

SHIFT@SHOP™

# Beginner's Guide to Email Marketing for eCommerce



# Table of Contents



<b>Chapter 1: Building And Growing An Email List</b>	<b>3</b>
Where to Collect Emails	4
How to Get People to Sign Up	5
List Segmentation	6
Legal & Ethical Considerations	7
<b>Chapter 2: Winning New Customers</b>	<b>8</b>
Lead Nurturing Campaigns	8
Cart Abandonment Emails	9
<b>Chapter 3: Converting Old Customers</b>	<b>11</b>
Cross-Sell & Upsell Emails	11
Replenishment Email Campaigns	12
<b>Chapter 4: Automation</b>	<b>14</b>
How to Do It	14
<b>Wrapping Up</b>	<b>16</b>



## Email marketing.

If you've owned a store online for awhile, you've heard a lot about emails. How effective and affordable they are, how many businesses rely on them to grow both revenue and their customer base.

Some of that might sound too good to be true, but the potential of email marketing is vast. Store owners willing to put in the time to research and design a great email marketing strategy are almost guaranteed to see results. That's why we're still talking about email marketing – and why it isn't going anywhere.

We wrote this e-book for newbies to the email marketing game. In it, you'll learn all about:

- 
- How to build an email list from scratch,
  - The case for list segmentation,
  - Email campaigns to win new customers,
  - Campaigns to grow revenue within your existing customer base, and
  - The power of automation.
- 

Let's dive in!





Before we can use email marketing to boost conversions, you need a list of people to send emails to. For our purposes here, we'll assume you already have a list set-up within your email marketing tool. With that in mind, let's talk about growing that list.

Email marketing can carry huge benefits for your business at any scale. But as one of the most efficient ways to market your store, you want to catch as many flies as possible.

## Where to Collect Emails

---

- **The top of your sidebar.** I don't know who started this trend, but it's caught on like wildfire. People online have come to expect an email sign-up at the top of every sidebar. The last thing you want is to make it hard for people who already want to subscribe.
  - **Pop-ups.** As a consumer, I have a love/hate relationship with pop-ups. As a marketer, I know how powerful they can be. The trick is to design them with the customer in mind. Don't interrupt them, make it difficult to close the box, or use passive aggressive copy to do so.
  - **The bottom of content articles.** If you're using content to grow your brand online, this is the number one place to include an email capture. Content can attract new consumers and get them familiar with your brand. By the time they finish reading an article, they're ripe for an email nurture campaign.
  - **Your Facebook business page.** Anyone who navigates to your business page on Facebook is a good candidate for your email list. Include the signup form there, and you reduce the chance that consumers navigate away and forget about you forever.
-



## How to Get People to Sign Up

In a perfect world, all your customers would be super engaged and in love with your brand. They'd sign up for your email list just to see you light up their inbox. Unfortunately, that isn't the world we live in. In our world, the inbox is a sacred temple and only the most deserving gain access.

All that is to say that you need to provide some kind of incentive for customers to subscribe. Make it worth their while to scootch in and share some of that valuable inbox real estate. Here are the top ways to incentivize email subscription:

- 
- **Discounts.** This is the tried and true tactic. As an avid online shopper, I've seen this one 4 times already today. Invite consumers to "share your email and receive 10% off your next purchase!" It's simple, but it works.
  - **Gated content.** Effective content marketing includes a mix of gated and open content. For more intensive content (like this lovely ebook you're reading) it makes sense to ask for something in return (like the email address you shared with us!)
  - **Exclusive email content.** Incentives don't always have to be instantaneous. The promise of exclusive content or discounts to come is enough to convince many customers to subscribe.
- 





## List Segmentation

Now that you have an email list that's growing, it's time to whittle it down. We're not talking about deleting your hard-won subscribers – we're talking about segmenting your list.

In its essence, segmentation is splitting up subscribers into groups that share characteristics. This step can have a big impact on your success with email marketing for eCommerce because it allows you to send targeted emails and offers to each segment of your list.

In fact, segmented campaigns can lead to a 30% higher open rate and, here's the kicker, [50% higher clickthroughs](#). DMA found that as much as [30% of email revenue](#) is the result of segmentation. As Help Scout puts it, "By not segmenting you're throwing away ... 30% of the value of your email marketing campaigns."

Convinced? Great – glad we got that out of the way.

## Ways to Segment

Now that you're on board with email segmentation, you might be wondering how to split up your list. There are varying perspectives on how to segment, but for online stores and eCommerce businesses, a few stand out:

- **Product preferences.** What types of products does each subscriber buy? Housewares? Jewelry? Power tools? Group subscribers based on the products they frequently buy, and you can tailor email offers for them.



- **Buying persona.** Luxury and exclusivity motivate some consumers, others will buy anything that's on sale. Segmenting by these personas can help you craft the most impactful emails.
- **Time as a subscriber.** This gets overlooked a lot, but how long someone has been a customer affects how they react to different offers.

---

These are the most effective ways to segment an email list. But keep your eyes peeled for trends and groups that emerge within your own subscribers. Then leverage those trends to provide hyper-targeted emails.

## Legal & Ethical Considerations

A chapter on building out your email list wouldn't be complete without touching on legal and ethical matters. This stuff is less than fun, so we'll cut to the chase. Here are the most important email marketing no-no's to avoid:

- 
- **Purchasing email lists from someone else.** It's deceptive, debases subscribers, and not effective for email marketing. Remember that engaged subscribers are the only ones worth having.
  - **Adding subscribers without their consent.** Nobody likes spam – enough said on that. When someone makes a purchase, it's generally okay to use a pre-checked subscribe box, as long as you give them an easy out.
  - **Being icky about unsubscribes.** When a subscriber wants out, there's no benefit to making it hard for them to unsubscribe. Make it easy.



Email marketing is unique in that it's über effective at fulfilling many varying goals. There are a variety of different email campaigns you can use to work toward each of your targets.

One of those goals is scoring new customers. Nurture and abandoned cart campaigns are most effective at converting first-time buyers. Let's dive into both of these to see what they can do for your online store and how to get started with each.

## Lead Nurturing Campaigns

**What it is:** Lead nurturing email campaigns provide that little nudge to keep prospects moving through the buyer's journey. They work to both build trust in your brand and then identify and create urgency around the customer's problem and your solution to that problem.

**How it helps conversion:** According to data from Marketo, an average of [50% of leads](#) who enter your sales funnel aren't ready to buy yet. That means half of the people who visit your website, follow you on social media, or subscribe to your newsletter might disappear forever. If you can design a system to capture potential customers and convert them, imagine the effect that can have on your online store's conversion rate.

## 3 Steps to Get Started

---

- 1. Create unique segments.** As we discussed in Chapter 1, you'll want to segment leads based on their first touchpoint with your brand. Did they find your website in a Google search? Click on a link in a trusted friend's Twitter post? Identifying how leads enter your sales funnel helps determine how to nurture them.



- 2. Set specific goals and benchmarks.** Fair warning, you're going to hear this a lot in this guide. Defined, measurable goals are the only way to ensure your campaigns are worth the investment. Set benchmarks for the campaign as a whole and clear objectives for each email.
- 3. Identify the right campaign timeline.** Your business has its own unique buying cycle – the normal amount of time it takes for a lead to go from learning about your business to becoming a customer. An [effective lead nurturing campaign](#) will follow along with this timeline and even seek to shorten it.

## Cart Abandonment Emails

**What it is:** It's estimated that up to 70% of online shopping carts aren't completed, so it's clear that the eCommerce world has some serious abandonment issues. When abandoned carts happen, you're usually left with no sale and no explanation why. Abandoned cart email campaigns re-engage the almost-customer. They identify what stopped them from buying, and offer that little extra push.

**How it helps conversion:** Abandoned cart campaigns help reinvigorate a potential customer's excitement about your brand. They serve as a second chance to capitalize on the marketing you've already done and provide that last reassurance needed to hit "Confirm purchase." They're also effective, with [open rates nearing 47%](#).





## 3 Steps to Get Started

---

- 1. Create a hypothesis about why carts are being abandoned.** Until you see which offers are effective, it's hard to know why people are abandoning carts. Take a look at the data you have around cart abandonment, the types of leads who are abandoning, and the factors that come into play during checkout. Then form a hypothesis for why abandonment is happening.
  - 2. Craft an offer.** Using the hypothesis you formulated, put together an offer that addresses that specific problem. Is [shipping cost too high](#)? Offer free shipping. Are customers worried about whether they can trust you? Pull together reviews or testimonials.
  - 3. Measure and adjust.** Remember, you based your initial campaign on a data-backed hunch. Track how effective these emails are at converting abandoned carts. Then use that information to confirm or deny your original hypothesis.
- 





Another thing email marketing does well is to help cultivate a loyal customer base that generates sales on a regular basis. We know it costs a lot more to get a new customer than to keep existing ones. Email can be your go-to tactic for keeping those first-time buyers around.

Campaigns that get previous or current customers to buy from you again take a few different forms. Cross-sell and upsell emails are common, but replenishment and re-engagement campaigns have their own value.

## Cross-Sell & Upsell Emails

**What it is:** Cross-sell and upsell campaigns are what they sound like – emails designed to convince customers to buy something else after a sale. If someone buys a handmade mug from your store, you might email them about the matching soup bowl. The most common example of this is Amazon’s product recommendation emails.

**How it helps conversion:** Product recommendations help you to generate more revenue based on the marketing you’ve already done. Once a customer has made a purchase, you learn two important things: 1) they trust you, and 2) what sort of items they’re interested in. This helps you create targeted recommendations that produce a higher rate of conversion than generic emails.





## 3 Steps to Get Started

---

- 1. Set measurable goals.** Here it is again – like any other campaign, it's vital that defining key metrics to determine success is one of the first steps you take.
- 2. Identify product groupings.** Whether they're purchased together often or just make sense as a package, create groupings around flagship products. You can pull from these to make relevant recommendations. For example, one grouping might include a smartphone, the case, earbuds, and those poppy things that stick on the back.
- 3. Decide when to send upsell emails.** There's no one right time to send these emails, but the order confirmation email is a good option. You have the customer's attention, their original purchase is top-of-mind, and the confirmation serves as a reminder that they trust you.

## Replenishment Email Campaigns

**What it is:** Replenishment emails aren't a viable option for every online store or every type of product. But when they are an option, they can be one of the most effective forms of marketing, let alone email marketing. When you have a product that needs replacing on a regular schedule, replenishment emails can help you slide into customers' inboxes at just the right time.

**How it helps conversion:** Replenishment emails are almost more of a service to your customer than an outright marketing campaign. When a customer trusts your brand, and you know exactly what and when they'll need to buy again, it's like gaming the system. Replenishment emails are often the most effective triggered emails, with an [open rate topping 53%](#).



## 3 Steps to Get Started

---

- 1. Note products that are good candidates.** As we mentioned, not all products are a good fit for replenishment campaigns. That's why the first step is to identify what, if any, products you offer need regular replacement.
  - 2. Identify the buying cycle.** Once you have the right products, figure out the cycle they follow. How long does it take before customers need to come back for more? Your goal is to be right there, before customers even think about buying from someone else.
  - 3. Develop a simple process.** The idea behind replenishment emails is to make it as easy as possible for customers to reorder. That's why developing a system to handle that simplicity is key. Customers should be able to go from email to order confirmation page with the smallest number of clicks.
- 





If there's one, final step you take when implementing an email marketing strategy, it has to be automation. Automating your email marketing is the extra step that can take your strategy from good to amazing.

Many of the benefits of email automation are obvious – it keeps your email strategy honest and accountable, it takes one more thing off of your plate, etc. But automatic triggered emails are more effective at reaching and converting customers, too.

JetBlue augmented their marketing with email automation back in 2011. Their goal was to win back leads who didn't convert – for one reason or another – the first time around. The results? JetBlue saw [200% more conversions](#) , and their revenue per email [skyrocketed by 1,640%](#).

Combine results like that with your limited time as a business owner, and you have a recipe for crazy email marketing success.

## How to Do It

---

**Step 1: Start small.** Choose one campaign to test how automation can boost your business and save you time. If you want to see what automation can do, choose one of your most successful campaigns – where improvement in conversion rates can have the biggest impact on your bottom line.

**Step 2: Measure against your goals.** Based on your campaign's performance, you have benchmarks to measure your expectations against the reality of email automation. Let the triggered campaign run for a month or so and then take a look at the difference automation has made.



**Step 3. Go all in.** If you see strong results from automating the first campaign, dive right in and set-up triggered campaigns for all customer actions (or inaction). Once everything is set up, you can set-it-and-forget-it for a while. Make sure to circle back, though, and make continuous improvements to the emails themselves as you learn more about what works for your audience.

---

## One final note on automation:

One of the difficulties that comes part and parcel with all the benefits of automation is the need to maintain a level of personalization that keeps customers from feeling like just another faceless email address.

When setting up your automated email campaigns, write out the first template as if you're sending it to a friend. Once you have a chummy, personal template down, let your email marketing software take care of the personalization en masse.





There are a lot of factors that affect your online store's conversion rate. Whether it's the products you offer, the website itself, or the marketing efforts you use, there are countless ways to boost your conversion rate.

At the end of the day, email marketing is one of the most powerful ways to grow your online store. It takes some setting up to create a strategy that makes a difference. But if you invest the time and effort, your online store will reap the benefits for years to come.

The best SEO eCommerce platform for your online store, with hundreds of features to help your website rank higher, engage visitors and convert sales.

# SHIFT **4** SHOP™

Get Started with  
**Shift4Shop**  
for Free