



# SUCCESSFUL EMAIL MARKETING METHODS

## Introduction

---

Email is a revolutionary medium. Consider the following:

- According to the Direct Marketing Association (DMA), email has achieved a return on investment (ROI) of over 57 to 1. In other words, DMA members are making \$57 for every dollar they spend on email, an ROI unrivaled by any other medium in the history of marketing—5700%, versus 4% for overall advertising.
- Email delivers sales at a lower cost per order than paid search (e.g., Google AdWords) or banner ads. The average cost per order for email is less than \$7, compared to \$71.89 for banner ads, \$26.75 for paid search, and \$17.47 for affiliate programs, according to “State of Retailing Online 2007” (September 2007) from Shop.org.
- Email generates unsurpassed lead generation response rates, according to DMA.

However, email marketing is an increasingly demanding art and science. Competition within the recipient's inbox is fierce, and recipients are merciless in deleting emails that are illegible or irrelevant. Your message has just seconds to capture the attention and interest of the recipient and to be opened, all of which are prerequisite to achieving your objectives; average reading time for a promotional email is 15 seconds or less.

Therefore, successful direct marketing requires employing best practices to beat the odds. Based on actual email broadcast results and industry standards, we recommend the following Successful Email Marketing Methods to maximize your direct marketing results.

It should be noted that results may vary by market, company, product or service. So it is important to test changes to your program to measure their effectiveness before you “roll out” to your entire email marketing program.

## Successful Email Marketing Methods

---

### Allow Enough Time

The more time you have to work with MMS to plan your campaign, the better. Planning should ideally encompass an entire campaign, including any necessary logistical coordination with your information technology staff and contingencies for various levels of initial results. Include time for overall message development and creation, html and text creative builds, testing, approvals, revisions and final deployment.

Speaking of time, broadcast scheduling should be a key element of your plan. Seasonality may come into play here. Allowing recipients enough lead time to make plans for continuing medical education (CME) courses is essential—the longer the course, the more lead time required.



## Establish Your Objectives and Goals

Do you want to maximize the response rate or the number of responses? Are you interested in obtaining a target number of responses or maximizing sales or market share of a product or service? Quantify your objectives into achievable goals against which you can evaluate results. Once you have established and communicated objectives and goals, your MMS team can help you pinpoint the perfect prospects for your promotion and execute your campaign in a manner that maximizes your ability to succeed.

## Select Your Audience

Target your broadcast as precisely as possible based on your objectives. Use all available selection criteria to select the audience for whom your offer will have the most relevance, and include all physicians and other health professionals who fit your target profile.

## Develop Your Offer

An offer is the proposition you make to customers, e.g., "See our latest white paper." A compelling offer can mean the difference between success and failure. It should be simple and relevant to your target audience. Use just one offer per message, but test alternatives, such as a free gift, a dollar-amount discount on a purchase, a percentage discount, or free shipping. Consult legal counsel to make sure offers comply with all applicable legislation, regulation, and industry codes.

## Decide on Frequency

While it is true that, in the words of G. M. O'Connell (founder of Modem Media), "You cannot annoy people into liking you," direct marketing experts suggest that up to seven waves of messaging, properly scheduled, may yield a positive return on investment (ROI). Your MMS team can consult with you on the optimal frequency and can plan your campaign in advance to maximize its cost-effectiveness.

## Optimize Creative

Keep the following points in mind when preparing your creative.

### Overall

---

**Relevance is of paramount importance**—The golden rule of email marketing is "Do unto recipients as you would have them do unto you." View your marketing as part of your brand and of your service to a soon-to-be or incumbent customer. Empathize with the recipient—put yourself in his or her shoes. Write as if you're talking to one person and one person only—because you are. Even though email is a broadcast medium, each recipient reads it individually. Make sure you are sending the right message to the right audience at the right time, and writing with style and substance that the recipient will understand and find useful.

One-to-one marketing is the ultimate objective, which can be approximated by segmentation. Logical segments to test in physician marketing are specialty, type of practice, age, gender, behavior (e.g., prescribing profile), and preferences (e.g., type and topic of CME).

**Avoid spam and junk filter triggers**—Test your message using an online content checker or have MMS check it for you, but be sure to allow enough time to make any necessary changes. Using some triggers may be unavoidable—for example, if you're marketing Viagra. The costs may outweigh the benefits in other situations, as some case studies have found regarding use of the word free, which is among the



most powerful words in the copywriter's toolbox. But in general, seek to minimize if not eliminate filter triggers. Check your HTML coding, verify that it is W3C compliant, some spam filters look at incorrect coding as a spam trigger.

**Keep design simple**—Email clients such as Outlook 2007, Gmail, and Hotmail tend to suppress images, advanced programming, css coding, embedded surveys, and other advanced message elements. In the case of Outlook 2007, this is due to Microsoft's substitution of MS Word's HTML display for its Internet Explorer browser, which had more advanced HTML-rendering capabilities.

**Maximize for Mobile devices**—78% percent of recipients read email messages on mobile devices. Keep your content short and simple, the call-to-action earlier in the message and your images. You can also create a link in your message to an alternate mobile version specifically designed for mobile devices.

**Test for rendering issues** — Test your email for rendering and filtering before broadcasting in a variety of major email client types and domains (Yahoo!, AOL, MSN, Outlook, and handheld devices such as BlackBerries, etc.). Illegible messages are doomed to fail. According to the Email Experience Council, 21% of the emails reviewed appeared completely blank when images were turned off or stripped by a variety of email clients such as those mentioned above. Messages filtered out or relegated to junk mail folders suffer similar fates. Proper testing and refinement based on results is an iterative, continuous improvement process and is the best practice to optimize delivery of legible messages to the in-box of the intended recipient. MMS can work with you to implement such efforts. For more information, contact your MMS Business Development Manager.

**Test alternatives for all major message elements**—Test the “From” line, subject line, message body, message content, message format, and landing pages to determine optimal elements for your audience and your offer. Use the A/B method, also known as “split testing,” in which you test different versions of a message element with half of a list (using every other name as the basis for division). Basic tests should change only one variable at a time, leaving all other elements the same.

**Integrate your email campaign with other elements of the marketing mix**—Coordinate direct mail, Web site publicity, telemarketing, space advertising, etc., creatively and chronologically (from a marketing planning and scheduling perspective) to maximize return on investment (ROI). In addition, coordinate with other departments to make sure everyone using your domain name in broadcasts is following email best practices, because what one unit does can affect your entire organization.

**CAN-SPAM Compliant**— Stay Can-Spam compliant. Always include the following:

- Signature
- Postal Address
- Unsubscribe link
- Contact email address

### **From and Subject Lines**

These message elements, also known as headers, may well be the most important elements of your message. 40% of reader's decision to open is based on the email subject and “send from”. Like the outer envelope in direct mail, they determine the fate of your message: whether or not it will be opened. An unopened message cannot meet your objectives. So these two elements of your message merit as much if not more time, thought, and energy as the rest of the campaign combined.



The 50/50 rule states: Spend 50% of your time on the subject/from line and first two lines of the email and 50% on everything else.

According to one study, the “From” and Subject lines are the only message elements that materially affects open rate. In other words, the primary driver of open rates is you—the power your organization’s brand name holds for the recipient. To make sure you communicate this crucial information to the recipient, follow these best practices:

#### “From” Line

- Do not leave this line blank.
- Make sure the “From” name is meaningful and relevant to the recipient—i.e., a company name, a brand, or a recognizable executive name. It must tell the recipient who you are and convey your relevance, importance, and trustworthiness; it must relay that you are a sender whose message merits attention. Research has shown that a person’s name can actually outperform a company or brand name. It should be noted that the name used may impact results. Using the name of an individual known and trusted by the recipient is likely to outperform a stranger’s name.
- Keep it short—handheld devices display only 14 characters. We use “MMS” in the “From” line for our company newsletter, for example.

#### Subject Line

- 8 of 10 people will skim the email subject line. Less than 2 in 10 will read the rest/take action.
- Keep subject lines short—optimum length is 45-55 characters—but make every character count. According to Return Path, short subject lines generate 75% higher click-through rate. Succinctly state the product, service and/or offer in the subject line. For example, in recruitment mailing put the specialty, compensation, and location in the subject line: “NYC Group seeks IM-\$250K.” Or for a survey, consider: “Take Brief PlaceboXL Survey-\$50 honorarium”
- Use deadlines to impart a sense of urgency and increase open rates.
- Include the company or brand name, which research has shown increases the open rate by as much as 12 percentage points, yielding 60% more opened messages.
- Be specific and consistent with the email’s theme and messaging—avoid gimmicks.
- Good subject lines will be short, concise, specific, relevant, offer benefits/value and non-hyped.

## Message Body

---

### Copy

- Personalize the salutation and content as appropriate, using dynamic content based on segmentation, e.g., by specialty (“Doctor Jones, as a gastroenterologist...”) or by geographic location (“Doctor Jones, attend our seminar at the L.A. Hilton, just a short drive from your office”). Always test a sample BEFORE you broadcast to make sure your personalization scheme is working properly



- “Above the Fold” is the most important part of the message. You have the subject line and the first 3 lines of the message to get attention. Make sure your opening sentence can stand on its own. Use the 3 +30 approach: Tell the 3 second version of your story first.... then tell the 30 second version.
- Don't require recipients to click through to a Web page to get the content of your message. Your message should be self-contained and self-explanatory.
- Good copy is like good weather: clear and fair—truth well told. Keep the body of the message clear, concise (500 words or less is recommended, or the length of one computer screen), clean, and uncluttered. Stress the benefits. Use short paragraphs or bullet points to facilitate quick scanning. Use a type size of at least 10 points so it's large enough to be read easily.
- Place important messaging (especially the “call to action” and offer) in the first two inches of the total email content—“above the fold” in a preview pane—so the recipient will see the important messaging in a preview screen without scrolling. This increases average click-through rates by 3.5 percentage points.
- To maximize click-through rate, offer only one option for response to the call to action or offer: clicking on a hyperlink. However, to maximize overall results as opposed to just click-through rate, you may want to make it easy to respond by offering other response options, such as a toll-free (800) number.
- Make your call to action prominent and make the way to respond clear and easy to understand. For example, “For a 20% discount on early registration for this conference, use this link” (avoid using the word “click,” as it may trigger spam filters). Also see “Hyperlinks” below.
- Provide summary copy for longer topics with a link to the complete content.
- Put key words in **bold type**.
- Follow the “three-second rule”: strive to grab the recipient's attention within three seconds of reviewing the document.
- Use an actual person as signatory.
- You must include a physical mailing address to comply with the federal CAN-SPAM law.
- Don't require recipients to click through to a Web page to get the content of your message. Your message should be self-contained and self-explanatory.
- Proof online and hard copy carefully (MMS recommends [www.proofreadnow.com](http://www.proofreadnow.com) for affordable, professional proofreading). Pay particular attention to contact information such as phone numbers. Test every link.
- Consider using a “forward to a friend” device if it's appropriate for your offer.
- Consider using a security logo—it increased the average order value by over 28% for one email marketer, according to a Marketing Sherpa case study.



- Ensure that responses will be properly handled.

### Hyperlinks:

- Use text-style hyperlinks—they average three percentage points higher click-through rates than image-style links.
- Hyperlinks should look like hyperlinks—underlined and colored blue.
- Use multiple hyperlinks—between six and 10—to maximize click-through rate. Duplicate important clickthrough links at the beginning and end to provide multiple opportunities for the recipient to click on the call to action.
- Test hyperlink copy. Small copy changes can increase click-through rate by more than 8%, according to a Marketing Sherpa test.

## Art

---

### Design

- Keep it simple! Use graphics judiciously. Given that Microsoft Outlook 2007 and other email clients such as Gmail and Hotmail may strip out images in your message, a picture isn't always worth a thousand words. As a contingency against email suppression, make sure your message is not image-dependent. Text-heavy messages that are light on images get better click-through rate. All-text messages generate a 54% higher click-through rate than those with equal amounts of text and images. Text also renders better when accessed with portable devices such as BlackBerries. In addition, lifestyle photos actually lower click-through rate for business-to-business emails.
- Postcard formats—messages with a single, postcard-like image—have tested better than other formats (such as newsletters) when used with business-to-business broadcasts, particularly among younger recipients, and thus merit consideration.
- Avoid reverse type (white text on dark backgrounds). White backgrounds with dark type are preferred, especially because backgrounds don't render well (if at all) in Outlook 2007 and for Web-based email clients such as Gmail and Hotmail.
- Be consistent with corporate branding, color scheme, and creative elements of other marketing efforts, especially landing pages.
- Generally, the top left quadrant is the best placement area for logo/branding.
- Navigation bars, if used, should be placed at the top of the message.



- Leave your landing page on the Web for as long as possible to serve laggard responders. This is a best practice even beyond the expiration date of time-sensitive offers such as meetings; in such cases, the landing page can be updated with current offerings or links.

## Technical Do's and Don'ts

---

### DO:

- Include a link to an HTML Web version of your message in case your message experiences rendering issues (MMS automatically includes such links in your broadcasts).
- Provide well-constructed HTML templates (created with an HTML editor) and plain text layouts. (Word documents can be accommodated but are not recommended; additional charges may apply because of their limitations.)
- Keep email width to 600 pixels maximum, or set width to 100%.
- Make sure images load quickly and keep them to a minimum 72 dots per inch (DPI) maximum. (MMS can host images unless otherwise advised—additional charges may apply and provides a “Click to view HTML version” link in all messages in the event that a recipient cannot view the full content of the email.) Keep images small to facilitate quick loading. To hedge against filtering, use <alt> tags (HTML tags that provide alternative text when nontextual elements, typically images, cannot be displayed) and intersperse images with text.
- Use numeric codes for special characters, such as the copyright sign, ©.
- Limit multiple, stacked, and nested tables to no more than two levels deep.
- Set up HTML-compatible seed email addresses – consider including email addresses from yahoo, gmail etc, so you can see how the message renders in different email clients.
- If you're sending a large volume of messages, consider establishing a static/dedicated Internet protocol (IP) address. MMS can establish one for you. Ask your MMS Business Development Manager for details.

### DON'T:

- Don't use frames.
- Don't use attachments—instead, use hyperlinks to Web pages or hosted objects.
- Don't use Cascading Style Sheets (CSS), JavaScript, or EMBED tags.
- Don't apply attributes to BODY tag. Med-EmailSM strips them on import.
- Don't leave tags open.



- Don't format text intended for use as a link.
- Don't use font formatting (e.g., bold, typeface) in text messages.
- Don't use symbols in text messages, they will not render correctly.
- Don't copy a word document or save a word document for the text message. Formatting and rendering issues will occur.

## Landing Pages

According to Marketing Sherpa, improving and optimizing your landing pages can increase your conversions by 40% or more.

- Use offer-focused landing pages to facilitate response and allow recipients to advise you of preferred mode and frequency of future communications. For example, to maximize click-through rate, physician recruiters should make a clear call to action that drives the recipient to click on a hyperlink to a job-specific landing page; the page should have a response from allowing the physician to provide contact information, best time/method to contact, etc., and to attach a curriculum vitae (CV).
- The landing page should be free of distractions such as links to other areas of your site.
- Like a business reply card in a mailing, a landing page should restate the offer and should be graphically consistent with your message.
- Make it brief and to the point, and entirely "above the fold" (visible in the preview pane) if possible—95% of business-to-business recipients view messages in preview pane mode, according to a Marketing Sherpa study.
- Keep copy to a minimum and make it readable online—short and scannable. Use good design—simple, with the relative importance of each text element conveyed by the size and weight of the typefaces.
- Ask only for information that is essential to the transaction. The less you request, the more likely you are to close the sale. Include a link to your privacy policy.
- Include a "thank you" screen that appears after the response. In addition to validating and cementing the relationship, it allows for tracking and presentation of additional cross-sell and upsell offers to maximize return on investment (ROI).
- Make sure you're able to run tests of alternative page designs and measure results.

## Track and Analyze Results

Track the results of all tests and roll-outs to determine which combination of message elements is the most effective in achieving your objectives and goals. Communicate the analysis to all parties involved, and use findings from your first few efforts as benchmarks to optimize subsequent efforts.



Response-related metrics (click-through rate, cost per response, return on investment) are arguably superior to open rates, which have been depressed because of image suppression by clients such as Microsoft Outlook 2007. Opens are recorded when the recipient's computer downloads images from the sender—when images are suppressed, actual viewership/ readership of messages can be understated

### Next steps

Plan what your next steps will be for all foreseeable eventualities based on results of your campaign. For example, consider what to do if your results don't meet plan or how to respond if demand exceeds supply of your offering. Make sure you are prepared to respond promptly with an email confirming the transaction and thanking the respondent.

### Conclusion

Using these successful direct marketing methods should help you maximize results and achieve your objectives.

### Contact Information

Medical Marketing Service, Inc.  
*The Industry Leader of Healthcare Lists and Email Marketing*  
185 Hansen Court, Suite 110  
Wood Dale, Illinois 60191-1150  
Phone: 1.800.633.5478/1.630.477.1559  
Fax: 1.630.350.1896  
[sales@mmslists.com](mailto:sales@mmslists.com)  
<http://www.mmslists.com>

### Resources

MMS recommends the following resources, which have been used in this document, for further reading on successful email marketing methods:

- **ClickZ Email Reference:**

[http://www.clickz.com/showPage.html?page=resources/email\\_reference](http://www.clickz.com/showPage.html?page=resources/email_reference)

- **Marketing Sherpa:**

[www.marketingsherpa.com](http://www.marketingsherpa.com)

- **Target Marketing:**

[www.targetmarketingmag.com](http://www.targetmarketingmag.com)



## Reach Over 1 million Health Professionals with MMS Email Marketing

In order to properly target your email campaign, it is critical to use a broadcast service that has the best available data and deployment technology. For example, in the physician market, your email broadcast should be targeted using a robust, comprehensive, accurate list such as the American Medical Association Physicians Professional Data (AMA-PPD). Pharmaceutically driven broadcasts should utilize one of the industry-standard syndicated prescriber databases.

Email addresses need to be permissioned, current, and well maintained (bounces and opt-outs should be purged daily).

The broadcast technology should be state-of-the-art, with all the necessary competencies to meet the technical, legal, and operational challenges of contemporary email marketing and to provide you with reports on results metrics that enable you to continuously improve your program.

Your email broadcast partner has your reputation in its hands, and since reputation is increasingly important in maximizing deliverability, you need to be sure it's in good hands.

When you work with MMS, you can take all these prerequisites for granted. MMS makes sure your broadcasts are CAN-SPAM-compliant; optimally targeted to permissioned email addresses that are updated daily; disseminated through a service strictly limited to messages germane to the practice of medicine, to safeguard your reputation; and technically optimized to maximize every metric—delivery, open rate, click-through rate, and most important, results.

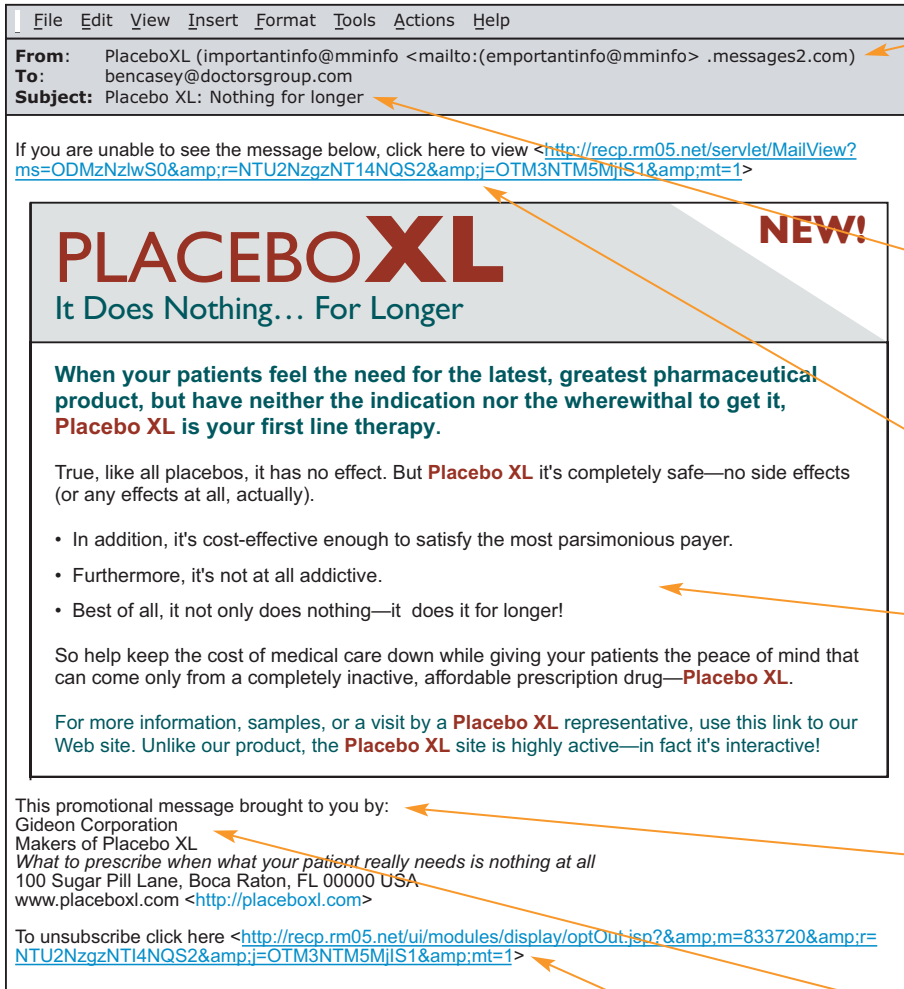
MMS email marketing services reach virtually all healthcare professions, including:

- Physicians
- Physician Assistants
- Dentists
- Nurse Practitioners
- Nurse-Midwives
- Nurse Anesthetists
- Clinical Nurse Specialists
- Hospital Management Personnel & Executives

For more information, see the MMS Web site: [www.mmslists.com](http://www.mmslists.com), email: [sales@mmslists.com](mailto:sales@mmslists.com), or call 1.800.MED.LIST (633.5478) or 1.630.477.1559.

Maximizing The Power of Email to Health Care Providers

## APPENDIX A—Anatomy of a Successful E-Mail



**From Line**—Accurately and clearly represents sender per CAN-SPAM. Uses brand name to maximize open rates. From address is Med-E-Mail<sup>SM</sup> to maximize delivery.

**Subject Line**—Consistent with message content, not deceptive, under 40 characters, uses brand name

**MMS Header**—Connects to hosted version of message for reference in case of rendering issues

**HTML Message**—Short, minimal graphics, multiple links, strong call to action, consistent with subject line, minimal images to maximize rendering integrity.

**Clear, Conspicuous Disclosure** that message is a commercial advertisement per CAN-SPAM

**Marketer's Postal Address**—per CAN-SPAM.

**Opt-Out Mechanism**—Ideally, marketer's opt-out is used to ensure CAN-SPAM compliance, in which case suppression file must be provided to MMS for future broadcasts. Alternative is MMS opt-out, in which case suppression file is provided to client for applicable fee.