



EDITION 1 : VOLUME 2

Because we care about your business, this guide to obtaining emails and sending your very own eBlasts was created to help promote and grow your company right now through simple strategies at little or no cost to you.

PROMOTE YOUR EYE CARE BUSINESS WITH EMAIL

INCREASE EXPOSURE

Do you have an email marketing list of engaged prospects and customers that you can consistently communicate with? Now that you have your website up and running, start acquiring customer email addresses and sending your customers regular emails to promote your eye care services.

One of a small business's best marketing assets is a healthy email list. While proper management and use of your email file will drive revenue immensely, it is often a challenge to create the email list itself. With inbox clutter on the rise and customers becoming more sensitive toward any unwanted communication, marketers should develop their subscriber lists with relevance and care.

So where do you start? Here are some tips to help you build a compelling permission-based marketing list as well as some tactics to avoid.

Maintain an In-Store Signup List

Be sure to make collecting email contacts as important as collecting phone numbers for visitors, potential and regular customers to build and grow your list. If you have a tablet or smart phone, the **OnSpot** app makes it quick and easy for new patients to add themselves to your list at the reception desk. Or go low-tech with a sign-up sheet! For retail stores, asking customers for their email addresses at the point-of-sale (POS) is a proven technique that is quickly gaining momentum. In-person and in-store events were ranked second in acquisition quality and quantity, according to research studies.

To put this practice into action, it's important that your associates:

- Ask customers for their email addresses
- Explain the benefits of your email program
- Let customers know exactly what to expect in terms of email frequency and content
- Read back the email addresses to verify correct spelling and reduce the risk of error

Constantly training your employees and maintaining an in-store signage promoting your program can effectively support this effort.

Request Customers' Email Addresses While on Customer Service Calls

Customers are highly receptive during customer service calls. You have their full attention and should use it to your advantage by requesting email addresses. You may be surprised at how many will comply. If your customer service representatives are writing their own emails to follow up with customers, have them put a link to an email sign-up form in their email signatures.

Offer a Reason or Incentive to Sign Up

To encourage people to subscribe to your list, offer an incentive such as an e-newsletter subscription or email updates that keep prospects notified of special offers or events. Another option is to offer an on-the-spot incentive. This could be educational in nature. Don't expect people to just stumble into this type of content; promote it whenever you can – on your Facebook page, even blog about it by giving a sneak peek, but require folks to "Subscribe Here" if they want to read the full content.

Display Your Opt-In Form Wherever You Interact with Your Customer

Your opt-in form should be easy to complete and easily accessible. Link to it prominently on your website, on your social media sites, from your blog, and your email signature – basically every time you interact with a customer or prospect online, providing email sign-up opportunities for potential customers. When your website visitors make requests online, ask for (or require) their email addresses. Save any new documentation as a PDF for download, and require that individuals enter their names and email addresses in order to access it.

Send a Welcome Email Offering a Free Gift with Any Purchase

To encourage customers to give store associates their email addresses, consider offering a free product with their next purchase. An email can be sent to confirm the email address and can include the free offer coupon. This validates the email address and encourages customers to shop again.

Use Your Blog and Social Media Networks to Drive Opt-Ins

Your social media fans and blog readers are your captive audience and should be your number one targets to add to your marketing list. There are many ways of doing this and all of them complement your social media activities.

- **Use your blog.** Most blogging software lets you easily add links to other areas of your site. Use them to encourage newsletter sign-ups in particular.
- **Post links to your sign-up page on your Facebook page.** And don't forget to Tweet and Facebook every now and again about your newsletter, your offers, and how people can sign up to receive them.
- **Promote your product, services or incentives.** As above, whenever you publish a new newsletter, provide your social media followers with a sneak peek of the content, and always include a link to your sign-up page.

Be Aware of Data Privacy CAN-SPAM Laws

Once you start communicating with your marketing list, be sure to familiarize yourself with online marketing laws that cover the CAN-SPAM Act and your unsubscribe responsibilities. You'll also need to develop an online privacy policy to show your compliance with these consumer data protection laws. Read more in SBA's Overview of Privacy Laws.

Things to Avoid

Lastly, what list-building tactics should you avoid as a small business owner? Generally you'll find that the following are not worth spending your marketing dollars on:

- **Google ads** – It's very hard for small business owners to make pay-per-click advertising work as a list-building mechanism. Larger brands and thicker wallets tend to dominate this space.
- **Purchased lists** – These include magazine subscriber lists, association member lists, and so on. When you communicate with a purchased list you are doing so on an unsolicited basis and your email will fall on deaf ears or be flagged as SPAM.
- **Banner ads** – Okay for brand awareness if you are a big brand, but no good for small business lead generation or list building.

Keep Regular Contact through eBlasts

By following responsible "best practices" to build a permission-based house file, marketers create a win-win situation for both the customer and the brand. Companies gain long-term, profitable relationships with their customers, and customers receive offers for products and services that are meaningful and relevant to them.

By using the email channel responsibly, you and the consumer can continue to benefit from this cost-efficient and environmentally friendly medium. Use contact list to announce new lines of frames, promotions, trunk shows, and perhaps news about your product and industry. Keep them simple, meaningful, and interesting. Send an email to your contact list at least once a month (twice a month at most) with a subject line announcing a sale, event, or related eye-issue so that your patients keep you in mind when their optical need arises. This is proven to be most effective since a higher frequency may cause contacts to unsubscribe. Email programs through websites like www.aweber.com, or www.mailchimp.com can help you accomplish this.

For more information, contact our Marketing Department at marketing@bestimageoptical.com.