

Getting Started Guide
Express Email
Marketing®

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Getting Started Guide: Express Email Marketing

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Introduction

OK, it's time for you to make a "State of Your Website" address by answering these questions: Is your website relevant to your customers? Do they find it interesting? Finally, does your website deliver results?

Fact is, you don't have to be a marketing guru to understand the importance of "connecting" with your customers to keep them coming back. You want results, and that's what Express Email Marketing delivers.

Express Email Marketing shows you how to create and manage your mailing list, design professional, eye-catching campaigns, and even track the success of your mailings. You'll be able to use it to create and publish customer surveys and reports. Express Email Marketing gives you the tools to take your website, and your business, to the next level.

What is email marketing?

The bigger question is: Why should I care? Oh, but you should, because email marketing is one of the cheapest and most effective forms of promotion available today. You have no printing costs, no postage, and it's virtually immediate – from your desktop to your customers' inbox. And thanks to source codes, email responses are supremely easy to track.

Sending periodic emails helps keep your company top-of-mind among website visitors, increasing the chance that they'll think of you the next time they need what you sell or provide. Embedding links in your emails boosts traffic to your website – still the holy grail of online advertising.

Setting up Express Email Marketing

Ready to start growing your business? Let's get started by setting up Express Email Marketing.

To Set Up Express Email Marketing

1. Log in to your Account Manager.
.....
2. In the **My Products** section, click **Express Email Marketing**.
.....
3. Next to the account you want to use, click **Setup Account**.
.....
4. Read the Terms of Service Agreement, and click **Accept**.
.....

That's it! Now, let's customize your account.

Getting Started with Express Email Marketing

Before you start creating impacting marketing campaigns, you'll want to customize your account.

The Getting Started page includes five steps:

1. Establish Account Settings
2. Create a Subscriber List
3. Build a Sign-Up Form
4. Create a Campaign
5. Compose a Survey

The first two steps are required before you can start a campaign.

Tips for creating logos and graphics

Don't have a company logo? While not essential, an attractive, eye-catching logo or graphic helps create credibility and gives your business a professional look. But not everyone is a graphic artist, or has access to one. Here are a few suggestions:

- First, get a concept in mind. Think about what your company offers, and some of the symbols or images that might convey that concept. For inspiration, search online logos from other companies in your line of business. You can even sketch some rough ideas on paper.
- For more ideas, look at free stock art sites such as office.microsoft.com, sxc.hu, and freestockphotos.com.
- Ask business colleagues and friends for referrals. Or you can join an online graphics design forum.
- Do an online search for local graphic design artists. Search criteria might include graphic design, logo, logo design, company logos. There are some websites that help you design your own logo for free. Just search "free logos."
- Contact local graphic arts schools and colleges. Many times, these students will design a logo for much less money in order to build their portfolios.

Establishing Account Settings

This step includes the pertinent details about your account, including company name, location and email address.

1. On the Getting Started page, click **Go to Account Settings**.
2. In the **Company Information** section, complete the on-screen fields.

NOTE: The From Address is the email your subscribers will see in their inbox. The Reply-To Address is the email you want your customers to reply to. Finally, all account-related emails will be sent to your Reporting Address.

3. *Optional:* You can add a company logo or image.
4. Click **OK**.

Creating a Subscriber List

Organizing Subscribers

You don't necessarily want to send every campaign to every subscriber, right? A simple way to break them up is to use Interest Groups.

For example, you might use an interest group for "new home buyers" or "real estate agents." Their interests lie in different areas, but your business might serve both!

To add Interest Groups, click **Add Interest Group**, enter the **Group Name**, and then click **Add**.

Now, you're ready to set up your subscriber list. Subscribers are your customers, contacts, and anyone else you want to include in your email campaigns. You have two options: You can build your list manually, or import your contacts from another database.

To Add Subscriber List

1. Under **Create a Subscriber List**, click **Go to Add Subscribers**.
2. From the **Demographics** section, enter your mailing contacts in the fields provided.

NOTE: An email address is required, but you should try to include as much information as possible to create a more complete demographic profile. You have the option of clicking **HTML** or **Text Only**. Subscribers can select either of these options on the sign-up form or subscriber management pages. By default, **HTML** is selected.

3. Select any **Interest Groups** you want to add the subscriber to.
4. Click **OK**.
5. Repeat steps 2 and 3 until you're finished adding subscribers, and then click **Save and Exit**.

5 Ways to Make an Email Stand Out

1. **Make it personal.** When an email relates directly to your subscriber it boosts its credibility and relevance.
2. **Add motion to your promotion.** Including animation (a GIF, Graphic Interchange Format) in your email is a great way to draw more attention to your campaign. Do a search on GIFs to find free animated images.
3. **Be different.** People are bombarded with email advertising and marketing messages every day. Try to think outside the box when creating your campaign. Different is good!
4. **Boring is bad.** Try to create visually appealing emails by using interesting fonts, illustrations, and angled text.
5. **Blocked images.** Sometimes email images are blocked by default. Using preheader text, alt text, and HTML text instead of graphical text will help convey your message even if the image isn't visible.

Creating a Campaign

The objective of Express Email Marketing is to get you results. With easy step-by-step procedures, we give you everything you need to create vibrant, dynamic marketing campaigns that target your customers and subscribers. Each plan includes more than 150 professional, full-color images and ready-to-use templates. Plus, if you're handy using HTML, you have the flexibility to enhance or create your own special designs. Let's get started.

To Create an Email Campaign

1. From the Getting Started page, under **Create a Campaign**, click **Go to Create Email Campaign**.
2. From the **Campaign Type** menu, select your template type.

NOTE: The professionally designed template categories include **Product Promotion, Newsletter, Announcement, Creative and Design, Holiday, Home and Garden, General Business and Events and Parties, as well as Custom HTML and Text Only options.**

3. Under **Campaign Templates**, select the template you'd like to use, and then click **Next**.
4. Enter a **Campaign Name** and **Subject Line**.
5. Add content to your campaign by clicking on the generic copy blocks to personalize your campaign with your own headline and body text.
6. When done, click **Save**.
7. From the **Options** menu, you can preview the mailing, perform a spam analysis, send a test email, and edit the text version associated with the HTML campaign.

NOTE: You have the option to **Add Attachments**. Click and follow the prompts.

8. Click **Next** if you're ready create your mailing, or click **Save**.

3 Questions Your Email Marketing Should Answer

In today's fast-paced business environment, people are much too busy to have their time wasted by trying to decipher cryptic marketing emails. In fact, research cited by Smith-Harmon, a marketing-research company, finds email subscribers will spend just 8 seconds on most messages before clicking through or navigating away.

Here's a look at three questions your email should answer in 8 seconds or less:

1. What is this email campaign about?
2. Why should a subscriber care about it?
3. What should a subscriber do about it?

Check out this example:

"Select Marketing Software On Sale"

Does it answer the three questions? Nope. It's vague and doesn't tell you what the software will do for you.

A better example would be this:

"5 Software Programs to Jumpstart Your Marketing Plan"

This email quickly tells you what is being sold, why to buy it, and what it will deliver: a robust marketing plan.

Adding Images

When creating a campaign in Express Email Marketing, you can add images from the Image Library, which includes stock images and images you uploaded from your computer. Images may be used in different places in an email campaign depending on the campaign template.

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NOTE: You can add images, up to 100 KB in size, in JPG, GIF, PNG, or BMP formats.
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To Add an Image to Your Email Campaign

1. Log in to your Account Manager.
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2. In the **My Products** section, click **Express Email Marketing**.
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3. Next to the account you want to use, click **Manage Account**.
.....
4. Click **Email Designer**, and then click **View Email Campaign**.
.....
5. Click the campaign you want to use.
.....
6. Click the area where you want to add an image, and then click **Select**.
.....
7. Select the image you want to use, and then click OK.
.....

Writing Emails That Get Results

Can the structure of an email contribute to its success? Do keywords or phrases help? Should you always tell the truth? Yes. Yes! Yes!!!

Most of us are not marketing experts. And the good majority of us aren't even writers. But we all have it in us to be effective communicators. Writing effective marketing emails doesn't need to be difficult. We're not crafting *War and Peace*. You shouldn't make it harder or more complicated than it needs to be. Just keep a few things in mind and it'll practically write itself:

Tips for Writing Effective Marketing Emails

1. **It's all about the benefits, baby.** Don't simply tell your customer you've got a great product for a great price. Tell them what the product will do to make their lives better. If it can save them time, tell them how. If it's going to save them money or make their lives easier, tell them.
2. **What motivates you?** People are moved to purchase based on four basic motivators: fear, guilt, greed, and exclusivity. Play off these motivators in your copy and let them work their magic. If you're selling home security systems, tap into customers' desire to protect their family and belongings. If rare coins are your bag, talk about the investment value and earnings potential.
3. **The truth will set you free.** You can say anything in your marketing copy, but if you're not being truthful, your profits and your business are going to be short-lived. Make it sizzle, make it sell, but most importantly, make it honest.
4. **Make it personal.** It might not seem like much, but if you can drop "your" into your copy, it can go a long way to draw customers in, whether they realize it or not. And isn't that what *you* want for *your* business?
5. **Accuracy counts.** Before you consider your copy complete, read it, read it again, and then read it out loud. Have a second set of eyes look it over. Nothing is worse than writing really great copy that's tamihsed, oops, tarnished with typos.

One final bit of advice: choose your email "subject line" carefully. This is the headline of your message. You want it to be compelling, draw attention and be interesting to your customers.

Dissecting a Subject Line

The subject line truly does the heavy lifting in a marketing email, and worth spending your time creating. You have, on average, between 40 and 60 characters to capture customers' attention. How you choose your words is critical to the success of your message.

So, what makes a subject line work? Good question. Unfortunately, there is no magic formula. A good descriptive subject line, written concisely, can get your email opened in a flash. A poorly constructed one can condemn your email to the trash or junk file. No pressure, right? Here are few suggestions that can steer you in the right direction:

1. **Read all about it!** Examples of great subject lines are as close as the headlines in your local newspaper. Yes, it's true, newspapers generally do a good job highlighting the most important facts in a few words, which is what a subject line should do.
2. **"From" who?** Marketing research shows readers often look at the "from" line first when deciding whether to open an email, and then the subject line. That stated, these two should work in tandem. The "from" line tells the recipient who sent the email, while the subject line entices them to open it. If your "from" line lists the company name, and it should, you don't have to repeat it in the subject line, which frees up space to highlight your message.
3. **It's a numbers game.** David Letterman doesn't have corner on Top 10 lists. People love numbered lists. Look at any magazine cover and you'll most likely see a story tease to a "top 10," "7 ways," or "best 5" something or other. Including a number in your subject line is a great way to entice your subscribers to want read more.
4. **What's inside?** It's great to be creative, but don't be too cute, cheesy or overly salesy. Rather, top-load your subject line with the most compelling and valuable content. This is what will capture the reader's interest, not pushy propositions or overused clichés.

Examples of good subject lines

- 12 Marketing Secrets Revealed
- Check Out These Last-Minute Travel Deals
- 10 Sure-Fire Methods to Market Your Business
- New Products that will Change Your Life
- 5 Proven Solutions to a Boring Party
- Last Day for New-Car Pricing
- 8 Reasons to Buy Local
- Want More Customers? Here's How
- 3 Ways to Jump-Start Your Advertising

Setting Up Your Mailing

You have four options available to use in defining the recipients of your campaign mailing: Here's a look at each, and how they work:

- **Send to all subscribers** — Sends the campaign to every email address in your subscriber list. If you select this option, you can use the Demographics option (see below) to apply specific demographic filters to the subscribers included in the campaign.

- **Interest Groups** — Sends the campaign to all subscribers who are members of the Interest Groups you select. If you select this option, you can also use the Demographics option (see below) to apply specific demographic filters to the subscribers included in the campaign.

- **Demographic Information** — Select **Limit by demographic information** to narrow the recipients list according to demographic information contained in the subscriber profiles. Select from profile information that contains a single condition or a range of conditions. From the **Condition** menu, select a profile question, and then select from the available options in the **Rule** menu. For example, to send the campaign to only those subscribers living in selected states: select State in the condition drop-down list, select from the list of available options, and then click **Add**. To include multiple states, repeat the process.

- **Additional Recipients** — Send to additional email addresses besides the Interest Groups or Demographics you selected. This might include subscribers or non-subscribers and is independent of any selection you defined in other sections on this page. In cases where a duplicate email address is added, only one campaign mailing will be sent to the email address.

Stay Away from the ‘Blast Zone’

Your first impulse when mailing an email campaign is to blast it out to everyone with a heartbeat. After all, the more eyes on it, the better response, right? Wrong!

Before you can send email marketing, you must have permission from every single one of your recipients. Permission means people requested email marketing from you.

No one wants to get unsolicited emails in their inbox. If you’re sending your marketing campaigns to folks who have no interest or haven’t subscribed to receive your emails, you open yourself up to labeled a “spammer.” And once your website and server are flagged by unhappy recipients for sending spam mail, you will lose your ranking in search engines. You might even end up getting your website banned.

The best practice is to build an opt-in list of people who have provided their contact information and agreed to receive your emails. It’s important to do your homework, be respectful, and don’t spam.

Bottom line: Successful and effective email campaigns are the product of targeted mailings.

Building a Sign-Up Form

Express Email Marketing lets you invite individuals to your join your subscriber list. You can add sign-up form links to your website, which lets visitors register to receive your email campaigns. This form also allows you gather information about your subscribers' interests. You can customize your form with your company logo or image, as well as filter the type of information you want to collect. Here's how:

To Customize Your Form

1. From the Getting Started page, click **Go to Build Sign-Up Form**.
2. On the Build Sign-Up Form page, enter the URL of the logo or image you want to display or click **Select** to browse the image library.
3. Click **Apply**.
4. Select your font type and color, and background color.
5. *Optional:* Select to **Notify me when someone subscribes** to receive email when you get new subscribers.
6. Click **Next**.
7. In the **Section Heading**, enter what you want the heading to display.

8. Define whether the information is required, and set the order in which the questions display.
.....
9. *Optional:* Add custom questions.
.....
10. Click **Next**.
.....

.....

NOTE: Based on the amount of content you chose to display on your sign-up form, you can set it up in vertical or horizontal format. A subscriber confirmation message allows you to personalize the message that displays when someone confirms their subscription.

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11. Choose your form type.
.....
12. Click **Next**.
.....
13. Select whether you want to **Redirect to a URL** or **Use Standard Completion Page**, complete the on-screen fields, and then click **Next**.
.....
14. Select a link style to add to your website.
.....

You have finished building your sign-up form. Now all you need to do is select the type of link you want to display on your website for it. Select a link style, click **Copy Code**, and then paste the HTML code for the link into the code for your Web page.

How to Get Subscribers

There's no question that the size of your subscriber list can affect the success of your email marketing. Still, it's a quality vs. quantity issue. Your subscriber list should be made up of people who want to receive your campaigns, even look forward to them, and will tell others about them. But how do you get these A-list subscribers? Here are a few suggestions:

- Take advantage of your social media opportunities by placing your subscriber link on your Facebook and Twitter pages.
- Place your subscriber link in your email signature.
- Put sign-up forms on your Web pages.
- Make sure you have an "offer" for signing up, such as "Latest news," "Exclusive offers," "Free content," or other calls to action.
- Attend tradeshows or special business events, and invite with whom you network to sign up.

NOTE: Don't buy mailing lists! There's no value in it, and you open yourself up to being labeled a "spammer." It's important to build your subscriber list the right way, by recruiting those recipients who are relevant to your business, interested in what you do, and hopefully have bought or engaged with you in the past. What you want is a highly targeted large mailing list that you build over time.

Composing a Survey

Learn more about your customers or just have fun with friends and family by designing and sending surveys. Creating a survey is easy and can be designed to include just a few simple questions or as a comprehensive survey covering a broad range of questions.

You provide the Web page URL to the people that you want to invite to take the survey. This can be done by placing a link to the survey on your own website or any other website, as well as including the link in any of your campaign mailings. Here's how:

1. From the Getting Started page, click **Go to Compose Survey**.
2. Select **Compose blank survey**, and then click **Next**.
3. Enter your **Survey Name** and **Title**.
4. You can add a company logo or image for your survey. Enter the URL where the image is located, to link to the image or click **Select** to select an image from the Image Gallery.
5. From the menu, select where you want the image title to display.
6. Select your font type and color, and background color.
7. In the **Survey Return Link URL** field, enter a full website address as a link on the survey form.
8. In the **Survey Return Link Text** field, enter text to display in place of the website address.

9. In the **Survey Completion Text** field, enter your concluding remarks. For example: “Thank you for taking my survey. Have a nice day!”

10. Click **Next**.

11. Add questions to your survey by clicking **Add New Questions**.

12. Select the type of question you want to use, complete the on-screen fields for the question, and then click **Next**.

13. Repeat this step for any questions you want to add, and then click **OK**.

14. Select the survey you want to publish, select options for when to close the survey, and then click **Publish Survey**.

To add the survey to your website, click **Select Code** to highlight either the **Link** or **Button** HTML. You can paste this code into your website’s HTML to display the survey.

NOTE: You have the option to add a survey link to your email campaigns. Click on the chain-link icon in the Email Editor to insert the link to your survey.

Where Do You Go from Here?

Express Email Marketing has helped you create a dynamic email marketing campaign that is interesting, timely, and relevant, which is now driving traffic to your website's landing page. The bigger question becomes: Once they hit your landing page, is your marketing campaign converting the click into revenue?

Your email campaign can be brimming with all the bells and whistles in the world, but if your landing page is underwhelming, your conversion rates will suffer. Here are a few suggestions to give your landing page some TLC and help seal the deal:

- **Keep your promises.** If you're telling customers they're going to receive an offer or discount by clicking to your landing page, then follow through. The quickest way to lose a subscriber is to make false claims. If you deliver on your promise, you'll not only create revenue opportunities, but also keep that subscriber coming back and looking for more.
- **Be consistent.** If your email campaign is slick and professional, your landing page should follow suit. Think about it. Wouldn't you would be disappointed if you booked a hotel online based on the property's stunning photography only to find that it's a seedy dump once you arrived at the reservation desk. Make sure your landing page syncs aesthetically with the design of your marketing campaign.
- **Keep it simple.** It's tempting to throw everything — plus the proverbial kitchen sink — at your customers once they reach your landing page. Bad idea. When offering choices, keep them as simple as possible. If you make it confusing or difficult to find the product or offer touted in your email campaign, you run the risk of losing the customer.
- **Second chances.** Subscribers might not take you up on the main offer, but how about offering a free newsletter or report that requires their email address in order to download? This gives you a second chance to earn their business and build a relationship over time.

These suggestions can help ensure your landing pages deliver clear, pertinent, and useful experiences to your subscribers, which can go a long way towards increasing your conversion rates.