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EMAIL MARKETING

BEST PRACTICES FOR EMAIL MARKETING WITH IMODULES

Overview

Communication is fundamental in building valuable relationships with your constituents. Emails can be up to 20 times more cost effective and generate a 30% higher response rate than direct mail. And with recipient response generally occurring within 48 hours, emails are also one of the fastest ways to reach an audience.

iModules offers an easy-to-use, comprehensive suite of tools for successfully delivering targeted and engaging email messages to your constituents. Last year, our clients averaged an open rate of 24% through email marketing with iModules.

Clients who sent an average of one email per month:

——Raised 3x more donations

——Acquired 4x more donors

——Collected 5x more event registrations and revenues

Contents

So how do you make the most of your email marketing efforts? Below we'll explore best practices for building, testing, and sending relevant and effective emails to your constituents.

Building Your Email

Implementing the following best practices as you work through the steps to build your email with iModules can help ensure a successful campaign:

1. **Be familiar with legal requirements.** There are several important items that must be included in each email your organization sends in order to meet legal requirements, as defined by the CAN-SPAM Act of 2003. To comply with this Act, your iModules email footers are pre-populated with your valid physical postal address and an opt-out method for your constituents. Your subject line is pre-populated with your website name. Additionally, iModules works with the leading ISPs to ensure that your emails are white listed and are not treated as spam.

2. **Utilize email categories.** The iModules email marketing tools let you create specific categories for different types of emails your organization sends. When building an email, specify in which category that email belongs. This allows your constituents to unsubscribe only from that specific category of emails, should they click on the opt-out link in your email footer. Not only will this reduce the amount of people who universally opt-out from receiving all communication from your organization, but it also helps build more relevant relationships and constituent satisfaction.

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3. **Pay attention to your subject line.** Writing an effective subject line is essential for making your email stand out in an inbox full of promotional and unsolicited emails. Displaying a consistent, recognizable piece of information will help recipients know that the email is from you. Your subject line is pre-populated with your website name in brackets; this area is editable, but studies have shown that emails with the best open rates have the sending organization's name in the subject line. So what goes after the brackets? Try these tips:

→ **Avoid sounding like spam.** Don't use all capital letters, exclamation points, dollar signs, or splashy promotional phrases.

→ **Keep it short, but make your point.** The general rule is to keep your subject line under 50 characters in length to avoid being cut off by your recipient's email client. The most effective length is between 20-40 characters. But clarity is the most important factor; a short subject line means nothing if it doesn't make sense.

→ **Appeal to emotions, needs, and curiosity.** Studies show that recipients open emails based on the "Five I" theory: importance, intrigue, involvement, investment, and interest.

→ **Make it personal.** Try segmenting your audience and tailoring the subject line for each different segment, even if you aren't creating different versions of the email content. A recipient is more likely to open an email with a personally relevant subject line.

→ **Write it as you go.** As you're planning and drafting the content of the email, write down ideas for subject lines, too. It saves the time, stress, and brainpower of trying to develop a subject line to suit a completely finished email.

→ **Test, test, test.** Subject lines are one of the easiest components of your email marketing campaign to test. Split your recipient list in half, thirds, or even quarters and send each group the same email but with different subject lines. Then track and analyze which words or phrases claimed the highest open rates and use that information for future campaigns.

Keep your subject line under 50 characters in length

4. Use familiar "From" information. Presenting a "From" name and email address that represents your organization or that is familiar to your audience will help increase open rates.

5. Reinforce your brand. The following suggestions can help create brand recognition to increase open rates, boost readership, and strengthen future relationships:

    → Choose a color scheme and font to complement and represent your organization's brand consistently throughout your email marketing efforts.

    → Always place your logo in a prominent location, such as the top left or right corner.

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→ Make sure your organization's name is clearly identified in the "From" address.

→ Try something new. Reusable layouts and templates are a convenient, standard feature within email marketing through iModules, but don't forget to try something new once in awhile. Just as you should periodically update the look of your website, you should also refresh your email designs to boost reader interest.

Pre-Made Templates
You can leverage a handful of design templates already created and available in Encompass.

Professional Services
developed these custom templates for the New Mexico State University Alumni Association. Learn more about Professional Services at imodules.com/professionalservices.

In-House Creation
The iModules Marketing Team created these templates in-house. using a combination of Photoshop®, Dreamweaver®, and Encompass®.
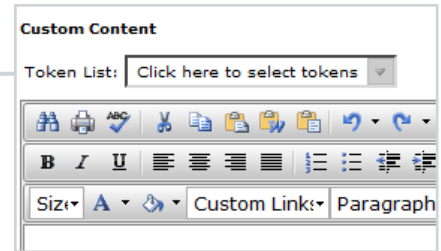
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6. **Use graphics for visual interest only.** Images can grab the reader's attention and add interest to your email. But many email client software programs block images by default, and more people are viewing emails on text-only mobile devices. To ensure email readability is not dependent on image rendering, it's important to follow some basic guidelines when building your email:

→ Make sure your email text-only content makes sense without supporting images. In other words, will email recipients understand your message even if the images do not display?

→ Do not rely on images for important content such as calls-to-action or hyperlinks.

→ Use text (not images) for your welcome message or personal salutation.

→ Place your most important content in the upper left corner of your email and above the fold.

→ Include a link to a web-based version of your email, and house the HTML in a content area on your website for online viewing.

→ Use the Table Wizard to house your email content. Specify a table width so that various email clients do not present your email in different layouts and sizes.

→ Use the Image Properties tool to specify alt text for each image, allowing text to display if the image does not render properly.

7. **Deliver relevant content.** Leverage your Encompass database to deliver the most relevant content to different audiences within one email. Using data roles to display individual pieces of content to specific groups of constituents in the same email allows you to communicate the most applicable information to each recipient without having to build multiple emails. Additionally, the query building tools let you pull specific recipient lists from your database for segmented and targeted communication; or, importing an offline list of email recipients lets you communicate with additional or new audiences. And all recipient lists can be saved in the system for future use.
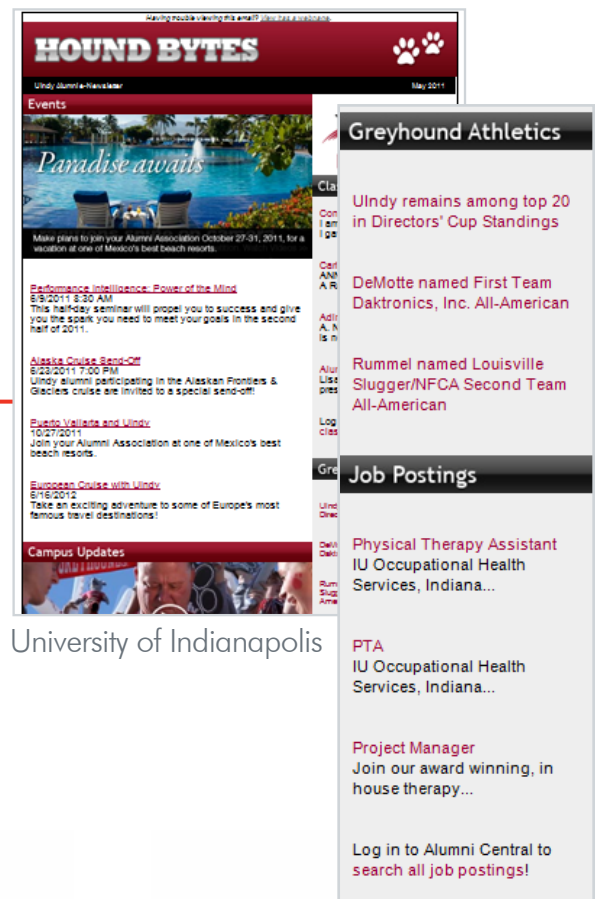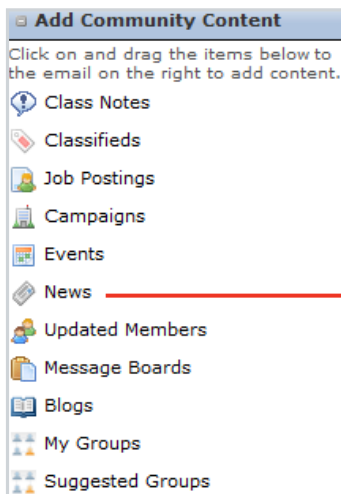
8. **Personalize your message.** Use values from your Encompass database to personalize your message and increase connections. These values (Tokens) let you address email recipients by first name, nickname, or other personal information and speak directly to each constituent. Using Tokens to automatically display the email recipient's contact information – such as email address or home address – gives you the opportunity to ask for updated Profile information (be sure to also provide a website link for easy Profile access).

Custom Content

Token List: Click here to select tokens ▼

B *I* U | Size A ▼ ⬧ ▼ | Custom Links▼ Paragraph

9. **Reuse content.** Save administrative time and provide up-to-date information when you reuse content from you website in your emails. The email marketing tool provides a simple "drag and drop" system to let you easily populate your email with current website information such as news and events without having to manually recreate content. Try setting the content to display as a summary or headline only, rather than showing the entire news article or event. This not only visually shortens your email but also encourages your constituents to click through and engage with your website.

⬩ Add Community Content

Click on and drag the items below to the email on the right to add content.

- 💬 Class Notes
- 🏷️ Classifieds
- 📋 Job Postings
- 🏢 Campaigns
- 🖼️ Events
- 📰 News
- 👥 Updated Members
- 📖 Message Boards
- 📘 Blogs
- 👥 My Groups
- 👥 Suggested Groups

Reuse **content** from your website.

Add class notes, classifieds, job postings, campaigns, events, news, and more to your emails with this simple "drag and drop" feature.

HOUND BYTES

UIndy Alumni e-Newsletter   May 2011

Events

Paradise awaits

Make plans to join your Alumni Association October 27-31, for a vacation at one of Mexico's best beach resorts.

Performance Intelligence: Power of the Mind
6/9/2011 8:30 AM
This half-day seminar will propel you to success and give you the spark you need to meet your goals in the second half of 2011.

Alaska Cruise Send-Off
6/23/2011 7:00 PM
UIndy alumni participating in the Alaskan Frontiers & Glaciers cruise are invited to a special send-off!

Puerto Vallarta and UIndy
10/27/2011
Join your Alumni Association at one of Mexico's best beach resorts.

European Cruise with UIndy
6/16/2012
Take an exciting adventure to some of Europe's most famous travel destinations!

Campus Updates

University of Indianapolis

Greyhound Athletics

UIndy remains among top 20 in Directors' Cup Standings

DeMotte named First Team Daktronics, Inc. All-American

Rummel named Louisville Slugger/NFCA Second Team All-American

Job Postings

Physical Therapy Assistant
IU Occupational Health Services, Indiana...

PTA
IU Occupational Health Services, Indiana...

Project Manager
Join our award winning, in house therapy...

Log in to Alumni Central to search all job postings!

10. Include links. Promoting a specific call-to-action will help you measure the success of an email campaign. The Hyperlink Manager tool allows you to include text and image links in your email. Linking readers to specific areas of your website will not only help promote a campaign (event registration or online giving, for example) but will also increase site traffic and allow for member reporting and tracking.

11. Customize your email footer. The email marketing tool lets you choose from different custom versions of footers to display in your email. This allows you to represent various organizations with one email tool and provide applicable contact information, links, or other information based on email type and content.

Contact iModules account management or Application Support to create additional email footers.

12. Use "Forward to a Friend." Let your constituents do some of the work for you! Adding the "Forward to a Friend" option in your emails helps promote viral marketing.

Instant Help
With Application Support
913.685.5242
applicationsupport@imodules.com

913.888.0772 | imodules.com

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Testing Your Email

Before sending your email, be sure to test its layout and design rendering in various email clients and web environments. The "Send a Test Email" tool lets you send a preview to as many different email addresses as you'd like (and they don't need to exist in your Encompass database); you could develop a network of office peers or select constituents to receive your preview emails. Below are some recommended test environments:

Web clients:
Gmail, Hotmail, AOL, Yahoo

Desktop clients:
(PC) Microsoft Outlook, Outlook Express, Windows
(Mac) Apple Mail, Entourage

Web browsers:
Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari

Mobile devices:
Android, Blackberry, iPhone

Don't wait until the last minute. Give yourself plenty of time to test and queue your email. If you're sending a time-sensitive message, you'll want to allow extra time for any delays that your constituents' email accounts may be experiencing (which is completely out of your control), as well as give your constituents ample opportunity to open and read your email before any actionable deadlines.

Sending Your Email

- **Send the email when it's most relevant.** Although there have been general studies on the most effective days and times to send emails, the best time to send an email most often depends on each specific message. Try putting yourself in your recipients' shoes and think about when you would like to receive the email you are sending. For example, if you're sending a simple reminder to registrants of a weekend event, Thursday or early Friday would be relevant and timely.

■ **Adjust the frequency of your emails as needed.** Although some emails need (and should) only be sent once, some recurring emails – such as a monthly e-newsletter – can establish consistent contact, build relationships, and keep your constituents engaged with the community. You should also develop ongoing email campaigns around important marketing efforts such as events or annual appeals. Use your iModules Email Marketing tool to schedule recurring emails in advance; schedule reminder emails to arrive in your inbox and serve as a reminder before each recurring email is sent.

■ **Take advantage of reporting.** Gathering statistics from your emails allows you to better understand your constituents and improve future communication efforts. Every email sent through the iModules system generates standard reporting on key metrics such as open and click rates. This reporting is located in the Email Marketing Reporting area of your administrative tools. Click-through details and website actions are available through graphical, easy-to-read tracking and conversion reports. Reports can also easily be customized using "drag and drop" features built into the tool.

Learn more about
Email Marketing Reporting in
Best Practices for Utilizing Your iModules Reporting Tools

■ **Manage email kickbacks.** The Email Kickbacks area of your Administrative tools allows you to see all undeliverable email addresses in order to better manage your community data and the delivery of future emails. Because the system is tracking both hard kickbacks (fatal delivery errors) and soft kickbacks (non-fatal delivery errors), you are able to see why an email did not reach an intended recipient and whether or not their email address is still considered valid by the system. You can also reset invalid email addresses from this reporting area if needed, as well as pull an export for offline updating.

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Ready to Get Started?
DON'T FORGET TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THESE RESOURCES

Training
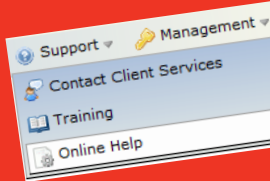Sign up for online training classes on the Client Community at clients.imodules.com/training

Client Community
Client Community
Visit clients.imodules.com for news, product updates, events, best practices, client examples, and more

Online Help Site
Find video tutorials and how-to documents at the Online Help Site, which you can access through your website

Professional Services
The Professional Services team at iModules provides expert email template building know-how and offers one-time project assistance or ongoing support.

About iModules
iModules provides technology solutions and services to help organizations achieve their missions and build meaningful relationships through member engagement and online communication. With more than 600 clients reaching more than 35 million constituents, iModules offers easy-to-use tools for website management, data management, email marketing, event management, online giving, membership management, and social networking. An industry leader since 2002, iModules partners with organizations worldwide to make a difference. For more information, please visit www.imodules.com.

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