

5 STEPS FOR GETTING STARTED



WITH EMAIL MARKETING

Email marketing isn't just for big businesses. Your small business can also benefit from an email marketing program, and a keep-it-simple approach is a great way to get started without getting overwhelmed. The following five steps for planning a successful email marketing program are designed to help you do just that.



1. SET MEASURABLE GOALS

To set your email marketing program up for success, start by setting goals you can easily measure along the way. Especially at the beginning of your program, your goals don't need to be confined to sales or revenue. The experts at Synchrony recommend keeping things simple, as well as setting a time target for your goals. For example: I want to increase the number of people registering their account online over the next six months. This simple goal is not only easy to measure, it also helps you focus your messages and send cadence so your email program remains a manageable part of running your small business.

2. CHOOSE AN EMAIL SERVICE PROVIDER

Once your goals are set, it's time to research email service providers. Simply put, an email service provider (ESP) is a tool that allows you to send emails to a list of subscribers. There is a seemingly endless number of ESPs out there, offering every bell and whistle you can imagine (and some you can't). Sifting through convoluted features and benefits menus can be a struggle when you're strapped for time, and your small business likely doesn't have the same email marketing needs as a large company. **Constant Contact is known as a simple, effective ESP** that provides templates, testing, and guidance on things like mobile-first design, accessibility, integrations, and more to help you launch and maintain successful email marketing campaigns for your small business.

3. BUILD YOUR SUBSCRIBER LIST

The right ESP can not only ensure your emails are delivered and look great, it can help you cultivate an active subscriber list. A subscriber list is the group of people — customers, prospects, or both — who'll receive your emails, so it's important to keep your goals in mind as you're building your list. There are a variety of high- and low-tech ways to encourage signups for your list, from a sheet at your cash register or QR code on your receipts to an opt-in form on your website or signup link on your social media posts or listings. One list-building strategy

Synchrony recommends avoiding: a purchased list. Often, the contacts on purchased lists can't be verified, and they didn't opt in to receive your emails. These may not be potential customers, and in fact, they may not be interested in your business at all.



However you choose to build your list, remember to clearly state what your subscribers should expect from your email program — then stick to that to encourage trust. At the point of signup, Synchrony experts suggest you share roughly how often subscribers can expect to receive your emails, what kinds of emails you'll be sending, and vitally, what's in it for them (think coupons, entry into your loyalty program, etc.). This helps you not only get subscribers but keep them, and keep them engaged with your email marketing program.

4. CREATE YOUR EMAIL MESSAGING STRATEGY

Quality over quantity is an excellent strategy for building your list, and it also applies to your messaging strategy. While there are many types of emails you can send your subscribers, Synchrony experts have identified a key starting point for your email marketing program: the welcome email.



The welcome email is automatically sent to everyone who opts in to your list. It's the first email they see from your business, so it should set the tone for everything that's to come — reiterating what subscribers should expect from you and offering something of value to create engagement. Since your ESP will allow you to automate your welcome email, you can set it up immediately while you research and plan the rest of your strategy. You may not have the time or bandwidth to send weekly marketing emails, plus a monthly newsletter... and that's ok. Choose a send cadence that works for your business and the goals you set for your program, and schedule some time in the month ahead of each send to plan your content. **Constant Contact and other ESPs** have helpful planning calendars that can make the job easier.



As your expertise grows and your program evolves, you can fold in other types of sends throughout the year to test and try:

- Promotional emails — sales, special events, etc.
- Seasonal and holiday emails
- Automated transactional emails like receipts, or abandoned cart and suggested items messages
- Personalized email series based on polling, purchase history, stated preferences, etc.
- Newsletters



5. SEND, ANALYZE, ADJUST, AND REPEAT

Once you've started sending your emails, your ESP will provide reporting that can help you analyze, test, and refine them to meet the goals you've set for your program. This is the true power of email marketing: the ability to make adjustments in real time. Rather than rely on trends or industry statistics, Synchrony experts advise employing repeated testing, always applying the data you've gathered to the next campaign so you can understand what resonates with your unique audience.

A/B testing is an easy way to increase the effectiveness of your emails. For example, many ESPs allow you to test two different subject lines in an email, sending the A subject line to a small portion of your list and the B subject line to an equally sized, but different portion. The best performing subject line will then automatically go to the rest of your list, ensuring your email has the subject line most likely to entice your subscribers to open it. From there, you can take what you've learned and iterate for your next send, optimizing your subject line (or image, content, call to action, etc.) to maximize your success.



While there is no set it and forget it approach to email marketing, it's a powerful tool for connecting with your audience — one that Synchrony employs regularly for its own marketing initiatives — and you could see a return on the time and money you invest in your program... on average \$36 for every dollar you spend.¹

For more information or to connect with an expert, contact us at synchronyconnect@synchrony.com.

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¹Moller, Megan. (2021, September 9). **The ROI of Email Marketing**. Litmus.

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