INFLUX | MD
SALES AND MARKETING SOFTWARE

MEDICAL PRACTICE GUIDE to EMAIL MARKETING

Winning New Patients and Getting Referrals with Email Marketing

01: E Introduction to Email Marketing

Email marketing remains one of the cornerstones of medical practice marketing. When carefully executed, email remains the highest ROI generating channel available. For the past ten years, email marketing leads all other marketing channels with an ROI of $38 for every $1 spent.

Despite the heavy marketing investment many practices make in social media, email marketing lead acquisition is forty times more effective than both Facebook and Twitter combined.

With such a dominant position in online marketing, why is it that email marketing is given so little attention among medical marketing teams? Part of the reason is that familiarity with email leads us to underestimate its potential as a serious marketing channel. For this reason, team members responsible for email communication are often unskilled in creating and executing email marketing strategies.

This guide changes that. It explains best practices in medical marketing and provides a foundation on which to build an email marketing strategy of your own.

Best of luck.

Nic Nevin
Solution Architect
Influx MD Sales and Marketing software
Influxmd.com

'DESPITE THE HEAVY MARKETING INVESTMENT MANY PRACTICES MAKE IN SOCIAL MEDIA, EMAIL MARKETING LEAD ACQUISITION IS FORTY-TIMES MORE EFFECTIVE THAN BOTH FACEBOOK AND TWITTER COMBINED.'

SOURCE: MCKINSEY

Setting Expectations

Medical email marketing is a numbers game. No matter how compelling your message, how useful your offer, or how excited you are about the news you are sharing more than two-thirds of the people you send to will ignore you completely.

In healthcare, a top open rate (number of people opening your email) for small to medium medical practices is 22.43%. Hospitals do slightly better at an average 26.1% (source: IBM)

Click through rates (number of people clicking a link in your email) for smaller practices is 2.42% and for hospitals 12.2%.

We'll look at factors that explain the differences especially in click-through rate when we discuss writing email copy, but for now, the important point about these metrics is that only a very small number of people you send an email to will engage with you in a meaningful way.

Does this low response mean email is not a worthwhile marketing channel? No. The response and engagement metrics from email are still higher than most other channels including search marketing (3.88%) and banner advertising (0.24%) at a much lower cost.

To increase the effectiveness of your medical email marketing, focus on list size and quality.The higher quality and larger your list the more engagement and sales you will make.

'ONLY 23% OF SALES EMAILS ARE OPENED'

SOURCE: DMA

Creating a Power List

Your list is the muscle behind your medical email marketing strategy. It drives action from your emails, but it has to be healthy to be effective. Logic says that a larger list means more potential for leads and sales. Unfortunately, this is not true. Sending emails to disengaged or uninterested recipients damages your email reputation and artificially deflates your email marketing metrics.

1.Segment from the start

Depending on where the email recipient is in their buyer's journey, they will respond differently to the messages that you send. Recognize this by setting your lists to accommodate segmenting or dividing into groups with similar interests. Most email systems support segmenting so add your emails with at least some information that you can use to segment later.

'57% OF EMAIL RECIPIENTS CONSIDER A MESSAGE TO BE SPAM IF IT ISN'T RELEVANT TO THEIR NEEDS, EVEN WHEN THEY KNOW THE VENDOR WELL.'

SOURCE: SCRIPTED

'17% OF AMERICANS CREATE A NEW EMAIL ADDRESS EVERY SIX MONTHS.'

SOURCE: CONVINCE AND CONVERT

2.Make an offer

People are more likely to part with their email address if they get something of value in return. Make an offer of something they can only get through your email offers such as an educational resource or access to a subscriber-only section of your website.

3.Use strong Web Forms

Don't rely on a simple newsletter sign up form to generate email subscribers. Promise people something useful and offer a testimonial of how useful others have found it. If you have an impressive number of subscribers, consider a "join the 10,000 other health-conscious people who receive our emails" message.

4.Assure privacy

Always add a privacy statement to your sign up forms and follow every rule you describe.

5.Place your form front and center

Once you have a sign-up form with a compelling offer, don't hide it at the bottom of your page. Place it prominently on the home page of your website or use smart bars or inline popups.

6.Take it offline

Make it a policy to get email addresses from everyone who calls your practice so you can send something of value to them. Collect names and emails at health fairs and community talks.

7.Move Slowly

Building a useful list takes time and just a little effort. Avoid any temptation to speed up the process by purchasing a list or using email addresses for people who have not permitted you to contact them. Third-party lists result in damage to your IP reputation and harm your future marketing efforts.

Super-Charging Your List

The value of an email list increases with time and some tough-love. Despite reluctance to do so, thinning out unengaged emails improves the performance of the list and its effectiveness in generating revenue.

1.Double Opt-In.
Consider a sign-up process that requires your subscribers to confirm their subscription before you send emails. While this may benefit the subscriber, it will also improve your email deliverability and reduce the amount spam complaints you receive.

2.Inactivity
Inactive emails are of no value to your business. If a subscriber has not engaged with you in two years, ask them if they still want to receive your emails. If they respond; fine. If they don't; delete them.

3.Bad Emails
Monitor bounce rates on your email delivery metrics. Hard bounces mean the email address it bad so delete it if the problem is not obvious. Soft bounces occur when an email address is suspended or full. Establish a rule of deleting an email address after a certain number of soft bounces.

4.Deliverability
Always monitor deliverability rates to the main ISPs like Gmail, Yahoo, Outlook, etc. Poor list hygiene can result in difficulty delivering to some addresses so spend extra time deleting inactive and bad emails from the ISPs with which you are having difficulty.

'77% OF PEOPLE PREFER TO GET PERMISSION-BASED PROMOTIONAL MESSAGES VIA EMAIL (VERSUS DIRECT MAIL, TEXT, PHONE, OR SOCIAL MEDIA).'

SOURCE: EXACT TARGET

'69% OF EMAIL RECIPIENTS REPORT EMAIL AS SPAM BASED SOLELY ON THE SUBJECT LINE.'

SOURCE: CONVINCE AND CONVERT

Spammer's Guide

Whether you gain the reputation as a spammer accidentally or intentionally, it is extremely difficult to recover from the damage it does to your email reputation. Here are some things you can do to stay out of spam blacklists.

1.Ask Permission

Always ask permission before sending emails to people with whom you do not have a business relationship. Do not infer that a request for information about your program is the same as agreeing to receive all of your promotional emails. It isn't.

2.Be Relevant

Promoting a program to people already enrolled or a gender-specific service to the opposite gender are examples of irrelevant emails or spam. Equally irrelevant is sending emails about new staff in the back office or someone who had a baby. Keep in mind that 70% of email readers open emails from a brand or company in search of a deal, discount, or coupon, not to get your local news.

3.Give them a way out

The ability to unsubscribe from your mailing list with a single action is a legal requirement under the CAN-SPAM act. There is no point sending emails to people who do not want them. Consider an options page where people can change email frequency or adjust content as an alternative to opting out completely.

'SEGMENTED AND TARGETED EMAILS GENERATE 58% OF ALL EMAIL REVENUE.'

SOURCE: DMA

4.Be Transparent

Including your contact information to your email is also a legal requirement. Make it easy to reach you if subscribers want to.

5.Avoid Spam Words

If you are in the weight management business, you have a problem. Spam filters trigger on certain keywords and those related to sex, and weight loss are at the top of the list. Keep a list of spam words and avoid using them in the subject line or body copy of your emails.

6.Keep It Simple

No large images, big fonts (over 16 px) or bold colors like red in your emails. These are all indicators of spam and may result in blacklisting of your address.

02: M

the Medical Practice Guide to Email Marketing

Relevance

Relevant emails drive revenue. They have higher open rates, higher click-through rates and generate a better impression of your medical practice. To make an email relevant to a subscriber, it should be segmented and personalized. Segmenting is dividing your list into categories of subscribers with similar interests. Personalization means at the very least including a person's name in the email and even better, other personal information that gives the email a personal touch.

To create segmented and personalized emails, you need data. You need to know who they are and how they interact with your business. To achieve this without an immense amount of work, automated marketing systems such as Influx MD are needed to capture and even solicit the profile data used to select email content and promotions.

'OVER 75% OF EMAIL REVENUE IS GENERATED BY TRIGGERED CAMPAIGNS, RATHER THAN ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL CAMPAIGNS.
AUTOMATED EMAIL CAMPAIGNS ACCOUNT FOR 21% OF EMAIL MARKETING REVENUE.'

SOURCE: DMA

'A MESSAGE IS 5X MORE LIKELY TO BE SEEN IN EMAIL THAN VIA FACEBOOK.'

SOURCE: RADICATI

Style

Emails come in two main flavors. HTML and text. HTML includes different fonts, colors, buttons and compelling images. Nearly two-thirds of respondents in a 2014 survey reported they prefer to receive HTML emails with images. However, the reality is that plain text emails consistently perform better than HTML emails in both open rates and click-through rates.

So which one should you use? We recommend mixing it up to use a combination of both styles based on the purpose of email you are sending.

Plain Text

- Use plain text until you have built some history of engagement with the lead.
- Gathering user feedback often works better with plain text.
- Transactional Emails -those that deliver information or require an action from the recipient such as scheduling or reminders.
- Email from specific agent or team member

HTML Email

- Promotion of product or service
- Special occasion
- Medical education requiring graphics

75% OF GMAIL'S 900M USERS ACCESS THEIR ACCOUNTS VIA MOBILE DEVICES.'

SOURCE: TECHCRUNCH

Transactional Emails

Transactional emails are business related emails such as an appointment confirmation or reminder. Because leads expect transactional emails, they are between 4 and eight times more likely to be opened than marketing emails (source: Pardot).

Sending transactional emails occurs at specific times during a buyer's journey, so the type of additional content that may encourage engagement from the recipient is known.

Adding promotional text to transactional emails is a strong email marketing tactic that is likely to yield positive results.

'TRANSACTIONAL EMAILS HAVE 8X MORE OPENS AND CLICKS THAN ANY OTHER TYPE OF EMAIL AND CAN GENERATE 6X MORE REVENUE.'

SOURCE: EXPERIAN

Cadence

Email timing and frequency is one of the biggest challenges we face as medical email marketers.Too few and you lose the momentum for the campaign.Too many and the lead becomes frustrated and refuses your mail.

The decisions to make when planning a campaign cadence are:

- When to begin
- How many emails to send
- How often to send the emails

Each campaign and its goals are different, so these decisions are made specific to the campaign. In general, however, there are some loose rules to consider for each campaign.

1. One email is never enough.
Regardless of the simplicity of your announcement, plan for multiple emails in a campaign.

2. Overestimate by 25%
Whatever number of emails you decide to have in your campaign, add another 25%. Better to err on the side of too many than too few.

3. Don't fear the unsubscribe button
If your segmenting and targeting is thoughtful, unsubscribe requests simply eliminate people who are not appropriate for your campaigns. People who recognize the value in what you are offering will stay.

'OPEN RATE IS HIGHEST WHEN COMPANIES SEND TWO EMAILS PER MONTH.'

SOURCE:DATABASE MARKETING INSTITUTE

4. Taper your approach

Start your campaigns with more frequent emails and reduce the cadence over time. Show excitement in the early stages by sending two or three emails in a week and then reduce to once a week and then one every two weeks if there is no response

5. Respond appropriately to engagement

If you receive a response to your campaign, respond quickly and appropriately. Don't continue to send the campaign to people who have already engaged with you. If you have made an offer as part of the campaign, deliver quickly and then change the email campaign to encourage them to redeem the offer.

6. Chain campaigns together

When you end one campaign, immediately roll into another one after a short breathing space. Email marketing is an ongoing strategy, not one and done.

7. Understand the Metrics

Measure results beyond just open rates and clicks. Always use engagement as the measure of the success of a campaign.These measures necessitate using a system that records engagement accurately.

'92% OF ONLINE ADULTS USE EMAIL, WITH 61% USING IT ON AN AVERAGE DAY.'

SOURCE: PEW RESEARCH

The From Name

The from name tells the subscriber who is sending the email. Recipients will decide based on the from name whether or not to open the email so providing a recognizable name is essential.

1.Avoid free emails
A recognizable email usually means your business email and never means a free account on Yahoo, Hotmail, or Gmail.

2. Don't use your personal email
It is not a good idea to send transactional, marketing, and personal emails from the same account. Reserve your personal email for people you know well and not for business activities.

3. Use A recognizable name
The **from name** is customizable and often appears in place of the **from address** in subscriber emails. Make sure people can easily recognize the from name.

4. Use an active email
People can and will respond to your emails, so it is important to monitor the mailbox frequently. If you are asking for a response in your call to action, it is good manners to respond promptly.

5. Don't use a No-Reply address
Not only is it frustrating to users who may want to engage with you, it can damage your future delivery with Internet Service Providers (ISPs).

The Subject Line

A full one-third of people decide if an email is worth opening based solely on the email's subject line. It's worth spending a little time crafting a perfect subject line to increase your open rates.

1.Short is best

Subject lines can display roughly 50 characters or less than ten words. However, almost half of your emails get opened on mobile devices first. On a mobile phone, only four to six words are visible in the subject line. Thirty or fewer characters result in an above average open rate.

2.Don't say newsletter

Use the word newsletter in your subject and you'll see a 20% drop in open rates.

3. Make it Personal

Adding a person's name into the subject line lifts the open rate 22%. If your system supports enhanced personalization, use it. The more snippets of relevant information you can use the greater your success will be.

4.Check your personalization is working

When people see hello User Name instead of Hello Bob, you can guarantee your email is DOA.

5.Make it accurate

Misleading subject lines annoy people so keep your subject accurate, too the point, and truthful.

'EMAILS WITH PERSONALIZED SUBJECT LINES ARE 26% MORE LIKELY TO BE OPENED.'

SOURCE: CAMPAIGN MONITOR

Writing Email Copy

Rule #1: it's not about you.

The number one rule in email marketing that applies to every aspect of the email is; It's about them not you. The only opinion that matters belongs to the people you are marketing to, so forget what you want to tell them and learn what they want to know. No matter how good your product or service, if the people on your mailing list don't care, then your marketing can't succeed.

Rule #2: Expand your subject line

Consider the subject line is your promise of what's to come. Now it is time to fulfill the promise. This double check ensures your subject is on point and your body copy follows suit. Keeping the subject and the body text closely related creates trust and increases future open rates.

Rule #3: Keep it Short

Short emails work better than long newsletter style tomes. Most of your emails should have one message only, and the message should be summed up in a couple of sentences. If it is not important enough to send as a stand-alone message, it is not important enough to send. If there is more information available for people who want it, provide a link.

'40% OF EMAILS ARE OPENED ON MOBILE FIRST – WHERE THE AVERAGE MOBILE SCREEN CAN ONLY FIT 4-7 WORDS MAX.'

SOURCE: CONTACT MONKEY

'EMAILS THAT ARE RELEVANT TO THE RECIPIENT DRIVE 18 TIMES MORE REVENUE THAN GENERAL BROADCAST EMAILS.'

SOURCE: MAILIGEN

Rule #4: Keep it organized

Prioritize the email so that the most important information is at the top. Use headers and subheaders leading to bullet points and short sentences arranged in short paragraphs if you have to. Assume nobody reads anymore so your entire email has to suit the scanner mentality that we have all adopted.

Rule #5: Include a call to action

Your call to action is the point of your email so don't bury like an afterthought at the end of the email. Put a clear and concise call to action above the fold and make it simple, compelling, and actionable right now.

Rule #6: Be personal

Write in the third person so that the reader knows that you know it is all about them. Use personalization where it makes sense. If you have the technology to go beyond the simple name tag merge and incorporate past activities or other personal information. The goal is to make each reader think that you wrote the email just for them.

Rule #7: Use technology to stay relevant

You have seconds to establish that your email is worth the recipients time to open and browse. When you are sending the same email in a blast to the entire email list, it is impossible to be relevant to everyone. That is where technology like Influx's Smart Mail comes into play. Segmenting lists to send an email relevant to them wherever they are in the buyer's journey is the only way to keep them opening and engaging in your email marketing.

'RECIPIENTS DECIDE WHETHER YOUR EMAILS ARE ATTENTION-WORTHY IN 0 TO 3 SECONDS'

**SOURCE: US CONSUMER DEVICE PREFERENCE REPORT**

Rule #7: Be polite

Consider each email open a gift. The subscriber is offering you a chance to make some money from them, so the least you can do is be polite. Don't be pushy, or loud, or obnoxious. Just tell them what you want them to know about the **BENEFITS** of your product or service, and then let them decide if it is the right choice.

Rule # 8: Mobile Matters

Mobile devices are used to open emails 75% of the time. Savvy email marketers ensure that all emails and landing pages are responsive. HTML formatting for email is a skill that most web developers do not have.

Rule #9: Remember, it's not about you.
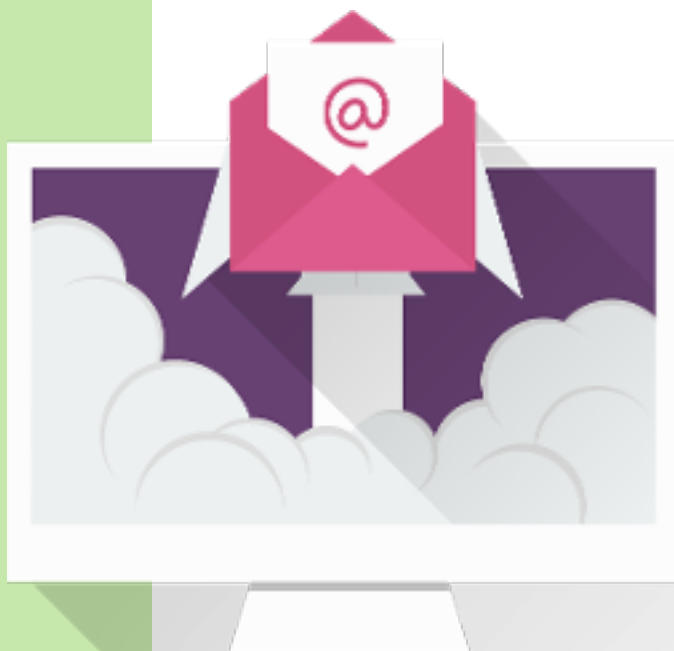
03: How Influx Can Help

Influx MD is a sales and marketing software designed to assist medical practices to increase revenue and decrease costs through workflow automation.

Influx's integrated smart mail module enables you to use advanced email marketing to promote your medical practice with less effort and greater power than standard email marketing systems.

Influx uses data collected from a lead management workflow to hyper-segment email lists and personalize to the level of individual subscribers.

Using content tracking, page visits, video views and other engagement metrics along with surveys, Influx develops detailed profiles of lead interests. When matched with the position of the lead in the intake workflow, Influx builds each email it sends specifically for the recipient, achieving the highest level of relevance possible.

If you are an Influx user, call today to learn how to leverage your data for higher conversion rates.

Not yet using Influx MD?

Get started today and experience the increased revenue that marketing automation can achieve.

Call Today 1.904.900.5803

INFLUX | MD

SALES AND MARKETING SOFTWARE

2018

INFLUX | MD

SALES AND MARKETING SOFTWARE

1551 1st St S. #203

Jacksonville Beach, FL 32250

904.900.5803

www.influxmd.com