

Email Marketing **STRATEGY GUIDE**



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Part 1: Create

Before you start designing, writing, and sending campaigns, you should define your audience. Once you know who you're talking to, it's time to think about what you're going to say to them.

Remember, the basis of an effective email campaign is crafting an effective email. The most important elements of your campaign and things you must take into consideration are:

[Subject line](#)

['From' name and email](#)

[Text content](#)

[Avoiding the Spam trap](#)

[Images](#)

[Hyperlinks](#)

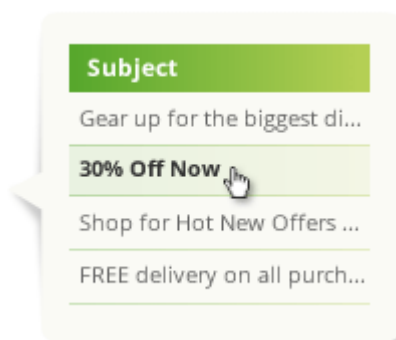
[Email Rendering](#)

[Mobile design](#)



Subject line

The estimation is that you have up to 5 seconds to catch your subscriber's attention with your subject line. With most people receiving on average 50+ emails per day you really have to make your subject line appealing to your readers and make them want to open your email.

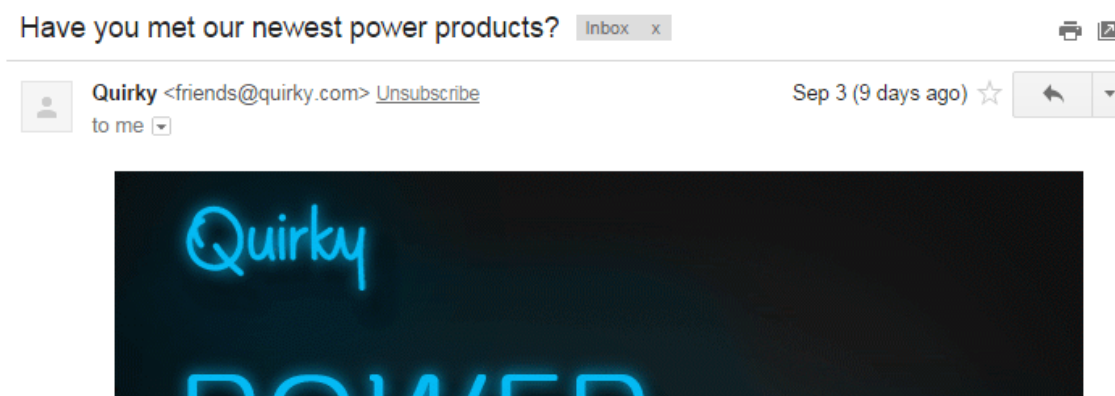


- ✓ Avoid subject lines that are too long. Anything from 40-55 characters should be OK.
- ✓ Keep the use of punctuation that can often flag spam filters to a minimum.
- ✓ Always be honest - don't try to fool your subscribers and lie about the content of the email as this could cause them to unsubscribe.

'From' name and email address

Aside from the subject line, the first thing a recipient is likely to look for is who the email is from. It should clearly be identifiable – either your company name or your personal name if it is well known. Once you decide on the 'From' name, keep it consistent with each email.

Whatever you do, avoid using a 'donotreply@' or 'noreply@' email address. Nobody wants to get an email from their good friend 'do not reply' – you're basically forcing your subscriber into a one-way conversation, the exact opposite of what a marketer should be encouraging.



Text Content

Keep your copy concise and include a clear call-to-action, encouraging the recipients to do something, such as click through to the website, sign up for an event, download a free trial, or print a coupon.

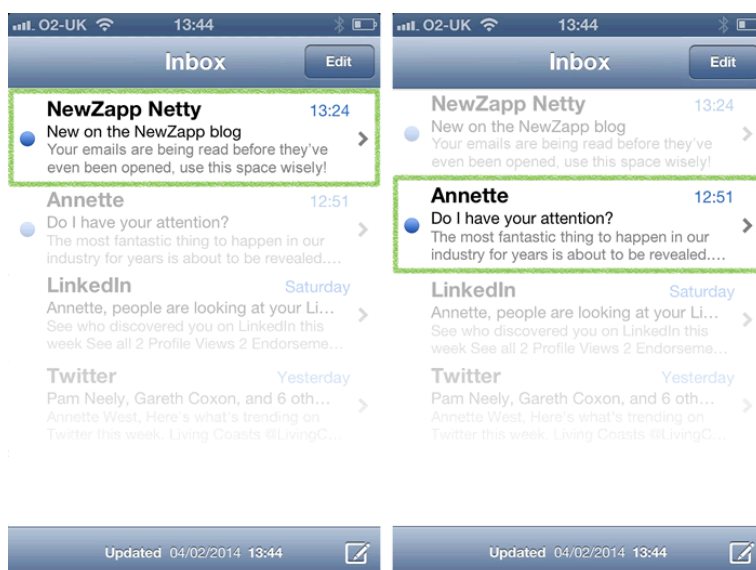


Remember, you don't actually want your subscribers hanging about, reading your email all day. The key is to get them somewhere else, your website or blog for instance, where they can consume all the information. Your email just gives them a little taste of what is on offer.

Also, be human - ditch the corporate speak, add humour, include customer stories, weave in real world events and pop culture when relevant - and don't take yourself too seriously!

Preview Text

Preview (or pre-header) text can be placed at the top of an email and used as a means of including a key message and/or summary of the email, which recipients will be able to see in their inbox before opening.



As the first proper text content within an email, it is often featured as part of the email's preview pane under the 'From' name and Subject line.

One of the main points of Preview text is to attract the reader's attention at this crucial point. Research has shown that this can make the difference between clicking to open an email in full or consigning it straight to the trash.

In direct marketing, this text is known as a 'Johnson Box', named after direct marketer Frank Johnson who is credited as having first used the Johnson Box to improve response to his offers for 'American Heritage' magazine.

Copying and pasting from Word

In a nutshell, HTML code and Microsoft Word just don't get along. This is especially important to consider as Outlook 2007 onwards uses Word to render HTML emails.

So, whilst everything may look fine and dandy to the naked eye in your editor, once sent it can turn into a behind-the-scenes turf war to decide how the email you've crafted will look once delivered. Will it be 'Arial' and black like it's supposed to look, or 'Times New Roman' and blue in the inbox?



If you are going to copy and paste from Word, and let's face it most of us do at some point, you need to make sure that the content you are pasting is cleaned of any of the unwanted extra code.

Some email service providers (such as NewZapp) have a solution to this nightmare - it's called 'paste as plain text'. This allows you to copy and paste to your heart's content. This works in much the same way that pasting content into Notepad does, and should ensure that your copy is clean as a whistle, regardless of where it came from. You can apply the same process when copying and pasting content from a website, or another email, as these applications will also carry unnecessary code in the background.

Avoiding the spam trap

'Spam' filters are designed to keep unwanted emails from clogging up your inbox, but sometimes genuine emails can offend them and also be marked as 'spam'. Most 'spam' filters work on a scoring system where they will score your email content on any negative factors, so if this score reaches a pre-set threshold (usually 5 points) the email will be marked as 'spam'.



Here are our top 5 tips for avoiding the spam trap:

1. Watch out for trigger phrases and words

To give your email the best chance of being delivered try to avoid including any words or phrases that might cause you to get caught in a spam filter - such as: over use of words like 'free', 'guaranteed', 'investment', and 'pharmaceutical'; over use of phrases such as 'free delivery', 'money off' and 'special offer'.

2. Run your email through a spam checking tool before sending the campaign

There are a number of online spam-checking services that can be used to help flag up trigger phrases and words and provide more detailed information on your spam score along with what improvements you can make to your email. Reputable ESPs will have these tools built into their system - in fact, NewZapp offers a [Spam Check tool](#) right in the Editor.

3. Monitor delivery to accounts like Outlook.com, Gmail, Yahoo!, Mac Mail and Outlook 2007+

When you set up your test group, it's worth including the above accounts. These major email clients cover up to 83% of all the major email clients used, so you will have peace of mind knowing your email will deliver and render correctly across the board.

4. Ask your subscribers to add you to their 'safe list'

Asking your subscribers to add you to their 'safe senders' list or contact list will help ensure the subscriber's mail service provider won't catch your email in their filter and block it. Filters are updated to learn subscriber behaviour, so being on a 'safe senders' list will make sure your emails are delivered every time.

5. Avoid using UPPER CASE text for entire sentences

Excessive capitalisation and punctuation are the equivalent of shouting at someone! It's also the standard practise of spammers, so avoiding this will help you get past the filters and into the inbox.

Images

Images are a fantastic tool to showcase a product or to portray a non-tangible service. You can also use images to break up your copy and provide a visual representation of your topics - after all, they say a picture speaks a thousand words!



Whilst a good balance between text and images will add value to your email, they can also be fun and show your personality, reinforcing your brand attributes and making you stand out from the crowd.

But do bear in mind that your recipients can opt to have images turned off on receiving emails, so make sure your message still makes sense without them. At the very least include alt tags on all key images - these will display in most email readers even if images aren't shown (more on this later).

It is recommended that an email address with email images turned off is set up and used as part of your email testing group.

Also important is ensuring that any images are added at actual size and not resized to their desired dimensions by use of code in your HTML. This is because email clients such as Microsoft Office 2007, 2010 and 2013 will display the image at its original size, not the one you may have specified in your code. This could drastically change the formatting and layout of your email, if you're referencing a large image.

Alt tags

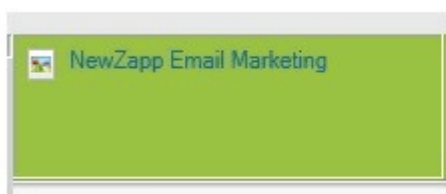
An alt tag is alternative text where your image should be if the recipient does not have images set to display. Most email programs turn off images in HTML emails by default, although Gmail has recently set images on as the default option. For example, if there is an image of a blue dress with a 20% off star, an ideal alt tag to the image would be "20% off dresses" not "blue dress image".

The display of the alt tag will vary between email readers. For example, in Outlook the alt tag appears after their instructional message, but in most web readers (Hotmail, Gmail, AOL etc.) the alt tag can be seen more clearly.



In Outlook

The actual alt tag text follows instructions on how to download images into an email. On a smaller image the alt tag would probably not be seen at all.



In Gmail

The alt tag is the only message seen if the image is not yet on display - there's valuable space to be made use of here!

Hyperlinks

You can add hyperlinks to any text or images within your campaign. Research has indicated in some cases that image-based links can help boost click-through rates. In our experience text links often outperform image links, however it's a good idea to add links to both. This will give your subscribers more opportunities to click-through and will also ensure you don't miss out on any clicks from subscribers who prefer image-based links.

Always link to something relevant, e.g. if it's a picture of a product, link it to the relevant product information on your website. There will be times when you may not have the time or resources to add a new page to your website to compliment the link so don't forget you can always hyperlink to PDFs, Word documents, Excel spreadsheets and PowerPoint presentations instead. These links won't add to your email's overall size, or increase the risk of being blocked by a filter, as you'll be hyperlinking to them and not attaching them.

Social media links

It's always a good idea to use share and social media page links in your email campaigns.

Why? Well, everyone can benefit from more followers and by adding sharing options, if your recipient likes the email you have just sent them and would like to distribute that message to their own network you should make it as easy as possible for them to extend the reach of your email.



Just think, if even a fraction of your subscribers are sharing your campaign, how many more users and prospective clients that will put you in front of.

The unsubscribe link

It may seem counter intuitive to make it easy for a user to leave your mailing list, but the other option is much less appealing. When users get frustrated while trying to figure out how to remove their email from your list, they may eventually just start to flag your email as spam.

Click here to unsubscribe



Every recipient who clicks your email as being spam counts against your sender reputation with email providers. It also makes it harder (and sometimes impossible) to get your email into the inbox instead of the junk folder. For this reason, you should make unsubscribing as easy as possible for the subscriber.

Email rendering

Businesses and consumers use a wide variety of email clients and devices to view their emails. Email marketing is delivered as HTML code, and each email client renders HTML differently, so the challenge is to create email campaigns that render as consistently as possible across all of them. So while your email might look fine and dandy in Gmail it might look completely different in Outlook 2016.

This is not a problem with your HTML email (nor is it a glitch on your email service provider). Instead it shows just how different email clients handle HTML code. Some email clients strip images, while some do not have HTML support at all. Others have problems handling and displaying CSS, while some do not show link colours or even font changes.

Outlook 2007, 2010, 2013 and 2016 are considered to be the more challenging email clients for rendering HTML emails. Unlike other email clients who use web-based rendering systems, Outlook 2007, 2010, 2013 and 2016 use Microsoft Word to render HTML, bringing with it a number of issues.

Mobile design

A recent study claimed we're on our mobile phone every 6 minutes, checking it on average 150 times a day - that means your email marketing campaign needs to look just as good on a mobile as it does on a desktop. There are two common design options for mobile – scalable or responsive.



Scalable

A scalable email layout is readable and clickable no matter what size screen it is being read on. There is only one version (one HTML file) of the email, but the whole email scales to fit on both desktop and mobile devices.

Responsive

Responsive email designs use CSS3 media queries to render two different layouts depending on the size of the screen the email is opened on. CSS media queries can auto-adjust the layout, content and text size of an email depending on the screen size. In addition, images can be swapped out or completely disabled, images and buttons can be resized, and colours can be changed.



Part 2: Send

How you deliver your email is an important consideration. We've collated what we consider the most important topics in this chapter:

[Email Service Providers](#)

[Whitelisted servers](#)

[UK Data Protection Act](#)

[Electronic mail regulations](#)

[Solicited vs unsolicited](#)

[Subscriber lists](#)

[Single vs double opt-in](#)

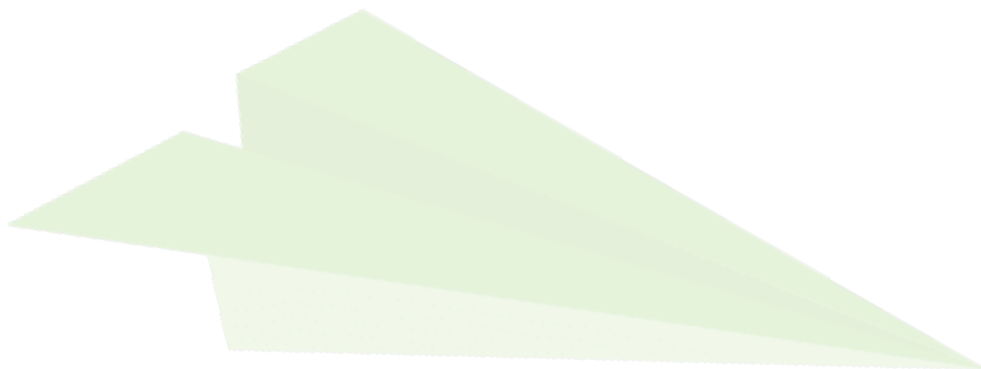
[Test emails](#)

[Campaign scheduling](#)

[Split testing](#)

[List segmentation](#)

[Sending](#)



Email Service Providers

As an Email Marketer you should be using an ESP (email service provider) to handle your campaigns, even if your list is small. This way, when your list grows to a few hundred or more recipients, you will have the technology already in place to automatically handle subscribes, unsubscribes, bounces, and deliverability issues. It also protects you from the risk of exposing your whole database to your recipients in error



Whitelisted servers

Because your everyday email client, Gmail and Outlook for example, are not built for email marketing, the messages you send out may end up labelled as spam by ISPs (internet service providers), not even arriving into your recipients' spam folders, much less their inboxes.

Most ESPs are whitelisted, or approved by ISPs as a legitimate, permission based email delivery service. ESPs also offer easy methods to authenticate your email, which will prove to ISPs that you are who you say you are, a legitimate non-spammer sending emails to those who want to receive them.

UK Data Protection Act

The UK Data Protection Act (DPA) controls how your personal information is used by organisations, businesses or the government. The Data Protection Act sets out rules for processing personal information. It gives certain rights to individuals and it also says that those who record and use personal information must adhere to eight data protection principles. [For more information click here](#)

There are 8 principles of data protection. Personal data should be:

- ✓ Used fairly and lawfully
- ✓ Used for limited, specifically stated purposes
- ✓ Used in a way that is adequate, relevant and not excessive
- ✓ Accurate
- ✓ Kept for no longer than is absolutely necessary
- ✓ Handled according to people's data protection rights

- ✓ Kept safe and secure
- ✓ Not transferred outside the UK without adequate protection

Electronic mail regulations

The Regulations define electronic mail as ‘any text, voice, sound, or image message sent over a public electronic communications network which can be stored in the network or in the recipient’s terminal equipment until it is collected by the recipient and includes messages sent using a short message service’. In other words, email, text, picture and video marketing messages are all considered to be ‘electronic mail’.

[Find out more here](#)



What does the law state?

You cannot transmit, or instigate the transmission of, unsolicited marketing material by electronic mail to an individual subscriber unless they have previously notified you, the sender, that they consent, for the time being, to receiving such communications. There is an exception to this rule which has been widely referred to as the soft opt in (Regulation 22(2) refers).

You cannot transmit, or instigate the transmission of, any marketing by electronic mail (whether solicited or unsolicited) to any subscriber (whether corporate or individual) where:

- ✓ Your identity has been disguised or concealed; or
- ✓ You have not provided a valid address to which the recipient can send an opt-out request.
- ✓ That electronic mail would contravene regulations 7 or 8 of the Electronic Commerce (EC Directive) Regulations 2002 (SI 2002/2013); or
- ✓ That electronic mail encourages recipients to visit websites which contravene those regulations (Regulation 23 refers).

Solicited vs unsolicited

Solicited emails

A solicited message is one the subscriber has actively invited - in other words, if someone specifically asks you to send them some particular information.

Unsolicited emails

An unsolicited marketing message is any message that has not been specifically requested - even if the subscriber has 'opted in' to receiving messages from you. An opt-in just means that they do not object to future messages. This is not the same as soliciting a particular message.



Subscriber lists

Signup form

Add an email sign-up form to your website. Building an opt-in database takes time and effort, but the rewards will be worth it as you should experience better open rates, more responses and higher conversion rates at a lower cost. Remember, these people specifically opted in to hear from you - they are interested in what you have to say.

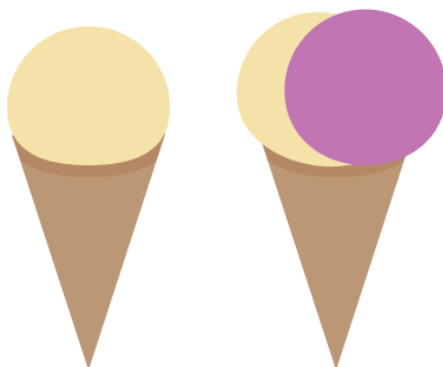
Purchased lists

There are many companies out there that will provide you with a list of email addresses at a cost. However, whilst many companies boast that the data they sell is all for people who have given their permission to receive emails, you need to remember these people have not specifically opted to receive your emails.

Single vs double opt-in

Single opt-in

A single opt-in list means that as soon as a person subscribes to your list, they will be added to your database and do not go through a verification process to check if their email address is valid.



Double opt-in

A double opt-in list means that when someone subscribes they are sent a confirmation email with a link to follow to verify their email address, as well as to confirm that they did request to receive your correspondence. Only after the link in the confirmation email is followed will they be added to your list properly and be able to receive your campaigns.



Test emails

There's nothing worse than sending an email to your entire database and then finding out that it went right to the spam folder or that something in your email layout broke in Outlook's preview pane. Before you send an email to your entire list, send a test version to a test account using each of the big email clients. If you catch any errors, there's still time to start disassembling your email and fixing them.

You can also use web-based testing systems such as [Litmus](#) which will show you how your email will appear in all email clients and mobile devices.

Campaign scheduling

Campaign scheduling allows you to choose the perfect time for your campaign to be automatically sent out. This is ideal for situations when you want to send out a campaign but you won't be at your computer, over the weekend, or if you want to send across international time zones.



Split testing

Split or A/B testing is a powerful marketing tool that can be used to increase the open and click rates of your campaigns. It also improves the general effectiveness of your email marketing efforts.

It allows you to send two or more versions of your message to different portions of your list. The difference might be the subject line, the main call to action, inclusion of images or text only, or any other relevant factor.

After sending, you can then compare the reporting results to see which campaign performed best and use this information for future campaigns.



List segmentation

It's very tempting to just send a generic email to your entire database but this won't produce the best conversion rates, and may eventually turn your subscribers into non-responders. If you segment your database and target your emails, you'll be able to write about what your subscribers are interested in.

This will get a much better response rate, as your recipients are more likely to be interested in your communication. This will increase your open and click-through rates and therefore the overall success of your email campaigns.

Sending

Time and day

How many times have you heard people suggesting the best days and times to send your emails? The problem with following the “best” time to send your email is that everyone else is also sending their email during that time. The best time to send really varies based on your list, so do your own tests to find the best results.



Frequency

In regards to frequency this is entirely up to you, but there are certain pitfalls to sending too often; subscribers will get burnt out and not read any of your emails. Equally if you send too infrequently subscribers can easily forget who you are and hit the delete or spam button.

Part 3: Track

After sending your email marketing campaign, you will want to know how many and which people opened it, how many and which people clicked on specific links in the email, how many messages bounced, how many unsubscribes you had, and maybe how many people converted to a sale. Unlike print and traditional direct marketing, email marketing allows you to answer all of these questions and get the inside scoop on your subscribers.

The importance of tracking and measuring your campaigns cannot be overstated. It eliminates the guesswork and enables you to calculate your email marketing campaign ROI (return on investment), so you know just how effective it was and whether you should spend your marketing budget in this way in the future.

Topics covered in this chapter:

[Open rate](#)

[Click-through rate](#)

[Conversions](#)

[Client summary](#)

[Bounces](#)

[Unsubscribes](#)

[Google Analytics](#)

[Failed emails](#)

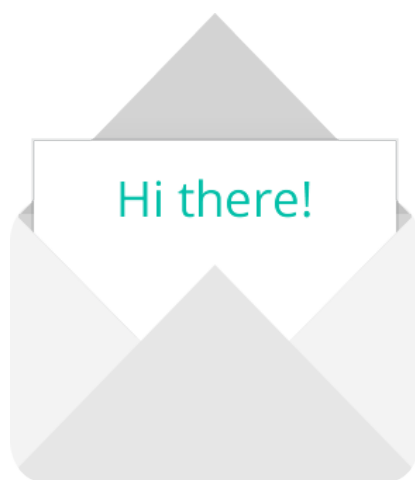
[Social activity](#)



Open rate

The open rate represents the percentage of delivered emails that are opened by recipients. An 'open' is recorded when images are enabled or a link within the email is clicked.

Images may be automatically enabled when an email is opened, especially if the recipient has chosen to display them for all emails from that sender. Since recipients may open the email but fail to enable images, this metric can be somewhat inaccurate.



Click-through rate

Your click-through rate is the number of unique individuals who click on one or more links in your email, expressed as a percentage of total tracked opens. Email service providers calculate click-through rates by taking the total number of unique individuals who click a link in your e-mail and dividing by the total number of tracked opens.



Conversions

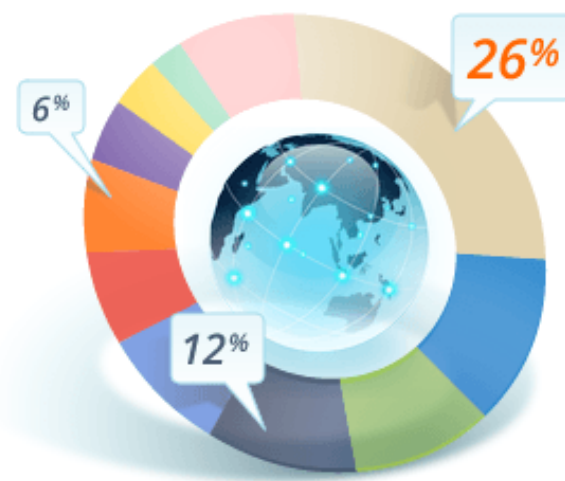
The number of people who received your email, clicked through and took the action you wanted them to take, whether that's a product purchase or a simply a 'like' for your Facebook page. Google Analytics is one means of tracking these conversions and can be integrated with most email service providers including NewZapp.

Client summary

Not only should your ESP be able to tell you how many mobile opens your email marketing campaign has received, but also exactly what device the recipient was using, for example iPhone, iPad, Android device etc. This will allow you to better target and design for the device your recipients most prefer.

According to Litmus, the top 10 most popular email clients as of July 2017 are:

1. Apple iPhone - 31%
2. Gmail - 22%
3. Apple iPad - 11%
4. Apple Mail - 7%
5. Outlook - 6%
6. Samsung Email App - 5%
7. Outlook.com - 4%
8. Google Android - 8%
9. Yahoo! Mail - 3%
10. Windows Live Mail - 1%



Source: emailclientmarketshare.com

Bounces

Bounces are the number of emails you sent out that were returned by the recipient's server and therefore undelivered. Bounced emails are unavoidable in email marketing; what matters most is how you deal with them.

To keep your subscriber list up to date and to get the best results from your email campaigns, we recommend you clean the bounced emails from your database following each campaign you send - if you have a NewZapp account these will be handled automatically for you. How you manage bounces will depend on the type you have.

Like boiled eggs, there are two types of email bounce - **hard** and **soft**.

A hard bounce will indicate a permanent issue with the recipient's email address, for example when the email address doesn't exist anymore, or it's been misspelled and therefore doesn't exist.

A soft bounce can indicate a temporary or resolvable issue with the email address, for example when the recipient's mailbox is full.

For a list of the most common bounce messages and how to deal with them please [click here](#).

Unsubscribes

Unsubscribes are the number of people who remove themselves from your email marketing list by clicking on the unsubscribe link meaning you can no longer send them emails. A perfect unsubscribe rate is around 2% as it's practically impossible to get down to 0%.

A common misconception will lead you to believe that unsubscribes can only be a bad thing, but people unsubscribe for a reason, so don't be downhearted when someone does; just take it as feedback for the next campaign you send.

Google Analytics

Google Analytics is a service offered by Google that generates detailed statistics about a website's traffic and traffic sources and measures conversions and sales. Email service providers such as NewZapp allow you to integrate your email marketing with Google Analytics for an in-depth look at website traffic as a result of your email campaign.



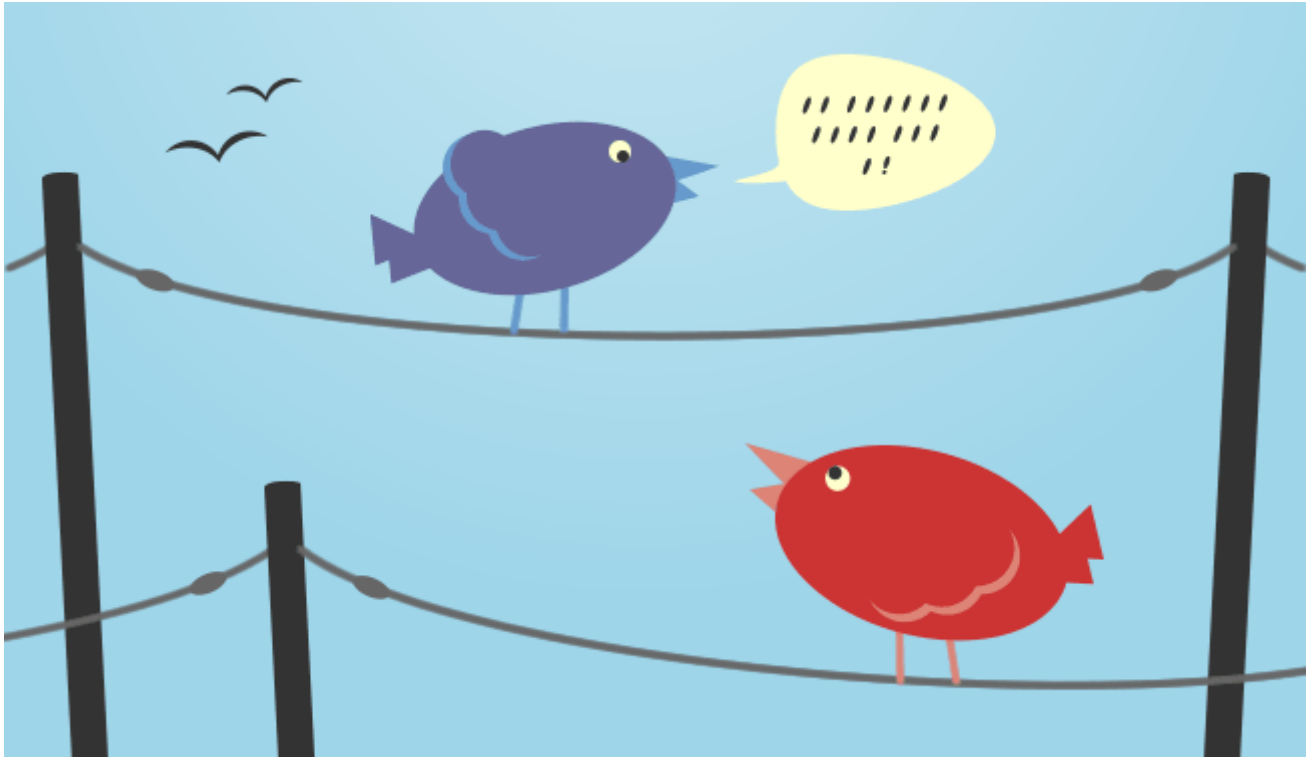
You can watch subscribers as they hit your website, move through key areas and onto those crucial goal completion pages. As a result this helps to maximise your database activity and your return on investment (ROI).

Failed emails

Different to bounces, failed emails are emails that were never sent. They never left the server which is why they weren't delivered. This may be due to any number of factors, including an invalid domain, disallowed characters, or an incomplete email address. The latter two are usually filtered out during the process of importing your data into your ESP account.

Social activity

The number of people who tweeted or shared your email on social media websites. Such social activity opens up your campaign to a whole new audience.



For more information on getting the most from your NewZapp account, visit our [Knowledge Base](#) or contact us on support@newzapp.co.uk.