

Increase your Email Open Rates by Leveraging Automated Emails

Every email your business sends is an opportunity to create an even better relationship between your business and your customers. So today we thought we'd take a look at how to leverage automated emails, also called transactional emails - those messages that are sent automatically when a customer does something on your website.

The purpose of transactional emails is to give your customers updates so that they know exactly what's going on with their requests. A request could be a membership account set-up, a payment process, delivery tracking, a downloadable file or just submitting a message via a form.

From your customer's point of view they're not interested in from where or how the email is getting to them. In fact their main concern is whether it will arrive in their Inbox, be recognisable when it does and if there is something they need to do with it, that it's easy for them to do correctly.

To leverage your transactional emails as a marketing tool, there are 3 key factors that you need to pay attention to if you're to achieve your desired outcomes.

Brand Recognition

Capitalise on your brand and make sure that all your email messages have the same design style. Headers, footers and any images that are used for branding should be the same no matter how your business has sent out the email. Have your transactional emails look like your regular commercial emails and vice versa.
Standing out in the Inbox

Hold back from the temptation to sell in the subject line of your transactional emails.

To ensure that your customers recognise your message amongst a confusion of subject lines in their Inbox, your transactional email subject lines must reference the transaction that caused it to be sent and give an indication of whether the person receiving it needs to do anything with the message.
For example -

- Activate your DMXzone.com registration
- Action required to finalise your Vogue Australia membership
- Gmail profile update confirmation
- Keep safe your SBS Forum details
- Print & file your XMLsoft license key code
- FYI - Download your Clickz document anytime over the next 7 days

Recognisable transactional email messages have a higher open rate than marketing and sales email messages, so maximise the opportunity by making yours the easiest to spot and understand by their subject line.
Weaving in the sales message

To make the most out of each email you send, many email marketing professionals will advise that there always be a commercial section in the messages that advertises, promotes or sells.

For transactional emails this can be a bit of a balancing act. Transactional emails generally have a different status to regular email in the eyes of the Anti-Spam laws around the world - they don't have the restrictions of commercial email. So by including a marketing message you could end up changing the classification of your emails from transactional to commercial without realising it, and suddenly you find yourself blacklisted.

To make sure you stay on the right side of the law we recommend that you put your marketing section at the bottom of the message, keep it concise and written so that it's benefits oriented; also make sure that it links to a strong landing page that delivers what you promise in your marketing message.

You can also protect your transactional email classification by ensuring your marketing message is a 'soft sell', that in total it is less than a quarter of the overall message size and that it stands out LESS than the transactional section of your message (it shouldn't use strong colours, large headings or large pictures).

Transactional emails get higher delivery and open rates than commercial email because customers want to receive them. By taking advantage of your transactional emails and following these few simple guidelines, you'll protect your reputation and create a helpful message that can up-sell and cross-sell without you touching a button.