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for a massive spelling mistake to slip through your own once-over and look embarrassing in front of your entire customer base.

14 DON'T BE WORDY While it can be tempting to unleash your vocabulary and give the Oxford Dictionary gathering dust on the shelf a good workout, being concise is the order of the day in email marketing.

According to Chris Dale, managing director at Marketing HQ, this means making sure the copy is simple and jargon free. He advises making sure the message is getting through very quickly and to hit them with the offer early.

15 CLARIFY YOUR CALL-TO-ACTION

It's no good hiding what you want your customers to do – they are unlikely to put the effort into finding it. By the same token, it's going to be disastrous if your readers have to scroll through long, intrusive, calls-to-action.

“Don't wait until the end of the email to communicate exactly what it is you want them to do. Be very clear with what you are actually offering them and make it clear how you want them to contact you,” adds Dale.

16 BRANDING

Appearance is everything when it comes to your shopfront or website, and your email marketing is no different. It's common sense that you want your

customers to know the material comes from you and for it to be branded.

“You need to make sure that the look and feel is consistent with your website design, so that people can see that it's coming from the business,” says Dale.

17 SEGMENT YOUR LIST

The simplest way to manage your list of email addresses is to bang it into one big database and then blast everyone inside it.

In reality this isn't actually best practice, as there is far more to be gained by splitting your list up into groups and tailoring the message slightly for each one.

By segmenting your database in such a way, you are able to send a slightly altered version of your newsletter or offer to different demographics. This might be by location, age, or one for customers and another for partners.

18 DON'T BE DODGY

This is another common sense item, but can often be a trap many small businesses will fall into. As tempting as it is to capture email addresses through your website in any way possible, it's in your best interest to only send information to those that opt-in to do so.

The main reason behind this is that people will resent your branded material – and your business in general – if they start receiving unsolicited information from you on a regular basis.

19 MAKE A PROMISE

It seems straightforward, but it's one of the most overlooked elements of an email marketing campaign.

The promise you give when someone checks the little box to say they want to receive your email newsletter or other marketing material is an important one.

“Many small businesses make the mistake of not making a promise at the opt-in. They just say ‘here, register for our updates’,” says Dale.

20 USE CLEAN AND PUNCHY HEADLINES

This is almost an extension of not being wordy, but headlines are so important they deserve extra attention. The difference between someone opening your email, marking it as ‘read’, and moving on can be a couple of words. The less time that is required for someone to read your headline, the more likely they are to become interested and open it – within reason.

Naturally this doesn't mean you should start having one-word subject lines, but if you can say something in nine words, often you can say it far more effectively in four or five. ■

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