

# Email Marketing Strategy in 7 steps for Small Business Owners

Boost engagement and drive sales

## At a glance

At Zoho Campaigns, we endeavour to help you improve the outcomes of **all** your marketing efforts.

In this guide, we're sharing the top seven steps for getting your email marketing strategy up and running.

- ① **Know your audience**
- ② **Build your email list**
- ③ **Choose the right email marketing tool**
- ④ **Create stellar email content**
- ⑤ **Determine the best send time**
- ⑥ **Incorporate automation**
- ⑦ **Track, analyse, and improve**





## ① Know your audience

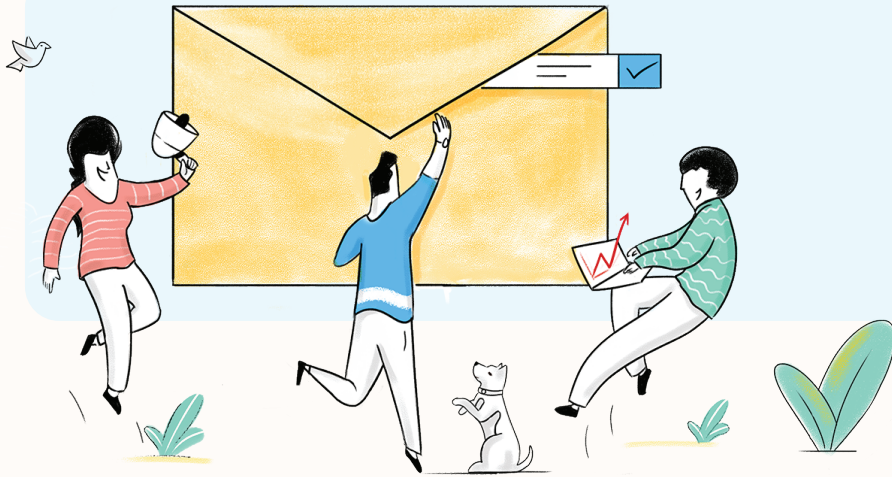


To run successful email marketing campaigns, it is crucial to have a deep understanding of your target market. Your target market consists of various buyer segments that you can categorize. Consider segmenting your buyers based on demographics, psychographics, or any other method with which you are comfortable.

For example, if you own an apparel store, you may want to segment your buyers by gender, life stage (for those purchasing kids' clothing), price points (budget or premium) and lifestyle (including those buying party wear or office wear).

It is important to personify each segment, and one simple way to do this is to visualize your ideal customer for each segment. Once you have a clear understanding of your target audience, you are prepared to take tangible and strategic steps towards running highly effective email marketing campaigns.





## ② Build your email list

Now that you have a clear idea of how to segment your audience, it's time to build and effectively manage your contact list.

The first step is to create comprehensible signup forms on your website. Ensure that the questions on these forms, or the pages they are placed on, clearly identify customer segments or personas.

Take the time to label your lists correctly and possibly add brief descriptions. This small but thoughtful action will be appreciated in the future when you need to access certain lists quickly or better understand what they entail.





### ③ Choose the right email marketing tool

When searching for the perfect email marketing tool for your business, the abundance of options available can be overwhelming. Consider the following parameters when comparing these tools:



#### Value versus features

Be cognizant of the value of a platform in terms of costs and features, especially noting that costs often rise with growing contact lists. It's essential to select a platform that meets both current and future needs. While you may only need a few features initially, investing in a platform that covers at least 80% of future requirements is wise. Striking the right balance ensures you avoid overpaying for unnecessary features or choosing a platform that can't scale effectively.





### ③ Choose the right email marketing tool

#### Platform longevity

It is important to evaluate whether the software company is established, well-funded, and has a strong reputation in the market. Avoid basing your decision solely on objective parameters. While a new software may offer great value in terms of features, the longevity of the company is vital for building a reliable business pipeline.

#### Ecosystem and switching costs

Switching software or platforms can be both expensive and time-consuming. You should consider software which has a strong ecosystem built around it, so you can seamlessly bring in new features and capabilities when you are ready to scale. This will eliminate the need for frequent platform switches every time your business experiences significant growth.





At this stage, you already know who you're sending your emails to (step 1) and how you're doing it (steps 2 & 3). Now it's time for the **what**. That is, what are you sending out as the content of the email? As a business owner, this is where your expertise and creativity come into play.

Based on your understanding of your business and your target audience, decide what message you want to convey to the recipients. Are you launching a new product or service? Perhaps you want to remind your customers of their previous purchase and encourage repeat business.

Whatever your objective, note it down clearly. You can consider sending out welcome emails (to new users), newsletters (to existing users), business updates, or targeted offers to specific segments.



You will need to build this email on the platform you have chosen, usually using its drag-and-drop elements. You should also optimize your emails for **mobile devices** to ensure your audience can easily engage with your content.

Effective practices for creating impactful emails include writing compelling subject lines, including relevant links, images, and a clear call to action.

By following these guidelines, you can create stellar email content that captures the attention of your recipients and drives the desired engagement.





## ⑤ Determine the best send time

You've put in considerable effort into your research and now you are ready to launch your first email campaign. It's important that this email reaches the recipients' inbox at the optimum time for them to open and engage with your content. Many email marketing software platforms come equipped with a feature called 'send time optimization', which schedules your campaign to launch when your audience is most likely to read it.

As a rule of thumb, avoid Mondays mornings for sending promotional content. Instead, aim for Thursdays, Fridays, or even weekends if you are a B2C company.

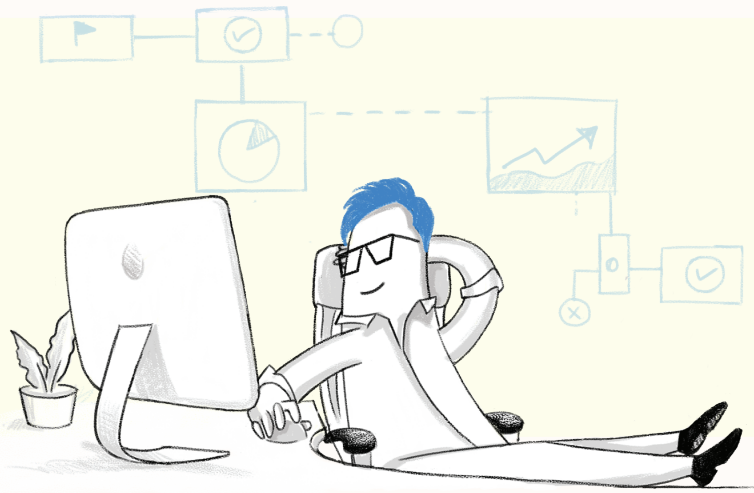


A point to note is that once you have sufficient data regarding your recipients' preferences, you will be able to leverage advanced send time optimization. With this option, you can dispatch emails in batches according to each recipient's unique preferences.

This feature analyzes the sent emails to determine the most effective time for future communications to each individual contact and schedules subsequent emails accordingly.







## ⑥ Incorporate automation

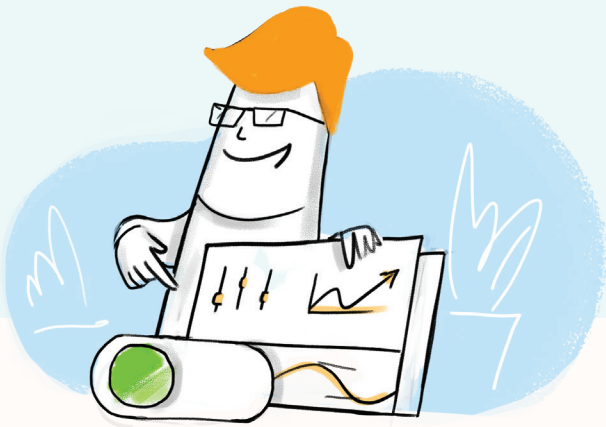
Congratulations on successfully sending out your first email campaign! Before the moolah starts rolling in, let's dive into an indispensable aspect of modern email marketing - automation.



Automation allows you to create customer journeys, where a series of emails are triggered based on the actions (or lack thereof) that recipients take with the initial email they receive. But that's not all - you have an array of triggers at your disposal. For instance, when a new contact gets added to your list, a welcome email can be automatically sent to them.

If a recipient opens an email but doesn't take the desired action, you can follow up with a targeted email to re-engage them. The possibilities for triggers and actions are limitless, and it adds so much more pizzazz to your email marketing. Once set up correctly, you can sit back and relax as your campaigns help you scale your business' revenue.





## ⑦ Track, analyse, and improve

Right, to the very last step! The hallmark of a marketer is continuous improvement. So, when your email campaign is sent out, you should ideally be eagerly waiting for the results to come in! Since this was your first campaign, correctly interpreting the data is vital. Understanding the insights provided in your email marketing tool's reports section will help you enhance your future campaigns.

Kickstart your analysis by checking the click-through rates, bounces, email opens, and unique clicks. Low open rates usually indicate suboptimal subject lines, low delivery rates, or even bad send times. A high bounce rate suggests the need to improve the quality of your customer data.

By delving into these metrics and considering how to improve them in your next campaign, you can elevate your email marketing skills and become an effective marketer.



## Here's your takeaway!

Mastering email marketing is a pivotal step for small business owners looking to elevate their marketing strategy. At Zoho Campaigns, we're committed to helping you achieve the best possible outcomes in your marketing efforts.

Remember that email marketing is an ongoing process, and by following the steps outlined in this guide and staying committed to improvement, you can harness its full potential to engage your audience and drive business growth.



Earlier, it took me almost four days to reach 5,000 recipients. With Zoho Campaigns, we're able to reach out to 11,000+ contacts, with over a 25% open and click rate.

Talitha Moore,  
Educational Specialist  
SMD Technologies





If you have questions or need further guidance, feel free to reach out to us. Your email marketing journey is just beginning, and we're here to support your success.



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