Email Outreach

Email campaigns live and die by the subject line. This is your one shot to hook someone’s attention or pique their interest long enough to get them to take that gigantic step of “actually” opening the email. In general, the more concise it is, the more likely it is to open. Short quirky questions, declarative statements, hard numbers do well. Anything to make the reader do a double take.

Strive to sound human to stand out from the over-polished marketing noise cluttering inboxes everywhere. For example, lower case seems to do well (though there is some debate.) That said, there is a fine line between strategy and manipulation and most folks have a built in gut sense of that creepy uncanny email valley. For example, using “Re:” or “Fw” gives the reader the false sense that they have previously established a relationship with you.

The times you send can be just as important as the subject line itself. In general there are three sweet spots around 10 am, 1 pm, and 6 pm: Think of these as after breakfast (and coffee), after lunch, and “just” before dinner is ready when a person is more likely to be free and using their phone/other mobile devices.

You’ve got them to open your email, that’s the hard part. Now it’s your job not to mess it up. At this point in the game, the biggest enemy of email success is mission creep and too many asks – you want one specific, actionable goal or call to action in your email and you want it prominently placed as close to the top as possible: For instance a sign up form, or some sort of tactile button they can click to take them to a specific link. The more steps you add to the process, the higher the bar of effort you set for your reader, and the more who will drop off before taking action.

Keep things as pithy and concise as possible – with the experts recommending no more than about 200 words in your email. Other helpful tips to keep in mind:

★ Break up the big daunting blocks of text in favor of short paragraphs composed of no more than about two to three sentences. Bolding some of the text periodically also helps to break up the graphs themselves.

★ Make the email read as conversationally as possible. The more you can continue to pull the reader in with humor, quirks, or just plain good writing, the better chance you have of taking them through your entire email.

★ GIFs and Images – they are your friends. Not just because of the humor and levity they inject but also because they’re a chance to break up the text and entice the reader to keep scrolling. But there is such a thing as too much of a good thing: overloading on images or GIFs can be dizzying, drown out your message, and in the very worst cases have the email inadvertently chucked into the spam folder.

★ Also, be mindful of the makeup and diversity of your audience in order to make sure your content can be appreciated and understood by folks from every walk of life.

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