



# BRING IN THE NEW YEAR WITH 10 EMAIL MARKETING Resolutions to Grow YOUR BUSINESS



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The New Year is here, and with it comes another round of New Year's resolutions and planning for your business in 2012. Now, more than ever, is the time to focus your energy on internet marketing, particularly email.

According to a [report](#) published by the [Direct Marketing Association \(DMA\)](#), email is set to bring in \$39.40 for every dollar spent in 2012, as well as drive \$67.8 billion in sales. So, as you think about your own New Year's resolutions, we wanted to share 10 New Year's email marketing resolutions to help you refine your email marketing and grow your small business in 2012.

## 1 Grow Your Email List:

Growing your email lists can be a challenging thing to do, but the more qualified customers you have on your list, the better it is for your business. **Here are 5 smart ways to collect valid email addresses:**

### Opt-in Forms on Your Website

Place email opt-in forms on your website, blog, and social networking sites such as Facebook. Try our free VerticalResponse email [opt-in form](#)!

**OPT IN FORM**

Name:  Email:

**OPT IN**



### Link to Opt-in Forms

Include a link to an opt-in form in your Tweets and Social Media pages to extend the reach of your emails.



## Collect Emails at the Point-of-Sale

Collect email addresses and permission to mail at the point-of-sale. If you have a store, ask your employees to collect email addresses, place a guest book at the register or have a tablet or laptop handy for online signups. You can also collect email addresses during phone and online transactions. Remember to collect business cards or scan badges for contact information at tradeshow as well.



**Thank you for visiting our site!**  
Join our mailing list for special offers.

Name:

Email:

## Pop-up Windows

Display a friendly pop-up window to new site visitors, with tools such as [Popup Domination](#) asking them if they'd like to subscribe to your email list. Also include the benefits of signing up.

## Direct Mail

Send [direct mail postcards](#) and ask your prospects/customers to sign up to receive special "email only" offers and discounts.



## Only Send to Opt-in Email Addresses

Remember to avoid sending email to people who aren't expecting to hear from your company. Our recommendation is to only email people who have agreed to receive email from your business and always observe the rules of the [CAN-SPAM act of 2003](#).

## 2 Create an Email Marketing Plan:

One of the best ways to get organized is to create a plan. Create an email schedule with your preferred email launch dates. Then work backward from your launch date – through all your due dates – to reach your start date. This will help make sure that you are working with achievable deadlines, while having ample buffer time to write and review your content. You should also publish this document, by either sharing it in a public folder (a [Google Calendar](#) for example) or even printing out a large hard copy and hanging it for all to see.





### 3 Segment Your List and Provide Relevant Content:

When it comes to email dissatisfaction, irrelevant content is the biggest offender, rating even higher than mailing too much. What this means is that your business needs to provide relevant content to your customers. We recommend doing this through [list segmentation](#). Ways to segment your mailing lists include:

- ✓ **Email response rates:** Segment based on people who open and click vs. those who don't.
- ✓ **Purchase history:** Segment based on past purchase behavior.
- ✓ **Demographic:** Segment based on demographics such as gender, location, age, and other specifications you may have in your data.

### 4 Develop an Email Welcome Program:

Email welcome programs are a positive way to get loyal customers. If you don't have a welcome program, now is a good time to create one. We suggest starting with a strong welcome email thanking people for signing up. Then decide how often to mail and send a welcome series of 3-5 emails that offer helpful information at the right time. This can be especially useful if, for example, your product has some kind of learning curve, in which case you can include how-to videos and tutorials in order to get customers up and running quickly. You can easily set this up by using our [opt-in form](#) to collect a list of new sign-ups and set that list to receive the series by scheduling them in the [VerticalResponse email application](#).

# welcome emails



### 5 Conduct Email Tests and Use Your Learnings:

Test, test, test. They're easy to set up and extremely effective. We recommend creating an email test schedule, and committing to testing at least one variable each month. Easy things to test include subject lines, copy length (short vs. long), time and day of the week and frequency, call-to-actions and creative. Use the [segment tool](#) to split your email list in half, where half of the list receives version "A," and the other half receives version "B." Track your results and use them for future mailings.



# 6 Pay More Attention to Subject Lines:

The subject line is the most important element of your email, as it will trigger the customer's decision to open your email or not. So make it good! You can have the greatest content/offer in the world, but if your subject line isn't compelling enough, your audience will miss it. We have a [webinar](#) as well as a [guide](#) dedicated to becoming a subject line expert. So try to keep these 5 things in mind when writing your next subject line:

## Personalization:

Include personalization (such as first name) in your subject lines to see if it improves customer response (for example, "John, take advantage of this offer now.").

TransUnion tip for Laura

## keep it short

## Length:

It's generally a good idea to keep your subject lines concise. Avoid going over 40-50 characters if you can help it, or the message could get cut off.

## Benefit-Oriented:

Mention what benefits, not features, your customers will receive (i.e., what's in it for them, why should they buy your product).

Tame your garage, mudroom or utility closet

2 Days Left: 20% Off Star Wars Cookie Cutters,  
From: Williams-Sonoma <Williams-Sonoma@enews.will

## Call-to-Action:

Include a call-to-action in your subject line that will make people want to open it. Also, provide a sense of urgency, such as a deadline on your offer.

## Keep it Fresh:

Try not to reuse the same subject line over and over; test subject lines to see what your audience responds to best.

## keep it fresh

From
The Container Store
TurboTax Online
TransUnion

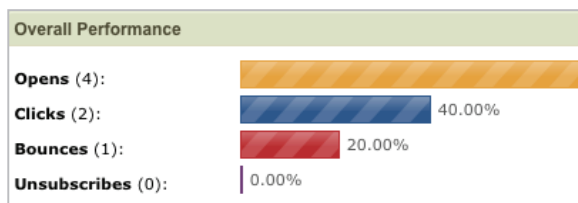
## From Label:

'From labels' can be just as important as subject lines, because they tell the recipient who sent the email. If you include your company name in the 'from label,' you won't have to repeat your company name in the subject line.



## 7 Listen to Customer Feedback:

Send a [survey](#) asking your customers what they think about your emails, such as frequency, content and relevancy. You can also ask them open-ended questions so they can give you suggestions, in their own words. Consider these findings as you make email plans for 2012. If you're not sure how to get started with surveys, you can try VerticalResponse surveys and get 25 FREE survey responses. Learn more about [VerticalResponse surveys here](#).



## 8 Monitor Email Response Rates:

The next step after sending an email is to track your results. We suggest tracking open and click rates, revenue and conversion, unsubscribes, bounces, but also linking to your website's analytics tools ([Google Analytics](#) or [Omniture SiteCatalyst](#) for example) to see how readers behave once they've clicked through. These can be key to discovering the success of your emails. Check out our [guide](#) on email marketing reporting for more information

## 9 Integrate Social Media and Email:

It's easy to see how email and social media work together. Here are some ways you can use them together to create more buzz around your business:

- ✓ **Post your email to social networks:** Instantly publish your emails to Twitter or Facebook using the [VerticalResponse Social Sharing feature](#).
- ✓ **Link to social networks in your email:** Include links in your emails to your company social network pages such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Google+.



FACEBOOK



TWITTER



# 10 Monitor Competitor and Industry Email:

Subscribing to mailing lists in your industry allows you to see what competitors and colleagues are doing with their emails. You can use this information as a benchmark – and possible best practices – for your business. Ideas of emails to subscribe to include:

- ✓ Emails belonging to leading businesses in your industry.
- ✓ Direct and indirect competitors' emails.
- ✓ Industry-wide online newsletters.

**check out what  
your competitors  
are sending**

This might seem like a lot, but you have the whole year to make email marketing improvements for your business! Start small, and you don't have to tackle all these resolutions at once. Try achieving one resolution each month.

Happy New Year and best wishes for your email marketing success in 2012!

Start Your Resolutions & Send Email Today!

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

