



Email DoctorTM

SPECIAL REPORT

the ten WORST email marketing mistakes

**Who makes them,
how to avoid them,
and what it means
for your business.**

www.EmailDoctor.info

The Ten Worst Email Marketing Mistakes

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Welcome!

Hello! I'm Mike Adams, the Email Doctor™, and my mission is to provide free advice for healthy email marketing. If you enjoy this report, you'll find more articles, advice and information on my site: www.EmailDoctor.info.

I enjoy hearing back from readers, so if you have comments, suggestions, or (gasp!) criticisms, email me at doctor@emaildoctor.info. While I can't respond to every email, I do read them, and your comments are very important to me.

Now, on to the fun!

There's A Bit of Marketing In All Your Email Communications

All communications with customers are a form of marketing.

If you send email to customers, prospects, readers or members, you're engaged in email marketing. It doesn't matter whether you're just sending members a meeting notice or announcing a sale: any content item that you distribute to a group of email recipients is, in one way or another, a marketing action.

Although it has been used since the mid 1990's, email marketing remains in its infancy. Relatively few people demonstrate mastery of the medium – many people simply treat email like direct mail or approach email as a spamming opportunity.

I've seen the good and the bad of email marketing.

I've been in the email marketing industry for eight years, and I've seen the good and the bad of email marketing. My company's email marketing software is used by thousands of companies around the world, and I've personally spoken with hundreds of our users to learn what they're doing that works (and doesn't work).

Over these last eight years, I've seen email marketers make terrible mistakes. I've seen them unintentionally sabotage promising campaigns, alienate readers, and miss terrific opportunities for building trust with customers. And, of course, I've seen the mass proliferation of spam -- which has rightly earned the reputation as "the worst thing about the Internet."

I've seen brilliant examples of email marketing done right.

I've also seen brilliant examples of email marketing done right. I've watched companies double and triple responses, I've seen organizations win the trust of their readers, and I've seen companies gather a wealth of intelligence about their customers' preferences by using the email marketing strategies I frequently write about on my site, EmailDoctor.info.

This report, however, showcases the worst mistakes of email marketing. Here, I reveal the ten worst mistakes I see email marketers making right now... and I tell you workarounds and solutions for avoiding these mistakes. Boy, are there some doozies when it comes to email marketing mistakes. I've seen companies annoy a million readers at a time. It can be very educational to see a simple mistake multiplied a million times.

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Mistake #1: Spamming

Although the definition of spamming is a moving target, Spamming is generally understood to mean sending email to someone who hasn't volunteered to receive email from you.

The definition of "spam" is more complex than you might think.

In reality, it's more complex, and that's where a lot of email marketers get into trouble. In observing characteristics of spam and unscrupulous email marketers, I've expanded the definition of spamming to include:

- Sending email that insults the readers' intelligence such as "You've won ten million dollars! Click here to claim it!"
- Sending email offers that aren't consistent with what the reader signed up for (for example, they signed up to receive technology news updates, but you emailed them online gambling offers).
- Sending offers from third parties without identifying your own organization as the source of the relationship.
- Sending repeated emails without offering the reader an easy way to unsubscribe.
- Sending a significantly higher frequency of emails than you originally implied (i.e. sending people ten emails a week when you actually told them you would only send one email a week).

Even careful email marketers can easily get tripped up on some of these points. For example, you might think your unsubscribe mechanism is easy to use, but have you ever used it yourself? Does it actually work?

Of course, some of these are blatant. If you're sending third-party emails to try to make a quick buck, don't try to fool yourself into thinking it isn't spam. I've seen ridiculous justifications of why "this campaign" isn't spam. People have actually told me, "This isn't spam because they can opt out!"

Spam that offers an unsubscribe is still spam.

I've also seen people send what they call "legal" spam by claiming their spam is fully compliant with the pending Senate Anti-Spam Bill. In other words, they identify the source of the email and they give people a way to opt out. But they're still using webpage harvesters to collect email addresses, so, it's still spam.

Why is spamming bad, anyway?

Email spamming is almost universally considered one of the worst things about the Internet. Relentless spammers send a steady stream of offers (usually involving porn and casinos) to every email address they can get their hands on. Trying to remove your email address from these lists by clicking the "remove me" links just tells the spammer that you're alive and reading the emails, so they send more!

Spam causes literally hundreds of millions of dollars in damage each year to individuals and organizations around the world. Why? Because it takes time, disk space and bandwidth to deal with spam. Estimates of the actual cost of dealing with spam range from \$10 / month to more than \$50 / month per individual. A corporation with, say, 5000 employees is spending somewhere between \$50,000 and \$250,000 per month fighting spam (that is, unless they install spam filtering technology, which many corporations implement now, but even those spam filters aren't perfect and still allow some spam to come through).

Because of the huge costs of dealing with spam, some people fight back hard when they receive spam: they'll complain to your ISP. Your ISP, in turn, will yank your connectivity, leaving you high and dry like a beached spam whale.

Thanks to upcoming federal laws, sending spam could soon cost you a fortune.

If all that isn't bad enough, the U.S. federal government is inching closer to passing anti-spam legislation that would make it much easier for citizens and state Attorneys General to go after spammers with fines of \$10 per email. Planning on sending a million spam emails? Set aside ten million dollars just in case you have to pay the fines.

In other words, spam is a very bad idea. And not just because of the penalties, either: spam is bad because it neglects to honor the individuals -- the real people -- who populate the Internet in the first place. You probably wouldn't go around screaming offers into your neighbor's ears, right? So why do it electronically? Spam is, simply put, a good example of being a bad neighbor.

If spamming is so bad for business, why do spammers keep sending it? Because there's always some one looking to make a quick buck in a fly-by-night operation that can get the mail out, collect a few thousand dollars worth of checks, and run for cover. Spammers still exist for the same reason investment con artists still exist: there's always somebody willing to do whatever it takes to make a dishonest buck.

If you want to make an honest profit providing a product, service or information to people -- and you want to do it with the help of email marketing -- there are all sorts of powerful, high-integrity strategies you can follow that will bring you profits and the thanks of your customers. You can read about many of them at my site, EmailDoctor.info. Educate yourself about what works. You'll find your email marketing success naturally follows.

Mistake #2: Sending A Sincere Message To A Spam List

Even a well-intended message, when blasted indiscriminately, is spam.

Mistake #2 is related to Mistake #1, but it merits separate consideration because many people think they are still engaged in relationship building when they send a sincere message to any list. What do I mean by a "sincere" message? I mean a message that isn't the standard spam fare (free porn, cable TV descrambler, credit card offers, etc.). Rather, it's a message that either asks for permission to send the recipient an offer, or it contains information of general social value (see below).

The most common variety of this spam is the old, "Business Partnership" spam put out by affiliate advertisers. They want you to post their ad on your website, but instead of flat out asking you to post their ad, they approach you with a spamvertisement like this:

Dear webmaster,

I visited your site recently (www.whatever.com) and really liked your content! I would like to discuss a business partnership proposal with you that I think could add significantly to your bottom line. I represent advertisers with annual budgets of over \$10 million who would be very interested in placing CPA ads on your site. Please reply if you'd like more information.

The message, of course, is bogus. Your site was never looked at, and the exact same message goes out to the entire WHOIS database (contains all websites on the Internet).

Pre-spam is still spam.

With this kind of message, spammers are trying to "pre-spam" you to get your permission to send you an offer. In their minds, they think this means it's no longer spam. Somehow, spamming you to ask your permission if you want to be spammed isn't considered spam by these people.

The "public good" email

Another variation on mistake #2 is any kind of email that attempts to spread information for the "public good" despite the fact that nobody asked for it. Politicians easily fall into this trap.

Even members of Congress don't have the right to send unrequested email.

I once received a call from a Congressman in California who asked for a list of all the email addresses of people who lived in his district. When I explained that would be spamming, he got irate and claimed that he had a "Constitutional right to free speech" that gave him the irrevocable permission to email all the people in his district. After all, he claimed, "I represent them!"

Had he actually been able to acquire such a list (no such lists exists, by the way), it would have been rather entertaining to watch him spam all the voters in his district. I suspect he would have paid the price on voting day.

Ultimately, I encouraged this person to build a website, have an email alert sign-up form on it, and to plug his website with the media to attract visitors. "That way," I explained, "the people who sign up actually want to receive your email updates." It seemed like a totally new concept to this guy.

Whether you're a Congressman, a Senator, or a person with a mission (save the whales, save the planet, save the children, and so on), there is no justifiable reason to send unsolicited emails to people, even if your intentions are good. The only exception might be if you discover an asteroid that's going to obliterate the planet in a few days. Go ahead and spam all you want.

Mistake #3: Sending Messages on the Wrong Day

Unlike direct (postal) mail, with email you can precisely control the timing of your email messages. When you send email, you want readers to have the time to see and read your message.

Most people read their email at work.

A lot of people read their email at work because that's where they have the fastest connection. Even if you're not offering business-related products and services, chances are your audience is at work when they're reading your email.

What's your busiest day of the work week? For most people, it's Monday. And in the email world, Monday is the worst day of the week for email because everyone has to deal with not only Monday's email, but the weekend spam, too. And if they left early on Friday or took a long weekend, they could still have Friday's unread email to deal with. Realistically speaking, people have to wade through three or four days of email on Monday. Do you want your email to be in the thick of all that?

Send your email on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday.

No way. Save your email for the days when people are "in the work groove." Again, for most folks, that's Tuesday through Thursday. That's when people can pay attention to their incoming email. If you want your email to get read, make sure it arrives on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday.

Of course, there are exceptions to all this. If your audience is primarily older folks, you may find that Saturday works best. If you're emailing young consumers (school-age kids, for example), Saturday might be a perfect day! Naturally, you'll want to test all this and see what works best for you, but as a rule of thumb, avoid Mondays and Fridays for delivering the mail.

Morning email is more effective

Generally speaking, you want your email to arrive in the AM, not the PM. Here's why: people tend to think of email that arrived the same day as "fresh" email. You want to give your recipients plenty of time to find (and read) your message before the day ends. So send your mail early.

If you send your message late in the day, chances are it won't get read that day. The recipient won't see the message

until the next day, and by that time, your message is no longer same-day "fresh" email. It's old email that's more likely to be deleted.

Make sure your email arrives during work hours.

Also, don't send emails before work hours begin. Why? Because you don't want your email to be buried under a list of emails that the recipient has to dig through just to get the day started. It's better to send during working hours in the morning.

The bottom line? Send your emails at 10am central time. That catches nearly everyone during work hours, no matter what time zone they're in. Of course, the bigger your list, the earlier you have to start. If it takes two hours to actually get your emails sent out, you might want to start around 9am or even 8:30. Try to make sure all your email arrives before lunch, no matter where the recipient lives.

Mistake #4: Neglecting to Identify the Source of the Email Message

This one seems obvious, but believe me, it's an easy mistake to make! In the momentum of writing an award-winning message to readers, a lot of email marketers utterly forget to tell the readers why they're getting that particular email message in the first place.

Always tell the recipient why they're receiving your email message.

Did the reader sign up for this? Did they ask for it? Did a friend recommend them? Did you get their name from another list? If so, what list? If they can't answer the question of, "Why am I getting this email?" in about two seconds, your mail is headed for the recycle bin.

Naturally, there are all sorts of ways to communicate the answer to your readers. You don't necessarily have to use words, a logo might communicate the idea sufficiently. If you've kept your logo visible throughout the signup and confirmation process, placing your logo at the top of your outbound emails is an easy way to tell your recipients why they're getting the email. They look at the logo and think,

"Oh yeah, Acme corporation. I signed up for this..." and away they go.

You can also say it with words: "You're receiving this email because you signed up for it..." and so on. If you can, use both methods: words and visual cues (logos).

Special circumstances

There are plenty of special cases where you need to further explain to the reader why they're getting the email, usually because they didn't ask for it in the first place! This is common in the "tell a friend" functionality of a lot of sites. These sites have a tool that allows a website reader to send an article to their friend. Working this out is slightly tricky because the person receiving the email didn't actually ask for it. But if it's from their friend, they usually don't have a problem with it as long as:

- 1) You identify the source of the message
- 2) You succinctly explain that you won't be emailing them repeatedly

A good explanation message might sound like this:

Dear Betty,

Your friend Jane (jane@somewhere.com) recommended the following article to you:

<http://www.emaildoctor.info/0001.htm>

Enjoy!

Technical notes: This email was requested by a human being. Your email has not been recorded. If you feel this email was sent in error, please contact the Email Doctor™ at support@emaildoctor.info. The source of this email is www.Emaildoctor.info.

As you can see, this message establishes the fact that it was requested by a personal friend and that the reader won't be

receiving a long list of spam messages from you. Most people are fine with these messages, and it's rare that you'll experience any problems unless the recipient happens to hate their friend. Who knows, maybe you have an article on your website that's so awful, people actually send it to their enemies as punishment.

Word-of-mouth email marketing is very powerful.

When used correctly, **Tell-A-Friend** marketing is very powerful, and I highly recommend that you implement this kind of functionality on your site. Just make sure that you stick to your promises when it comes to sending the email. In other words, don't secretly track all the "friend" email addresses and later use them to promote your new gambling affiliate partner! You will be caught, screamed at, and discredited precisely because there are email privacy zealots out there who love to catch companies violating their email privacy promises.

Mistake #5: Not Giving Readers An Obvious Unsubscribe

In the email marketing industry, it's traditional to place an unsubscribe hyperlink (a clickable link) at the bottom of the email message. Usually, it reads something like this:

If you wish to unsubscribe from the Email Doctor™ email alert, simply click here:

<http://www.EmailDoctor.info/u.asp?ID=738382349>

When the reader clicks the link, they are taken to an unsubscribe confirmation page that asks a simple question: "Do you really want to unsubscribe?" If the reader clicks **Yes**, they are immediately removed from future mailings.

Amazing but true: not all users have yet figured out how to click hyperlinks contained in emails.

That's the way it's traditionally done. But not everyone in Internet Land has yet figured out how to click those pesky unsubscribe links. No matter how simple you make it for users, you'll always get a few email replies that say something like, "Unsubscribe me!" So you need to deal with

those, too. The easiest way, of course, is to just open those emails and click the unsubscribe link yourself.

Either way, the important part is making sure there's an unsubscribe mechanism in place. Emails that don't offer readers an easy way to unsubscribe are considered spam by definition and are punishable under the pending Senate Anti-Spam Bill. That's true even if the subscriber initially opted in!

Handling unsubscribes

There are several ways to handle email unsubscribes. The Cave Man way is to "thunk" your way through it by simply asking people to reply to the email if they want off the list. You can then wade through the unsubscribe requests and manually remove them from your database.

The high-tech way is to have a clickable hyperlink, as demonstrated above, that uses an ASP script (or PHP, or Cold Fusion, or CGI, and so on) to automatically handle the request and update the database. This requires a (small) bit of programming, however.

The Lazy Man's way is to use a piece of software that does it all for you. My own company's software, **Campaign Enterprise**, is a good example of this: it automatically inserts the unsubscribe link, handles the clicks and updates the database with no programming required.



All three methods are acceptable. Just make sure you actually get the requests handled promptly. You sure don't want to email the same person after they've already asked to be taken off the list!

Mistake #6: Neglecting to Bring Readers Back To Your Site

For some reason, a lot of email marketing folks think the email message must do everything all by itself. They forget

that their web site is the best tool for building relationships with readers and customers.

An email message is the wrong place to try to communicate a complex message.

Email is a terrible medium for trying to convey a complex message. A website, with all its interconnected hyperlinks, does a much better job. Smart email marketers know that the purpose of the email is to simply grab the attention of the reader and invite them to explore the subject further on your site.

Here's a concrete example. Let's suppose you run a website that sells snowboarding supplies. You write three articles each month and post them on the site. Once a month, you want to contact your subscribers and send them the articles. So you put together an email campaign and you create a long, long, long message containing all three articles.

You're about ready to send the message when a tiny voice in your head says, "Uh, hold on there..." That's my voice, the Email Doctor™, questioning your sanity. Why on Earth are you trying to stuff three articles into an email when it would be far more effective to email your readers a list of hyperlinks and article introductions?

Improve your email marketing campaign by focusing on convincing your readers to come to your site and read the articles. Here's an example of how this is done:

Dear reader,

It's been a great month here at SnowboardBob.com, and we've put together three exciting new articles on snowboarding that bring you the inside scoop on what's really happening in the industry:

"The Insider's Guide To Snowboard Wax"

This article shares the insider secrets (yes, used by the pros!) on snowboard wax. How often should you wax? Which waxes really work? And how quickly does

grinding your board on pine cones and rocks destroy a good wax job? Check it out at:

<http://www.SnowboardBob.com/wax.html>

"Insane Snowboard Tricks"

Want to know the newest (and most insane) snowboard tricks? We've got the names, the pics and the tricks lined up for you in a tell-all article that's so full of body-bending bizarreness, it hurts just to read it. Slap on your helmet and check it out at:

<http://www.SnowboardBob.com/newtricks.html>

"Technology Breakthroughs Can Save Your Skull"

Did you know that a new composite-fiber helmet has been introduced? Here's something that just might save your skull, even if you have a habit of beating it on trees at high speed. If you haven't already caused so much brain damage that you can't see straight, you owe it to yourself to read this technology update:

<http://www.SnowboardBob.com/compositehelmets.htm>

This email is brought to you by SnowboardBob.com. If you don't remember subscribing, it's probably because you're a hard-core snowboarder. If you really want to stop getting these incredibly fascinating, entertaining, and downright mind-bending emails, just click to unsubscribe:

<http://www.SnowboardBob.com/u.asp?ID=nnnnnn>

That's how it's done. Of course, with the snowboarding example, the email has plenty of attitude. Your own emails should have more or less attitude, depending on your audience. Naturally, you don't want to get too funky with B2B readers, keep it professional.

Why you want to bring them back to your site

What's the big deal about bringing folks back to your site, anyway? Well, think about it: your site can advertise your

products, services or information. Your site lets people explore other areas of related interest. Your site is your best relationship-building tool, by far!

If you don't get your readers engaged in your site, you're doing something wrong. From a purely financial standpoint, too, isn't it true that only your site can actually process orders? Emails don't sell squat. They inform, they entice, they motivate, but they don't host purchase forms. They don't process credit cards. Only your site does that.

Mistake #7: Emailing Attachments

"Okay, I have a better idea," I hear you say from the back counter of Snowboard Bob's shop. "I'll just send the articles as attachments. That way, they won't crowd the email message."

That voice in your head is getting louder now. That's me, again, reminding you of the following:

- Attachments take extra bandwidth, slowing your ability to send emails and your recipient's ability to receive them.
- Due to the threat of viruses, smart readers don't open attachments.
- An attachment still doesn't get people to visit your site, and that's the point, remember?
- Attachments can be application-specific. If you send an MS Word .doc file, how do you know your readers can open .doc files in the first place?
- If you need to send an attachment, you're trying to squeeze too much into the email in the first place.

Are there times when sending a large attachment is justified? Perhaps in very rare circumstances, such as if you're sending financial invoices to your clients. But in general, attachments are forbidden.

Mistake #8: Mailing Too Frequently

If you plan to send email on a regular basis (say, once a day, once a week or once a month), be sure to tell your subscribers about the frequency of emails when they sign up. And stick to it! Don't hand them any surprises.

Remember to understand and honor your readers' email frequency expectations.

What's interesting about this email marketing mistake is that it's not really about the raw number of times you email your readers, it's about how many times they expect to be emailed. If they've signed up for a once-a-day email, they're thrilled to get an email every day! But if they've signed up for a once-a-month email, they're gonna be downright mad if they get one from you every morning at 9am.

Generally speaking, folks don't mind getting fewer emails than you promised. But they can get irate if they see you sending a lot more than you promised. Of course, it also depends on what you're sending them. If you're sending them stuff they like (which varies person to person), they might not mind it. If you're sending stuff that annoys them, that's different.

Always remember that people can unsubscribe with a single click. It's easy. All it takes is a single annoying email and, whammo! They're off your list for good. So keep your promises, send the emails on the schedule you've described, and don't try to squeeze in extra email offers at the expense of alienating your subscribers.

How often should I send email?

Although this varies considerably from industry to industry, a rule of thumb is to send your subscribers no more than one email a week. Once a month is more common if you're just sending company news and updates. Daily emails should be reserved only for alert services such as stock alerts, news alerts, and so on.

Mistake #9: Mailing Too Infrequently

I'm guilty of this mistake. If you keep your email list shelved for too long before sending a message (say, six months), you're going to get accused of spam the first time you use the list again. Why? Because the people who originally signed up have now forgotten they did! They get your email and think, "Hey, I never asked for this. It must be spam!" So they send off a strongly-worded spam complaint to your ISP. Now, you get to defend yourself with your ISP.

To avoid the mistake of mailing too infrequently, make sure you send email to your subscribers at least once a quarter (every three months or so). Waiting any longer than that risks false alarm spam accusations.

Consistency of origin

Use logos to brand your email messages so that readers can instantly identify the source.

Of course, when you send emails to your recipients, it's important to brand your organization (with a logo, usually) so that people can recognize your emails from message to the next. When people receive your email, there's an unseen "origin check" that happens in their heads: they see your email, and they immediately scan it for both the main topic and clues to its origin. If they quickly spot the source -- and they remember wanting to get mail from that source -- they unconsciously say, "Okay, yes, I asked for this email, let's see if it's interesting to me..." and they go ahead to scan the mail for subject matter. But if they can't figure out where the mail came from, they trash it (or worse, they initiate a spam complaint).

To avoid this, practice what I call "consistency of origin." All that means is making sure your logo or company name appears in the same way, in the same place, in every email you send. Make sure your readers can find your logo without hunting for it.

What if I have nothing to send?

What happens if you don't have anything to send to your subscribers every three months? Make something up! No matter what industry you're in, there's always something happening. There's news and current events, of course, and you can always send your readers your own commentary on a big news item that's hitting the industry.

You can also send offers and discounts. Want to reach your sales goal by the end of the month? Send out a "free shipping" coupon, or a 5% off coupon. Readers will respond.

Still don't have a clue what to send? Send a survey. Ask your readers to interact with your site by voting on a survey.

If you're clueless on what to send your subscribers, send them an email that asks for their suggestions on what they'd like to hear from you.

Flat-out ask your readers for their suggestions on what they'd like to receive from you. They'll tell you (or they will unsubscribe, which solves your problem, too).

The point is, there's always something of value to send your readers. Keep in touch with them. Let them know you're alive!

Mistake #10: Purchasing an Email List From Anybody

What's the difference between a legitimate email list and a spam list? It's simple: spam lists are for sale. Legitimate email lists are only for rent (you never get your hands on the actual email addresses).

It doesn't matter what the salesperson tells you, if the list is for sale, it's a spam list, period. They can call it single opt-in, double opt-in, or triple opt-in, but it's still spam (see "Opt-In Vs. Opt-Out," below, for more information). Never spend a dime on any email list that's available for outright purchase.

Renting email lists, on the other hand, can be a rewarding email marketing strategy. You can rent double opt-in lists

from many companies, but the way you rent the lists is very different from Direct Marketing (DM) rentals. In the email world, when you rent an email list, the list owner sends the email, not you. You never see the actual email addresses. This is how the list owner protects the integrity of their list.

Renting email lists can be pricey, but also rewarding if you've targeted your message correctly.

Prices can be steep for email list rentals. Expect to pay anywhere from 10 to 50 cents per email for sending your offers to someone's in-house list. If you're wondering why the prices are so high when the list owner doesn't have to spend a dime on postage, you're still thinking in "direct marketing" mode. When you rent a quality email list, the cost to the list owner isn't postage, it's reputation. Every commercial offer they send to their list threatens to annoy a percentage of the list subscribers who will unsubscribe, reducing the total size of the list.

There's another factor of huge importance here: in the DM world, if one company rents their name list to a marketing company that sends postal mail to the list, the recipients generally have no idea where that mail came from. They have no way to trace it back to the original list. But in the email world, when a high-integrity list owner sends a commercial email to their subscribers, those subscribers know where the email is coming from. They associate the commercial offer with the reputation of the list owner.

That's why, when you rent a quality email list, you're actually renting the reputation of the list owner. You're not paying for postage, you're paying for the readers' trust.

Special Section: Opt-In Vs. Opt-Out

What does opt-in really mean? Depends on who you ask. I once had a conversation with an email marketing company that was trying to convince me their list of 50 million emails was 100% opt-in. They claimed to have a three-stage opt-in process, the strongest in the industry! According to their

salesperson, email recipients opted in like this:

- The first opt-in is when they placed their email address on a public web page.
- The second opt-in is when they "accepted" an email message by not replying to it. The message asks recipients whether they want to continue receiving emails.
- The third opt-in is when they voluntarily open the next email message. By simply opening the message, they have opted in yet again.

That's how this company arrives at "triple opt in." It's amazing how people can justify spam.

Opt-out, on the other hand, means marketers have the right to send you email until you say, "stop!" This is how postal mail currently works. Marketers can send you all the mail they want. If you don't want any more mail, you have to contact them and request a stop.

Opt-out email marketing is an absurd idea that will never pass muster with Internet users.

Many marketers hope that opt-out will become the standard for email, too. But in reality, the proposal is absurd. An opt-out standard would give every individual or company the right to send you an unlimited number of unsolicited emails until you told them to stop. This is acceptable in the postal mail world only because high postage costs provide a natural disincentive for marketers to try to mail everyone. But in the email world, it costs almost nothing for marketers to send email to, say, 100,000 instead of just 10,000 recipients. There's very little reason to target emails to a select group of recipients.

The bottom line on opt-in vs. opt-out is that, unless you plan on joining the spammers guild, stick with verified double opt-in lists that are only available for rent, not for sale. At the same time, build your own list from your website. That's the best list you ever had.

Here's a summary list of the ten worst email marketing mistakes:

1. Spamming
2. Sending a sincere message to a spam list
3. Sending messages on the wrong day
4. Neglecting to identify the source of the email message
5. Not giving readers an obvious unsubscribe
6. Neglecting to bring readers back to your site
7. Emailing attachments
8. Mailing too frequently
9. Mailing too infrequently
10. Outright purchasing an email list from anybody

About the Author



Mike Adams, the Email Doctor™, is the founder and president of Arial Software LLC (www.ArialSoftware.com), a company that has been developing and marketing personalized email marketing software for more than eight years.



Comments and suggestions about this special report may be emailed to suggestions@emaildoctor.info

Thank you for reading!