

SPECIAL REPORT

Dirty Dozen:

Email Newsletter Mistakes Nearly Everyone Makes

2011 Edition

Provided Courtesy of:



Special Report

MarketingSherpa's Dirty Dozen: Email Newsletter Mistakes Nearly Everyone Makes

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INTRODUCTION FROM HUBSPOT

MarketingSherpa first published the *Dirty Dozen: Email Newsletter Mistakes Nearly Everyone Makes* in 2008. We recently read through it again and found that fundamentally, the mistakes that were most common then are still common today.

1. *Blatant Lack of Permission* - Companies still try to get around the permission issues in search for the quick buck. That's a big mistake.
2. *Utterly Deficient Segmentation* - Content relevancy is the number one issue for the email marketer. Without segmentation, you have no real relevancy.
3. *Lame 'Welcome' Messages* - We still receive far too many lame welcome messages. What a wasted marketing opportunity.
4. *Frequency Decisions Made for the Wrong Reason* - Marketers are in a constant battle on the matter of frequency.
5. *Institution-to-One Messaging* - The debate on how to personalize company emails is ongoing. It's all about testing.
6. *No Real Interactivity* - Interactivity is not only for social media. Email was once the relationship building medium, and it still can be.
7. *Deliverability: Content, Formatting & Lack of Self-Advocacy* - If anything, deliverability is even a bigger issue than it was two years ago.
8. *Designing Images That Appear as Red Xs* - Getting HTML images to appear for those who have images turned off still requires that they turn the images on. It's the text vs. HTML debate.
9. *Disregarding Your BlackBerry and Mobile Readers* - The number of mobile readers has exploded since 2008. Thank you Iphone and Android. It's more important than ever to make your email mobile reader friendly.

10. *Repeating Ad Types* - Banner blindness in email newsletters is more prevalent than ever.
11. *Collecting Bad Response Rates* - You need good analysis to determine the effectiveness of your email. That's always been the case.
12. *Relying on Email Only* - This last mistake of relying on email only was written during the dawn of the social media revolution. It's the only one that feels a bit dated, but it's still worth noting that relying on just one tactic alone is never a good plan.

We've updated portions of the Dirty Dozen with new data from MarketingSherpa's 2011 Email Marketing Benchmark Report to replace the 2008 data. What we've kept is the wisdom.

Enjoy,

The HubSpot Team.

For years, MarketingSherpa has been publishing research-based reports on email marketing – from hundreds of online Case Studies to multi-page documents entailing industry best practices to our heralded annual Benchmark Guides. Like all MarketingSherpa content, this information has been based on interviews, surveys and studies; “best of” outside studies we garnered results data from; and other anecdotal evidence we gathered after spending hundreds of hours with marketers in the field.

Indeed, we are one of the few marketing publishers who base our writings on actual research. While most people talk about what they think should be done, or what’s launching but is yet proven, we write about a tactic or test only after the results are in.

That said, we have often discovered that what works in newsletters is fairly obvious to anyone with a strong hold on common sense. Therefore, it shouldn’t be surprising that interesting, relevant and punchy subject lines work. Or that sizable typeface in the body of messages produces clicks because people can easily read them. And so on and so forth.

On the other hand, we have discovered that what works for one marketer may fail for another. Some brands can get away with publishing long, prosy newsletters, but most online audiences tune out after 400 words. Some emailers can send out daily bulletins, but most brands’ recipients would report them as spammers or unsubscribe because of that level of frequency.

In the end, all you can do is test the tactic or strategy, and then test it again – because “what works” is often elusive. Your brand is changing before your very eyes, along with your readership and your marketing sophistication and your competition in the inbox.

An example: We used to run our house ads in the right-hand column of our Sherpa newsletters – just like we did (and still do) on the homepage of our website. After speaking with a publisher one day about their tests, we had a strong hunch that we were leaving money on the table because we were informed that those ads were not showing in preview panes. So, we tested our ad column on the left-hand side, where they would appear in preview panes and, voila, 28.24% more clicks. We have followed the strategy ever since. But even that won’t stay this way forever.

A second instance: Back in 2008, we discovered that the difference in just a couple of words could mean a big change in response. For the hyperlink to each article, we tested “Continue to article” (the incumbent) versus “Click to continue”; the latter outperformed the former by 3.5%. Needless to say, we immediately switched the words in our link in all of our newsletters.

Moving forward, the main lesson we have taken away from reviewing the email newsletter field for more than six years is that you can never stand pat. Your official newsletter template has to be grabbed by its corners, shaken upside down, tested and then revamped every year or so.

That doesn't mean your template will change entirely – or sometimes at all. But if you put a template in place even just a year or two ago and you've yet to conduct an audit on it, now is probably the time. Review open rates and, more importantly, click rates and patterns.

Also, run a reader survey (a study-proven idea that's never really crossed over from the professional publishing world to the marketing-newsletter world). Simply ask your list what they want. Without question, email communication makes surveying so easy to send and track, and its cost-effectiveness compared to the older methods is out of this world. (We ran a special report on how to do email surveys in early October that would certainly be worth checking out.)

Some marketers also run usability studies that can range from plopping a consumer down in front of a screen and watching how they delve through email to sophisticated eyetracking tests. Meanwhile, if you want to check just one element, A/B testing your list has never been more affordable as ESPs have premiered offers for small- and medium-sized brands. Or, multivariate tests can help you see how a number of extravagantly different design elements perform.

Naturally, if your brand relies on its site as the home of the brand experience, and you've revamped that site's look and feel, you'll want to make sure the newsletter changes to adequately match it.

Should you change your newsletter dramatically? Frankly, we think newsletter revamps are a lot like site revamps: They can be risky. Enormous changes (especially involving colors, logos and navigation) can depress response for a short time before an uptick occurs as regular users adjust. But again: Test it. Test it all. And then test it again – at least once a year.

To help you begin auditing your newsletter, we have put together this dirty dozen list of email mistakes to avoid. Like all marketing, some of them are common-sense ideas that were relevant a few years ago and will be relevant in the future. Others, though, will cause your department to pause and reconsider its strategies.

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Blatant Lack of Permission

MarketingSherpa's Email Marketing Benchmark Guide 2008, in which 1,100 marketers revealed their email budgets, tactics and responses, indicates that email marketing for the most part is still paying off. Almost half of marketers (42%) said email marketing will eventually produce ROI and 26% said that it was producing an ROI. Both of these groups plan on increasing their budgets for email marketing.

Truthfully, we wish those numbers were a little better to represent a more clear-cut triumph for our email community. It's reasonable to suspect that the reason why about half of those surveyed were less than absolutely thrilled was because they hadn't conquered the idea of relevancy. And while there are many things that go into relevancy, it really starts with how you gain subscribers' permission.

Sound like Email 101-type stuff? Well, based on past benchmarks and interviews there are companies still using an "opt-out" registration tactic. Those companies either pre-checked the box for receiving emails or required an email address for some other purpose (e.g., to get access to the website/to get an insurance quote). They did not make it clear that the person signing up would be receiving emails from them.

Part of the reason why people don't go for proper permission is that it's hard getting people to opt-in to email lists. Forty five percent think that getting people to opt-in is a very significant challenge, and 39% think its somewhat difficult.

There are other causes to what is the huge mistake of "assumed permission" as well. Your reasoning may fall into any of the following ideas:

- "They are already a customer, so they must want to hear from me."
- "They entered their email address in a contact form or registration form, so they must know I'm going to use it."
- "They received something of value for free from me (sweeps entry, white paper, etc.) in exchange for their email address on a form, so they understand their 'cost' is receiving email from me without complaint."
- "They are in a very specific niche – perhaps an extremely targeted

group of people, or even one single person – who should be interested in my newsletter, and they posted their email addresses publicly on a site or handed a business card to a rep from my company.”

- “It’s legal. CAN-SPAM allows me to send email newsletters to anyone I choose to in the US until they say no. So why not?”
- “Our unsubscribe rate is low (under 5%), so they must like receiving the newsletter.”

Unfortunately, the vast majority of consumers and business professionals who receive email newsletters do not agree with any of these assumed permission excuses. Simply put, they don’t see why you’ve started emailing them. They are likely to consider your newsletter spam (especially if it is higher in frequency than monthly and/or they receive it for more than a few months without clicking through on any of the links).

In fact, 38% think that legitimate email being perceived as spam is a very significant challenge to email marketing effectiveness, and 40% think it’s somewhat significant. Add to this the fact that spam filters are even more diligent than they were two years ago, and you can see why anything that smells of spam is problematic.

In other words, carelessly sending email to addresses that haven’t duly shown permission in your registration process will do several things: hurt your response rates, significantly damage your reputation among receivers and, eventually, put a pinch on your deliverability.

You also risk losing your relationships with your email-services provider and Web-hosting vendor because assumed permission is often unauthorized under terms of their contracts.

HOW TO AVOID THIS MISTAKE

Audit each of the ways an email address can be added to your list for a newsletter. Is the individual told they’ll be added to the list? If it’s over the telephone, have you scripted this for clarity? If it’s online or in print, is there a box on the signup form they must proactively check (i.e., it’s **not** pre-checked) to receive the newsletter?

Plus, if you have more than one type of email you would like to send them, have you asked them separately (given separate preferences check boxes) for each? It’s not merely a best practice to ensure higher response rates to your future mailings; it’s the best way to safeguard your mailer reputation.

Lastly, implementing specific frequency options during the opt-in process **could be** quite the cure for your headaches here, and it’s a move many industry leaders are testing to ensure that the email they send out counts. For instance, allow your database to decide what kinds of offers they would like to receive and **how often** they want to get them.

Once a week? Once a month? Once a quarter? Depending on your customer

niche, these may be timing options that will actually improve your response rates, while deflating your unsubscribes and messages sent to the junk bin. It's probably worth a test. (More on this in Mistake #4.)

SAMPLES FROM MARKETERS WHO GET IT RIGHT

(1) After entering an email address on the homepage, (2) new GourmetStation subscribers see a stylish but cleanly designed Web page that prompts them to complete the double opt-in at their inbox. (3) There, they are greeted with a straightforward subject line: "GourmetStation Newsletter: Please Confirm Subscription." (4) Then, the gourmet cuisine eretailer's email body features a prominently placed "Confirm" button (gold-hued, 92-by-42 pixels) and a secondary opt-in link, which make finishing the subscription a seamless, permission-driven activity.

Sample 1.1: GourmetStation

1 NEWSLETTER SIGNUP

Receive our Newsletter with seasonal suggestions and occasional coupons on new additions.

Email Address:

You are already subscribed to Gourmet Stations Newsletter

First Name:

Last Name:

[SIGNUP](#)

[Continue Shopping](#)

Phone 888-944-9794 (Mon - Fri 9 to 5 Eastern) [Site Map - Gourmet Food Gifts](#)

2 ALMOST FINISHED

We need to confirm your email address.

To complete the subscription process, please click the link in the email we just sent you. You will receive a final email with a link to download your GourmetStation wine tips.

If you haven't received your email within an hour, please check your email filters.

3

Home | **Inbox** 66 messages | x

Delete | Reply | Forward | Spam | Move | Print | More Actions

From | Subject

GourmetStation.com | GourmetStation Newsletter: Please Confirm Subscription

GourmetStation Newsletter: Please Confirm Subscription

GourmetStation.com <patronservice@gourmetstation.com> | Add | To:

4 GOURMETSTATION ENTERTAINING & HOSPITALITY NEWSLETTER

Your newsletter subscription is almost complete. Your last email will contain a link to download your gift, GourmetStation wine tips.

Your subscription to the GourmetStation newsletter contains seasonal offers, new product offerings, and preferred patron discounts. [Please confirm my subscription.](#)

[CONFIRM](#)

If you received this email by mistake, simply delete it. You won't be subscribed if you don't click the confirmation link above.

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Utterly Deficient Segmentation

The #1 challenge in 2011 to email marketing effectiveness is targeting recipients with highly relevant content. It's all about relevancy.

While most marketers we speak with also say they would like to do more segmenting – if only to break out recent customers from prospects – they often just don't have either the time or resources (or both). The following real-life response data from our 2011 Email Marketing Benchmark Report, however, should inspire you to add segmentation to this year's budget:

- For tactics used to improve relevancy, 57% of marketers surveyed said that they are using segmented email campaigns based on behavior, and 43% used segmented email campaigns based on sales cycle.
- In terms of relevancy improvement effectiveness, 49% said segmented email campaigns based on behavior were very effective (with 50% saying somewhat effective). Also, 35% said segments email campaigns based on sales cycle were very effective (with 64% saying somewhat effective).

Past research has shown that for finance, publishing and retail lists, segmentation beats non-segmented every time for each category. But many email newsletters try to accomplish segmentation by adding a little something for everyone to each newsletter issue. Sorry, that's not going to cut it!

Although this works at restaurant buffets (where you try to please the whole family with an assortment of offerings), it doesn't work in email because each message is received by one individual. That individual is only interested in information that's relevant to them.

And, that individual has a very short attention span for your newsletter that is only growing shorter – perhaps as little as a few seconds, generally not more than 15 to 20 seconds. If they don't immediately see something highly relevant and interesting, your email gets deleted.

Unlike print magazines and catalogs, which might get second glances, emails once abandoned are usually abandoned forever. So, by cluttering the newsletter with non-relevant info, you're wasting those precious few seconds of eye time and reducing your overall chances of readership and account lifetime open rates.

HOW TO AVOID THIS MISTAKE

Discover how people on your list think of their information needs as being unique. You may want to run a survey (once again, email is an incredibly ROI-effective medium to deliver surveys) or even focus groups.

Other segments may be by age group, purchasing style (discount shoppers versus early adopters), geographic region, etc. As in Mistake #1, allowing your audience to decide how often they would like to hear from you is also worth heavy consideration. (Definitely worth a survey question if you go that route.)

Best practice: Ask about interests up front when folks sign up for your newsletter. If the name is already on your list, send out with a survey and/or start reacting to data on which links they've clicked and which they've ignored. These types of database-driven segmentation and "dynamic content" have been technically possible for more than seven years now, and more marketers are using them, thankfully. But many still do not ... yet.

SAMPLES FROM MARKETERS WHO GET IT RIGHT

Electronics etailer Second Act tries to grab more than an email address and a few demos on their registration page. They facilitate built-in segmentation by offering 16 categories for which their subscribers can choose from specific content options.

(SEE SAMPLE 2.1 ON NEXT PAGE)

second act

Preference Center

Please take a moment to select your e-mail preferences. Use the drag down boxes below to choose which mailings you'd like to receive from Second Act.

- Email:
- First Name:
- Last Name:
- City:
- State:
- Great Deal of the Day Email:
- Weekly Coupons Email:
- Home Automation:
- Front Projection TVs:
- Home Theater Receivers:
- Gourmet Appliances:
- Home Theater Seating:
- Home Video and DVD Players:
- LCD Flat Panel TVs:
- Large Appliances:
- Plasma TV:
- New Products:
- Refurbished Products:
- Rear Projection Big Screen TVs:
- Small Appliances:
- Surround Sound Systems:

Quick Links

- www.secondact.com
- [Info Portal](#)
- [Subscribe to our RSS Feed](#)

[Home](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Affiliate Program](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Login](#) | [Support](#) | [Policies](#) | [Cart](#)

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Lame ‘Welcome’ Messages

We have known for a couple of years that the email most likely to be read by your newsletter subscribers is the very first one they receive from you. No, this doesn't mean the first newsletter issue or campaign; it means the first email after they sign up.

Most marketers use a formulaic message for this first email, which is usually sent in text-only. From your perspective, it's often seen as an "administrative" message rather than a marketing message. So, it looks and feels more like a receipt or subscription-order acknowledgement than any sort of branded messaging.

Sample of a basic welcome note:

~~~~~  
Thank you for subscribing to the NAME OF NEWSLETTER.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
SUBSCRIPTION STATUS  
If you wish to unsubscribe at any time or feel that  
you have been added to our list in error, click the  
following link:  
REMOvE: <http://www.LINKTOUNSUBSCRIBEHERE.com>  
~~~~~

Some marketers dress this up a bit with some warm wording about what to expect in future email newsletter issues. While we applaud the effort, why not take things a bit further? If this is going to be your most-read email of all time, why not try to get some real engagement or interactivity going? The more you can engage a recipient from the very start, the more likely it is that this pattern of engagement will continue throughout their account lifetime with you.

HOW TO AVOID THIS MISTAKE

Review your online content and possible offerings. Perhaps you wrote a great “evergreen” article everyone loved. Perhaps one particular emailed offer got an outstanding response recently. Why not include the offer in your welcome message? So, your welcome becomes a mix of administrative info (brief) and an engaging offer.

Of course, retailers can try coupon offers (15% off, free shipping, etc.) to get their new subscribers, who signed up for the newsletter but didn't make a purchase, immediately engaged in the brand. Or a simple “Shop Now” button is undoubtedly better than nothing at all.

As one example, athletics gear retailer Finish Line offers a smart dual offline-online coupon. Recipients can redeem it for \$10 off at a store or online. They also invite new signees to immediately join their rewards program in the Welcome message.

On the coupon: No, you don't need to (and should not) mention this extra bonus on your opt-in form; you really do not want your list to be comprised of discount-chasers and whatnot. (You'll want to test the offer to see if it raises opt-ins of course, but that's a different discussion.) Adding an extra unannounced bonus is never a bad thing. Like Finish Line, you will be over-performing against expectations.

Lastly, be sure to include an annual review of your 'Welcome' letter from then on. Most marketers do it every six months, including reviewing the percent of clicks on the offer.


SAMPLES FROM MARKETERS WHO GET IT RIGHT

Finish Line makes the most of the 'Welcome' message by offering a savvy dual offline-online coupon. Recipients can redeem the coupon for \$10 off at a store or online. The athletics gear merchandiser doesn't stop there. The 'Welcome' message design uses a nine-category top navigation bar, and they invite new signees to immediately join their rewards program.

(SEE SAMPLE 3.1 ON NEXT PAGE)

Sample 3.1: Finish Line

We sent you this email because you asked for updates about new products and promotions. To ensure receipt of our e-mails, please add us (finishline@news.finishline.com) to your e-mail address book.



MEN | WOMEN | KIDS' | FAN SHOP | ACCESSORIES | BRANDS | CLEARANCE | WINNER'S CIRCLE

Welcome!


Now that you've joined our exclusive email group, you'll get some great perks delivered straight to your inbox:

- Incredible discounts
- Free shipping offers
- Exclusive access to special events and promotions
- First dibs at our Clearance Section

Your special treatment starts now. Just for signing up with us, here's a special offer for \$10 off your next in-store or online purchase of \$60 or more!

Sincerely,

The Team at Finish Line



WANT MORE REWARDS?
Join the Winner's Circle

SIGN UP NOW >


TAKE \$10 OFF YOUR NEXT PURCHASE

\$10 OFF


YOUR NEXT PURCHASE OF \$60 OR MORE!

ENTER COUPON CODE
140572

*Minimum purchase amount must be met before shipping and taxes. Coupon not redeemable for cash. Present this coupon at time of purchase. Limit one redemption per customer per day. Coupon not valid on the purchase of gift cards. This coupon cannot be combined with any other discount, coupon, offer, prior purchase, exchange or refund. Excludes regularly priced Nike Statement product (including but not limited to all Air Force, Air Max 360, LeBron James, etc.) and Brand Jordan. Also excludes all Fossil. Additional exclusions may apply. Coupon valid in-store or at www.finishline.com. To redeem online, enter the 6-digit promo code at checkout. Cash value 1/100¢. Coupon valid 12/1/2007 through 3/1/2008. Coupon code 140572



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Frequency Decisions Made for the Wrong Reason

How do you determine your newsletter's frequency? Is it based on how often readers want to hear from you? Did you choose a frequency by default? ("Monthly seems good. Let's do monthly.") Did you pick a frequency that matched your own ability to get an issue written and created?

Frequency is one of the toughest strategic decisions you'll make that will affect the success of your newsletter. But as was touched upon in Mistake #1, it's becoming a hot testing ground for marketers because – with all the messages being sent these days – many are extremely curious to find out if a bit less sending will actually manifest higher response and better sales.

If you send too frequently, you risk annoying readers. The minute you annoy them, you go from valued mailer to unwanted spammer. Not only do you risk losing a customer, but you risk losing your email reputation and deliverability to boot.

On the other hand, if you mail too infrequently and the folks on your list don't receive any other communication from your brand (in any media) during the normal run of things in that time period, you run the risk of lower performance. Simply put, your brand isn't in front of the recipient enough to have any sort of impact.

And during the gap time in between mailings, your competitors may pick up sales that should have been yours. Throttling down your email frequency can be a scary proposition, but there are safe measures to take.

HOW TO AVOID THIS MISTAKE

The first thing you need to do is, of course, test. Conduct an A/B split on your signup page for a short duration of testing time that allows you to get a healthy sample. Let half of your new subscribers pick frequency-specific options ("weekly," "biweekly," "three times a month," "monthly," "bimonthly," etc.), while the rest see your current signup options.

This could be a huge part of your timing strategy moving forward, so follow the A/B groups for at least a few months to see if the needle moves in terms of how each responds to offers. Being able to hone in on your subscribers' timing

preferences could very well be a boon to this arm of your brand's marketing.

Meanwhile, because email tracking is becoming more sophisticated, major retailers have been adjusting their email schedules to reflect increased consumer interest for a few years. As a basic example, many mail more frequently during the holiday rush and barely at all during the slow summer months. Some marketers email only on Tuesdays (a good day for opens and clicks for many brands) and not later in the week when response typically declines.

But, shouldn't how often they visit your website also be reflected in how often they get emailed? Ask your ESP if this is something they can help you test.

Some advanced B-to-B mailers are also picking up the idea. If a prospect has visited their site or done other activities indicating heightened interest, that prospect may get more email from the company.

And here's a no-brainer: Some marketers only send mail to their list when there's content of genuine value to distribute. When you are ready to hit the submit button to start your send, consider this question: "Am I sending this because it's on my to-do list, or is it something recipients will be genuinely excited to get now?"

The answer should determine your schedule. Once again, common sense rules.

SAMPLES FROM MARKETERS WHO GET IT RIGHT

Powells.com gives subscribers some truly meaningful leeway when it comes to how often they receive messages. Signees can choose from eight newsletter options with these frequencies: daily, weekly, biweekly, monthly and "as specials become available."

Sample 4.1: Powells.com

The screenshot shows the Powells.com website with a navigation menu on the left and several newsletter options in the main content area. The navigation menu includes sections like 'IN THE CITY TODAY', 'Find Books', 'Read the City', 'Win Free Books!', 'PowellsBooks news', 'Technica', 'PowellsBooks kids', 'GIFTS', 'Gift Certificates', and 'POWELL'S OFFLINE'. The main content area features a 'PLEASE LOG IN' form, a 'POWELL'S BOOKS NEWS' section, a 'REVIEW-A-DAY' section, a 'TECHNICA' section, a 'KIDS' BOOKS' section, a 'RECENTLY ARRIVED USED BOOKS' section, and a 'SPECIALS' section. Each newsletter option includes a brief description and its frequency.

Newsletter Name	Frequency
POWELL'S BOOKS NEWS	Approximately once every two weeks
REVIEW-A-DAY	Every Day
TECHNICA	Approximately once per month
KIDS' BOOKS	Approximately once per month
RECENTLY ARRIVED USED BOOKS	As specials become available
SPECIALS	Every day
DAILY DOSE	Every day
LOCAL EVENTS	Approximately once per week

Institution-to-One Messaging

Many marketers forget that personalization comes in two forms.

On the one hand, personalization is about creating a “personal” communication to an individual, which might range from the basic insert first name and last name at the head with common content to customizing content to match a recipient’s interests.

Then there is personalization on your end. One-to-one communication means you writing as an individual to another individual – not as an institution to an individual.

All too often, email newsletters come off written as though they are coming from a large institution writing to an individual. Take this quick quiz to see how personalized your newsletter is:

- Is the “from” an individual’s name?
- Is the newsletter “signed by” any individual?
- Is there contact information for a named individual anywhere in the text?
- Are there any headshots of individuals?
- Does any of the writing have an individual’s “voice” or tone?
- Is the word “I” used more than the words “we” or “our”?

If you answered “Yes”:

4-6 times – Congratulations, you’re doing great.

2-3 times – Good work, but you might be able to improve even more.

0-1 times – Time to consider revamping your newsletter.

HOW TO AVOID THIS MISTAKE

One-to-one messaging doesn’t have to be cutesy, nor is it limited to certain types of brands. We know financial brands that carry regular columns from their

analysts in newsletters. They write just as you would expect an analyst to write; you get the sense the column wasn't ghost-written for them by marketing or PR. And you can contact the analyst at his or her direct email if you have questions.

Meanwhile, B-to-B marketers are now often personalizing newsletters by putting the name of a sales rep or account rep for each recipient on the newsletter. The content may be the same for all recipients, but the "from" and contact info is different.

We also know franchise and chain retail marketers, automotive firms and real estate agents who are doing the same thing. The email comes "from" the manager of the local store, even though it's actually written and distributed by headquarters on their behalf.

Once again, you also have to show that there's a true relationship taking place by WHAT you send them. Whether you are talking about a specific salutation within copy or subject line, matched products to customer needs or stated wants, products matching buying cycle (batteries for a year-old iPod), etc., a little bit of personalization can go a long way.

Offer-based personalization can be as specific as your list segmentation. And after all, it's hard for the subscriber to feel like they are in a one-to-one relationship if it doesn't appear you are listening to them.

SAMPLES FROM MARKETERS WHO GET IT RIGHT

Charles Schwab shows that the simplest gestures can nurture powerful relationships: Their email program connects a personal consultant to the customer when the account gets opened. The consultant's name appears in the reply-to slot, and the message includes the Schwab rep's first and last name and direct telephone number.

(SEE SAMPLE 5.1 ON NEXT PAGE)

Sample 5.1: Charles Schwab

charles SCHWAB

SCHWAB INVESTING INSIGHTS® January 17, 2008

Dear [Name of Client],

I'm pleased to share the January issue of *Schwab Investing Insights* with you. In this newsletter:

- > Chief Investment Strategist Liz Ann Sonders argues that this economic cycle is apt to look more like a fat "u" than the typical narrow "V," and explains what it might mean for investors.
- > Our 2008 Sector Outlook. Consider overweighting health care and info tech. Get ready for bargains in consumer discretionary and financials, but beware of energy. Plus, stock ideas to get you started.
- > Get a grip on cash by learning how to manage inflows and outflows wisely—it can save you a bundle.
- > Great mutual funds for 2008: Check out reviews of five of our favorites, plus a list of 14 more funds across a broad spectrum of fund types.

If you'd like to discuss any of the ideas you find in this issue, just give me a call or drop me an email. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,


Name of Financial Consultant
VP, Financial Consultant
Charles Schwab & Co., Inc.
+1 (415) XXX - XXXX
Name of Financial Consultant@Schwab.com

[Client Log In](#) | [Unsubscribe](#)

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[Tell us what you think.](#)

ON STRATEGY

 **Looking Through the Valley to Recovery**
By Liz Ann Sonders
Senior Vice President, Chief Investment Strategist
Charles Schwab & Co., Inc.

This economic cycle is likely to be shaped more like a fat "u" than a typical narrow "V." What it means to investors. [More](#)

TOP STORIES

2008 Sector Outlook
Consider overweighting health care and technology. Bargains may surface in financials and consumer discretionary—but don't get burned by energy. [More](#)

Great Funds for 2008
An in-depth look at five of our favorites in large growth and value, small blend, foreign equities and bonds. Plus, 14 more outstanding funds to consider. [More](#)

Cash Flow Planning for Life
Managing your inflows and outflows wisely can pay off big-time. Find out how. [More](#)

To unsubscribe, please click [here](#).

To read more about Schwab's privacy policy, go to <http://www.schwab.com/privacy>.

Notice: All emails sent to or from the Charles Schwab corporate email system may be retained, monitored and/or reviewed by Schwab personnel.

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No Real Interactivity

Now, let's take Mistake #5 a little further. Everyone talks about how wonderful the Internet is because it's such an interactive medium. Yet, most marketers treat their newsletters as "blast" content – information that's sent one way, marking the end of the so-called interactivity.

Note: A hotlink back to read an entire story or to accept an offer back at your site is not really interactivity unless you plan to treat each newsletter recipient differently in the future based on that particular click (i.e., dynamic content). Most of the time, you're just using the hotlink to show users something that wouldn't fit in the email itself because of format or deliverability restrictions.

The true nature of interactivity is give-and-take on both sides. You send something to someone, they react, and then you respond, and then they respond, and so on and so on. This is why strategists often talk about email as a "relationship-building medium."

Don't fool yourself. Sending out blasts with links to get more stuff at your site is not building a relationship. It's broadcast advertising, albeit to a segmented market of requestors.

Another note: Adding a reader poll feature to your newsletter is often the first and last additional interactivity newsletter publishers do. However, unless readers truly believe their answers to your poll will be effective and have an impact, they are less than likely to answer it, or to feel in their hearts that your newsletter is interactive. Hence, a poll is an interactive feature, but it's not interactive unless you truly react to it.

HOW TO AVOID THIS MISTAKE

Before you get caught up in the fancy stuff, first make sure your email newsletter is interactive on the most basic level. Email Street cannot be one-way.

If a recipient hits the "reply" button, does their message reach a named human being who will get right back to them if need be? Plus, is there a named contact on the masthead with personal direct contact information? No, info@ and feedback@ do not count as direct contact information in anyone's

book. JillSmith@ does. Better yet, add in Jill's telephone number and direct extension. Even better: Include a headshot of Jill.

Ok, lots of folks are doing a nice job of testing linked videos in email. But, once again, the communication is too one-way to be truly interactive. The video landing pages need to have a "Comments" section. Moderator or editor duties do not have to be extensive; one person on your team can check the comments and approve them over the course of a few minutes at the end of each day.

And, what about a hyperlink with this invitation: "Have a Question About Our video? Email [insert name of Product, Service, Content Offering] Expert, [insert rep's First-Name] Now And We'll Get Back to You Within 24 Hours!"

Think about the possible conversion rates for those emails to your "expert." In short, for all the ballyhoo about video in email, marketers are only beginning to test what kind of true interactivity can be applied.

Example of cool, real-life interactivity: A popular independent rock band, The Faint, allowed their online audience members access to separate recorded tracks (vocals, guitar, bass, keyboards, etc.) to the songs on their forthcoming album. The viewers were able to download the tracks and do their own mixes, which were posted in a separate forum and listened to by other online community members. Band members posted about their favorite fan mixes.


The idea was pushed by their record label's newsletter. Fans loved it, and it only encouraged sales when the band's version of the album came out. It was their best-selling CD to date.

SAMPLES FROM MARKETERS WHO GET IT RIGHT

Every issue of Annie's Homegrown newsletter is sent "from" Bernie (a rabbit), whose "headshot" appears in the upper left corner. Sure, Bernie's not a real person, but that doesn't stop thousands of consumers from taking up the newsletter's perennial offer to interact with Bernie at its blog online. Plus, the ongoing news and photos from a real-life customer on Baffin Island give readers the feeling that someday their story could appear, too.

(SEE SAMPLE 6.1 ON NEXT PAGE)

Sample 6.1: Annie's Homegrown



Rabbit Tales

April 21, 2007

Free Shipping!
Receive free shipping on all UPS Ground orders of \$100 or more. Go to [Annie's Store](#)

Bernie's Blog
Come join the discussion at Bernie's Blog. Discuss current events in Environmental policy, learn about new products in development, and other topics that concern Bernie, the Rabbit of Approval. [Read the Blog!](#)

Store Locator
Find Natural Foods stores and Supermarkets near your home or office that carry Annie's products. [Locate now!](#)

Annie's Affiliates
Become an Affiliate and earn cash commissions when you refer friends and family to [Annie's.com](#). [Become an Affiliate](#)

Dear <%Field2%>,

Earth. A tiny magical and mystifying speck, orbiting a star in our solar system within an ever-expanding universe. Our shared planet. Our common ground. Our shelter and our source of sustenance. The home that connects not only all people but also all other earthly inhabitants. From coral to camels, penguins to pandas, oak trees to osprey, honey bees to humans. We are all interconnected, here and now, alive on our home planet, our Earth.

Earth Day is not an observation in honor of individuals or events, nor could it be called a religious celebration in any conventional sense. Still, it is a global celebration, transcending specific holidays and excluding no one. Our Earth awes, inspires and uplifts our human spirits without regard to race, gender or religion. In our commonality, we can celebrate our Earth.

As global temperatures rise and the land, rivers and oceans become more and more poisoned and polluted, we humans must raise our collective voice to speak out. We must demand better of ourselves and our leaders. As citizens of the most powerful democracy in the world, a democracy and political system for which men and women continue to sacrifice their lives for, we must utilize our rights and privileges. We must use the power of our voices and actions to be responsible stewards. Let's take back our democracy and put it to work.

Annie

p.s. Do you have an Earth Day resolution? Please [share it with us](#) (your answer just might win you something snazzy!) so we can share it with others. My Earth Day resolution is to use as few new plastic bags as possible. I will reuse the ones I have collected or bring cloth bags to the stores where I shop.

In this issue:

1. [Organic Pasta Conversion](#)
2. [Annie's Farmer Profile: Meet the Turners](#)
3. [Recycling & Reusing Annie's Packaging](#)
4. [Native Energy Helping to Reduce Our Bunny Footprint](#)
5. [Stop Global Warming](#)
6. [Fan Letter of the Month](#)
7. [Stand For Peace Goodie Bag](#)

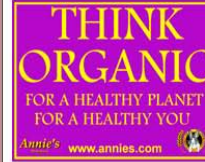
What's the Next Name of Annie's Mobile Tour?

As you know from previous Rabbit Tales issues, we're looking to you to help us rename our Mobile Tour. So far, we've received 31 different suggestions from our beloved Rabbit Tales readers as to what to call the vehicle itself and the overall tour. All of the suggestions were fantastic. But we haven't chosen one yet because we think we can get more of you to spin your creative wheels and add to the idea pool. So the search continues! Read the ideas we've gotten so far.

For all you new to the contest, here's the skinny. This year, we bought a trailer and hit the road in a tour across the country, stopping at various events, sampling our delicious macaroni & cheese, Cheddar Bunnies, and Bunny Grahams. We dubbed our traveling trailer "Annie's Stand" and the tour itself "Annie's Mobile Tour". As we plan next year's adventure, we want to be a little sassier, a little catchier. Help us rename our tour!

Send us your brilliant ideas. We'll decide by the end of this month, and send a bountiful gift filled with all kinds of Annie's goodness to those who came up with our favorite three suggestions.

Annie's Pasta now Made Exclusively with Organic Durum Semolina Wheat!



We're proud to announce that all of our yummy products - with the exception of our **Gluten-Free Rice Pasta & Cheddar** - are now made exclusively with organic durum semolina wheat pasta! Since 1998, when we became the first to introduce organic macaroni & cheese, we've worked with organic wheat growers to build the supply. We now work with more than 75 **organic family farmers** - mostly out of North Dakota, Montana and California - who grow our organic durum wheat. **Organic** means that it's produced without synthetic fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, GMO's or irradiation.

And our cheese? We're supporting **Cedar Grove**, our organic cheese supplier, as it works towards gaining Sustainable certification from the **Food Alliance** - a step beyond organic certification. We're very excited about this opportunity to grow within and support the movement toward "beyond organic".

Why Organic? Learn more about **organic farming and sustainable agriculture**. Grow your own garden with the help of our **Growing Organic** booklet!

Get **\$2.00 off** any Macaroni and Cheese product when **shopping online**. Use Coupon code **ALLORGANIC**. Valid until May 31.

[Back to the Top](#)

Meet The Turners

"It used to be that farming knowledge was truly valued, but now there's an urban mentality that looks at farmers as peasants. Farmers are some of the smartest people I know. Give a farmer some iron and he can make anything. Farmers are the original engineers."

o Dee Turner

It takes a lot of hard work to grow the organic durum wheat that makes up Annie's **organic pasta**. Our **organic farmers** do what they do because they have incredible respect for the land. Thanks to their care and consideration, their farm's soil stays healthy and you get to eat mineral-rich pasta that's been grown and processed without synthetic fertilizers, herbicides, or pesticides.



The Turners

Living in northeastern Montana, the Turners are known to consistently grow some of the best wheat available. Welcome, Dave and Dee Turner, to the Annie's family and for helping us to provide the best ingredients to our customers! [Read more about the Turners.](#)

One of our farmers, Terry Jacobson, is quite the talented poet. We received his book of poetry and couldn't resist sharing with all of you. [Read Right of Ownership.](#)

[Back to the Top](#)

Deliverability: Content, Formatting & Lack of Self-Advocacy

Deliverability concerns turned out to be the #4 challenge for marketers in the 2011 Email Marketing Benchmark Report. That's interesting especially when one considers that if an email is not delivered, everything stops there.

Making it into the inbox involves a complex set of issues and is a perennial challenge for email marketers. While many organizations are experiencing measurable improvements, nearly as many are experiencing worsening conditions. The net result is only a slight change for the better.

Marketers are often in denial about what their deliverability situation may look like because it makes them feel helpless. It's one of the key aspects to their campaigns where they probably have the least control. Keeping your copy "un-spammy" just isn't good enough anymore. And now we're starting to learn that having a good reputation isn't necessarily the cure-all we thought it *might be* about six months ago. (Although, to be clear, we at Sherpa still HIGHLY advise making reputation management a HUGE priority.)

Marketers also tend to fall into two "mistake camps" when it comes to email filtering:

- Camp #1. "It doesn't happen to me. My reports say 95%-99% of my mail is delivered."

Well, unless you have had your delivery audited by a third party, as much as 20% of your campaign email may be getting filtered.

- Camp #2. "It's our email service provider's job to get the mail past filters. If too much is being filtered, we'll switch broadcast vendors."

The answer to that: Although competing vendors may tell you that they can save the day, chances are one of the big (but not only) reasons your email is stopped by filters is because you formatted it incorrectly in HTML. Or, it could be that your reputation with an ISP or two is bad.

HOW TO AVOID THIS MISTAKE

Assuming you're already doing the basic stuff – only mailing true permission names messages you're darn sure they're interested in at a non-annoying frequency – here are four more factors to double-check:

Factor #1. Are you currently using a dedicated IP address to send email that no other mailer ever uses? Almost all vendors offer it, and it's your responsibility as the mailer to insist on using this service.

Otherwise, you're at the mercy of every other mailer sending from the same IP address. If any of the folks on their list block or blacklist them, your mailings are tarred with the same brush because you appear to be identical.

Factor #2. If you send in HTML, is it coded properly? Industry experts have told us off the record that it's actually STILL rare to see email newsletters and alerts coded cleanly. (Reportedly, there have been only slight improvements on this front in recent years.)

For instance, a great deal of email design is done by Web designers who don't realize email requires super-clean code. Plus, as original email templates are altered and adjusted over the years, the code can get messy.

Factor #3. Content filtering is still HUGE in the corporate world. Excellent email service providers can help you get through to major ISPs with volume controls, strict list hygiene and reputation.

But, you must remember to be your biggest deliverability advocate when speaking to your ESP. Talking with them should be just like going to the doctor – it's your job to ask questions, too. (That goes for factors #1, #2 and #4 as well.)

Factor #4. The most important thing you need to do is improve your sender reputation. Work with your ESP on this if you need to improve deliverability.

Example of why deliverability is huge: In a recent Sherpa Case Study, we saw how events marketer LiveNation dramatically tempered their massive email list for three months worth of campaigns, only sending to purchasers from the past 16 months for one month before slowly reopening the spigot to include all database records. It worked wonders; they saw 20.4% more messages get through and a year-over-year increase in email-generated revenue of 143%.

SAMPLES FROM MARKETERS WHO GET IT RIGHT

eDiets tested a number of 'sexy' subject lines that other marketers might have steered clear of due to concerns about getting flagged and sent to junk bins. Not surprisingly, they learned that the best kind of email content management can entail testing your own audience. eDiets saw opens jump by more than three percentage points with the sexier subject lines and got click-throughs as high as 92.2% in the tests. Meanwhile, their deliverability rate didn't drop a bit.

Sample 7.1: eDiets - Sex Shockers: eDiets - Dumbest Things to Say in Bed Positions, Dos, Don'ts

Love Lines
by eDiets.com

ARE YOU HEAVY OR HEALTHY?

Worried about your weight? Check out the chart, and then check out the diet that keeps you satisfied.

Height	Age 19-34	Age over 35
5'0"	97 - 128	108 - 138
5'1"	101 - 132	111 - 143
5'2"	104 - 137	115 - 148

✓ Feel fuller longer
✓ Reduce your hunger and cravings
✓ Avoid those sugar "highs" and "lows"

Lose 10 lbs. in 5 Weeks

[CLICK HERE TO GET STARTED](#)

Table Of Contents

- 10 Dumbest Things to Say... In Bed!
- Trust: Can It Be Recovered After Cheating?
- Let's Get (More Than) Physical
- Can't Get It Up!
- Dating Together: Good or Bad?

10 Dumbest Things to Say... In Bed!
Learn the most dastardly foreplay faux pas that murder the mood, and keep the body alive!
[Follow: trash-talkin'...](#)

Trust: Can It Be Recovered After Cheating?
When one partner "strays" - and the other stays - it can be difficult to rebuild.
[Putting the pieces back together...](#)

Let's Get (More Than) Physical

Can't Get It Up!

Dating Together: Good or Bad?

Q&A

Sex Fact

Can't Get It Up?
Can't let it get you down. It may just save your life.
[The hard facts...](#)

More Hot News

Dating Together: Good or Bad?
Should you try losing weight with your partner?
[The buddy system...](#)

Which is Your Perfect Diet?
Our Diet Needs Analysis can help you decide from among the world's best plans. [Click here to find out!](#)

Love Lines Archive

- 10 Steps to Better Sex!
- 10 Energy-Boosting Foods
- Do Most Men Want Thin Women?
- Sex Shockers
- Sex and Back Pain

CoolSavings

FRS
FRS Support
TRY IT FREE!

MAX GXL - A HEALTHIER YOU
Visit our website for info on a feeling better with Glutathione
<http://www.mymasg.com/distributor>

House Payments Fall Again
\$430,000 Mortgage for \$1299/Mo. Paying too much? No credit check reqd.
www.loveyourbills.com

DO YOU NEED TO LOSE WEIGHT?

Height	Age 19-34	Age over 35
5'0"	97 - 128	108 - 138
5'1"	101 - 132	111 - 143
5'2"	104 - 137	115 - 148

Lose 10 Lbs. in 5 weeks

[FREE! eDiets Profile](#)

Love Lines
by eDiets.com

ARE YOU HEAVY OR HEALTHY?

Worried about your weight? Check out the chart, and then check out the diet that keeps you satisfied.

Height	Age 19-34	Age over 35
5'0"	97 - 128	108 - 138
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✓ Feel fuller longer
✓ Reduce your hunger and cravings
✓ Avoid those sugar "highs" and "lows"

Lose 10 lbs. in 5 Weeks

[CLICK HERE TO GET STARTED](#)

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- Dating Dos & Don'ts
- Sex Shockers!
- Holiday Loneliness
- Wanted: Legal Positions
- It's All in Your Head

Dating Dos & Don'ts
You're looking for the "right one" to kiss when the ball drops, but will you spend 2007 making the same dating mistakes you've made year after year? Backsliding into sex with your ex is no way to spend 2007.
[Do the right thing!](#)

Sex Shockers!
Everything you know about sex is just the tip of the iceberg. Most sex advice hasn't looked below the surface... until now. [The truth is under there.](#)

Holiday Loneliness
Dear Sirs:
Help! I'm single all the holidays and hating it. It is even possible to meet a nice guy during a season that seems so much about couples? Any suggestions on what I can do and where I can go to mix and mingle and maybe meet someone special?
-Lonely on Long Island

Wanted: Legal Positions
Several states still have outdated statutes outlawing sexual positions beyond missionary. Are you a [sex offender?](#)

More Hot News

It's All in Your Head
If it seems like you and your partner can't seem to get on the same page, it may be due to differences in brain wiring.
[Connect with Dr. Brenson](#)

Q&A

Sex Fact

Which is Your Perfect Diet?
Our Diet Needs Analysis can help you decide from among the world's best plans. [Click here to find out!](#)

Love Lines Archive

- How Long Should It Last?
- Things You Shouldn't Share With Your Partner
- My Guy Won't Stop Sharing!
- Stop Settling: Find Real Love!
- How to Build a Perfectly Good Relationship

Surprising Smoothie Hints
Check out this article as the new offering from the writers of eDiets.com. Give featured the latest fitness, healthy, and beauty tips plus juicy entertainment gossip.

Diet Your Way!
Lose 10 lbs. in 5 weeks

[FREE! Diet Profile](#)

Try FRS FREE for 2 Weeks!
Feel Better With Healthy Energy!
INDEPENDENT STUDY*
15.3% less fatigue
35.6% less work frustration
34% better focus

Boost your physical, emotional, & mental health!
*Buck, 6th May 2008

Designing Images That Appear as Red Xs

Still wondering if you should be sending HTML or text-only newsletters?

Here's the bad news first: Getting HTML images to appear for people who have images turned off hasn't gotten much easier. The good news: Marketers are getting remarkably more intelligent about the way they design their HTML newsletters to look intriguing even if the images do not appear right away.

It's amazing how many big-brand retailers, however, are still sending out banner-styled messages that appear as blanks or red Xs after initially being opened. We won't name names to protect the not-so-innocent, but we at Sherpa have been watching and, overall, the firms doing the best job are medium-sized, etail-born firms. (Not surprising, we know.)

HOW TO AVOID THIS MISTAKE

At the same time, one example of a big-brand marketer doing excellent work in this regard is A&E Television Networks. Basically, they laid out the blueprint to ridding red Xs from your design.

(See <http://www.marketingsherpa.com/article.html?ident=30071> for the article.)

Here were their three major steps:

Step #1. Balance copy and images. They created a three-column layout where the text flowed up and around images so readers who had their email images disabled could focus on the message rather than the blank spaces.

Step #2. Employ ALT-text tags. They used a feature available in all HTML email programs, but not used by all marketers: ALT-text tags. The tags allow the designer to insert descriptive copy that the viewers could read inside the blocked images.

Here's what you need to do to add ALT-text tags:

- Open the image tag (IMG)
- Add the ALT-text attribute: (img src="http://..." alt="XYZ")

- Type in copy the way they wanted it to read

Step #3. Implement checklist. To avoid badly written code or copy typos in the ALT-text tags, A&E put together a 13-point quality assurance checklist that addressed various potential tripwires in rendering and deliverability.

Of course, this is something you can easily test in-house. You should already have an account for every free ISP, as well as the Comcasts, Time Warners and AT&Ts of the world. So, test your designs in each of those accounts (and, of course, Outlook) before you settle on a “post-red X” template. And if you have any other difficulties with the red Xs, contact your ESP – they will be happy to help you with these procedures. (If not, tell them you are moving on.)

A&E Relationship Marketing Manager Ana Lucia Dunkle and her team are sure glad they did. With click-throughs being their most-important data point, they saw a whopping 41% increase since the overhaul. In addition, email-generated traffic from the content programs has doubled at their Web sites. The ALT-text tags, as well as the improved copy/image design balance, deserve most of the credit.

“We’ve seen that designing HTML for a Web page and an email is totally different,” she says. “It’s been difficult for our designers because they’re used to designing using tools like CSS, Flash animation, Java script, etc. So, we went back to basics and found that HTML as a programming language contains a plethora of tags and attributes that may not always be used for Web page design but can be taken advantage of in email.”

SAMPLES FROM MARKETERS WHO GET IT RIGHT

Abandoning banner-style emails for designs involving ALT-tags, which let text appear inside images even if a recipient has images turned off, proved to be a boon for A&E Television Networks’ newsletters. With clickthroughs being their most-important data point, they saw an incredible 41% increase – while email-generated traffic from their content programs doubled at their websites.

(SEE SAMPLES 8.1 & 8.2 ON NEXT PAGE)

Sample 8.1: A&E Television

Date: Tue, 4 Apr 2006 18:55:07 -0400
 Subject: A&E: We're wheeling and dealing, Vegas style.

If you have trouble viewing this email, [click here](#)

GOD OR THE GIRL -- Series Premiere
 Sunday, April 16 @ 9pm/8C

Meet Joe, Mike, Steve, and Dan, four all-American guys at the most important crossroads of their lives: becoming Roman Catholic priests or finding women to love, marry and start a family with. A&E's new five-part series, GOD OR THE GIRL, takes you along on their powerful journey, capturing the tension, turmoil and triumph of choosing between two divergent paths—and committing to that choice for the rest of their lives.

DOG THE BOUNTY HUNTER
 Tuesday, April 4 @ 9pm/8C

Dog may act like he's tough as nails, but case after case proves he's a softie at heart. When he discovers that Frankie is trying to get off meth and get a job, Dog promises to help him out of jail. And when he tracks down Christy, a woman with 87 prior arrests, he is moved by her life story of abandonment and betrayal. This episode is about second chances, and Dog is eager to give others the new start on life that he had.

[See our Dog DVDs](#)

BIOGRAPHY: WOMEN OF COUNTRY
 Friday, April 7 @ 8pm/7C

Musicians, Businesswomen, Stars. The women of country music are not only making it in a man's world, but changing the industry in the process. This two-hour special gives a never-before-seen look at the glamour, heartache and music of some of the top female stars in the country music business, including Barbara Mandrell, Emmylou Harris, k.d. Lang, LeAnn Rimes, Loretta Lynn, Naomi Judd, Tanya Tucker, Trisha Yearwood, Reba McEntyre and Crystal Gayle.

[Loretta Lynn's life story on DVD](#)

COLD CASE FILES
 Saturday, April 8 @ 9pm/8C

On a summer night in 1987, a 19-year-old girl is raped and strangled near the Hudson River. Her friend Michael remains the chief suspect for 17 years, until DNA fingers another man who offers a chilling account of Diana's last breath. In 1983, a young mother is raped and murdered while at work at a San Antonio interior design shop. Two decades later, detectives reopen the case, but when DNA evidence turns up missing, it looks like it could all be over before it starts.

[Check out our Cold Case Files DVDs](#)

APRIL HIGHLIGHTS

By Satan Possessed: The Search for the Devil: America Undercover Monday, April 10 @ 9pm/8C	Mysteries Of The Bible® Sunday, April 16 @ 8pm/7C
Biography - Gone Too Early Friday, April 14 @ 8pm/7C	Dallas SWAT - New episode Thursday, April 20 @ 10pm/9C

Visit the A&E Store |
 >> [all Dog DVDs](#)
 >> [BEST SELLERS](#)
 >> [BEST SELLERS Channel](#)

This email was sent to you by A&E Television. To ensure delivery to your inbox (not bulk or junk folders) and view (AOL), please add news@ae.com to your address book or safe list.
 If you have trouble seeing this message, [click here](#) or paste this URL in your browser.
<http://www.aetv.com/subscribe/subscribe.asp?cid=12345&tid=12345&aid=12345>

Sample 8.2: A&E Television

Sent: Monday, July 30, 2007 2:51 PM
 Subject: NEW time! New episode: Sticky stuff

If you have trouble viewing this email, please [click here](#)

THIS DAY IN HISTORY 7/30/1971:
Fighter jet collides with passenger plane

The viewers have spoken, and the winners are... thousands of you voted in our MODERN MARVELS Viewers' Choice, here are the results:

Freight Trains (4.23)	80's Tech (3.35)
World's Biggest Machines 3 (3.21)	Extreme Aircraft (4.32)
Nature's Engineers (3.21)	Horsepower (4.00)
Brewing Beer (2.46)	Snack Food Tech (5.05)

Buy one MODERN MARVELS DVD, get one free!

MODERN MARVELS: The Creation of the Computer DVD

Duct tape, scotch tape, fly paper, Poligrip... we take this stuff for granted, but without it, our lives would come undone... [MORE](#)

Now catch MODERN MARVELS Monday-Friday @ 8pm/7C
 Check the [TV Schedule](#) for more MODERN MARVELS!

FACTOIDS

- Working in zero gravity might be a challenge if it weren't for hook and loop fasteners - which line the walls, ceiling, and floor in many sections of the international space station.
- The historic punishment tar and feathering should have been called rosen and feathering since it was pine tar rosen that gave the penalty its slick. Burning occurred in less than three seconds, and the accused was left to clean it all off with turpentine and tar soap.

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Disregarding Your BlackBerry and Mobile Readers

Did you know that 64% of key decision makers are looking at your carefully crafted email on their BlackBerrys, iPhones, Androids and other mobile devices? In addition, regular users are often from a wealthier demographic – with an annual household income of more than \$100,000.

Yet, chances are, your email looks downright terrible in BlackBerrys. The good news is that mobile email isn't, per se, replacing desktop email usage; it is merely complementing it. Because consumers know that the quality of mobile email rendering is not as good as it is on a computer, they'll typically wait to deal with commercial email until they're back at their desks.

At the same time, ignoring the impact your campaigns can have on BlackBerry, iPhone and mobile users would be foolhardy. In a Case Study from September, we saw how sending text-only messages on the weekends helped the Durham Bulls minor league baseball team have their best playoff tickets sales campaigns in their history.

Further, there's no reason why marketers shouldn't be able to balance the needs of their readers who are on mobile and at their desks. In fact, with swamped inboxes being the top challenge to email marketers, this is an area where you can get a distinct leg up on the competition (especially B-to-B marketers).

HOW TO AVOID THIS MISTAKE

What do you do?

First, get a BlackBerry, iPhone and other wireless devices and see your emails for yourself. Then, call for an immediate meeting with your email design team.

Second, design your messages so they can be read in almost open-standard formatting. If possible, you want malleable email that conforms to where relevancy through the message is maintained no matter what receiver or device the recipient is using. But, unfortunately, with all the different protocols for every receiver, it can get rather complicated.

The easiest solution is to offer text-only messages when you are emailing during peak times for BlackBerry users, like the Durham Bulls did on weekends. But business professionals are often not at a desk even during regular hours.

What a lot of smart marketers are doing to dually serve their computer- and mobile-based subscribers is to design the offer (or “the hook”) in text format at the very top of the message. What’s below it – for the sake of this particular discussion – doesn’t matter. At least everyone knows WHY you are emailing them. Hence, if necessary, they will make a mental note to examine your entire message when they get back to their desks. In the case of “traditional” HTML emails, that might not be the case at all for people receiving them on BlackBerrys and not being able to make out a thing.

SAMPLES FROM MARKETERS WHO GET IT RIGHT

The Durham Bulls tried to target BlackBerry weekend readers in a time-sensitive campaign with a text-only email, which was followed by an HTML message three days later. The one-two punch sold 262.3% more single-game tickets than their average 2007 email campaign. Better yet: 88.5% of the sales derived from the initial text-only message.

Sample 9.1: Durham Bulls Baseball text-only email

Subject: FAN ALERT: Bulls Sweep, Face Yankees or Braves for League Championship
To: _____

Bulls Playing For Another Championship

The [Durham Bulls](#) completed a [sweep of the Toledo Mud Hens](#) on Friday night to advance to the International League Championship Series Presented by [Time Warner Cable](#). The Bulls advance to the Championship Round for the fifth time in ten seasons. [Jon Weber](#) led off the ninth inning with a tie-breaking home run and [Evan Longoria](#) followed a few batters later with his second homer of the game leading the Durham Bulls to a 5-2 win and series sweep.

The Bulls will host Games One and Two of the International League Championship Series Presented by Time Warner Cable beginning on [Tuesday, September 11th at 7:00 PM](#). The Bulls will face the winner of the series between the Scranton Wilkes-Barre Yankees and Richmond Braves.

[Order tickets now](#) for the final two home games of the Bulls season. The playoffs bring some great baseball crowds and these players are fun to watch - you will have a great time. Best of all, choice field box seats are only \$8 so order today:

[Tuesday, September 11 7pm](#)
[Durham Bulls vs Yankees or Braves](#)

[Wednesday, September 12 7pm](#)
[Durham Bulls vs Yankees or Braves](#)


Thanks for your continued support this season,

Jon Bishop
Assistant General Manager
Durham Bulls Baseball Club
919-687-6578
jbishop@durhambulls.com

To unsubscribe, please click [here](#).

Sample 9.2: Durham Bulls Baseball HTML email

Subject: Evan Longoria's Home Runs Lead Bulls to Championship Series



International League Championship Series Starts Tonight in Durham

Durham Bulls vs Richmond Braves for the Governors' Cup

The Durham Bulls will be trying to win their third Championship in six years when they face the Richmond Braves in the best-of-five International League Championship Series Presented by Time Warner Cable. The series starts tonight with Game 1 at 7pm at the Durham Bulls Athletic Park. >> [Buy Tickets Now!](#)

Game 2 of the series will be on Wednesday, September 12 at 7pm. The series will finish in Richmond.

Evan Longoria and [Justin Basso](#) lead the Bulls' offensive attack that hit the most home runs in the IL this season. [J.P. Howell](#) will start game 1 for the Bulls and [Jeff Newman](#) has been named the starter for Game 2.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information on the Championship Series.
Expert Says: "Bulls in Four"

Great field box seats are still available by ordering online or calling the Bulls ticket office at 919-687-2855.

[CLICK HERE](#) to order tickets for the Championship Series.

Durham Bulls Baseball Club | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [Contact the Bulls](#)
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Repeating Ad Types

One of the more interesting projects we did back in 2008 for the Email Marketing Benchmark Guide 2008 turned out to be the eyetracking tests. In the email eyetracking, we wanted to explore how people view ads in newsletters and the different elements that could positively (and negatively) affect their attention.

We led test groups through several rounds of newsletter changes, each time trying to introduce variations to test their effect on how people view and move through the page.

One of the most telling findings was that, in these unmodified emails, attention on the top left ads dropped steadily each time the audience viewed them. By the third viewing, attention had dropped to almost zero.

Of course, we're all aware of "banner blindness," but it's interesting that this occurred so quickly and to ads that were highly relevant to the context of the surrounding content. (This likely helps explain why moving our house ads from the right to the left was such a big win for the Sherpa newsletters.)

HOW TO AVOID THIS MISTAKE

This news sounds like a conundrum for your design team, huh? We can hear them now: "Are you telling me we have to change the template every third or fourth mailing?"

Fortunately, there are methods to positively change attention, and we explored a number of them. Yes, the bottom line is to change things up. Ad rotation isn't necessarily enough – if ads are in the same location and are the same size, blindness occurs quickly. In several subsequent tests, we found that changing ad position and format can jumpstart attention.

Simply put, you need to mix up your ad spots on your newsletter without losing its consistent feel. Use different ad types – from graphical ads to text lists. Slight variations can bump up attention. If you have a template with a couple of choices, rotate between the spots to keep the ads looking fresh.

SAMPLES FROM MARKETERS WHO GET IT RIGHT

Here's one from the MarketingSherpa file. We tested moving our house ads from the right-hand side of our design to the left margin, where they would appear in preview panes. Presto! 28.24% more clicks.

Sample 10.1: MarketingSherpa



Did your email system mangle this newsletter? [See it Online.](#)

EmailSherpa

July 21, 2006

CASE STUDY: Emailed Video Hotlink Helps Business Development Reps Land (Big) New Accounts

SUMMARY: Do your reps ever have trouble getting major prospects to agree to meetings so they can pitch the account?

Here's a great new Sherpa Case Study that could help you with that problem. Best of all, it doesn't require a huge budget. Includes creative samples and deliriously positive result stats:


<http://www.marketingsherpa.com/article.php?ident=29652>
(Open access until July 31st)

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A Great Resource for Marketing Departments or Agencies!

January 25, 2008

1. PR Interview: How to Pitch The Baltimore Sun

SUMMARY: The Baltimore Sun is Maryland's premier newspaper with a newly redesigned website offering plenty of interactive features. Many stories and columns run in sister publications, such as the Chicago Tribune, Los Angeles Times and Orlando Sentinel. The Sun's consumer columnist/blogger shares tips on how to get your news mentioned.

[Click to continue](#)
(Open access until January 31st)

2. Horizon Interactive Awards

Designers and developers, pay attention: the Horizon Interactive Awards is in its sixth year of recognizing successful innovative technically-savvy communication efforts. Last year alone, almost 1,000 people competed from 24 countries. Enter your achievements from any of the relevant categories, including blogs, B-to-B, magazines, newspapers and ecommerce. Keep in mind the following judging criteria: creativity and originality; design, appearance and user experience; communication of message; technical merit and effectiveness of solution.

[Click to continue](#)
(Deadline January 31st)

P.S. Did a friend send you this? [Go Here](#) for your own copy - it's award-winning, useful, and complimentary.

P.P.S. Got questions, comments, or ideas for editorial? Email Editorial Director Tad Clarke at [TadC\(at\)marketingsherpa\(dot\)com](mailto:TadC(at)marketingsherpa(dot)com) or call Customer Service at (877) 895-1717 -- thanks!

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Collecting Bad Response Rates

While collecting data for a number of our email-related research endeavors, we were surprised to learn that not all marketers use the same math to calculate their rates – mainly click-throughs and conversions. For instance, some divide their clicks by the total list to get their “click-through rate.” Some divide it by the number of opens.

Who’s to blame for this mess? Not anyone, in particular; it’s just the industry as a whole, which has not established standards for emailers.

The potential trouble with all of this is that marketers who aren’t doing the math the right way are not as likely to hone in on what’s working (or not) in their campaigns. The problem could have to deal with anything from the subject line, to the creative, to the call-to-action copy to the color of a button. Heck, there could be people in the same brand’s department calculating things differently.

HOW TO AVOID THIS MISTAKE

First of all, you can clean up this situation with – you guessed it! – a little common sense. Here’s an easy-to-understand breakdown of how most industry leaders are tallying their stats:

- How to calculate opens: Divide the number of opens against the sum of delivered addresses (to the best of your tracking) – and not the entire list. There’s little use in judging a subject line against a group of people who never saw it.
- How to calculate click-throughs: Divide the number of recipients that click through by the total opens – and not the entire list. This way you can assert how truly effective the body of your message was, along with the subject line if you like (that’s up to you and whether you think subject lines affect click-throughs).
- How to calculate conversions: This is the most debatable of the three, since some marketers tend to “cook the books” at this stage by calculating conversions against the smallest possible pool. But it is not difficult to figure out which kinds of calculations actually equal a fair assessment.

If you want to judge a campaign in its entirety, from the list segmentation to the subject line to the body of the message to the landing page to the offer, divide the amount of unique transactions against the number of total delivered addresses. But, if you want to measure the effectiveness of just the landing page, divide the number of transactions by the amount of click-throughs.

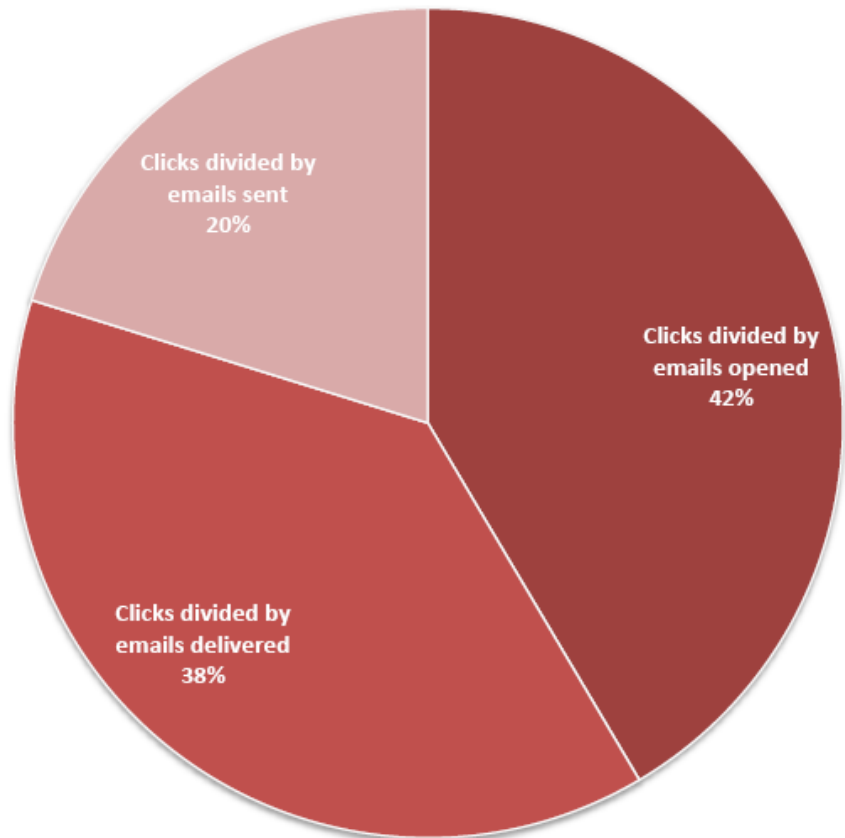
Over time, if you consistently collect rates in these manners, you will get the truest read on how the different components to your campaign are performing. And, that is what's really important.

Chart 11.1: How Marketers Measure Emails Clicked

HOW MARKETERS MEASURE EMAILS CLICKED

Q. Which best describes how your organization calculates 'Clickthrough Rate'?

Chart: Calculating 'Clickthrough Rate'



Source: MarketingSherpa Email Marketing Benchmark Survey
Methodology: Fielded Sep 2010, N=1,115

Relying on Email Only

Whether you are talking about combining media, such as TV and radio spots, roadside billboards, banner ads or telecommunications, one strategy that is still in style is multichannel marketing. With that in mind, even if your newsletter is a vital part of your communications with clients and/or prospects, don't rely on email alone. One-two punches of the smart variety almost always test better.

For instance, Disc Makers targets their audience of music recording hobbyists by emailing request-a-catalog campaigns to past customers and opt-in prospects; then they mail the catalogs. "The email campaigns qualify the catalog requests at a higher level and increase [ROI]," says Kate Sullivan, Marketing Manager. "Most of our sales come over the phone, and the direct mail-email combinations drive those calls."

Indeed, email alone is not going to do the trick for a promotion (unless your brand has one heckuva longstanding offline presence and an INCREDIBLE house list, perhaps). It helps greatly if you complement it with another channel.

HOW TO AVOID THIS MISTAKE

First of all, reconsider your own newsletter strategy. Perhaps you should send follow-up printed copies of your newsletter to top prospects and best customers. Or, perhaps, you should create a bound booklet or syndicated PDF of your best-of articles for annual distribution. At the very least, supplement email sends with RSS feeds (a companion to, not a replacement for email) and posted online articles (in a search engine-friendly format).

If your message matters, then make sure people receive and pay attention to it. Be as creative as possible in the ways you reach out to them. Of course, retailers have the luxury of combining email with one or two examples of the other forms of media. Combining email with a channel that has traditionally worked well for you offline may be worth a test.

SAMPLES FROM MARKETERS WHO GET IT RIGHT

There are two popular and proven ways of using email with your print catalog. Like many successful marketers, World's Finest Chocolates has consistently used email to announce the in-home arrival of their seasonal catalogs. And since pushing the print book is important to Disc Makers' success, they regularly include an image-driven, request-a-brochure house ad in their newsletters.

Sample 12.1: World's Finest Chocolate

This email contains images. If you are having trouble viewing it, please [click here](#).



A New Catalog Is In The Mail!

If you don't get your new catalog soon, request a copy through our website at www.worldsfinestchocolate.com

Shop Now for

- Thanksgiving, Nov. 22nd
- Christmas, Dec. 25th


World's Finest® Chocolate has sent you this email advertisement because you have purchased from us or registered to receive our email updates.

To be sure our mail reaches your inbox (not bulk or junk folders), please add chocolate@wfchocolate.com to your address book.

If you would like to change your email address, or no longer wish to receive email from us, let us know by updating your [email preferences](#).

Sample 12.2: Disc Makers

1-866-266-0884



Outfit your fans.

24 custom-printed T-shirts just \$168


Price includes everything: garment, one-color printing, and all setup and output charges.

[CLICK HERE](#)

Disc Makers introduces custom-printed Merch.

Any successful band will tell you that you can make a lot more money selling merch at your gigs than you can by just selling CDs. Now you can turn to the same company for both. Disc Makers not only provides the best CD manufacturing, we now also offer custom-printed merch in a way any indie artist can appreciate: with no confusing setup charges, incredibly low minimum orders, and—best of all—your merch will be ready in plenty of time for your CD release party.

[Learn more about merch.](#)



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Plus: Order Disc Makers design for your CDs, we'll throw in free design for your merch.

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