

# Email Marketing

Fundamentals & Update - 2010



## ■ ■ Opt-in Email Marketing

Do you do opt-in email marketing and typically send 100,000 emails per week? Are you struggling to get your emails delivered and read - not lost, filtered out or discarded? And what of the cost - are you happy with what you are currently paying or looking for a lower-priced but equally effective alternative? Many corporate email marketers are grappling with the same issues. The payoff is huge when email marketing is done well. It's worthwhile to reconsider the fundamentals and to evaluate the latest trends.

## ■ ■ What is Important

Your mission is to get your marketing message through to your intended audience. Everything else is unimportant by comparison. If you are outsourcing your email campaigns, you receive reports saying that your scheduled emails have been sent; but how many of those emails were bounced? How many were opened and read, not trashed unread? Was the click-through rate acceptable? Did your outsourcers use email campaign server technology that optimize your emails getting delivered, opened and read? Probably not.

Then, there is the question of whether the content of your email is optimized for a “friendly reception.” There is an abundance of good advice, publicly available, about how to prepare your email content to avoid being mistakenly treated as spam mail. When these “Best Practices” are internalized and observed, you get good results. Are you adhering to these “Best Practices” when you prepare your emails?

It is important to consider when emails should be sent. If you are sending business-to-business (B2B) emails, the optimal time is during office hours, except Friday afternoons and Mondays. Open rates are lowered if B2B emails are sent over the weekend or overnight. July and December, when many people are on vacation or celebrating holidays, are not good months for email campaigns. It is wise to specify when your outsource vendor should send your emails. Do they charge a premium to send emails during the optimal mid-week period, during office hours?

In order to eradicate or minimize spam email at the receiving end, ISP's and corporations set up spam filter to trap and stop any suspect email from reaching the recipients. Often time such efforts form a barrier which opt-in email marketers must overcome. Do commercial email campaign vendors have the inclination and the tools to “optimize” your campaigns for this purpose? You cannot be sure. Chances are, when you dig deeper, you conclude the pragmatic way to deal with the situation is to systematically learn how to do the job properly, and to do it yourself. If you are already doing that, all is well; if not, now is a good time to start.

For more info, please visit: <http://www.wisagetech.com/>

First, make sure your mailing lists are free of “Spam Traps.” These are email addresses that lead to nowhere, often deliberately planted by ISPs and corporations to identify spammers. Since opt-in email lists only contain addresses of “real and legitimate” recipients, they do not contain “Spam Traps.” However, a legitimate but misspelled email address may trigger a spam trap. Smart email campaigners do well to ensure that their email addresses are spelled correctly.

It's important to try to avoid spam complaints. A spam complaint occurs when a recipient clicks the “spam” button and sends your email to the spam box. When an email recipient “un-subscribes” by clicking the Opt-out link on your email, make sure this email address will no longer be used in future campaigns. An irate email recipient is apt to click the spam button.

The content of your email (including the Subject Field, the Body Text, the Graphics and the Links) must be well below the size and frequency limits objectionable to the spam filters. You must avoid using words and styles favored by spammers. Phrases such as “Click here!” and “Money back guarantee” will be assigned high score points by spam filters; when the points add up and the threshold is reached, your email will be filtered.

Additionally, the email campaign server must offer the capability for adjusting the email batch size and the inter-batch time interval; and it must support multiple email servers. By using previous campaign performance reports, trial-and-error adjustments can be made. By following these guidelines, the email streams presented to the receiving ISPs and corporations will appear “short and regular” and will avoid being marked as a coming from a spam source.

## ■ ■ ■ Safeguard Your Confidential Customer Mailing List

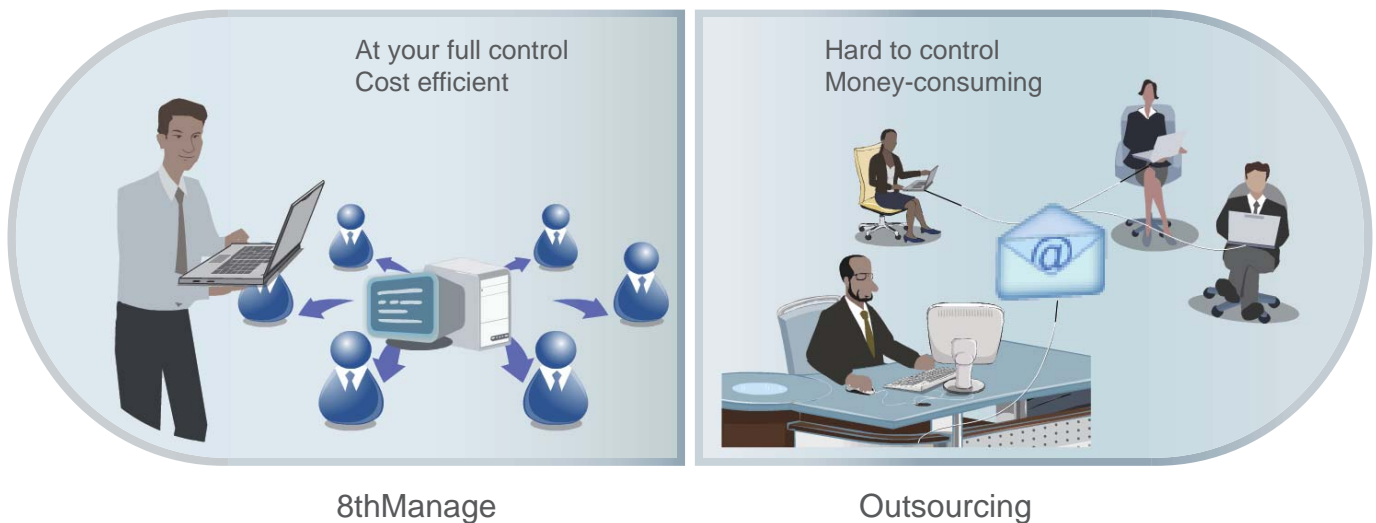
The second most important consideration you have is how to safeguard your confidential mailing lists. Even with a signed non-disclosure agreement, when you allow your outsourcer access to your mailing lists, you are taking risks.

Can you tell how great your risk is? Not really. What is the consequence of your confidential customer mailing list falling into the hands of your competitors? Avoid the risk altogether and do your email campaigns in-house.

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## ■ Email Outsourcing is Not Cheap

Mass email campaigns will enable you to reach out to a large audience quickly and without fuss, and as often as you wish. Suppose you send out 100,000 emails per week and pay your outsource vendor 1 cent per email sent. In one year, your email mail campaign outsourcing cost will be US\$52,000. In the event you are successful and your mailing list size doubles in capacity, your outsourcing cost will be doubled. If you bring your email campaign in-house, you can easily recover the cost within one year. In fact, it is most likely that you will recover the cost within 6 months. Internet bandwidth expenses are the largest portion of "in-house" costs. If you already have the bandwidth, you can probably send your emails at minimal incremental costs. All you pay then will be the start-up hardware and software license costs, which depends on capacity and quality, and is much less than US\$52,000. After the initial start-up, the ongoing operating cost is small.



## ■ New Feature in 2010

Email Campaign Marketing is a powerful tool. Its power is increased when the content delivered to the recipient is personalized. In 2010, the content of any email can be personalized. 8thManage Email Campaign Server may be programmed to interpretively select one of many email templates for delivery at execution time. The selection is based on a multi-column recipient database. By using this special feature, emails with enhanced personalized content may be implemented from one central database.

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## Conclusion

Although the value of Opt-in Email Marketing is well understood, its true power can only be unleashed when proper care is given to its implementation. Bring it in-house and do it well. In 2010, email campaigns with enhanced personalized content may be implemented from a central database.



8thManage also provides an upgrade path for a complete CRM solution:



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