

A Whitepaper of Email Marketing Questions and Answers

What's Working in Email Marketing Today, (Bob Bly)



Introduction

This document summarizes the questions that were asked during the session and offline in the recent Pinpointe webinar: "What's Working in Email Marketing Today", presented by internet strategist and known copywriter, Bob Bly. We had dozens of questions that we were not able to answer online, so if you posted a question that we didn't get to during the online session, please check here, as we've done our best to answer and address all questions that were asked.

Q: CAN YOU RE-CAP, WHAT IS THE 'AGORA MODEL'?

A: The "Agora Model" was conceived by a company called Agora Publishing. The concept is to enter the 'inner circle of trust' – to become one of the trusted companies from whom recipients are willing to regularly receive and open their email / communications.

Based on further research, the typical person opens email on a regular basis from 16 trusted sources – your goal is to become one of these trusted sources with each recipient.

In this model you offer free, high value content such as white papers, webinars, e-books, reference materials as an incentive for contacts to join your contact list. The content is distributed via multiple channels - (search, PPC, landing pages, webinars registrations, joint partner events, co-registration programs, newsletter sponsorship, and more.

You use the developed in-house list to communicate with readers ("move them along the education cycle – to inform readers about your market, products, technologies, etc) over time and develop a trust relationship. Research has found that these contacts / prospects are often 3x or more likely to buy from you, and the average purchase per contact is higher.

Q: WHAT THE "10/10" RULE"?

When creating a call-to-action that includes a call-to-action, the 10/10 rule is that – the offering should be at least a 10% discount or \$10, whichever is greater, in order to offer a high enough incentive for people to be interested in the offering.

Q: YOU USED THE TERMS B2B AND B2C - WHAT DO THESE MEAN?

"B2B" means 'Business to Business' - as in businesses communicating with other businesses, whereas "B2C" means 'Business to Consumer'.

Q: WHAT ARE THE BEST DAYS TO SEND EMAILS?

A: Based on our data we consistently find the following:

- Business to Business (B2B) –Scheduling for delivery on Tuesday Wednesday and Thursday early morning are best. Peak open times are between 5 and 7am local time.
- For B2C recipients (specifically, when sending to a contact list with a high concentration of consumer addresses such as @yahoo.com, @aol.com etc), we find that peak open times are commonly Saturday morning, Saturday evening and Sunday evening.

However, as more and more companies focus on these times, you may find that you get very good responses by sending at different times - when overall email traffic is lower. The best bet is to test your campaign timing with **your** audience.

Q: WHAT QUALIFIES AS A CALL TO ACTION (CONTACT US, DOWNLOAD, ATTEND...) ?

A: A 'Call to Action' is your offer. For example, an offer a link to download a whitepaper, or registration to attend a Webinar, that is a call to action. A call to action might also be: " please call me at..." or "please email me at: ..." However we generally recommend using links within an email when possible because responses can then be directly and automatically tracked by Pinpointe.

Q: HOW LONG SHOULD AN EMAIL BE?

There is no set length, and it depends on the objective of the email. For example, a monthly update / newsletter format might be 1-2 pages. Be sure to put a list of topics at the beginning of the newsletter, so it is easy for the recipient to 'jump' to specific sections that may be of interest. A brief update, that is extending an offer to download a whitepaper or join an event, usually performs best if the email is short, to the point, and includes links to landing pages with additional information **within the first paragraph or within the first 3 sentences**. Another common style is the 'educational, email blog's style. If you subscribe to 'The Motley Fool' for example, you've seen this. The writing style is personalized, 1 on 1 communication that typically covers a topic or two, and explains the topic in detail. This might be 2-4 pages long, and can include links to landing pages and external documents with additional supporting materials.

Q: WHEN SENDING AN EMAIL IS IT BETTER TO USE A 'SEND FROM / REPLY TO' ADDRESS SUCH AS 'SALES@MYCOMPNY.COM' OR 'MY [NAME@MYCOMPANY.COM](#)'?

A: In most cases, you will see better results by using a specific contact person (yourself for example) vs. a general address like 'support@' or 'sales@'. Keep in mind that your recipients take only a second or two to decide whether or not to open your email. If they do not recognize your company, they are likely to skip over the email. Also, general addresses are less personal, which reduces open rates.

Actual results. Based on analysis of various campaigns across our system we have seen that using a specific personal name vs. a general email address can improve the net open rate by 15% - 35%. That said – it is always important to test with your audience.

Q: HOW MANY LINKS CAN I USE IN MY EMAIL? WILL TOO MANY LINKS REDUCE MY RESPONSE RATES?

A: Based on analysis of our B2B customer data, adding more links will almost always improve response rates. Key points to consider:

- Try to include a link within your initial opening paragraph (Read More.. for example). This can increase overall click rates by 12-15% and is virtually always the top-clicked link of a campaign.

- Do you know where the second best performing link is? In the 'P.S. or Footer section! Don't be afraid to 'advertise' or promote below your signature.
- Work more links into your campaigns. Our analysis shows that campaigns with more links produced higher total click response rates while *not* increasing the unsubscribe rate. 15-20 links in a campaign is not unreasonable.

Q: IS IT CONSIDERED 'BEST PRACTICES' TO OFFER A WEB VERSION OF THE EMAIL IN CASE THE MAIL CLIENT CANNOT DISPLAY INTENDED EMAIL?

Absolutely. Pinpointe's on-demand email service automatically creates an online version of each email campaign that is hosted on our system. A customized link to the web version can be easily inserted into all emails.

Q: CAN YOU SUGGEST A GOOD TEXT TO IMAGE RATIO?

A: There is no set, best ratio. Avoid using large image blocks. A guideline would be - use images only where necessary and use text wherever possible. In addition, you can use ALT tags for images - this will improve your text to image ratio.

Earlier SPAM filters relied heavily on specific keywords to determine how 'spammy' the email was. Spammers simply created images that included the spam words, or created an email that was a single big image. This allowed them to get by SPAM filters. However most SPAM filters now look at the amount of content that is text vs. images and if you are using a large number of images, content will often be considered SPAM.

Pinpointe Questions

Q: WHAT SETS PINPOINTE APART FROM LOW END SOLUTIONS LIKE CONSTANT CONTACT?

- Pinpointe's 'business class' email marketing system is the most feature-rich, cloud –based solutions available today for mid-sized enterprises and organizations.
- **Pinpointe Professional** edition is a powerful full-featured email system with WYSIWYG editor, spam checker, email previewer and more.
- **Pinpointe Agency / Enterprise** edition is for larger enterprises who need 5 ~ 250 users (seats) and send 300,000 emails – 10M+ emails /month.
- Pinpointe transparently integrates with Google Analytics, so all of your campaigns can be tracked, monitored and analyzed within Google analytics.

Q: WHAT IS PINPOINTE'S PRICING?

Pinpointe offers flexible pricing based on the number of active contacts in your list or the number of emails sent. Pinpointe also offers non-expiring, pay-as-you-go options.

For the latest pricing please check www.pinpointe.com/get-started.

About Pinpointe

Pinpointe is a leading provider of on-demand email marketing automation software based in the heart of Silicon Valley, California. As former marketers, we've been in your shoes. Our team has a passion for helping mid-sized B2B and B2C marketing professionals communicate with existing customers, and target new prospects through behavioral targeting, improved segmentation and message personalization.

Other Resources

If you're a Business to Business marketer and are want to stay on top of the latest marketing trends, tips and best practices, then please sign up for our twice-a-month Tips 'n Tricks notes. Once or twice a month we'll send you a briefing with tips and tricks. We'll also include a link so you can op-out or update your preferences, any time.

Pinpointe Site: www.pinpointe.com

Pinpointe support Blog: www.pinpointe.com/blog

Contacting Pinpointe

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