



# EMAIL MARKETING BEST PRACTICES

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Results matter. Marketers are always looking for ways to improve performance on marketing campaigns. [Use these four simple strategies to help make your Email Marketing more engaging and impactful:](#)

## 01 ANTICIPATE INTENT AND PINPOINT YOUR IDEAL AUDIENCE

## 02 SPARK ACTION WITH RELEVANT AND ENGAGING CONTENT

## 03 OPTIMIZE RESULTS WITH BEST-IN-CLASS DEPLOYMENT STRATEGIES

## 04 MEASURE SUCCESS AND ROI

Note: Although many of these tips are applicable across both the Basic and Personalized Email offerings, those specific to Personalized Email (the offering that delivers greater relevancy to each individual) will be noted with an asterisk. Some limitations may apply.

# 01 ANTICIPATE INTENT AND PINPOINT YOUR IDEAL AUDIENCE

Valassis Email Marketing is designed to attract new shoppers for your retailer or brand. By using predictive intelligence from the Valassis Consumer Graph™, you can uncover your best prospects and breakthrough in a personalized way.

## How to Identify Ideal Prospects for Your Email Campaign

### Segment Based on Your Best Customers:

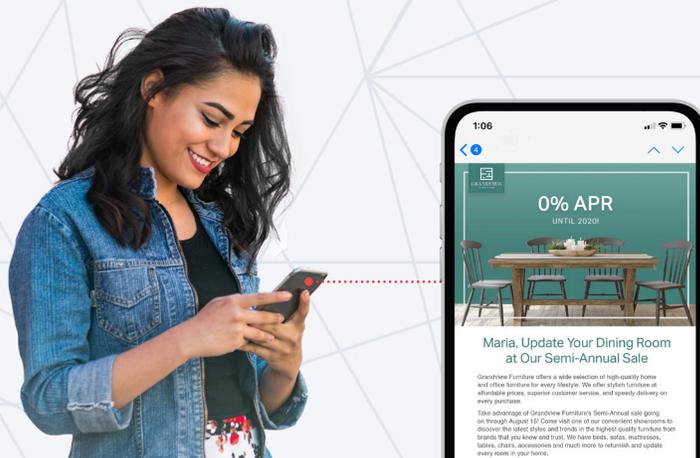
Start by understanding your best existing customers to define characteristics of the likeliest buyers of your product or service.

- Using the Valassis Consumer Graph, we'll identify an audience that represents your best customers based on:



**Only Engage New Customers:** Suppress your existing customers and unsubscribe lists to ensure you are truly reaching new, prospective customers.

**Match Creative to Audience:** Your message, content, and images should align with your audience. If you are targeting several audience segments with unique traits, consider using Personalized Email in order to ensure that your images and content speak directly to each recipient.



**Avoid Mass Mailings:** Internet Service Providers (ISPs) are increasingly choosy over which message gets to land in the inbox. If a message does not have universal appeal, but is deployed to an untargeted, mass audience, there will be an increase in opt-outs, complaints, and overall deletes. These actions will have a negative impact on an advertiser's sending reputation, which can be difficult and costly to overcome.

# 02 SPARK ACTION WITH RELEVANT AND ENGAGING CONTENT

Today's modern consumers are more likely to engage and respond to personalized, relevant marketing messages. Follow these simple tips to craft engaging email campaigns that target specific audiences with dynamic content personalized for each recipient.

**91%** of consumers are more likely to shop with brands who provide relevant offers and recommendations<sup>1</sup>

**72%** of consumers only engage with marketing messages tailored to their interests<sup>2</sup>

## How to Deploy Dynamically Personalized Emails\*

### Audience Segmentation

Define up to 5 audience segments for prospective customers.

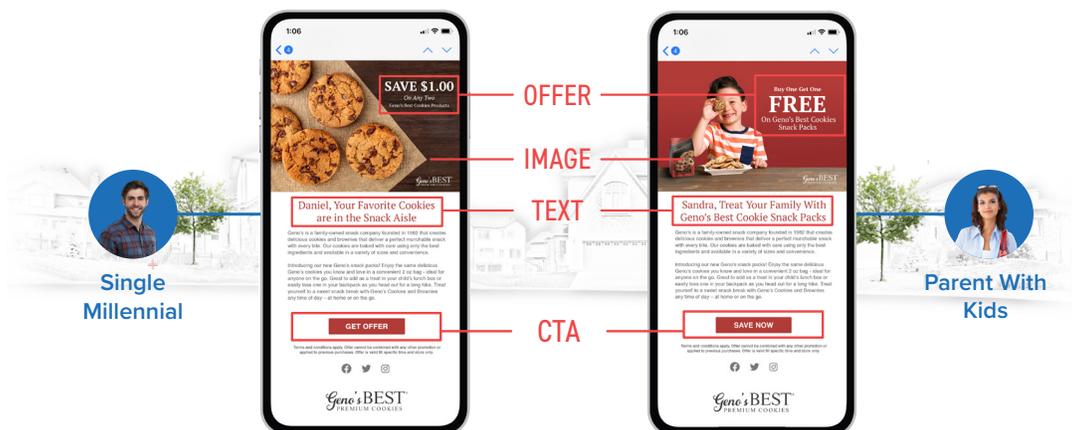
#### Location

- If you're aiming for a specific audience within a particular city or area, use location as a variable for dynamic content. This way, you can leverage images and content that speak to your consumers' hometown environment. You can also localize dynamically via text in your subject line to boost open rate.

#### Demographics

- If you're promoting products specific to gender, use this as another targeting variable with specified images for each. Think about whether your images and language should relate to singles or families or children.
- Age is another powerful consideration for segmenting and tailoring content.

Use location and demographics as dynamic triggers to personalize offers, images, text, and call-to-action (CTA) to each audience segment.



1 Accenture Interactive, 2018 Personalization Pulse Check;  
2 SmarterHQ, "Privacy and Personalization";

When planning your email creative, consider these tactics to increase relevance, influence consumers to act, and drive response.

## How to Design Emails for Visual Appeal

- From Line:** Use your brand name only with no extra words. This provides recipients with clear distinction of who the message is really from.
- Subject Line:** Use 49 characters or less to ensure entire message is informative, short, and recognizable.
- Logos:** Feature your brand logo in the email body content to ensure a branded experience.
- Headers & Pre-Headers:** Use of message headers is recommended. For mobile users, consider using a “pre-header” to greet the user with a short email summary and CTA.
- Fonts:** Use universally web-safe fonts (Arial, Verdana, Tahoma or Times New Roman), and minimize the number of fonts, sizes, and colors for a more efficient look and design that’s consistent across all devices. Body copy font size should be no less than 12 pixels.
- Images:** Minimize graphics and images to logos, photos of products, or situational photos that support the message and resonate with the target audience.
- Video / GIFs:** While playable video cannot be embedded in an email, animated GIFs provide a similar experience for short loops and animations.
- Message Length:** Keep the message short and to the point (one page maximum in length). Additional details of a message should be provided on a linked web page.
- Image-to-Text Ratio:** The higher the ratio of image-to-text area in an email, the higher the SPAM score. We recommend no more than 1/3 of the design area be images or graphics and the rest to be formatted text.
- Call-to-Action:** The most effective CTA “gives your target a reason to act” while creating a sense of urgency, and ideally should be placed in the upper portion of your email body content. CTA hyperlinks can also be used in multiple locations for additional ways to drive customers to take action and measure results by click-throughs.
- Key Selling Points:** Use bullet points to illustrate the key selling points, which will tell the user why they should respond to the CTA.
- Landing Page:** Don’t forget to evaluate the landing page for effectiveness. The landing page should mimic the offer highlighted in the email and have the same overall look and feel.

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# How to Increase User Engagement and Response

## Personalize Content\*

- Include name or location in subject line and body of email to grab immediate attention and persuade recipients to read your email.
- Increase relevance by aligning images and offers to audience interests, buying habits, demographics, and preferences.

## Create a Sense of Urgency in the Subject Line

- Entice readers to open the email by creating a sense of urgency with an offer end date. For example, “30% Off Sale Ends Tomorrow.”

## Incentivize a Response

- Try using a relevant offer such as free shipping, discounts, and coupons.

## Implement Social Media Marketing

- Promote integration with social communities like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Pinterest within the email message. This provides a secondary means for end users to respond and empowers users to choose how they wish to communicate in the future.

## Implement “Sharing” Functions

- Maximize ROI and make it easy for users to share some information/offers with their friends and colleagues by inserting a “Share this with a friend” link within the message.



What if you could choose from layout options known to drive opens and clicks? Check out the layouts below — developed from analyzing performance on hundreds of real-world email campaigns. They're designed to dynamically render on both desktop and mobile devices for optimal user experience.

## Take the Guesswork Out of Email Development

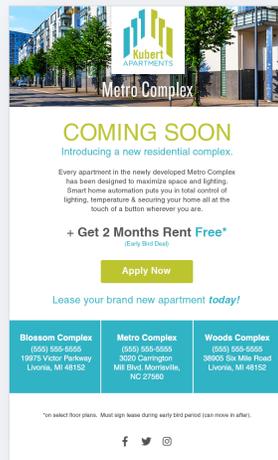
### Valassis Performance Layouts

- Built from the ground up to support dynamic, personalized content\* and responsive design for highest engagement
- Faster turn time from asset collection to deployment
- Compatible with light and dark mode settings for optimal user experience
- Available for both Basic and Personalized Email

Standard:



Plus:



Advanced:



Dark Mode:



## Choosing the Best Layout for Your Campaign

### Standard: Amplify Basic Offers and Promotions

- Communicate a simple message with minimal clutter
- Focus on a single point of engagement or click through

### Plus: Drive Awareness of Nearby Locations and Offers

- Promote multiple store locations near the recipient
- Deliver special offers for select audiences\*

### Advanced: Drive Awareness and Trial of Products or Multiple Offers

- Deliver special promotions to specific audiences\*
- Promote a sale or multiple sets of featured products
- Present multiple images in their email content
- Distribute multiple personalized offers\*

# 03 OPTIMIZE RESULTS WITH BEST-IN-CLASS DEPLOYMENT STRATEGIES

Knowing what worked and why creates actionable insight to optimize future campaigns and drive greater growth.

## How To Optimize Email Deployment

### Test, Don't Just Hope It Works

Utilize various testing strategies to ensure the highest performance for email campaigns.†

- **Subject Line Testing:** Understand what captures consumer attention by performing a subject line audit, which will raise any flags if a particular subject line is used. For example: Offer versus urgency.



- **Creative Testing:** Learn which creative drives higher response. For example: CTA button text and location, or balance of text and images.

### Use a Trusted Partner for Email Deliverability

Deploy industry-leading data cleansing and on-demand email verification to ensure your message reaches the inbox.

- **Industry-Leading Data Cleansing:** Confirms validity, deliverability, and risk profile of email addresses in real time
- **On-Demand Email Verification:** Confirms a record is deliverable by analyzing top-level domains and identifying invalid emails
- **Resend to Openers:** Reinforces your message with consumers who engaged to drive conversion

# 04 MEASURE SUCCESS AND ROI

Knowing how consumers engaged and why creates actionable insights to drive future campaign success.

## How To Measure Campaign Performance

### Understand Performance by Geography, Retailer, Offer, and Creative†

- Arrange to have metrics broken out by store, market, or retail banner to understand engagement at a local level.
- Analyze metrics by creative variant to understand which offers and content resonated best with the target audience.

### Match Email Recipients to Sales Data†

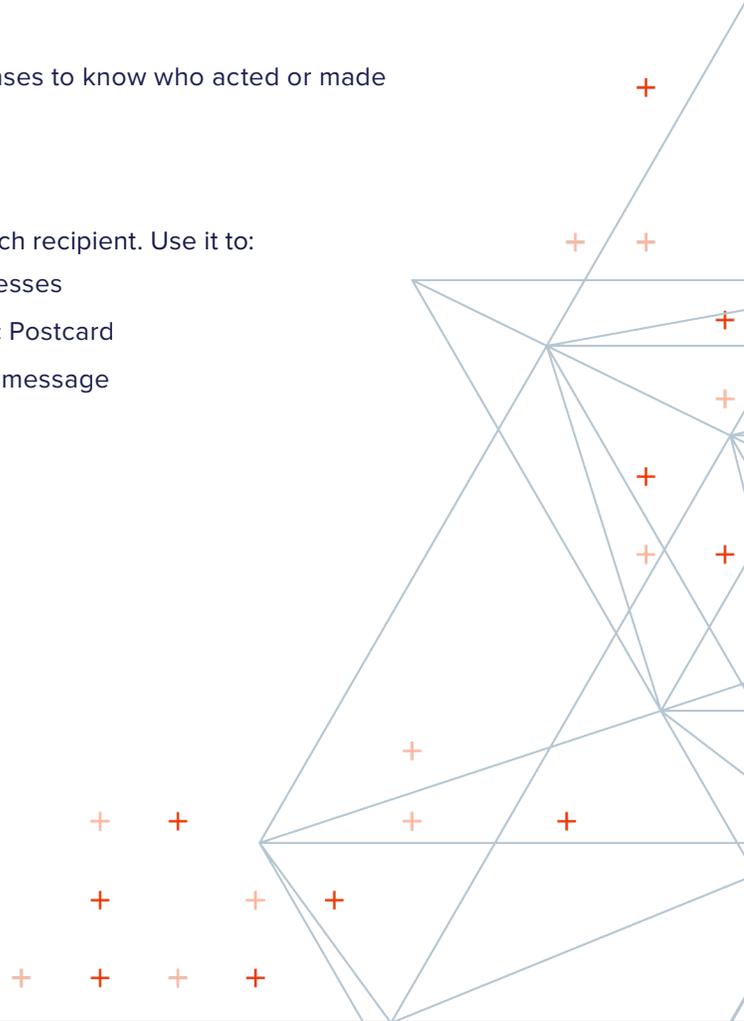
- Using first-party CRM data, match and analyze responses to know who acted or made a purchase after receiving your email campaign.

### Request the Follow-Up Marketing File†

It details engagement behavior and physical address for each recipient. Use it to:

- Enhance your CRM database with new prospect addresses
- Retarget openers with personalized offer via Dynamic Postcard
- See who received, opened, and/or clicked your email message

†Additional fees may apply.



By following these best practices, you can maximize the impact of your email campaign either on its own or as part of a multichannel campaign.

Contact us today at [info@valassis.com](mailto:info@valassis.com) to learn more.