



EXPERIENCE THE POWER OF LIVE EVENTS

A large, stylized orange envelope icon with a white outline, positioned in the top left corner of the page.

The email marketing guide for exhibitors

A decorative bunting banner with white triangular flags and black outlines, hanging across the top of the main content area.

CONGRATULATIONS!

You've booked a stand at an ITE exhibition and you can relax because face-to-face marketing remains the most powerful way to connect with your customers.

But, your work isn't done yet.

No marketing channel operates in isolation, and exhibitions are no different. To truly turbo charge your investment, here are some best practice tips on how you can use email to catapult your exhibitor investment into the ROI stratosphere.

Why use email as an exhibitor?

At the last count there were 4.1 billion active email accounts and over 122 billion emails are sent every hour.

Yes every hour!

With statistics like that you will be scratching your head about how you can use email to turn you into an exhibiting superstar?



Four reasons why email is an exhibitor's best friend

1. YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS IS YOUR DIGITAL PASSPORT.



When you log into Facebook, LinkedIn or Twitter, how do you do it? With an email address! Without it, you don't exist on the internet and neither do your customers.

2. THE NUMBER OF EMAIL ACCOUNTS IS EXPLODING.



By 2018, the number of active email accounts is projected to grow to 5.2 billion - that's an increase of 27% on today's level.

3. WITH THE ADVENT OF MOBILE, EMAIL HAS MORPHED INTO AN AGILE, RESPONSIVE MARKETING CHANNEL.



The average smartphone user spends 29 minutes per day checking email on their phone... more than any other app.

4. EMAIL IS MORE THAN DIRECT RESPONSE.



Companies like Amazon are sending out emails with increasing frequency. They realise that in doing so their brand is top of mind in their customers' minds. They use email as a branding tool, and realise how it interacts with other channels. It's more about awareness than open rates and click counts.

Most exhibitors follow one of two paths for pre-show marketing:

"Let's do nothing, it's the ITE's job to drive traffic to my stand."

"Let's tell our customers and prospects what stand we're at."

Both of these strategies are suboptimal and here's why. An exhibition organiser's job is to

get people to the event much like a shopping centre get people through the doors. And once people are in the centre it's the shop's job to get them through the door.

Shops that don't promote, that expect the shopping centre to do all the work, won't be in business for long.

And, shops that email messages like, "Come to find us in shop G2 on level 4 of the Grand Mall" will annoy people very quickly!

There's nothing special about having bought a stand at a show so don't shout about it.

PRO TIP
The fact is, email isn't just sexy - it's the killer app for an exhibitor.

Using email before, during and after an exhibition

Email marketing for exhibitors is not rocket science and here's a helpful timeline of things you should be doing before, during and after a show:

3 months out

Devise your value-based email content plan.

2 months out

Start emailing your customers and prospects with value-led content messages... but not invitations to the show. Build up buzz.

1 month out

Promote what you're doing at the show – new releases, special events, cocktail hours – whatever you're doing that will stand out.

2 weeks out

Set up appointments at specific times. The appointments won't always be kept, but it creates a sense of urgency.

1 week out

Save your best content for last and announce it now.

Day after the show

Send out a "nice to meet you email," and link it to a web form asking for more information about them.

1 week after the show

Follow up with content-led email. You've got their attention but now you need to build solid interest.

2-3 weeks after the show

Set up trigger-based follow up campaigns based upon their response to the previous campaign.



SHOW TIME



PRO TIP:

Remember that email is a branding channel. Make a long list of all of the unique things you've done over the last year and all the big things you have planned in the next twelve months.

PRO TIP:

Segment your customers by geographical region. If they're in the area of the show, there's no need to mention the event yet. If they're a trip away, offer some helpful advice about getting to and from the venue... or about where the best pubs are in the area!

PRO TIP:

You don't need to tell people to sign up. If you entice them with value-based messaging, they'll register without any prompting from you.

PRO TIP:

Make sure that you only offer a few time slots to create a sense of urgency. No one wants to go to an empty restaurant and your exhibition stand is the same.

PRO TIP:

Even if it's not "news" make it news. You need to put some "show business" in your presence at the "show" and the email channel gets more eyes than anything else.

PRO TIP:

Stand visitors will never be more engaged than just after they've met you. Leverage this top-of-mindedness to find out more about their product requirements and purchase intent.

PRO TIP:

Use your email platform's dynamic content tool to personalise the content that is sent to them. Make sure it's relevant to your sales conversations.

PRO TIP:

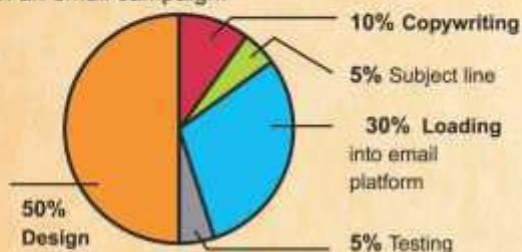
Most email platforms will have a native campaign automation tool. Use this to cover off all of the potential user journeys – opened but no click, clicked, non opens, etc.

EXHIBITOR PIE CHARTS

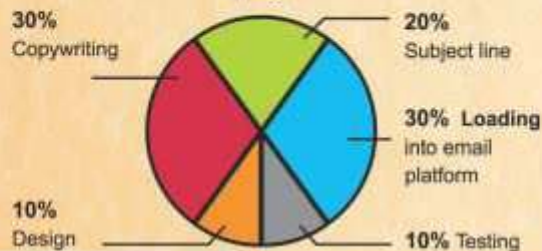


The not-very-scientific pie charts show where exhibitors should be focusing their efforts when sending emails...

How most exhibitors spend their time on an email campaign:



How exhibitors SHOULD spend their time on an email campaign:



PRO TIP

Save time and outsource email design. Focus on your copy and subject lines instead.

KILLER SUBJECT LINES FOR EXHIBITORS



Your subject line is by far the most important part of your email. Whether or not it gets opened or clicked on, everyone will see your subject line in their inbox.

HERE ARE 5 STEPS TO CREATING A KILLER SUBJECT LINE:

1. Write it first

Email as a channel is trending towards usability. Write your subject line early on, and then ensure the content follows.

2. Make it snappy.

Don't be boring with it – no one else needs another email with a boring subject line. But don't be crazy, make sure it's still brand compliant!

3. Mention your key USPs over and over.

Repetition works, especially when using email as a branding channel. Brainwashing? Maybe. Effective? Definitely!

4. Try personalising.

Including a customer's name or company can drastically improve results... just make sure your data is correct or you'll end up looking foolish.

5. Split test.

Nearly every email platform should offer substantial split testing capabilities. Follow a robust methodology and you'll be ahead of the curve.

MEASURING EMAIL SUCCESS FOR YOUR STAND



Traditional email marketers look at open rates and click rates, and base success upon that. However, the messages you send out can't be judged on those factors if the ultimate goal is to drive traffic to your stand.

The key here is to not view email as an isolated marketing channel. For your objectives, it is an amplification channel. It interacts with all of your other tactics – branding, direct response, social media, offline – to build your brand's awareness and ultimately drive people to visit you at the show.

What you need is a robust way to collect data at the show. Badge scanners, iPad forms, whatever – just make sure you capture an email address for anyone who comes by.

Then, you can determine how strong an amplifier your emails were.

If you want to go crazy, then don't send emails to half your audience, and compare traffic results after that. This way you'll be able to truly determine the effect email has on your stand activity results.

Four Top Tips for Exhibitors



MAKE YOUR EMAILS RESPONSIVE

Roughly half of emails are opened on mobile devices. Dwell time is decreasing, but this doesn't mean your content isn't being digested! Make your emails respond to different devices so they are usable and beautiful.



EXPERIMENT WITH SHORT VS. LONG COPY

Some email lists respond better to a waffle, and some better to an arrow. Test out your list and see what works... you'll be surprised at how big a difference the length of copy makes to your response rates.



ONLY INCLUDE IMAGES IF THEY ADD VALUE

No one needs to see stock photography of a rich person in a suit. We all know what that looks like. Make sure your images enhance the objective of the message.



RE-SEND TO NON-OPENERS

This is a simple strategy that increases response and eyeshare. A couple days after your email is sent, simply re-send the same message to those who didn't open the first time. You'll be amazed with the results!