

If marketing is the promotion of your business and products, email marketing is simply promoting your business, products and services via email. Email marketing can be loosely compared to direct mail marketing, but there are additional perks as well as limitations when you take your marketing efforts online and into the inboxes of thousands or even millions of consumers.

Email Marketing

There are many ways to describe email marketing, and many resources to help explain the various aspects and methods to success of email marketing campaigns. But at a very high level, email marketing consists of three forms of advertising: direct solicitation emails, retention emails or newsletters, and advertising through the email campaigns of others.

Direct Emails

Direct emails are comparable to direct mail advertisements. You prepare and send a formatted email message to any number of recipients inviting them to try out your product or service. The hope of a direct email is to gain new customers and bring you new business.

Newsletters

Once a customer has done business with you or responded positively to a previous email campaign, you can continue to maintain and even build that relationship. Retention emails are designed to retain customers. Rather than catchy advertisements, retention emails most often take the form of newsletters.

A newsletter is a compilation of articles, facts, and content that is interesting and relevant to the readers. It almost certainly contains promotional material about your offerings, and might very well contain advertisements from others, but the essence of the email is something that is useful and interesting to your clientele. This should hopefully build trust and respect and bring that client back again, perhaps with a friend.

Advertising in Emails

A third option for email marketing is to advertise in the emails of others. There are innumerable emails newsletters going out to consumers from all manners of websites and industry sectors. Your email marketing campaign might be as simple as placing an advertisement inside one of those newsletters. You pay for the ad spot, and reap the benefits without having to do any additional marketing work.

Avoiding Spam

While the high level descriptions of email marketing are clear cut and simple, there is a danger if you fail to understand or simply ignore the aspect of permission. If you send direct emails or even newsletters to an email address without permission from the recipient, you are no longer marketing, you are sending spam. And spam can kill your operations, reputation, and even land you in legal trouble depending on where you live. It is essential to understand what entails permission and how to steer well away from any misunderstandings that may damage your efforts or even your business overall.