Measuring & Tracking Email Results

3 STEP STARTER

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Table of Contents

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Introduction

While email marketing performance varies from business to business, the trends speak for themselves — email marketing can add significant value to your existing marketing operations. According to research from the Direct Marketing Association, 66 percent of consumers have made a purchase online as a result of an email marketing message.

Now that you know the value of email marketing, you must make sense of the data and choose the right tools to help your business grow.

Using the tools that you already have, or simply with GetResponse, you can develop a precise and laser-focused view of how audiences are connecting and responding to your campaigns. You can build upon this knowledge to forge stronger subscriber relationships and develop more tailored messaging.

In this guide, we'll teach you how to:

    Identify, measure, and track the right metrics for your campaigns
    Integrate your email marketing data with the analytics tools that you're already using
    Craft a clear plan of action from the insights you're generating

Let's get started!

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Step 1: Make Sense Out of the Data Avalanche

Data is a double-edged sword in the sense that it's valuable but there's just so much of it. Where organizations often struggle is that they're tempted to track anything and everything they possibly can. What's important to keep in mind is that the most effective data strategies incorporate a blend of creativity and science.

You need to take the time upfront to ensure that the metrics you're monitoring are in close alignment with your most pressing business goals. To get you started, we've created a blueprint with listed metrics, what they do, and what you should watch out for.

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Metric	What to know	Caveats
Open Rate	Defined as the proportion of recipients who open an email. Sheds insight into the effectiveness of your subject lines. Measures whether audiences find your content interesting. Valuable to measure over time and for comparing the impact of different subject lines.	Open rates are tracked with an impression pixel, so if a subscriber's email client doesn't automatically download your images, the 'open' won't register (unless they click on a link inside the email - this also counts as 'open'). Open rates should always be evaluated as part of the entire conversion funnel, as they aren't directly related to revenue-generating activities like sales and leads.
Click-through Rate (CTR)	This measure of email marketing success calculates the proportion of people who clicked to your website from an email. Valuable to measure over time, for comparing the value proposition of different offers.	Clicks may be accidental. One user can intentionally or unintentionally click on a CTA multiple times.
Click-to-open Rate	Allows marketers to calculate unique clicks compared to unique opens. Provides precision as to how audiences are engaging with an email.	The action of clicking through an email may be an indicator of increased engagement.
Conversion Rate	Tells you how many people completed a certain goal such as a demo sign-up, free trial download, whitepaper download, or transaction.	Conversion rates are driven by more than just the messaging of our emails, including landing page design and efficiency.
Acquisition Cost	This metric tells you how much you've spent to generate conversions. Acquisition cost may be calculated on a per-person or group-level basis.	Acquisition costs may present only a partial or incomplete picture of what you're spending. Make sure that you understand each and every variable that you're considering.
Unsubscribe Rate	Subscribers will naturally opt out over time, but peaks in activity may signal that audiences found a message unappealing. Unsubscribe rates vary from business to business, but anything around 0.5% or less is considered 'praiseworthy.'	Many factors influence unsubscribe rates beyond your content or frequency of communication.
Bounce Rate	Bounce rates refer to delivery failures based on e.g. non-existent email addresses or temporary connection problems. High bounce rates may be a sign that a brand doesn't follow email marketing best practices.	Subscribers will naturally change email addresses over time or have problems with properly setting up their mailing domain. It's important to regularly manage your email list hygiene and keep your audience engaged.
Sign-up Rate	This metric explains whether audiences are finding your brand's value proposition compelling enough to sign up for your email list.	New subscribers aren't always interested in buying your products or services. Not every 'lead' is a qualified one.

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Advanced Email Marketing Measurements

1. Long-term user value (LTV): Create a forecast of how much each email subscriber (and customer) is worth over the long-term. LTV is calculated based on estimated data - so it won't be exact - which is why you need to focus on refining your calculations over time.

One way of calculating LTV is to track how many times, per unit of time, someone has made a purchase from your website. For instance, an e-commerce retailer can calculate LTV by measuring the number of times that a customer has purchased products within 3-month, 6-month, and year-long time period. You can also slice your data by channel - for instance, to capture differences between social media and email marketing ROI.

2. The ripple effect: In today's socially connected world, marketing campaigns have the potential to escalate organically. In addition to tracking direct response conversions, look for the 'branding' value produced from audiences sharing your campaigns. This free, user-inspired marketing will generate significant value for your business too. You can start with a few simple techniques in your email marketing campaigns to generate organic growth:

    Include social media buttons next to your most compelling pieces of content.
    Ask audiences, in your email marketing campaigns, to forward your promotions to their friends.
    Provide audiences with a personal incentive for sharing your content or offer (such as a refer-a-friend program).

3. Word of mouth effect: Organic conversations are marketing forces of nature. That's why it's valuable for brands to monitor what audiences are saying about recent email marketing campaigns. Pay attention to the full spectrum of positive and negative feedback by monitoring social media conversations and backlinks.
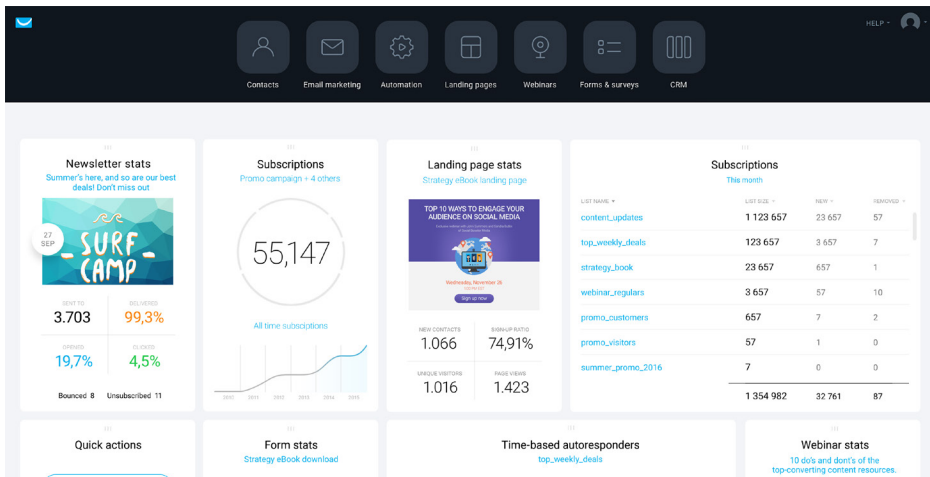
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Step 2: Craft Stories Out of Your Email Marketing Data

Email marketing is a powerful part of your marketing and conversion optimization funnel. You'll be reaching your audiences at important touch points in their buyer journeys — when they're discovering your company for the first time, requesting information about your product, and opting to stay engaged with your brand through content.

That's where your email marketing software comes in. You'll need to make the most out of this information by making sure that you have the right software, measurement frameworks, and protocols in place - this section will help guide you along the way.

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Campaign Data 101

ESP's like GetResponse come with robust analytics offerings. You're able to track open rates, click-through rates to your site from your content, goal completions, unsubscribes, and complaints. Even more importantly, your software will allow you to track performance over time (which means that you'll be able to analyze and respond to trends).

An example of GetResponse's dashboard

There is no doubt, data can be both your winning and losing ticket. When you have a lot of information on-hand, you have significant insight into your campaigns and business performance. You're equally likely, however, to find yourself buried under an avalanche of numbers. Data is powerful, but it's also confusing if you don't know what your goals are. Which is why it is to your advantage to have all your information in one place. GetResponse is able to provide you with an insight into all your email metrics.

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To start planning your campaigns, search for following information and tools within your analytics panel:

Metrics over time. Find out what days of the week (and hours of the day) your subscribers are most likely respond to your emails. Using this information, you can **group your subscribers based on time-of-day preference**, and you can target them with the right message at the right time.

Segmentation. Your email marketing platform should help you **see who's responding to your messages and who isn't**. This information will allow you to tailor your content to different email marketing segments so that you're always connecting the right audiences with the right information at the right time.

Comparison. Tools should allow you to very **easily compare the performance of two or more email marketing campaigns** so that you can very quickly identify which one generated the best results. Your platform should help you compare opens, clicks, unsubscribes, and conversions so that you have a clear picture of what works best for your audience and why.

ROI. Make sure that your program allows you to **see how audiences are converting on your website**. A simple tracking code can help you monitor what actions audiences are taking on your website.

Social Sharing. Your email marketing platform should help you **analyze how your email marketing campaigns are resonating across social media networks** such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, and Google+ so that you can continue to optimize your email marketing campaigns for the widest possible reach.

Your email marketing platform will bring structure to your analytics. What does that mean? Each campaign that you run will generate more data — and in turn every single campaign will become smarter than the one before.

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Integrating With Other Tools

Your email marketing software is only part of the analytics equation. In addition to tracking campaign-specific metrics like open rates and click-throughs to your website, you will also need to track how your separate marketing initiatives come together to form a complete marketing picture.

You're probably using tools like Google Analytics to monitor how your email campaigns impact your overall marketing performance. You might already be tracking key trends including referral traffic sources, time on site, and bounce rates. These metrics provide a great start, but they are only a partial view into the performance of your email marketing campaigns. In addition to tracking what's happening on your website right now, you need to analyze trends that are taking place over the long-term. You'll need to track the following:

    How audiences are interacting with your brand across platforms, from
    email to social media
    How email marketing engagement translates into long-term ROI
    The monetary value of goals completed on your site
    How revenue and sales metrics are trending over time, b channel
    How email marketing compares to other marketing channels

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At a very minimum, you'll need to set up campaign tracking between your ESP, like GetResponse, and your analytics tools. Google Analytics comes with built-in tracking features. You can get it up and running by appending a snippet of code to your links in your email marketing campaign. You can even automate this process (so that you do not need to manually add tracking code to your links).

An example of a Google Analytics integration in a GetResponse account.

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In some cases, however, marketers may want to choose their own tracking code - if you fall into this category, you'll want to become familiar with Google campaign parameters. You can get started by trying out Google's campaign URL builder:

In addition to tracking your campaigns, you'll also need to make sure that you have strong reporting mechanisms in place. Rather than creating your own reports from scratch, you can use GetResponse and Google Analytics reports that can help you integrate your email campaigns with your cross-channel marketing, engagement, and ROI data.

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6 Reports You Need To Read

To get you started on your way to analytics greatness, we have selected 6 reports about different metrics and tools used to track them:

1. Occam's Razor Awesomeness - This report provides a collection of curated dashboards and custom reports for Google Analytics users. You can use these resources to create structure around your otherwise unstructured data - to get started with analytics or to find inspiration about the types of information that you can gather.
2. Site Performance Dashboard - Great user experiences are built on high-performing websites. This report will help you identify issues with your website and servers so that you can quickly identify issues (and ensure that your audiences have the best possible experience from your email marketing campaigns).
3. Enhanced Ecommerce Analytics - This report will help you gain insight into the full customer journey - in addition to detailed product performance metrics.
4. Audience Snapshot - Get a top-level overview of your website users for quick insights into where your visitors are physically located, how engaged they are, and what devices they're using to browse your website.
5. Engaged Traffic - Get a sense of your highest-value visitors with this report, which tells you who is viewing more than 3 pages or spending more than 3 visits on your site. With this type of report, however, it's important to maintain a process of qualitative research
6. Engagement and Loyalty - This report will help you assess and track user loyalty behavior on your site. You can use this information to identify and focus your email marketing efforts on campaigns that are delivering long-term ROI.

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Step 3: Create a Clear Plan of Action From the Insights You're Generating

Once you dig deep into your analytics, you'll come across a lot of data - information that you'll find extremely interesting and that you'll want to spend lots of time analyzing.

Whatever you do, resist the urge.

You have limited time in the day, and you need to focus your time on trends and metrics that you can learn from and take action upon. With any pattern that you observe, take a step back and ask yourself whether what you're seeing will influence the decisions that you're making in your business. The more laser-focused you are, the more you can improve and build upon.

We've put together a list of action plans for five example trends to help you navigate this process. As you'll notice from these scenarios, the reasons behind the trends you observe may be complex. A simple metric such as **time on site**, for instance, may tell you that your audience is extremely engaged. It might also tell you that our audience is extremely confused.

Be prepared to do some exploration and digging. Always find a story within your numbers so that you can tell a larger consumer story.

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Sample Scenario 1: You notice **low open rates** - In this case, you would respond by cross checking whether emails have been delivered, and if so, to your target audience's primary inboxes. You might also try to tackle the issue by A/B testing your subject headlines, from field name, or preheaders.

Sample Scenario 2: You notice **low click-through rates** to your site - In this case, you'd want to validate your marketing message with your target audience. Do some digging into whether your customers are finding your campaigns valuable. If not, ask them what they would love to see instead. Maybe your subject line promises something you don't actually offer? A/B test different call-to-action buttons

Sample Scenario 3: You notice **a decrease in a positive trend** over time. You definitely want to talk to members of your audience directly, to figure out what's going on. Invest in generating substantial qualitative insights, through follow-up emails or surveys to derive meaning from the trends that you're seeing.

Sample Scenario 4: You notice traffic to your website but that **people aren't making a direct purchase**. This trend may be explained by the fact that people may need more time to decide whether or not to buy a product. Take a look at your funnel reports in Google Analytics to see what steps people are taking before making a purchase (for instance, by looking at the proportion of goals completed by return visitors). You may decide to take action by launching marketing campaigns that target intermediate steps of the conversion funnel (through retargeting or more email marketing campaigns, for instance).

Sample Scenario 5: You're experiencing **high opt-out rates and spam complaints**, despite your awesome messaging. Whatever you do, don't let this process bog you down. Instead, find out what is happening. Is it your content? Perhaps it's the frequency? Remember to deliver what you promised and as promies. You can also introduce an extra layer of caution by sending emails to only a small proportion of your subscribers.

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Room for Thought

This guide taught you the foundations for how to measure and track results from your campaigns. But before you get started, it's important to take a step back and figure out the metrics that are closest to your brand's ROI.

Marketers - eager to drive results - often jump into their campaigns and make changes based on 'best practices' that they've read. Don't make this mistake.

Every company and customer base is different. Always start with a research process that pinpoints exactly what your audience cares about and needs.

If you're looking to get started - and take that next step - look no further than a simple customer conversation. Seek out patterns that inadvertently arise. These patterns will be the heart of your email marketing program.

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Sara is always on the lookout for new ways to improve
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About GetResponse

Today, over 350,000 customers in 182 countries trust the GetResponse online marketing platform. With nearly 20 years of experience, we deliver excellent digital marketing solutions, available in 22 different languages. Our company operates globally with offices in Poland, Canada, Malaysia, and Russia. We have over 300 passionate professionals on board. Together we create inspiring technologies that empower entrepreneurs and help them grow their businesses.

GetResponse offers a complete suite of simple yet powerful features, scaled and customized for small and large companies alike. Our tools are designed for organizations that are focused on implementing high impact marketing campaigns that drive effectiveness and overall ROI.

The GetResponse online campaign management platform helps to design, implement, and track digital marketing activities. Companies can do that using marketing automation, autoresponders, webinars, landing pages, advanced analytics, and over 50 other easy-yetpowerful features.

Try GetResponse - FREE for 30 days
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