E-Mail Marketing

FOR

DUMMIES®

Learn to:

- **Use e-mail to attract customers and increase business**

- **Build a mailing list and create effective messages**

- **Track the results of your campaign**

- **Develop a strategy that incorporates social media**

John Arnold

Author of Web Marketing All-in-One
For Dummies

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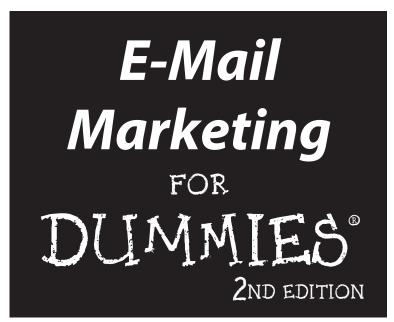- Illustrated Articles
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E-Mail Marketing

FOR

DUMMIES®

2ND EDITION

by John Arnold

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About the Author

John Arnold is the author of three marketing books in the best-selling *For Dummies* series: In addition to this one, he's also written *Web Marketing All-in-One Desk Reference For Dummies* and *Mobile Marketing For Dummies*. He also writes the Marketing Tools & Technologies column for Entrepreneur Magazine Online at Entrepreneur.com.

John is a small business advocate and entrepreneur with a passion for helping small business owners succeed through his writing, speaking, training, and consulting. He owns a small business marketing agency called Aveta Marketing that specializes in lower-cost, outsourced marketing solutions for small businesses and nonprofit organizations.

John also helps big brands learn how to help their small business customers become more successful marketers. He has developed marketing training and certification programs for brands like Coca-Cola, Constant Contact, The Mobile Marketing Association, and other companies you might know.

John lives and works in Boulder, Colorado. Visit his Web site at `www.JohnArnold.com` to inquire about marketing training programs, speaking, consulting, or outsourced services.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to the individual entrepreneurs who love the spirit of free enterprise and who live to share their personal passions with their customers and their communities.

I also dedicate this book to the One who causes all things to work together for good and reminds me that e-mail is not the most important thing in life.

Author's Acknowledgments

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Contents at a Glance

Table of Contents

Introduction

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E-mail isn't a new technology any more, but you can do a lot of new things with e-mail marketing. E-mail can be delivered to mobile devices and can integrate nicely into a social media marketing strategy.

Still, the same challenges that existed in the past apply to the new world of e-mail marketing. Namely, communicating with consumers is easy, but getting them to pay attention isn't. Every successful marketing strategy entails cutting through the clutter, and few places are more cluttered than the average consumer's e-mail inbox.

E-mail marketing represents an opportunity to experience both the thrill of increased customer loyalty and steady repeat business as well as the agony of bounced e-mail, unsubscribe requests, and spam complaints. Whether you find thrill or agony in your e-mail marketing strategy depends on your ability to effectively deliver valuable and purposeful e-mails to prospects and customers who have a need for your information.

This book combines time-tested marketing strategies with consumer preferences and best practices to help you develop and deliver e-mails that your prospects and customers look forward to receiving. I explain how to apply basic business and marketing principles to your e-mail strategy, such as maximizing your revenue and coming up with meaningful objectives. I also explain how to use e-mail templates to design professional-looking marketing e-mails and how to come up with relevant e-mail content to put into your designs.

E-mail marketers are also subject to legal requirements, consumer mistrust, and Internet service providers (ISPs) blocking and filtering unwanted e-mails by the billions. This book shows you how to adhere to professional standards, improve your deliverability, and execute your e-mail marketing strategy with current laws in mind.

Because your prospects and customers have to share their e-mail address for you to deliver valuable e-mails, this book explains how to build a quality e-mail list of subscribers who reward your e-mail marketing efforts with immediate action and outstanding return on investment (ROI). I include tactics that you can use immediately to start building your list as well as tips for obtaining permission and getting your list subscribers to take action on your e-mails.

E-mail integrates with other technologies, so this book shows you how to combine e-mail with social media and how to deliver e-mail to mobile devices. I also show you how to automate your e-mail marketing and target your e-mails more effectively with personalized databases and tracking.

E-mail marketing doesn't conclude with the successful delivery of an e-mail, so I also explain how you can find out who's opening and clicking your e-mails. I include tips for using e-mail tracking reports and Web analytics to increase the number of your e-mail list subscribers who regularly make purchases and refer your business to their friends and colleagues. I also explain how you can use e-mail to improve search engine optimization, blogs, surveys, and other new technologies to deepen your customer relationships and extend your online presence.

About This Book

E-Mail Marketing For Dummies answers your questions about e-mail marketing and gives you tips and ideas for executing the various steps involved in a successful e-mail marketing campaign.

This book isn't written to impress technically savvy intellectuals. It's for business owners and marketers who have to make the most of every minute of every day. I include lots of bulleted text with concise descriptions and ideas for implementing each topic immediately.

The content in each chapter stands alone, so you don't have to read all the chapters in order. You can use this book like an entire series of books on the subject of e-mail marketing. You can scan through the table of contents and read about a single topic to refresh your memory or to get a few ideas before beginning a task, or you can read an entire chapter or a series of chapters to gain understanding and gather ideas for executing one or more parts of an entire e-mail campaign.

Conventions Used in This Book

To make this book easier to scan and internalize, I use the following conventions:

> ✔ Words in *italics* point out industry terminology or words that have special definitions in the book.
>
> ✔ Web addresses and text you see onscreen appear in a different font, as in
>
> ```
> www.JohnArnold.com
> ```

What You Don't Have to Read

Sidebars, set off in special gray boxes, are included in this book to add clarity to complex concepts or to give anecdotal examples of the tips and ideas in the book. You don't have to read them to benefit from this book.

You can also skip the information marked with a technical stuff icon if you don't feel like geeking out.

Foolish Assumptions

It's hard to imagine that anyone has managed to stay completely away from e-mail. However, to get the most out of this book I assume you already

> ✔ Have a working e-mail address
>
> ✔ Are responsible for (or are soon to be responsible for) marketing a small business or other organization
>
> ✔ Know how to use a computer and a mouse
>
> ✔ Have a Web site or a physical store or office location (or you soon will)
>
> ✔ Have a product or service that people need or have an idea for a product or service that people need

How This Book Is Organized

E-Mail Marketing For Dummies is divided into six parts in chronological order according to the steps involved in developing and executing a successful e-mail marketing strategy.

Part I: Getting Started with E-Mail Marketing

Part I explains where e-mail fits into a business marketing mix and describes the benefits and limitations of e-mail as a marketing tool. I give you insight into the consumer landscape including tips for understanding spam and complying with spam laws as well as maximizing the revenue you generate from using e-mail. Part I also tells you about the benefits of using an E-Mail Marketing Provider (EMP) to help you manage the logistics of your strategy.

Part II: Mapping Out an E-Mail Marketing Strategy

Part II helps you to build a solid foundation for sending e-mails by telling you how to set objectives and how to build a quality e-mail list full of prospects and customers who will help you meet your objectives. I explain how to set money-making objectives as well as timesaving objectives, and I tell you when and how often to send your e-mail campaigns. Here are also lots of great ideas for finding new e-mail list subscribers and keeping the ones you already have. I also tell you how to ask permission to send e-mail so that your e-mails are perceived as more professional and inviting. I explain the importance of making your content valuable and writing effective calls to action so your audience does something meaningful with your e-mails after receiving them. Part II also gives you lots of ideas for prompting your audience to open and read your e-mails.

Part III: Constructing an Effective Marketing E-Mail

Part III explains the nuts and bolts of designing and building a marketing e-mail. I tell you how to use layout and design elements to make your e-mails easy to read, and I tell you how to develop relevant content for your e-mails. I also show you how to create Subject lines and From lines that get your e-mails noticed and opened.

Part IV: Sending Specialized E-Mail Campaigns

Part IV explains how to combine e-mail marketing with social media so that people can share your e-mails and access your e-mail content through the social Web. Part IV also shows you how to design e-mails for mobile devices and how to create e-mail content for mobile users. I also explain how to automate your e-mail marketing and target your e-mails to make them more personal and relevant to your audience.

Part V: Delivering and Tracking Your E-Mails

Part V is where your e-mail marketing strategy finds an enduring future. I explain how to use e-mail tracking reports to determine whether your e-mail strategy is working. I show you how to calculate important metrics, such as open rates and click-through rates. I also explain how to identify and minimize bounced and blocked e-mail and how to optimize your e-mails to sidestep some kinds of e-mail filters. The concluding chapter in Part V explains how to use click-through data and Web analytics to increase your results and how to deepen your customer relationships and expand your online presence.

Part VI: The Part of Tens

In Part VI, you find two lists, each containing ten important bite-size summaries of e-mail marketing information. The first list contains the ten e-mail marketing practices you should avoid, and the second list contains ten resources you should seek out.

The appendix shows one small business' entire e-mail marketing portfolio and includes an example of each type of e-mail you should have in your e-mail marketing arsenal.

Icons Used in This Book

When you scan the contents of this book looking for tips, reminders, and ideas, the following icons in the margin can help you find important information fast:

This icon signifies a tip, shortcut, or strategy that can save you time or trouble.

This icon signifies information that you should remember when taking certain actions.

This icon signifies important details that might cause your strategy to stumble or come to a halt if left unaddressed.

This icon signifies information that is technical in nature.

Where to Go from Here

If you have a new business or if don't know a lot about marketing, you might want to start with Part I and read each chapter in order. If you're an experienced business owner and tech-savvy marketer with a large e-mail list, you can scan through each part's table of contents and read the chapters or topics in any order.

Either way, it's time to get started with building your repeat and referral business as well as deepening your relationships with your prospects and customers with e-mail marketing!

Part I

Getting Started with E-Mail Marketing

"It all started when I received this e-mail about 'Baked Alaska' and frozen custards..."

In this part . . .

*E*very marketing strategy has its strengths and limitations, and e-mail marketing is no exception. Part I helps you to understand e-mail's place in the world of marketing so you can launch your e-mail strategy in the right direction.

Chapter 1 gives an overview of some basic marketing principles and tells you in general terms how to apply marketing principles to your e-mail strategy. This chapter also explains the benefits of e-mail marketing and how to maximize those benefits by using professional e-mail services.

Chapter 2 tells you how you can make money from your e-mail marketing efforts and includes tips for lowering costs as well as increasing revenue. Here are examples of using e-mail to follow up with prospects and grow your repeat business while lowering your costs.

Chapter 3 explains spam from the consumer's perspective as well as from a legal and industry perspective. The chapter includes information about the CAN-SPAM Act and tips for avoiding spam complaints from consumers.

Chapter 1

Adding E-Mail to a Successful Marketing Mix

*W*alking into a business where the first dollar of profit is framed victoriously on the wall always reminds me how important customers are to any business. Customers represent validation of your business idea and proof that your products and services are valuable enough to cause people to part with their money in order to obtain them.

The first dollar of profit is certainly cause for celebration. However, no matter how useful, important, unique, beneficial, or fitting your products or services are to consumers, no one will continue to purchase them if you can't effectively demonstrate that their value exceeds their price.

Demonstrating your value takes a lot of communication as well as the application of sound marketing principles. E-mail, Web sites, social media, mobile marketing, business cards, signs, and postcards are all good ways to communicate your value to consumers, but some tools are better than others for certain kinds of objectives, and all your marketing media has to work together to have the greatest impact.

In this chapter, I show you how to use e-mail in combination with other marketing tools and how to apply basic marketing principles to your e-mail marketing strategy so your framed dollar of profit won't feel lonely.

Fitting E-Mail into Your Marketing Strategy

Including e-mail in your marketing mix isn't as simple as transferring more traditional message formats into electronic formats or abandoning more expensive media in favor of e-mail delivery. Maximizing your business' e-mail marketing potential involves two ongoing tasks:

✔ Analyzing the strengths and limitations of each tool and type of media in your marketing mix

✔ Developing messages that work harmoniously across multiple types of media to achieve your objectives

Determining which tools and types of media are likely to work together to make a significant, positive impact on your business is a matter of some trial and error. At the same time, though, some tools have obvious advantages for any business. E-mail is one such tool because it's cost effective and because the returns on permission-based e-mail campaigns are generally outstanding.

According to the quarterly Direct Marketing Association (`www.the-dma.org`) economic impact study, e-mail marketing generally has the highest return on investment (ROI) per dollar spent when comparing other forms of marketing.

Combining e-mail with other tools and media can improve the ROI on both. The next sections explain the benefits of combining e-mail with other tools and media, and includes tips for using various combinations.

Sending commercial e-mail to complete strangers is illegal. To keep on the right side of the law, combine at least one other marketing media with e-mail in order to initiate relationships with prospective customers. For more information about the legalities of sending commercial e-mail, see Chapter 3.

Combining e-mail with other tools and media

Delivering your messages by combining different tools and types of media is an effective way to market your business, but you'll probably find it more affordable to lean heavily on a few communication tools where delivering your message results in the highest return.

Using e-mail for targeted follow-up is one of the best ways to maximize your overall return on the marketing dollars you spend. Here's an oversimplified example of how you can employ a targeted follow-up:

1. Your business uses traditional marketing media to initiate contact with new prospects.

   For example, if you have a pizza place, you can position an employee holding a sign on a busy sidewalk to talk to potential customers.

2. You collect contact and interest information from the prospects who respond to your initial contacts.

   In exchange for a free slice of pizza, you ask potential customers for an e-mail address and what kind of coupons they'd be interested in receiving via e-mail.

3. You send e-mails containing personalized messages based on the information you collect.

   If your potential customer indicates an interest in chicken wings, you can send coupons for, um, chicken wings. You can also ask your customer to print the menu — that you cleverly included in the e-mail — and forward your offer to a friend.

Branding your message across all media

In marketing, you're likely to employ several tools, types of media, and messages over a period of days, weeks, months, and years to communicate everything necessary to attract and retain enough customers. Keeping the design elements and personality of your messages similar or identical over time — *branding* — reinforces each of your messages and makes each successive message more memorable to your audience.

Consumers are more likely to respond positively to your e-mail messages when they can identify your brand and when the content of each message feels familiar to them. Plan all your marketing messages as if they were one unit to ensure that each message contains design elements that become familiar to your audience when multiple messages are delivered.

Here are some branding ideas to help you give all your marketing messages a familiar look and feel:

✔ **Make your logo identifiable and readable in all types of print and digital formats, with color schemes that look good online and in print.**

In general, your logo and colors should look consistent on

- Your Web site
- Social media sites
- Online directory listings
- E-mail sign-up forms
- Mobile Web sites
- Business cards
- E-mails

✔ **Include your company name in all your marketing.**

Incorporate your name in

- E-mail From lines
- E-mail addresses
- Your e-mail signature
- Online directories
- Your blog

✔ **Format your messages consistently across all media.**

When repeating messages in multiple types of media, make sure the following elements are formatted consistently in your e-mails:

- Fonts
- Layouts
- Images
- Headlines
- Contact information
- Calls to action

Make sure that you can also communicate your brand effectively by using words if you want to take advantage of words-only messaging opportunities, such as radio, podcasting, and text-only e-mail delivery. You can find tips for using effective wording in Chapter 8.