



Email Marketing Cheat Sheet

A playbook of email archetypes



Created by
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Dedication

To all of the SPI Fans, thank you for inspiring me, keeping me focused, and making sure I never stray off track. This ebook is the start of a new era of serving you.



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Introduction

Hi! I'm Pat!

I've made a lot of mistakes while building my online business. It took me a while, but I eventually learned that mistakes and failures are a part of the entrepreneurial journey, and learning from those experiences and overcoming related challenges is what becoming a successful entrepreneur is all about.

If there was one mistake I could take back, however, it would be the one I made related to my email list:

I didn't start one right away.

If there was a second mistake I could take back, it would be the other one related to my email list:

Not fully understanding how to use it.

There are a lot of things we can do to improve and grow our businesses, but building and properly using your email list is at the very top. As Amy Porterfield says:

"“The energy of your business is directly tied to your email list.”**"**

Most people, including you, probably realized the importance of having an email list sooner than I did . . .

On GreenExamAcademy.com, a business I created in 2008 that helps professionals in the architecture industry pass a particular exam, I didn't have an email list to sell to when I launched my first two products. "Launch day" was essentially adding a banner to my website and links to my posts.

I finally started to build a list six months after my products become available. I had it backwards.

On SmartPassiveIncome.com, I made the same mistake again! It wasn't until 2010, a year and a half after I started my blog, that I finally published my first opt-in form and began to build my list.

Like I said, I've made some mistakes, but a lot of those came simply because I lacked the knowledge. No one ever told me exactly what to do, and I had to figure out a lot of this on my own. Eventually, I learned what to do and I started to build my email lists.

After I started building my list, I learned from the best how to convert even more visitors into email subscribers. I experimented with a number of different tools and campaigns to increase conversions even more, and after a couple of years I started to see anywhere between 100–300 people joining my lists every single day.

This was pretty cool, except building an email list is only half the battle. The other half is what to do with your subscribers once they're on it.

Note:

if you haven't started building your email list, I've written an entire article that walks you through the process of getting it set up quickly and easily. I recommend you get started now, and here's a quick link you can use to get there: StartanEmailList.com.

The Money ISN'T in the List

A common phrase a lot of marketers will tell you is this:

“The money is in the list.”

That’s actually a terrible way to put it because it implies that simply having a list is what matters, and it also implies that the size of your list is what’s most important.

You could have a list with 100,000 people on it, but if you don’t send the right emails, you might as well not have a list at all. Plus, you could also flush your hard-earned money down the toilet because you’re paying an email service provider for those subscribers you’re not even using.

Here’s how I would like to rephrase this common idiom:

“ The money isn’t the list itself. It’s what you do with it.”

I’ve come across businesses with just a few hundred people on their email list, yet they can earn upwards of \$50,000 with a single broadcast email.

The size of your email list doesn’t matter, and here’s why:

Your subscribers are people. Actual, real-life people.

We forget this sometimes. It’s a lesson I want to teach you now before you go crazy worrying too much about the size of your list, which is easy to get carried away with. Even if you had one person on your list, that’s a person whose life you could change, who could become a customer, or give you the honest feedback you need to help your business grow.

No matter how many email subscribers you have right now, I want you to do this thought experiment with me. I typically do this exercise with everyone I speak to who sighs when they tell me the size of their list:

I want you to imagine a location that's big enough to physically fit all of your subscribers. For example:

- If you have 10 subscribers, maybe it's your living room
- 100+, maybe it's a movie theater
- 500+, a banquet hall or ballroom
- 1,000+, a concert hall
- 10,000+, a basketball arena
- 100,000+, a large football stadium

You get the idea . . .

Now, I want you to imagine seeing all of those people there. Really visualize them, and do this knowing that they came to this one location because of you. They're all looking forward to what you have to say.

Whether it's ten or ten million, that's incredibly powerful.

This visualization will help you as you craft your email copy down the road, because it's not about the numbers, it's about the real people on the other end. When you learn how to serve them best, your numbers will reflect a much more successful email marketing campaign.

The worst thing you can do is gather these people into this space, leave them hanging, and never communicate with them; or, call for their attention only when it's about you or whatever you're trying to sell. Selling through your email list is totally okay. But there are several other types of email you can send to round out your campaigns, strengthen the relationship you have with your audience, and make them feel more comfortable when you eventually pitch something.

And that's exactly what this playbook will help you figure out.

How to Use this Playbook

Here are some questions I remember asking myself (and several of you have asked) when I first started building my email list:

- What kinds of email should I send to my subscribers?
- How often should I send an email?
- What is a broadcast email?
- What is an autoresponder email?
- What do I send as a broadcast versus what do I include in my autoresponder series?
- What calls to action should I include?
- Should I send the same email to everyone?

After years of building my own email list and learning by subscribing to hundreds of others, I've come up with a list of email archetypes that you can use to add to your campaigns so you don't have to waste time asking yourself these questions.

Whether you're adding emails to your autoresponder series or trying to come up with an idea for your next broadcast, this playbook will become your guide. A playbook (like ones that teams use in sports) is made up of different plays, each with their own unique purpose and structure, each used for different scenarios.

In pure "choose your own adventure" style, you can select a play or email type that works best for you, and then use the information I've included along with that play to help you structure your next email.

Each play in this playbook comes with the following:

- **The What:** A description of the email so you can quickly see what it's about.
- **The Why:** The purpose of the email so you know why it's important.
- **The When:** An idea of when you could send this email to your subscribers.
- **The How:** A breakdown of exactly what should be included in the email so you don't forget anything.
- **The Call to Action:** Exactly what you want your audience to do.
- **Special Notes:** This could include examples, special variations, warnings, and other important notes related to the email archetype.

My goal here is to make email marketing a lot easier for you than it was for me. Before we get into the specific email plays, let's first cover five universal email rules that should be followed no matter what type of email you're sending.

Two Key Terms

Before we jump in, there are two types of emails that you can send your list and it's important that you understand the difference. They are:

- **Autoresponder Series (or Email):** An Autoresponder Series is another way to refer to a number of automated pre-written emails that get sent to your subscribers in sequential order. For the various types of Autoresponder Series emails, [check out this post](#).
- **Broadcast Email:** A Broadcast Email is a one-time message that is sent to all of your subscribers (or a particular segment of your subscribers as determined by you) at the same time.

5 Universal Rules for 99.999999% of All Emails You Send

RULE #1: KEEP YOUR EMAIL FORMATTING SIMPLE

You want people to actually read your emails, not get distracted by the design and formatting of your emails. A little branding (like a logo) is okay, but even then not all email clients include images, and adding designs to your email just adds another opportunity for something to break or look funky.

I suggest sending emails like you're sending them to a friend, which is what we want to do because we're looking to build a real relationship with our subscribers. Would you send a super fancy, heavily designed email to a friend?

Not usually.

Typically you just write something up and hit send. Just text on a white background. That is what has always worked best for me.

There are exceptions, however. Especially if you have something like an ecommerce store and people expect more structure and design with tons of links and things to look at. But in most cases, eliminating or cutting down the design formatting for email is the best thing to do.

RULE #2: EACH EMAIL SHOULD INCLUDE ONE SPECIFIC CALL TO ACTION (CTA)

When you craft any email, you should always ask yourself: “What’s the purpose of sending this?”

Each email you send should have one specific goal, and each email should include one specific call to action. You can have multiple instances of the same call to action within an email, but it’s a good rule of thumb to pair one email with one CTA.

This is important because if you include too many CTAs, you’re less likely to get people to take that action. This happens because of the “paradox of choice,” where more choices actually can hinder a person’s ability to make a decision. Also, when you include more than one CTA, you’re usually not focused and honed in on your messaging within your email, and it just becomes far less effective.

One email = one CTA.

As far as what CTAs to include, we’ll go over that in our playbook in the next section. For now, let’s finish up with these rules. Here’s an essential rule related to the CTA:

RULE #3: KEEP CTA LINKS ON THEIR OWN LINE

This is a small rule, but it matters big-time. Whenever you include a CTA link in an email, keep the link on its own line of text.

Why does this matter?

It matters because a lot of subscribers will open your emails on a mobile device, and most people suffer from “fat finger syndrome.” In other words, it’s not always easy to click on a link when it’s surrounded by other text.

When you place a link on its own line, you won't have to worry about that anymore, and as a byproduct your CTA will also become more obvious.

RULE #4: ALWAYS PREVIEW YOUR EMAILS BEFORE YOU HIT SEND

Please preview your emails before you hit send! Actually send yourself a copy of the email (which most email services providers enable you to do) before you pull the trigger.

Read your email copy out loud and click on all of the links to make sure they go to the right places. I know you're anxious to hit send after writing your copy, but it's not worth the potential disaster of sending an email where the links don't work. Plus, you'll likely notice small spelling and grammar issues that you can take care of first before the "grammar police" lets you know about it later.

Get in this habit, and you'll save yourself a lot of trouble down the road. You may also want to check your emails on your mobile device so you can see what that experience is like, too.

RULE #5: SUBSCRIBE TO YOUR OWN LIST

And finally, subscribe to your own email list. This will help you understand the exact experience that a potential subscriber will have after they sign up.

Become your first subscriber so that you can catch any required frequency or rhythm changes in your autoresponder series before those emails get sent out.

All right, it's time to get down to business. Like I said earlier, on the following pages you'll see a number of different email archetypes you can choose from to include in your own autoresponder and broadcast emails.

These aren't the only email types available to you, but they are the most common I've found success with, and you're more than welcome to tweak them to your liking and put your own spin on them. These email plays are here simply to help give you ideas and direction.

Thanks again, and enjoy!

Value-Driven Emails

“YOUR EARNINGS ARE A BYPRODUCT OF HOW WELL YOU SERVE YOUR AUDIENCE.” — Pat Flynn

Value-driven emails include content that is of real value to your audience.

By sending value-driven email, you will be strengthening the relationship you have with your subscribers, and positioning yourself as an expert in your niche. And, because your audience won't want to miss out on the valuable content they've come to expect, you will also train them to form the habit of opening all of the emails you send.

Five Plays for the Value-Driven Email

1. The Quick Win
2. The Free Resource
3. The Hard Lesson Learned
4. The Student Teacher
5. The Tip of the Iceberg

PLAY #1: THE QUICK WIN

What is this email all about?

The Quick Win is an email that enables your subscriber to experience a quick result or small win from something you teach or show them how to do. Generally speaking, it should take no more than ten minutes for your subscriber to achieve that quick result or small win.

Why is this email type important?

Small, quick wins are extremely valuable because your subscribers will begin to associate rewarding experiences with you and your brand, which can lead to habits such as opening more of your emails, sharing more of your content, and a higher chance of responding to your calls to action that you include inside (and outside, such as in your social feeds) of your emails.

For your new subscribers, this is especially powerful because it builds trust rather quickly. It doesn't really matter how small the task is, as long as there is some sort of win on the other end of it.

When should you send this email?

Try to include a quick win email near the beginning of your autoresponder series.

Also, if you feel your list hasn't been very responsive lately, a quick win broadcast email can be an easy way to re-awaken them. Send one or two of these a month before you begin a launch sequence so that your subscribers are awake and primed for opening and responding to your launch-related emails.

Call to Action:

The primary call to action is to simply take action and complete the task. For a more advanced experience, you could direct people to reply and share their results with you or visit a specific page on your website where comments are enabled. The second option is ideal because it will bring an element of social proof to the experience which can increase brand loyalty even more.

How

Step 1: Think of a small win that you could teach your audience to do. It shouldn't take more than ten minutes to complete or 500 words to explain.

Step 2: Break down the process into easy to follow steps. Share examples as you go if possible.

Step 3: Include a clear call to action.

Step 4: Share this process with a few people to validate your steps. Tweak as necessary.

Step 5: Solidify your email, include your call to action, and hit send.

Special Note:

For over four years, one of the very first emails I sent my new subscribers on Smart Passive Income was a strategy for discovering what kind of blog content to write. It involved searching for a book on Amazon.com, looking inside one of the covers, and visiting the table of contents.

Using a specific example about fly fishing, I was able to illustrate how I could pull inspiration from a book's table of contents to create hundreds of

variations of blog posts specifically for fly fishing related topics.

Without even asking for a reply, thousands of people replied directly to this email to thank me for sharing the tactic. A few people even mentioned that they were going to unsubscribe initially (because they subscribed just to get my free giveaway), but they decided to stay on because of the small quick win I shared.

PLAY #2: THE FREE RESOURCE

What is this email all about?

The Free Resource email is one that includes a link to a helpful resource or tool that your audience can benefit from, which is also 100 percent free to use. This tool can be something quick that you create on your own, or one that already exists elsewhere.

Why is this email important?

A powerful formula for succeeding online is to give, give, give some more, and then ask. The free resource email is one of your best gives, because it's quick, easy, but also massively valuable. It proves to your audience that you have knowledge about things that are useful for them, and it also illustrates that you care and aren't always going to ask them to pull out their wallets.

To several of your subscribers, it'll be a nice surprise, and small surprises are always going to help strengthen the relationship you have together. As I like to say, "An anniversary gift is great, but it's also expected. A gift on a random day for no apparent reason means a whole lot more."

When should you send this email?

Free resources are okay to share throughout your autoresponder series. But I wouldn't recommend sharing more than one every ninety days. When you

share too many, they aren't a sweet surprise anymore. Plus, you run the risk of training your audience to only expect free material from you, which can backfire when you promote your products or paid products you're affiliated with.

Call to Action:

You want people to click on the link in your email to the free resource. If it's a resource of your own product, you could simply attach it. But, since some email clients aren't so keen on emails with attachments, I recommending including a link to get access to the resource. In most cases, it'll simply be a link to another website with a special tool or giveaway included.

How

Step 1: Decide on a free resource to share with your subscribers, and make sure it's 100 percent free to use.

Step 2: Include information about why this is helpful and how it can be used, and include any of your own experiences with the resource, if applicable.

Step 3: Include a clear call to action.

Step 4: Solidify your email, and send.

Special Note:

If you have advanced email marketing features that allow you to segment and tag your subscribers, depending on the free resource, you could tag people who click on this link as being interested in whatever that free resource is about.

For example, if it's a free resource about podcasting equipment, I know that people who click on this link are interested in podcasting and can tag those subscribers as such, which may help me further personalize and target emails I send in the future.

As you may already know, I use [Kit](#) as my email service provider, which includes these more advanced email marketing tools.

PLAY #3: THE HARD LESSON LEARNED

What is this email all about?

The Hard Lesson Learned email is a personal story that involves a struggle that you've had in the past and the lesson you learned from it.

Why is this email important?

This kind of email is deeply effective for several different reasons.

First, it involves a story, and stories are some of the most powerful marketing tools you can ever use. As soon as we are born, stories are being read to us, and stories are a great way to hook people into what you're saying, even before they know exactly what it's about.

Second, it's about you, and not you in a "look at me and how awesome I am" kind of way, but in a more vulnerable, human kind of way. It shows that you're a real person, and as a result, you become more relatable.

Third, you're delivering value by teaching others a lesson you've learned through a past personal experience, and instead of just telling people to do something, you're putting it into context, which means it'll become much easier to remember.

The story creates the visual, which creates the memory.

When should you send this email?

This is a versatile email archetype that can be used both in autoresponder emails and in more timely broadcast emails, especially in and around a specific launch sequence or promotion.

Call to Action:

If in an autoresponder series: In this email, you're opening up a bit and talking about a particular struggle you've had in the past. As a result, you become even more relatable. Because of this, I'd recommend including a CTA that asks people to follow you on one social channel that you're active on so they can get to know you even more as a real world human.

When you include this email in an autoresponder series, you'll begin to gather a steady stream of new followers to this channel each and every day.

If in a broadcast email: If you're going to be including this email in a broadcast series, then the CTA should be relatively clear, since broadcast emails are typically sent in and around a particular event, like a launch.

How

Step 1: Decide on the story and lesson you'd like to share.

Step 2: Write the email as if you were writing it to a friend.

Step 3: Include a clear call to action.

Step 4: Solidify your email, and send.

Special Note:

Get creative with this email. I'm sure there are a lot of hard lessons learned in the past that you could apply and share with your audience. Just make sure to always tie the lesson into something your audience is trying to achieve, as if you went through this tough time so your audience didn't have to. Do you remember the mistakes I made with my email lists when I was

starting out? As a reminder, they were: 1) I didn't have a list, and 2) once I did have a list, I didn't even know what to do with it. Those were hard lessons learned, but have become a great way to setup everything I'm teaching here in this playbook.

PLAY #4: THE STUDENT TEACHER

What is this email all about?

The Student Teacher email focuses on a success story from someone in your audience and specifically highlights one of their strategies for success.

Why is this email important?

This email takes the focus off of you, and instead puts it on someone you've already helped. Because this person is in your audience, their story becomes that much more relatable and real to your subscribers. Additionally, it makes you more trustworthy because you helped this person during their journey too, and it shows that you care about the results of your audience.

When should you send this email?

This email works really well during the promotion of a product, whether it's a product of your own or one that you're affiliated with. Either way, this type of email works because it helps break down those security walls people have when they are asked to potentially purchase a product.

Even without a promotion directly tied to it, this email will help you build trust and authority with your subscribers, which is always a good thing.

Call to Action:

If you're not linking directly to a particular product (we'll talk more about

sales-driven emails later), the best case scenario is to include a CTA to a link that continues the conversation that your successful student's example has already started.

If your student shares a specific strategy that you shared, link to the page on your site where that strategy is referenced. If it worked for your student, your subscribers will be curious to learn more about what you taught them.

How

Step 1: Find a success story from someone in your audience that you can share. You may already have a number of success stories to pull from in your email, but you could also ask your audience on social media. If you're just starting out and do not have any success stories to share, you can still use the same principles in this email by highlighting an example success story from someone else who used a strategy similar to one that you teach. The only difference being that you were not the one to teach it.

Step 2: In your own words, write a quick story highlighting this person's journey, making sure to start by painting a picture of what the pain or problem was before discovering your strategy, how the strategy was implemented, and what happened as a result.

Step 3 (Optional, But Recommended): Include a direct quote from your student and link to their website, if they have one. A quote and a link will support that this story is actually true.

Although Universal Email Rule #3 says to place CTA links on their own line, you do not have to do that with your student's website. The reason is that it's not the call to action in the email, but rather a way for people to verify that this person is real. If they don't have a website, you could link to their Twitter (or other social media) profile.

Step 4: Make sure to share the email with your student so it's to their liking.

Step 5: Include a clear call to action.

Step 6: Solidify your email, and send.

Special Note:

At the end of this email, you may also want to include a p.s. after your name that asks your subscribers to reply if they have a success story they'd like to share. We'll get into specific survey-centric emails in the next section, but because you've already highlighted someone in this email, your other subscribers may jump on the chance to share more success stories with you at this point.

You can then use those stories for other emails and testimonials down the road. Plus, it's always nice to hear from your audience when you've helped them out!

PLAY #5: THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG

What is this email all about?

The Tip of the Iceberg email includes one part of a much larger whole that's on your website. For example, it could be one of the five tips that you've put together in a list post that lives on your blog.

Why is this email important?

People don't always come back to your website after subscribing to your email list, but it's important to make that happen because it's on your website where other important actions (and transactions) occur. The more you train your audience to click on links in your emails with CTAs like this, the more likely they are to click on links in other emails with different CTAs.

This email takes advantage of the "information gap" that you create by sharing just a part of the larger whole, which means you're encouraging

your audience to curiously click through to get the rest of that information. It's a great way to drive traffic to new posts, and a fantastic strategy for resurfacing older posts in your archive that your new subscribers should see.

When should you send this email?

This email works in a broadcast to send traffic to a brand new or recently published post, and it also works well within an autoresponder series to consistently drive traffic back to pillar articles you already have deep in your site.

Call to Action:

Your CTA should clearly encourage your subscribers to click on the link in your email, which brings them to the post where the rest of the information lives.

A sample link within your email may be:

[Click here to read the other four tips to help you grow your business via social media.](#)

How

Step 1: Publish or find a popular list-style post in your archive. I recommend checking your analytics software to discover the top three to five most visited list-style posts that you've published, which is a sign that those are hot topics that your subscribers will be interested in.

Step 2: Select the best tip out of the entire list, and write up a unique version of only that part of the article just for your email subscribers.

Step 3: Include a clear call to action to get the rest of the article by clicking

the link you insert within your email.

Step 4: Solidify your email, and send.

Special Note:

This particular email doesn't have to be very long. Even just 200–300 words will suffice to give people enough information about a topic so they want to click through to get the rest.

Also, you can use this email archetype to drive traffic to any type of article that has a list—not just “top tips” posts. You could also work in a top resource or products list, or a roundup post that consists of top pieces of advice from others in the same niche that you're in.

Survey-Centric Emails

“IF YOU WANT YOUR SUBSCRIBERS TO TRUST YOU LIKE A FRIEND, THEN YOU CAN’T MANAGE YOUR EMAIL LIST LIKE IT’S A ONE-WAY CONVERSATION.” — Pat Flynn

Not only is your email list a highly valuable tool for selling and content marketing, but also for learning more about your audience and what else you could do to serve them.

Each of these email archetypes is meant to have people respond and reveal useful information, which can help you determine what content, products, and other solutions you could create for them later.

When you begin to automate these emails so that every subscriber eventually sees them, you get a never ending supply of responses.”

6. What are You Struggling With?
7. Which One Are You?
8. Do You Know the Right Answer?
9. Why Do You Hate Me?
10. Where Have You Been?

PLAY #6: WHAT ARE YOU STRUGGLING WITH?

What is this email all about?

This is an email that asks your subscribers the simple but powerful question: What are you struggling with?

Why is this email important?

The answers you get back from subscribers are absolute gold to you and your brand. Not only are you hearing about what the primary concerns, issues, pains, and problems of your target audience are (which could become blog posts, podcast episodes, and even inspire you to create products and services), but also you get to hear their struggles in their own words.

You can then use this language on your site, within your emails, in sales copy, and even on social media to make a true connection with your audience. When they understand that you empathize, you earn their trust much faster.

When should you send this email?

I know a lot of marketers who make this the very first email people receive (via an autoresponder) after they subscribe. The reason this works so well is because you're catching them in the middle of a "yes ladder."

In other words, in order to subscribe to your list they will have had to say "yes" to a few things along the way, from clicking on a link, entering their email address, hitting subscribe, and opening your email. Asking them to open up at this point will likely give you some amazing answers.

As Jay Abraham says:

“If you can describe the problem better than your target customer, they will automatically assume you have the solution.”

Call to Action:

The CTA in this email is to ask your subscribers to hit reply and respond.

How

Here is a complete sample email you could send to your subscribers. I'd recommend changing the text to fit your voice, but this is really all you need. Quick and to the point. Obviously change your name, and if you can personalize the email with the subscriber's name via your email service provider, do that!

Thank you so much for subscribing [first name]! I'm excited to send you more information to help you [primary goal(s) of your subscriber]. So that I can better help you, I'd love to hear from you.

Yes, I'm actually asking you to respond to this email! Hit reply and share with me some of your biggest struggles with [goal(s) of your subscriber]. This way, I can make sure that I'm delivering emails that matter to you in the future.

Thanks so much, and I look forward to reading your reply.

-Pat Flynn

Special Note:

If possible, reply to your subscribers' replies. This can really surprise them, and it also helps to ensure that your emails with these particular subscribers don't get put in the Promotions tab in Gmail, but rather always land in the Primary inbox.

Once you begin getting a lot of subscribers per day, this can be very difficult to manage, but when you're just starting out, replying to responses from this email can be a huge advantage for you, and a big differentiator between you and other brands serving the same audience.

PLAY #7: WHICH ONE ARE YOU?

What is this email all about?

This email asks your audience to select an answer to a multiple-choice question about who they are or what their interests are.

Why is this email important?

Unlike the open-ended What are You Struggling With? email, this particular email includes two or more specific multiple-choice answers that your subscribers can easily click on. When a specific answer is clicked, your subscribers are tagged as such in the backend of your email service provider.

This is a fantastic method for understanding more about your audience and grouping similar types of subscribers together.

Note: Only certain email service providers enable you to tag your subscribers based on various actions, such as clicking a link in an email. I use [Kit](#) because it's extremely easy to use and can apply "if this then that" rules in just a matter of seconds. For example, if they click on link X they get tagged with tag X, if they click on link Y they get tagged with tag Y.

When you can understand the interests of your audience, you can better serve them with more targeted emails in the future, and you can leave out things that don't matter to them. I give a niche-specific example in the "how" section below, so you can see exactly how powerful tagging can be.

When should you send this email?

This email can live in your autoresponder series so that you can automatically have your subscribers tag themselves with specific interests over time. You can include as many of these types of emails in your series as you'd like, but I recommended that you space them out and have other types of value-driven emails in between.

Call to Action:

The CTA is to click on the best answer to the question that you include in your email.

How

Step 1: Decide on a particular interest you'd like to tag your audience with. It's best to ask questions about things where there is a very clear "this or that" situation. For example, if you have a photography site that helps photographers improve their photos, you can ask your audience whether or not they are a Canon camera user or a Nikon camera user.

Why would something like this be important? Let's say you get a special deal for a Nikon camera. If you send that out to everyone on your list, your Canon users may feel left out, and potentially unsubscribe. Send the deal only to the Nikon users, and you'll be delivering emails only to those who would care to receive that email.

Step 2: Create a landing page for each answer that you create. When people click an answer, they'll be redirected to a particular page that you create. A link has to lead to somewhere.

You could set up one landing page for all of your answers, which could just thank people for responding to your question, but you're losing out on an opportunity to deliver targeted content or product recommendations based on what you know about those types of people. Using the photography example, the Canon people could have links to Canon products on their landing page, and Nikon people could have Nikon products on theirs.

Step 3: Include your call to action along with your question and choices, making sure your choices are each on their own line to make sure people click on the answer they want to click on.

Step 4: Solidify your email, and send.

Special Note:

Make sure to keep the survey simple, and keep it to one question per email. After people click on a link to tag themselves, they'll be redirected to another page and you can't rely on them to come back and continue a multiple-question test. Stick to one question per email.

PLAY #8: DO YOU KNOW THE RIGHT ANSWER?

What is this email all about?

In this email, you're asking your audience to engage and respond to a question that has a correct answer.

Why is this email important?

Instead of an interest-based multiple-choice selection like in the Which One Are You? email, which is meant to learn more about your subscribers, this email's sole purpose is to have your subscribers click to leave an answer on your website (or on a social media platform) and engage with the rest of your community.

We as human beings LOVE to know that we know the right answers to things. This is why we love game shows, and it's why we yell out the answers to questions we know the answer to, even when we are by ourselves.

When given the opportunity to supply a correct answer, we take it, which is why we should give our subscribers this opportunity too.

This, combined with a platform to share these answers on and discuss, becomes a powerful tool to encourage your audience to engage with your brand and connect with one another. Plus, the increase in comments and conversation provide social proof to support the value of the community within your brand.

When should you send this email?

Use this kind of email in a broadcast only.

Because this is all about engagement, you don't want your autoresponder email to send new subscribers to an older post that may potentially have little or no new communication.

I like sending this email after I ask a specific question (one that has a correct answer) on a platform like Facebook, which makes it easy to view the replies and scroll through the various answers. Plus, Facebook does a great job of showing the top comments, how many people responded in total, and it also encourages people to reply to one another, which is a huge plus. A byproduct of this is more Facebook fans and shares.

Other times, I'll send this email after I write an important blog post that includes a question, and I ask this same question in the email and invite people to click through to leave an answer. Comments are left on the blog post instead, and a byproduct of this is more traffic to your site, and the likelihood that people who land there will find more reasons to interact.

This is a great way to re-engage your subscribers if, for example, you haven't sent them an email in a while, or you've been noticing that not very many people are taking action on your CTAs.

Call to Action:

The CTA is to click on a link to share their answer to the question that you pose.

How

Step 1: Ask a question on a social media platform (or blog post) that has a specific answer. For example, if you're in the health industry, you could ask: Which is healthier, spinach or kale? And why?

That alone will earn you an above-average number of comments. Remember, you want your audience to provide the answers, so tell 'em you'll share your answer later and they can see if it matches up with theirs.

Step 2: Create a broadcast email and ask your subscribers the same question.

Step 3: Grab the link that brings people directly to where they can leave their response. On social media, the link to the exact post or update is typically found where the timestamp is for that particular post. Right-click on that link to copy to your clipboard, and test it out before you insert it into your email.

Step 4: Provide a clear call to action to click on the link to leave "their version of the answer." It's important to let them know that it's "their version of the answer," because those words suggest that they have a say and you're essentially opening up the floor for them. This increases the likelihood that they will click and respond.

Step 5: Solidify your email, and send.

Special Note:

Just to warn you, sometimes people get VERY passionate about their answers. It's fun to watch the conversations evolve as several people in your community may disagree with one another, or rally to defend a person's answer. People will really pull out all of the stops to prove themselves right (or others wrong).

This is exactly what you want to happen. When you can spark this kind of conversation under your brand, it's a great sign, and can help others who aren't yet part of your brand get involved and discover you. You may need to moderate a bit if people begin to get disrespectful, but that doesn't happen very often.

Have fun with this one!

PLAY #9: WHY DO YOU HATE ME?

What is this email all about?

This is an email that asks your subscribers why they haven't taken action on something you've previously asked them to do.

Why is this email important?

The subject line and this email type is from Ryan Levesque's book, *Ask*, a book that I highly recommend for everyone who has an email list. Seriously, it's an amazing book that has changed how I think about and utilize my email list.

The question "Why do you hate me?" is meant to increase the open rate of this particular email, but it's the purpose of this email and the copy within that matter most. Ryan explains that this email is meant to get a direct reply so that you can understand, in the exact language of your subscriber, why

your subscriber has not taken action. This is typically at the end of a sales sequence when it's clear that your subscriber has yet to buy.

You see, ideally, when people subscribe to your email list they'll be sent a series of emails that eventually lead them into a specific transaction that you'd like them to take. It could be to purchase a product, download a piece of software, leave a particular kind of feedback, vote, or another type of action.

When people take this desired action, they are taken off of that particular email series and potentially put into another so that they aren't pitched to do something they've already done.

If subscribers wind up getting to the end of a funnel and have yet to take the desired action, there's some sort of disconnect between being interested in your email list, and the action you want them to take. Since they haven't taken action anyway, a question like "Why haven't you purchased this product yet?" can provide a ton of insight to help you tweak things to get better results.

When you think about it, what else have you got to lose? They've gone through your entire series, and you might as well ask them what's up before they become an inactive subscriber. Not everyone will reply, but some will, and those answers could be exactly what you need to hear.

When should you send this email?

This email should be placed at the very end of an autoresponder series connected to a sales funnel or other transaction/goal-based sequence.

Call to Action:

The CTA is: Please click reply to this email and let me know why you haven't [goal] yet.

How

Step 1: Within an existing funnel, add an additional email at the end of the sequence with a subject line that is the same or similar to “Why do you hate me?”

Step 2: Write your email in an authentic tone about why you’re asking for this honest feedback.

Step 3: Provide a clear CTA that asks them to reply to the email directly with their honest thoughts.

Step 4: Solidify your email, and send.

Special Note:

The “Why do you hate me?” subject line is sensitive for some people, so if you feel like it’s too harsh, then don’t use it. You want people to open this email though, because the answers you get back are going to tell you exactly why they got all the way to the end without taking action.

Whether they reply or not, if a subscriber gets to the end of an email series, you could automatically move them into another from that point forward. Again, you might as well, and you never know—perhaps another series is better suited for that person and they will be more likely to take action there.

PLAY #10: WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?

What is this email all about?

This email is meant to be sent to subscribers who haven’t opened a notable amount of recent emails from you. It’s a way to re-engage your subscribers, while at the same time help to weed out the ones who are no longer active or responding.

Why is this email important?

Over time, you're going to begin to collect subscribers on your list who shouldn't be subscribers anymore. Namely, I'm talking about people who are no longer opening your emails after a certain period of time. If they aren't opening your emails anymore, then they are inactive subscribers.

Before you delete those subscribers though, it's always best to do what you can to try to re-engage them, and a simple email with a "Where Have You Been?" subject line can be a casual and quick way for people to reply.

You have to be careful though, because sometimes different email service providers define "opening" an email differently, but even before you delete subscribers (which is smart to do after a long period of inactivity), this particular email can help re-awaken some people who want to make sure they stay on your list.

When should you send this email?

This is one of those "spring cleaning" type of emails that's good to send once a year. It's definitely meant for a broadcast, and I'd put this in your calendar a month before you know a huge month is going to happen. This way, if you do re-awaken some sleepers, they'll be ready for your important action-based emails to come.

Call to Action:

You could include a small reply CTA here in this email, but unlike other emails in this section, it's not as important here. The main goal is to get sleepers to open your emails and let them know that you have some good stuff coming soon that they will not want to miss out on.

How

Step 1: Create a segment within your list of subscribers who have not

opened the last five email broadcasts you've sent. Many (but not all) email service providers give you this capability. You can customize this number to your liking, but I like five. If someone hasn't opened your last five emails, that's definitely saying something about their interest.

Step 2: Create an email and make sure to only send it to this particular segment of your list.

Step 3: Solidify your email, and send.

Step 4: Pay attention to the open rates for these emails. It will likely be extremely low (since these are the inactives and sleepers on your list), but you will get a few opens, which is a good sign that some subscribers in that segment are still alive.

Step 5 (Optional): A month later, you can re-send this email to those who did not open your previous one, and after that you could make the assumption that those who did not open that one are worth deleting off of your list.

Special Note:

In order to run a successful email campaign, you're going to have to understand that the number of people on your list isn't as important as the percentage of people who are opening your emails and ultimately clicking on your links. Although I recommend not deleting subscribers right away, deleting them is totally okay and encouraged, as long as you know for sure a subscriber on your list is no longer active. A couple of re-engagement campaigns to no-opens can help you decide whether or not they are worth having on your list anymore.

Also, in regards to the subject line, I know a few people who get more aggressive with this email, just to make sure people open them. Their subject line may be something like: "Open This Now, Or You're Off the List."

Now, that's a little too aggressive for me, but I just wanted to share this with

you to again let you know that you know your audience better than I do, and you have the ability to do spring-cleaning within your list in any way that you see fit.

Thank You!



I'd like to thank you again for taking the time to check out Email the Smart Way! I hope you've found some value in it and can use it as a guide to help you craft your autoresponder and broadcast emails in the future.

If for whatever reason you got this playbook without ever subscribing to my email list (which is totally

okay because I realize people love to share things like this), then please head on over to SmartPassiveIncome.com and subscribe to my email list.

Best of luck with your email marketing and growing your subscribers.

Cheers, and I look forward to serving you again soon!

Pat Flynn

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