



Testing Techniques for your E-mail Marketing Campaign

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Creating successful and well received email campaigns is every marketer's dream. Ensuring your campaign gets the best possible response should involve some measure of testing.

According to a 2005 Jupiter Research report, marketers who used testing were twice as likely to attain conversion rates of 3 percent or better. Despite studies showing that testing yields positive results for marketing campaigns, only about 40 percent of marketers do it, mainly because it's perceived as difficult.

Here are a couple of easy tactics to get your testing efforts underway.

Step 1: What to Test

Testing is completely dependant on what you're trying to accomplish. Is your goal to improve open rates? Perhaps its to improve click through rates. Whatever your goal is, your testing efforts should centre on tactics that will help you in those areas.

Factors marketers typically test include:

- Subject lines
- Long vs. short copy
- Message layout
- Offer
- Frequency of mailings

Step 2: How to Test

Conducting your test doesn't have to be a daunting task. Follow these tips to get good, representative results for your efforts.

- **Split your List.** A popular option for splitting your list is the 10/10/80 split. Use 10 percent of your list to test one option and 10 percent to test the other. The remaining 80 percent receives the best-performing message. Dividing your list randomly can help with getting an accurate cross-section of your overall recipients.
- **Conduct tests at the same time.** Sending your tests at the same time on the same day is important for controlling the response rate. Remember that time is a variable, and sending one test on a Monday afternoon and another on a Friday morning can yield very different results.
- **Make sure the results are statistically relevant.** No matter how you decide what percentage to use, make sure you are testing a large enough sample to receive statistically relevant results.
- **Maintain a control group.** Exclude a random sample of recipients from your tests so you can compare the results of your tests to a group untouched by your testing efforts. This is especially useful when testing recipient behaviour over time.

Whatever factors you test, don't waste your efforts testing small differences, advises Silverpop email communications strategist Stephen Guerra.

"Concentrate on testing big changes—don't test a blue versus green background colour. Instead, focus on things like a four column format versus a postcard format. Or, test an offer on 30 percent off versus \$50 off a purchase," he said. different



“Don’t focus on testing a single word change in the subject line, but rather test completely different subject lines for a more statistically relevant result.”

Step 3: How to Understand the Results

The goal of testing is not just to receive high response rates and drive conversions for a single mailing. Your goal is to learn as much as possible to improve relevancy for greater long term success.

Testing can allow you to better understand individual preferences within your recipient database and directly improve relevancy. With testing, you’re able to determine which groups of customers prefer specific offers and, using that information, further your campaign goals.