sure the file size of your images isn't too

large, otherwise, you could be compromising the speed at which your email loads, especially on a phone.

Being strategic about your copy is another way to ensure your email has a clean design and that you're letting your images stand out. When writing copy for an email, always remember that people are scanning. Think about it – when you open a business email, do you read the entire thing from start to finish? Most of us look for headlines or bold calls-to-action that interest us. Use short paragraphs and bullet points to break your copy into easily digestible, easily scannable chunks. Use a larger font size, colored font, or bold or headline font for the most important information – the copy you want to make sure someone reads, even if they are quickly scanning your email. The way you design your email allows you to choose which information is most important to stand out to your reader.

You can also optimize your calls-to-action for mobile. When possible, use

a button instead of including a link as part of your copy. Add space (known as “padding” in most email campaign builders) around buttons to give them some breathing room and make them easier to “click” on using mobile.

Finally, when reviewing your email for any errors before sending, be sure to test it both on desktop and mobile. This will allow you to identify any issues that may arise on either platform.

When implementing any new email marketing strategy, keep an eye on your campaign data. Knowing what your average click, open, and unsubscribe rates look like before you make a change, and then comparing them after, will give you valuable data on what is resonating most with your readers. Stay tuned for more email marketing mistakes and tips on how to avoid them in the next issue of *Shoe Retailing Today*. ■

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