

How to Write an Effective Email Campaign

Marketing your practice through email can seem complicated, but there are some basic strategies that even a beginner can use to effectively reach the people who want to hear your message. There are two ways to measure the success of an email marketing campaign:

- The **open rate** is simply the percentage of recipients who open your mail. Most open rates hover between twenty to forty percent. This is more of a general indicator rather than a firmly reliable number, since there are several factors that can complicate the data (such as email servers that have a preview pane, etc.) Generally, the open rate tends to decrease as the size of your list grows. However, lists that focus on specialized groups or topics (like plastic surgery) tend to have higher open rates.
- The **click-through rate** is much more important. How many times have you opened an email only to delete it seconds later? You don't want this to happen with your email campaign; the goal is not simply to get your recipients to open your email, but to actually "click through" on a link within it (to your website, to an offer contained within, etc.)

There are several strategies for improving both your open and click-through rates:

- Make subject lines count (literally). Nine to fourteen words (or about forty to sixty characters), is considered ideal by email marketing professionals, since this is the range that correlates with the highest open rates. Many internet browsers will display only sixty characters, cutting off your subject line if it is longer.
- There's much more to a subject line than just length, of course. Include details about the content, and make sure the most important content of the email is given near the beginning. If you are sending an e-newsletter, make sure it is divided into three to five short sections, with the contents listed clearly at the top.
- Write emails as though you are speaking to the recipient personally (though still professionally). A positive, pressure-free tone is best. Keep the language fairly simple, and use terms that are friendly to non-experts (for example, "nose surgery" instead of "rhinoplasty").
- Give your reader something — a helpful tip, useful information, a special offer.
- Look for successful examples. You may want to sign up to receive (anonymously, if you wish) regular emails from other plastic surgeons with successful practices, to gain more understanding and inspiration for your own campaigns.

There is no firm rule about how often to send emails to your list, except one: *don't do it too often*. But what does "too often" mean? Some marketing experts recommend an incredible sixteen to thirty emails per month, while others advocate a less intensive five to ten per month (one or two emails per week). You may want to experiment, starting out with fewer emails and gradually

increasing their frequency, all the while monitoring your campaign's analytics to see who's opening, who's reading and who's deleting.

One thing is certain: the most common reason recipients unsubscribe from a marketing list is because they feel overwhelmed. You've invested too much time, effort and (probably) money into your email campaign to allow this to happen. The greatest measure of your success, of course, is an increase in your number of patients and the reputation of your practice. Fortunately, a great deal of this success is in your hands — all you need are the right tools.