

May I? Asking for permission & retaining it: 8 keys to your target's mailbox





We are permission-based marketers. We don't need to go over on how annoying spam can be, right?

Unfortunately, there is no certain solution yet that will effectively eradicate this pervasive pest, which can render useless our best email marketing efforts at the most sensitive level: our target's mailbox.

How do we differentiate ourselves from spammers? How do we gain – and retain-- access to our targets' mailboxes?

The cyber realm is no different than the real world in terms of socialization, so it is fundamental that we remember one of the main lessons our mom taught us: "always be courteous and respectful". But just how do you apply such axiom to your email marketing business?

Here are a few suggestions:

1. Introduce yourself (or "be polite")

Clearly state who you are, the address your email is coming from, what your messages look like. This will help make your messages familiar to your client or prospect and will set you apart from spammers.

2. Give people a choice (or "don't be pushy")

Offer a menu of options to people who are interested in subscribing to your email list. What do they want from you? Newsletters? New service announcements? New product announcements? Coupons? Event invitations/notices? Allow them to make any combination of choices and to change them at any time. Provide a way so they can easily do this.

This will not only prove valuable to retain your subscribers, but also to identify the intended audience for each campaign.

3. Speak directly to your client or prospect (or "look at the person in the eyes")

Don't assume that the recipients are always aware of why they are receiving your email. Thank your client or prospect for subscribing and/or remind him/her of their inquiry --that you are willing to satisfy. Tell them that you value their interest and want to keep in touch.

4. Be respectful (or "don't make yourself a nuisance")

Once you gain permission, you must continue offering recipients the chance to 'opt-out' or unsubscribe to all or any particular one of our mailings.

It is the client's privilege to decide that he/she no longer wants to receive product announcements or coupons, for example, and they must know that they are free to subscribe or unsubscribe at any time.

5. Show your interest (or "be mindful")

Ask your subscribers about their experience with your messages –value, frequency, topics.

A short survey every now and then will let them know that you are working with and for them.



6. Be trustworthy (or “make yourself dependable”)

- Adopt a privacy policy.
- Always post it clearly.
- Always follow it.

This will render credibility to your company and promote the trust of the recipients of your email messages.

7. Strive to update (or “don’t lag”)

In order to ensure that your communications reach your subscribers when they change their email address, their ISPs or other contact data, ask them for updated information.

Provide them with an quick way to change this data, particularly their email address.

However, make sure that you don’t “make yourself a nuisance” by addressing your subscriber with your requests too often.

8. Do your housekeeping (or “tidy up”)

Check your inbox for complaints and take appropriate action.

Check for unsubscribe (yes, some recipients will actually hit reply to unsubscribe) and remove those addresses from your list right away.

Check for opens and click through. Carefully study your reports and make sure your churn rate remains positive, If this is not the case, go over your campaign and make adjustments.