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Top 15 Best Practices For Modern Email Marketing Teams

featuring Artificial Intelligence
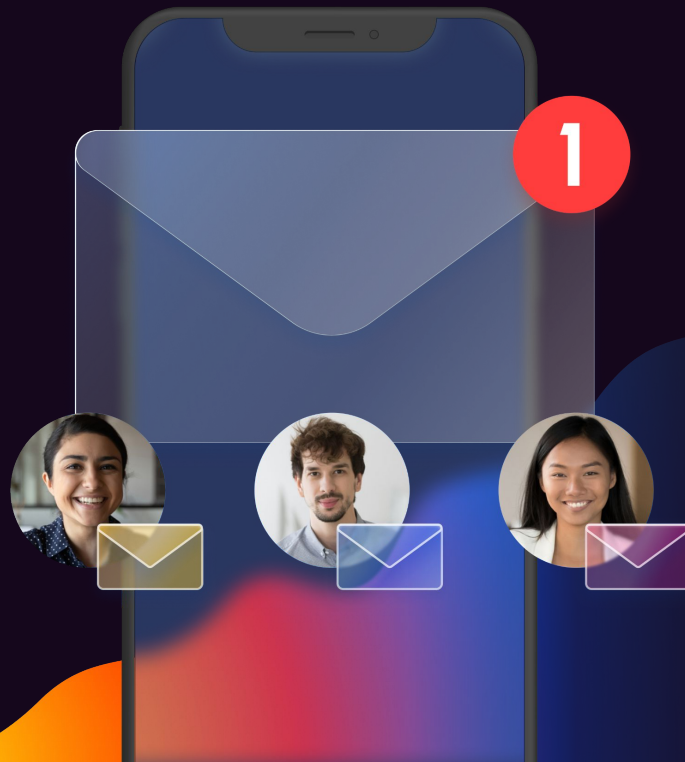
The main goal of any email marketing campaign is building effective communication with brand subscribers, getting the highest engagement possible, and securing a high ROI.

To keep solid metrics, brands may consider a number of emailing strategies. Email marketing teams should blend them in various ways and find the winning combinations to tweak and tailor them to each email campaign. Brands can only build customer loyalty by establishing a strong long-term relationship with each subscriber.

In this whitepaper, you will find a list of the top 15 email marketing best practices powered with machine learning algorithms that we at Inbox Suite rely on, and would like to recommend to all marketers.

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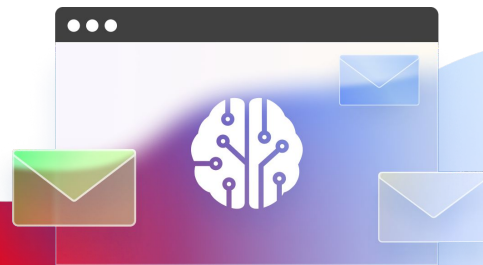
Email marketers no longer need to rely on a labor-intensive daily "test and learn" routine to establish and maintain outstanding communication with subscribers. The development and implementation of Artificial Intelligence changed this routine. The use of Artificial Intelligence in email marketing not only allows marketers to get the best results in open rates, click-through rates, and other standard metrics, but also use customer information to predict the lifetime value of each customer.

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Test it before you send it

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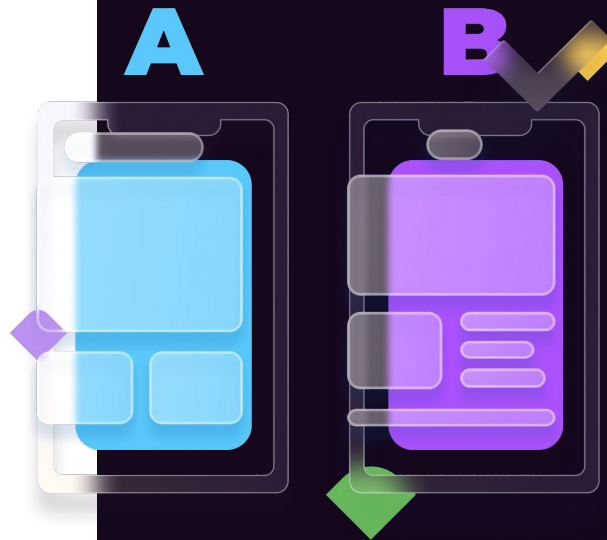
1. Test it before you send it

A/B testing (also called split testing) is a popular strategy that involves comparing two variables of an email message, and determining which of them stimulates better engagement from the target audience.
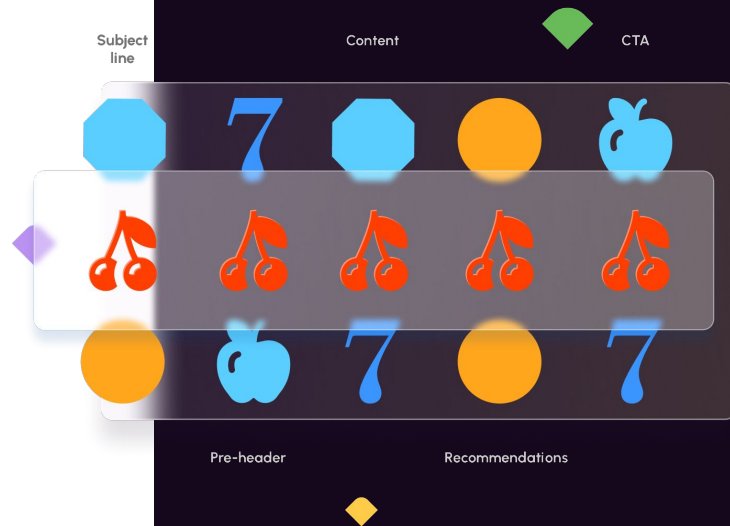
Email marketers can use a number of parameters for their A/B testing. Below you can see several of the most important ones which are likely to bring in significant improvements in the performance of your email campaigns:

- Subject line and preheader
- Sending day and time
- Email copy
- Images in the message body
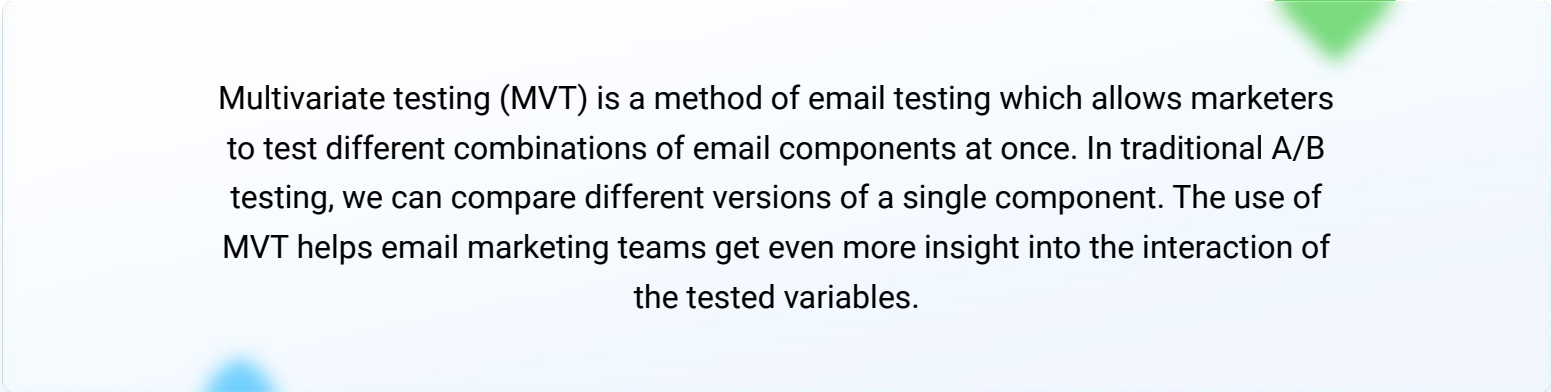- CTA (Call-to-action)

AI-powered email marketing tools allow marketers to get A/B test results quickly and without any manual work. A/B testing can be applied in numerous variations. For instance, to compare a list of subject lines, the AI algorithms can send them to a small group of the email list. Once the results are available, the system decides which subject line (or lines) should be used further.

A step further: Multivariate Testing (MVT)

Subject line

Content

CTA

Pre-header

Recommendations

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Multivariate testing (MVT) is a method of email testing which allows marketers to test different combinations of email components at once. In traditional A/B testing, we can compare different versions of a single component. The use of MVT helps email marketing teams get even more insight into the interaction of the tested variables.
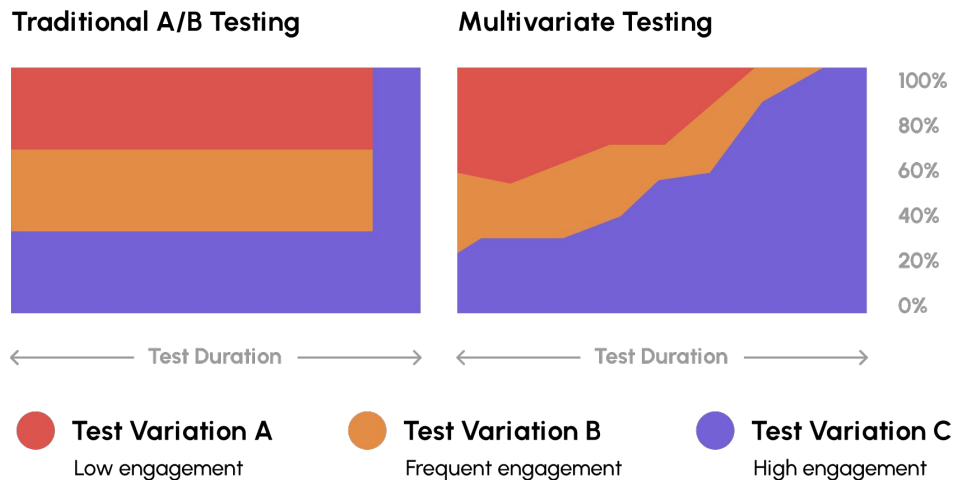
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2. A step further: Multivariate Testing

For instance, using MVT, we can test multiple subject lines, images, CTAs at the same time against different combinations of these elements. On the other hand, with A/B testing, we can only test two subject lines for the same email while all the other elements remain the same.

It is considered a very difficult manual task to set up all the different kinds of emails and estimate the results to make correct conclusions for email marketing managers. AI tools are based on complex mathematical practices, so they can do the same job quickly and without calculation errors.

It's important to keep it on mind that MVT works the best if you have a large enough sample. For smaller databases, we recommend using less components to test at the same time.

A/B Testing vs. Multivariate Testing

Traditional A/B Testing

Multivariate Testing

100%
80%
60%
40%
20%
0%

Test Duration

Test Duration

🔴 **Test Variation A**
Low engagement

🟠 **Test Variation B**
Frequent engagement

🟣 **Test Variation C**
High engagement

In the traditional A/B Testing practices the winning version runs only when the statistical significance is reached, and immediately deploys the winning version to the rest of your subscriber list.

On the other hand, the AI-Powered Multivariate Testing uses machine learning algorithms.It automatically and gradually deploys the winning combination to your subscribers.

By using MVT, the most optimized message combination starts reaching to your subscribers for better engagement which translates to more clicks and revenues for your email marketing program.

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3. Leverage AI-generated subject lines

Subject Line Generation is an email content optimization technique which is relatively easy to implement. Using machine learning algorithms, email marketers can see a significant incremental lift in open rates.

Why is it important to thoroughly test the subject lines? The answer is obvious: it is the pretty wrapping paper that covers your gift, - newsletter, offer etc. What's inside may be worth a million dollars, but who will see its worth if the wrapping is unappealing?

Moreover, it also has to create a sense of urgency – tear it off immediately and see what's inside! It should be personalized – how pleasant it is for a child to get a present wrapped in paper with their favorite cartoon characters!

Machine learning algorithms can sort through thousands of possible subject lines and immediately convert them into actionable insights. Although it may seem to be a great solution and the results of efficiency testing are really impressive, sometimes getting a significantly higher open rate doesn't equal an increase in CTR. Our recommendation is to combine this practice with other strategies to make your marketing funnel more powerful.

# Content optimization through clustering

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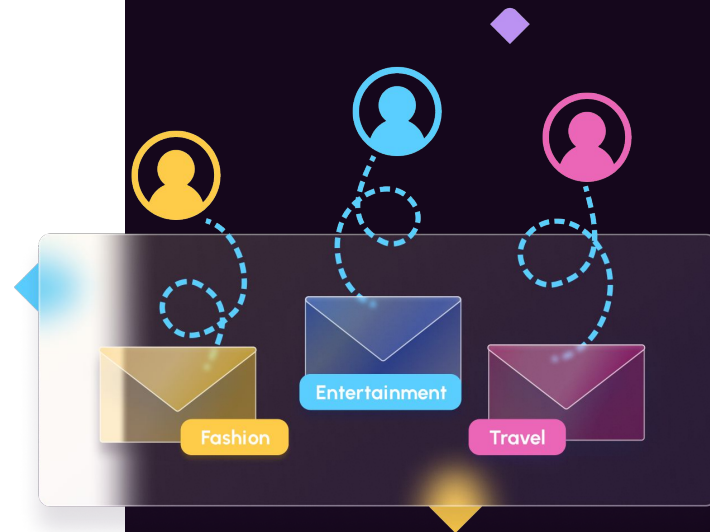
4. Content optimization through clustering

During the acquisition phase, using an AI-powered email solution, brands can divide customers into certain clusters based on their attributes, and create a separate email flow for each cluster.

Usually, brands work with customers with very similar attributes and it is often a matter of a simple segmentation to interact with these subscribers depending on their acquisition source or activity levels. However, customers can be very different and there might be many factors which should be considered during segmentation.

Subscriber interest and preferences, content type, activity level, predicticted behavior are some of the attributes that AI can analyze to create numerous clusters of customers. Respecting the preferences of each customer helps brands build loyalty and increase subscriber engagement.

Find the sweet spot with email sending frequency

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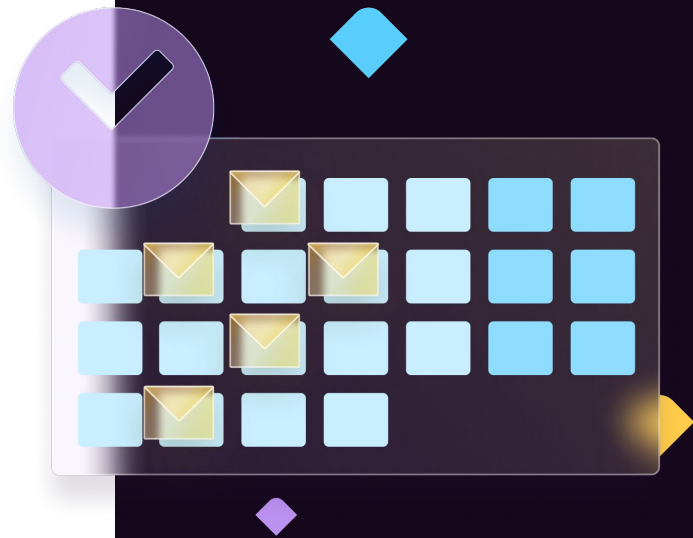
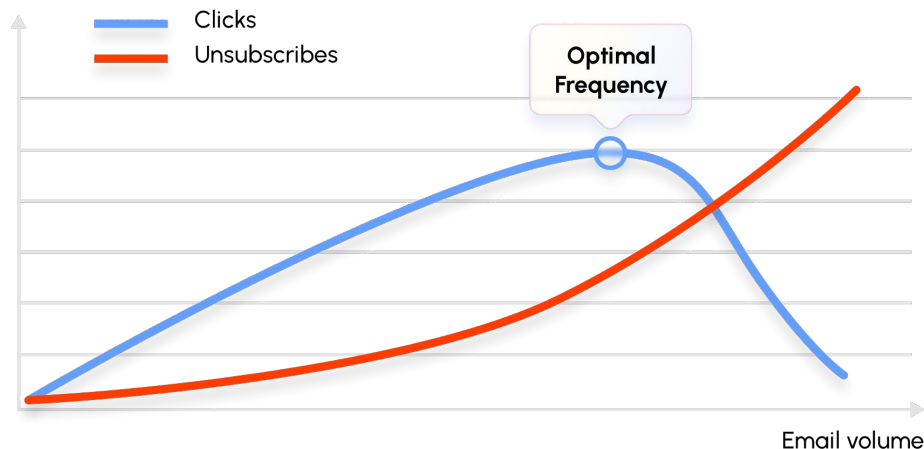## 5. Find the sweet spot with email sending frequency

Finding the optimal frequency of email campaigns is a truly challenging marketing task. Some subscribers may prefer daily messages, while others would go with just a single email per week.

To make your email marketing efforts more effective, you may want to adjust the sending frequency to the preferences of every subscriber. One of the most common practices is to let subscribers choose the desired frequency of content emails. It is usually done via a subscription manager - a separate page on a brand website where subscribers can learn more about the types of emails they may receive, review them, and decide about the frequency they desire.

An AI-powered email solution can choose the right sending frequency for each subscriber taking into account a number of various factors, including their typical activity level, engagement, etc.

Optimized email sending frequency settings show great results measured in the increased number of clicks from subscribers. This practice can also be very helpful to reactivate your fairly inactive subscribers. If a subscriber does not open or read your emails, you should not give up on them – they may just be less interested or have less free time. You can still turn such subscribers into loyal customers if you find the right sending frequency

Email frequency optimization

There is a sweet spot when it comes to email sending frequency.

If you send too many emails, you may risk overwhelming your subscribers. You should pay attention to the unsubscribe rate.

If you send very few emails, then they may forget about your brand.

Machines can find the best sending frequency for each subscriber.

Deliver when your audience wants to engage

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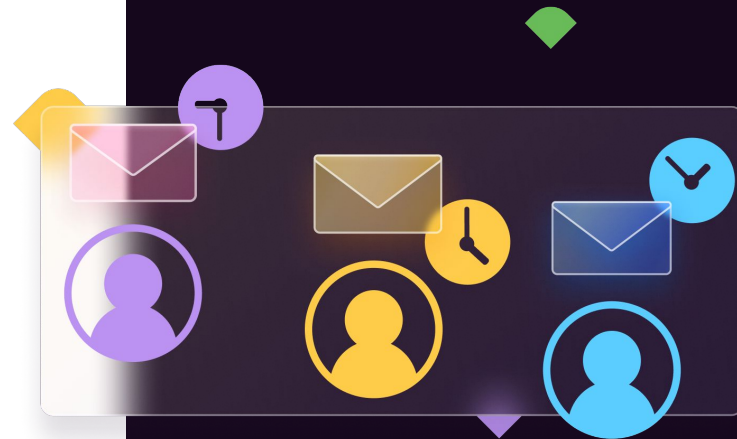
6. Deliver when your audience wants to engage

As humans, it is impossible for us to estimate the best sending time for each subscriber at a scale but machines can do it. Based on past activity, time zone, and habits machine learning algorithms watch how each person on your list interacts with your emails, and then find the best time to send an email with the highest likelihood to get opened. This way, your emails will not be buried in your subscribers' inbox.

Obviously, sending time can significantly affect the open and click rates. However, the day of the week in which you send your emails is just as important as the send time. Some weekdays are busier than others in terms of the volume of messages your users get into their inboxes.

There is a catch here: what is effective for one subscriber can be completely useless for another. ML algorithms can analyze individual users' behavior and pinpoint the time when your messages are more likely to get opened by every single one of them. Such details give a significant boost in conversion.

Engage-time optimization in action

When used effectively, sending emails in a smarter way can actually help you manage your operations better. Let's say you sent out a marketing campaign for your brand, it is very successful, but the capacity of your call center can't handle incoming customer calls at the same time.
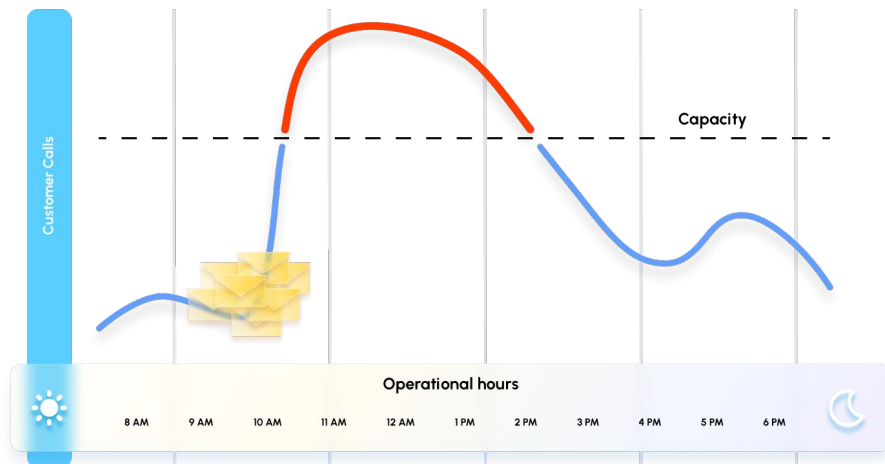
Engage-time optimization delivers your email campaigns in the most optimized time for each subscriber over time so that you can keep your operations running smoothly.

7

Make your loyal customers feel special

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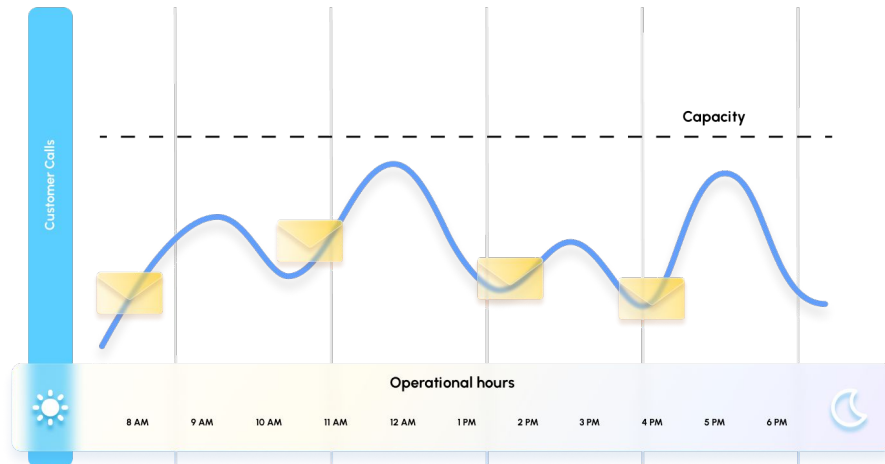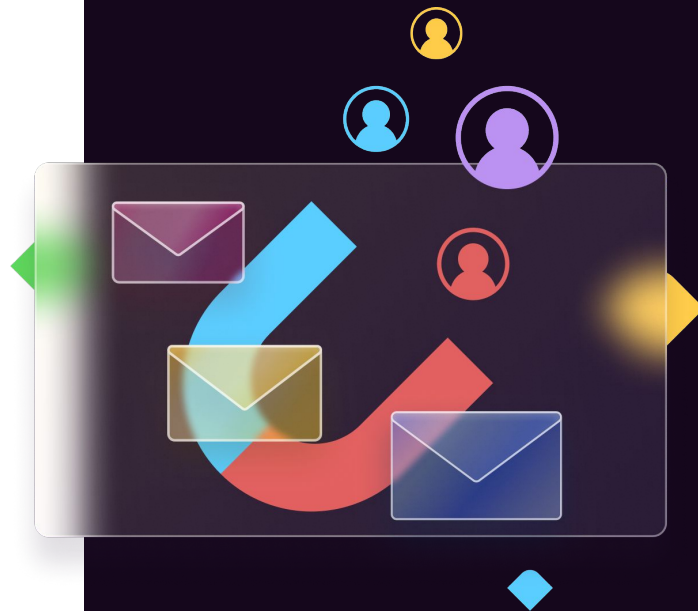
7. Make your loyal customers feel special

Brands appreciate their most active subscribers and they constantly invest in their long term repeating conversion. Subscribers feel that they are VIP clients and enjoy the perks. By sending special offers like free shipping and priority content, brands can help continually increase engagement. AI can help brands build personalized communication with their audience.

Moreover, AI can use customer data to enrich the customer segments and send them additional content. Email campaigns can get more clicks from the previously inactive subscribers using manual email marketing efforts.

Some of the ideas you can apply to encourage VIP customers to engage even more:

- send them email invitations to exclusive events held by your company

- deliver a customized ecard for their birthday to give them additional delight

- create a special email design to emphasize their VIP status

Customer Journey Optimization

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8. Customer Journey Optimization

Brands interact with each customer at a different stage of their journey. It is crucial that we correctly understand what they want, and we should provide them the right experience. However, it is not easy, and it gets even harder as we have more channels and devices on which customers can interact with our brand.

When we acquire new subscribers, it is the most important stage. We should send welcome email series for strong engagement. AI can help stimulate interest by optimizing content and promotions for each subscriber.

As subscribers are active, algorithms can predict their behavior and provide relevant products and promotions. VIP customers may have different motivation levels, so AI helps us read the digital body language of customers.

Inactive subscribers can be sent new and engaging content along with some exclusive promotions and benefits. And finally, AI can predict churn sentiment and we can send win-back campaigns to bring those subscribers to the cycle again.

AI-powered systems can effectively build the customer journey and identify what action to take in each scenario.

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Attract new subscribers with engaging content

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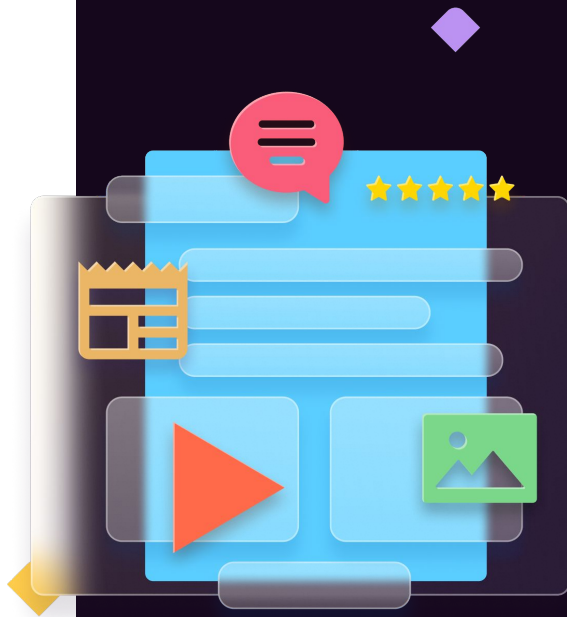
9. Attract new subscribers with engaging content

First impression matters. It's a crucial email marketing task to onboard new subscribers to eventually transform them to loyal customers.

At the very early stages, it is important to show the value of your product and explain how it can fulfill your customers' needs. Depending on how effective this initial communication is, the customers will either leave or stay with you and eventually purchase your product.

AI can help brands define the content to send to your subscribers during the onboarding. Since you may not have enough data to decide what to send, content with maximum click probability for certain users can be chosen to increase engagement. By analyzing all content and customer attributes, ML algorithms can accurately decide the content to be used. It allows creating a personalized communication calendar to get the highest attention from each customer.

AI-powered content recommendations

First impression matters!

Most popular & Trending

New arrivals Recent content

Seasonal content

What's next? Previews

Make use of customer data

Price drop

Back in stock

Repeat purchase

Bought together

Win them back!

Popular & new content

FOMO

Exclusive content/offers

Influencer or staff pick

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10

# Get the most out of your content library

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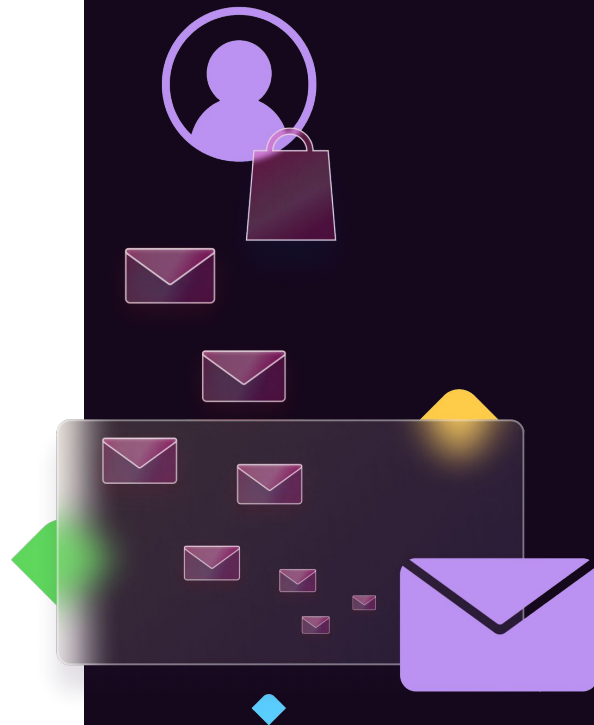
10. Get the most out of your content library

If you do content marketing (and you probably do), you already have a great deal of content for your brand. Marketers often feel discouraged when their audience does not react to some content pieces in the way they expected, and tend to hide them from sight. The good news is that you don't need to do it. Don't hesitate to send the same content more than once to those subscribers who did not react to it immediately. There might be many different reasons why your subscribers don't engage with these content pieces. If you feel the content is worth reading or watching, you may want to give it another try.

Among the content you have, there are timeless pieces which would trigger interest of your subscribers any time - you can send it repeatedly, without worrying about the time of the year and other factors. Automation will help to assign a special status to such content and use it to increase customer engagement.

11

Use Subscription Manager

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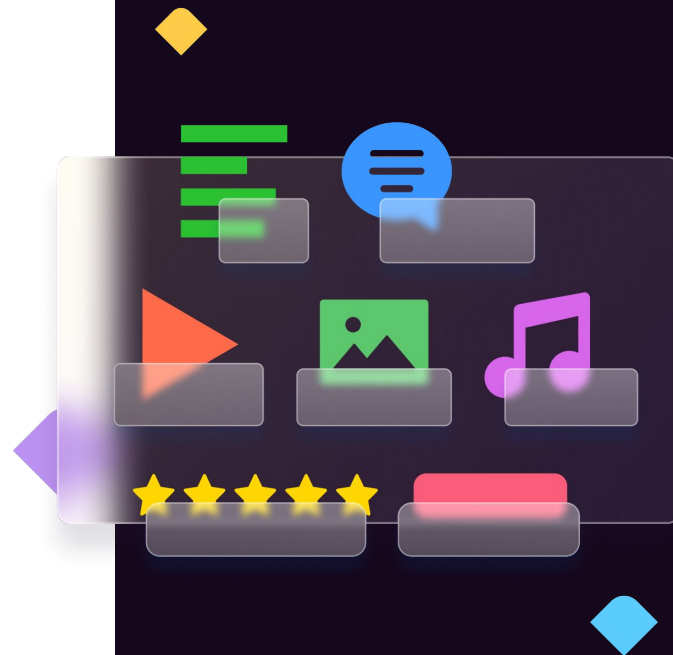
11. Use Subscription Manager

Let your subscribers sit on the driver's seat! Let them do it by creating a subscription manager, where they will select their favourite content types and set email frequency preferences. Even if your email list is responsive and engaging, the subscription manager will enable you to achieve even better results.

By letting your subscribers choose when and which content they would like to receive, you can mash two potatoes with one fork.

First, your email campaigns will become more targeted and relevant as you now know what exactly your audience segments are interested in.

Introduction of a subscription manager is simple and easy but you will be surprised with the results you see. Some subscribers may even request to receive more emails. Moreover, your maintenance costs may substantially drop, and your revenue may grow!

Second, you can reduce your email churn and complaint rates considerably: people eagerly react to the emails they are looking forward to receiving and they no longer have to unsubscribe from all categories to avoid getting irrelevant information.

Switch your content type

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12. Switch your content type

Nothing lasts forever. If your subscribers are not interacting with your content, they're probably losing their interest. You may need to consider to win back subscribers who are about to churn.

One of the most effective tactics is to switch the type of content you send or at least change the tone or template you have. You may want to create catchy, inspiring, and fresh content to revive their interest.

There are a number of algorithms that can help marketers find out which type of content is a good match based on similar customer groups and subscribers' history of interactions.

AI can help you define which content to place in your regular emails to secure higher engagement rates, and provide special offers and exclusive content to spark your subscribers' interest.

13

Send win-back campaigns

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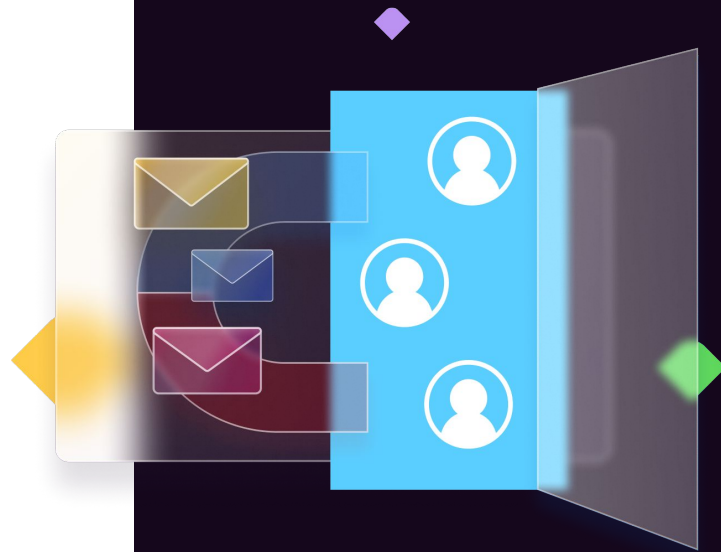
13. Send win-back campaigns

You may see ups and downs in your email list growth from time to time. Some subscribers may not even read your emails but it's too early to give up on them. They are still there, they exist, but you need to restore their interest by offering them something special.

Experts suggest to decrease the frequency of regular emails you send and attract inactive subscribers with special reactivation emails where the content is created specifically to fight fatigue.

Machine learning algorithms can predict the decrease in user activity and react accordingly by adding a special type of content to the communication schedule to improve the situation and win back those subscribers.

AI-powered email tools can send out reactivation emails to achieve desired results without triggering any unwanted consequences such as complaints or unsubscribes.

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# Group your content into series

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14. Group your content into series

It is a common practice to create content on your website and use it in email newsletters as well. Your content is a real treasure but it also requires hard work to distribute and attract traffic.

AI solutions use complex algorithms which analyze all available content. They can define common features of your content pieces and divide them into groups.

The next step is to use content series to build a personalized communication strategy for each subscriber. As you create and upload new message content, AI powered solutions classify its type and add it to one of the existing series or create a new one. Each series will be tested in order to determine the optimal sending frequency.

15

Always Be Helping

Top 15 Best Practices For Modern Email Marketing Teams

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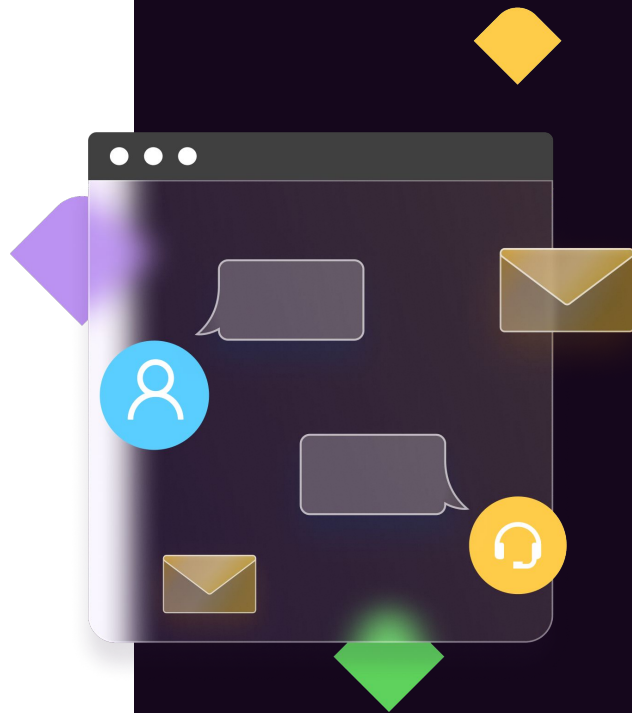
15. Always Be Helping

Before you send your next email campaign, think of your audience as your best friends. Would you send anything without a value or a meaning? Probably not.

People subscribe to your email list because they want to receive some value like special offers, or simply helpful information.

When your emails make sense and solve the problems your audience have, they may turn to you with more interest. As a result of it, they are willing to get your services or products.

Only by offering quality content, expert advice, excellent products, and reliable opinions will you gain your customers' trust and gratitude.

AI can help find the optimal ratio of different email types - content, advertisements, etc. - to build the best communication in your email marketing program. The outdated practices of manually sending offers with power words on the call-to-action text such as "buy now" can only guarantee huge complaint rates and churn.

Email marketing is a continuous process of testing and learning. You may want to keep it in mind to analyze the outcomes of your efforts, combine strategies in various ways to achieve better results, and to apply AI-powered solutions in email marketing, as they can drive a significant increase in the subscriber engagement.

As an email marketing manager, you may consider AI solutions to do this job better and faster than anyone in your team to get more engagement and revenue from your subscribers.

Inbox Suite pioneers artificial intelligence adoption among marketing teams across the globe and provides free consultation sessions to modern email marketers.

Get started working with AI!

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Want to find out more and increase your email revenues?

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