A Retailer's Guide to **Email Marketing Campaigns**

TECHNOLOGY THERAPY® GROUP

A Retailer's Guide to Email Marketing Campaigns

You know that email campaigns are important for your small business. But perhaps you don't know where to start with setting up a campaign or how often to send emails to your customers. Maybe you're also wondering about best practices for email testing, personalization, and deliverability. We've created this practical guide to lay the foundation you need for email marketing success.

CLICK, EXPLORE, AND LEARN:

This guide is designed to be interactive, with clickable links to additional resources. For the best experience, we recommend using it as a digital PDF rather than printing it.

What is Email Marketing?

A direct marketing channel that allows you to share new products, sales, and updates with customers. This includes 1) campaigns sent to a mass list of contacts on a designated day and time and 2) automated emails triggered by customer actions and attributes.

	Campaigns	Automations
When They Send	On a date and at a time that you designate	Varies based on the triggers you set and when your audience hits those triggers
Who They Send To	A list or segment of designated contacts	Contacts who fit your trigger definitions
How Often Do They Need to Be Created	Monthly, at minimum Weekly is best practice for retail	Varies based on your goals

The world of email marketing is vast, but in this guide, we're focusing specifically on campaigns.

Once you've mastered the basics, be sure to check out the advanced tips at the end and give them a try!

Email marketing generates an ROI of $36 for every $1 spent."

- LITMUS

Why Should I Use Email Campaigns for My Small Business?

1. Email campaigns boost profits

According to recent data from Litmus, email marketing yields an ROI of $36 for every dollar spent. Though, some sources like Omnisend estimate that it's anywhere from $36 to $40.

2. Email campaigns cultivate connection

Another advantage to email campaigns is that they're one of the best ways to build relationships with your audience and keep your brand top of mind. Your emails help warm people up to your business, allowing you to connect with those who are already interested or engaged. Beyond just staying in touch, email marketing can drive real results—whether that's generating website traffic, increasing sales, or upselling existing customers.

3. Email campaigns excel at personalization

Personalization is another huge perk to this marketing channel. When you leverage first-party data, you can tailor your messages to speak directly to your audience's needs and interests, making your emails more relevant and effective. Plus, email isn't just about direct communication. It's a powerful tool to guide your audience toward other marketing channels. This keeps them engaged and connected with your brand in multiple ways.

> **79% of Millennials and 57% of Gen Z say they like being contacted by brands via email."**
>
> - STATISTA

> **The global email marketing market was valued at 8.3 billion U.S. dollars in 2023 and the source projected that figure would increase to 18.9 billion by 2028."**
>
> - STATISTA, 2024

RESOURCE ALERT:

Check out our glossary of email marketing terms, if you're new to email marketing.

CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD GUIDE

Getting Started: Email Campaign Basics

Know Your Audience

Before you start sending emails, take time to define your audience. Who are they? What kind of content would they find valuable? Understanding your audience helps shape everything from your messaging to your send frequency.

Research Benchmarks

It's also a good idea to research industry benchmarks. These can guide decisions on send frequency, send day, and send time. However, every audience is different, so testing different days and times will help you determine what works best for your subscribers.

When to Send Emails

Data from popular email marketing platforms suggests that certain days and times see higher engagement. Tuesdays and Thursdays tend to perform best, while weekends generally have lower open rates. As for timing, emails sent between 9 AM and 12 PM typically see the highest engagement, followed by 12 PM to 3 PM.

How Often Should You Send Emails?

Consistency is more important than frequency, so choose a schedule you can realistically maintain. Testing different cadences can help you find the sweet spot for your audience. In general, here's what we recommend:

- **Every other week:** a good starting point.

- **Once per week:** helps maintain engagement.

- **2-3 times per week:** highly effective, especially for retail.

PRO TIP

There are always exceptions to rules. For example, if you're running a sale, it's smart to send a reminder email on the final day to create a sense of urgency and lean into FOMO (fear of missing out). If your holiday sale ends on a weekend, a "last chance" email should go out that day rather than sticking to the classic "Tuesday or Thursday" advice. The key is to send emails when they make the most sense for your audience and sales goals.

PRO TIP

Email send frequency for better engagement:

Good: every other week

Better: once per week

Best: 2-3 times per week

RESOURCE ALERT:

Define your audience the easy way when you download our FREE personas guide.

CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD GUIDE

Getting Started:
Email Campaign Basics (con.)

Define Your Goals

A great way to plan your email content is by addressing common customer questions. What do people frequently ask about your products or services? Use these topics to build your email content calendar, ensuring your campaigns provide value while keeping customers engaged.

Types of Emails to Send

By setting up a clear plan and choosing the right mix of content, you'll build a strong foundation for successful email campaigns. Different types of emails serve different purposes.

PRO TIP

Retail customers tend to expect promotional emails with some frequency. So work them into your content calendar at least once per quarter, ramping that up in Q4, when customers expect to see more deals.

Here are some of the most common ones used in retail:

- **Promotional Emails:**
  Announce sales, special offers, bundles, or gift certificate deals.

- **Newsletters:**
  A recurring email that provides a mix of updates, insights, and content.

- **Informational:**
  Share updates, educational content, or store information.

- **Seasonal & Holiday Emails:**
  Tie into major shopping periods or events.

- **Product Spotlights:**
  Feature new arrivals, trending products, or staff favorites.

- **Customer Loyalty & Rewards:**
  Encourage repeat purchases with exclusive perks.

- **Event Invitations:**
  Promote in-store or online events.

- **Post-Purchase Emails:**
  Follow up with customers, recommend related products, or request reviews.

- **Re-Engagement Campaigns:**
  Reach out to inactive subscribers with an incentive to return.

Getting Started: Email Campaign Basics (con.)

Building Your Email List

If you don't already have a list of contacts, here are several ways to grow one:

On Your Website	On Social Media	In-Person & Print
Add a popover or flyout offering a discount in exchange for an email signup.	Use Facebook page signups and Meta ads to capture emails.	Collect emails during transactions or at events (always ask for permission).
Include a newsletter signup form in your footer and in the body of key pages.	Add an email signup link to your Instagram bio (via Link-tree or a similar tool).	Use QR codes on printed materials to link directly to your signup form.
Offer free downloads or interactive content like quizzes.	Promote your email list through LinkedIn posts and ads.	Participate in joint events, contests, or giveaways to attract new subscribers.
Include an option to join your email list at checkout.		Include a signup link in your email signature.

At this point, you may be wondering, "Should I purchase a list?"

Our advice: Don't do it. These contacts never opted in to hear from you, which means you'll likely see a wave of unsubscribes—or worse, spam complaints—that could put your email marketing account at risk.

3 Steps to Planning Your Campaigns

1. Map It Out

Before launching an email campaign, take the time to map out a strategy. Start by deciding how often you'll send emails, whether it's weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly. The goal is to maintain a consistent presence in your audience's inbox.

2. Brainstorm Topics

The next step is to brainstorm topics that align with your business goals and your audience's interests. Think about seasonal trends, product launches, educational content, or promotions that will add value. Then review your Google Analytics data. Once you have a list of ideas, organize them in a content calendar to ensure a steady flow of engaging emails.

3. Create Content

Last, but not least, prepare any content you'll be linking out to in your emails well in advance of your send dates. Determine which promotions, blog posts, landing pages, product updates, etc. you'll include in your emails. This ensures everything is ready to go when it's time to hit send, keeping your campaigns smooth and stress-free.

Executing Your Campaigns

The Right Messaging: Crafting Compelling Copy

Before your audience even reads your email, they need a reason to open it. That's where a strong subject line comes in. Keep it short **(between 30-50 characters)**, so it displays well on mobile. Your subject line should be relevant, goal-focused, engaging, and, when appropriate, personalized. If it makes sense for your brand, emojis can add a visual pop and help your email stand out in a crowded inbox.

A great subject line speaks to a specific pain point your recipient is experiencing. Whether it's offering a solution to a common challenge or highlighting a can't-miss opportunity, framing your subject line around a need or problem makes it more compelling. To refine your approach, test different subject line styles over time. Some audiences respond better to curiosity-driven subject lines, while others prefer straightforward, benefit-focused messaging.

Some language will land your emails directly in the spam folder. It's a good practice to avoid the following in your subject lines:

- All caps
- Extreme/excessive punctuation

- Manipulative words or phrases (like sensationalizing or overpromising)

- Needy wording
- Spam words or phrases

Once the recipient has opened your email, they should be met with a clear, concise message. Too much information in a single email can over-whelm the reader, so stick to one key point per campaign. Repetition is your friend. Since people tend to skim rather than read, reinforcing your message increases retention.

Every email should include a call-to-action (CTA)—a clear instruction that encourages your audience to take a specific action. A strong CTA helps ensure your email achieves its goal, whether it's driving sales, boosting engagement, or sharing information.

PRO TIP

Your preview text is a valuable space—use it to add context and spark curiosity, motivating recipients to open your email.

PRO TIP

In email marketing, a CTA is often a button, link, or phrase that tells readers exactly what to do next—like "Shop Now," "Learn More," or "Claim Your Discount." For example, if your email is about a new product launch, your CTA might be a button that says, "Check Out the Collection," guiding readers to your website to browse or make a purchase.

Executing Your Campaigns (con.)

Designing Your Email

A well-designed email is visually appealing and easy to navigate. Simplicity is key – avoid clutter, use easy-to-read fonts, and ensure your branding is consistent throughout. Always include your logo at the top and link it to your home page for a seamless user experience.

Since most people check emails on their phones, design for mobile first. Use clear fonts, leave plenty of white space, and establish a visual hierarchy so the most important information stands out. Bold headlines, contrasting colors, and larger fonts for key points (such as offers) help guide the reader's eye through the content.

Keep in mind that images should enhance the email, not dominate it. Resize and compress them to prevent slow load times (900px max for full-width images, 450px max for smaller ones). Add alt text so recipients who have image loading disabled or who are using reader programs still get context. Avoid using a single large image as the entire email. If images don't load, your message won't be seen. Also, keep an eye on your email's overall file size—emails that are too large may get flagged as spam.

For better engagement, link buttons to specific pages where the reader can take action. If you're showcasing a product, direct them to that product's page with a "Shop Now" CTA. If you're promoting appointments, link directly to your booking page.
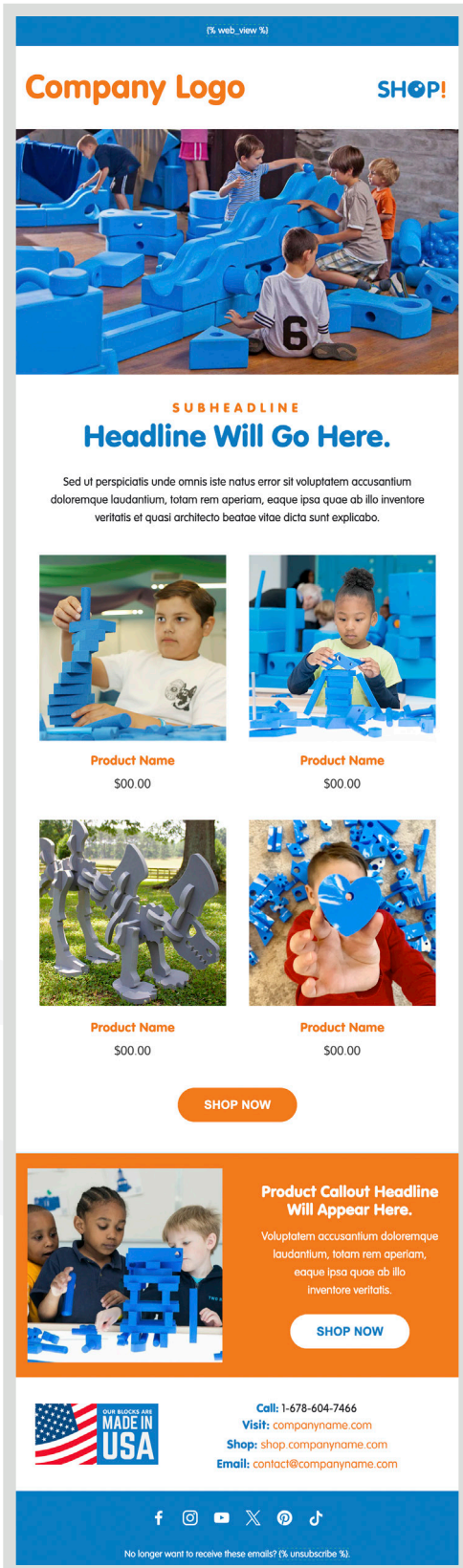
> ### PRO TIP
>
> **In addition to putting your links on buttons, put them on your images as well. Heat maps show that many users prefer to click on images.**

Executing Your Campaigns (con.)

✅ Design Do's

Use clear, legible font sizes

- Aim for 16px or larger for body text and 20–28px for headings.

Choose web-safe, easy-to-read fonts

- Examples of web-safe fonts are Arial, Helvetica, Verdana, or Georgia.

Maintain good spacing

- Leave ample white space between text blocks, sections, and images to make content easy to scan.

Use a strong visual hierarchy

- Make sure headings, subheadings, and CTAs stand out clearly.

Keep your layout mobile-friendly

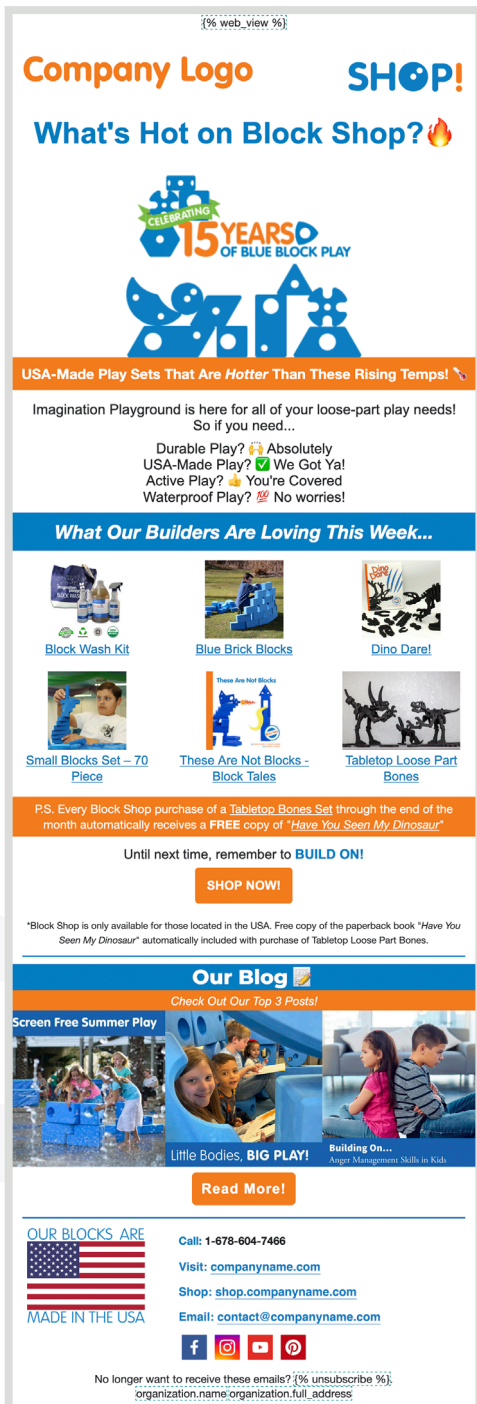- Use single-column designs, large buttons, and touch-friendly elements.

Keep your color contrast accessible

- Use high contrast between text and background for readability.

Include clear CTAs

- Make your buttons easy to find, tap, and understand (e.g., "Shop Now" or "Book a Consultation").

Executing Your Campaigns (con.)

✕ Design Don'ts

Don't use too many fonts or colors
- Stick to 1–2 fonts and 2–3 complementary colors to avoid visual clutter.

Don't overcrowd your email with text
- Keep your copy short and scannable—think bite-sized sections, not long paragraphs.

Don't use small or overly decorative fonts
- If it's hard to read, it won't get read.

Don't place CTA buttons too close to other elements
- Give CTAs breathing room so they're easy to spot and click.

Don't use one giant image as your entire email
- It slows load times, isn't accessible, and hurts deliverability.

Don't overlook your brand consistency
- Use your brand colors, logo, and tone consistently throughout the design.

Executing Your Campaigns (con.)

Testing & Quality Control

Before scheduling your email, always test it by sending a preview to yourself. Check how it appears on both desktop and mobile to ensure formatting is intact and all links are working properly. Never rely on how an email looks in the platform's preview. Seeing it in your actual inbox is the best way to catch any last-minute issues. Once everything checks out, you're ready to send or schedule your campaign.

TTG Insider Advice:
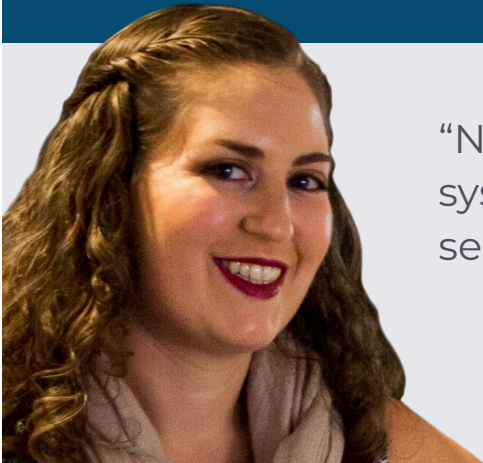
"Never trust a preview in an email marketing system. Always send yourself a test so you can see how the email actually looks in your inbox."

- COURTNEY DUMONT
SENIOR STRATEGIST AND ANALYST, TTG

Reviewing and Analyzing Your Campaigns

The key to improving your email marketing success is regularly reviewing your data and using those insights to refine your approach. Pay attention to important metrics:

- Open rates
- Click rates
- Bounce rates

- Unsubscribes
- Spam complaints

These numbers tell you what's working and what needs adjustment.

If a particular type of content or subject line is driving strong engagement, create more of that content for future emails. Likewise, if certain emails have low open or click rates, it's worth experimenting with different messaging, formats, or send times.

PRO TIP

There's no one-size-fits-all standard for open and click rates. Check industry-specific benchmarks to understand what good performance looks like for your business.

TTG Insider Advice:

"There's gold in your email marketing data—you just might not be digging deep enough. Spend some time reviewing it, and you'll uncover valuable insights about your customers."

- JENNIFER SHAHEEN
PRESIDENT & FOUNDER, TTG

Going Beyond: Advanced Tips for Email Marketing Success

If you're comfortable with email campaign basics and ready to take things to the next level, these advanced strategies will help refine your approach. From crafting stronger subject lines to improving email deliverability, these tips can boost engagement and ensure your emails reach the right audience.

Crafting Stronger Subject Lines

Think of your subject line as the storefront sign of your email – it needs to grab attention and invite people in. Different styles, from urgency to humor to personalization, can impact how recipients engage with your emails. Testing different styles over time will help you identify what resonates most with certain groups within your audience.

Looking for some inspiration? We've compiled a guide on effective subject line styles.

TTG Insider Advice:

"A/B testing is a powerful tool for optimizing your email campaigns. By testing one variable at a time, you can discern what resonates best with each segment."

- **GENEVIEVE BELCHER,**
OPERATIONS MANAGER, TTG

Going Beyond: Advanced Tips for Email Marketing Success (con.)

A/B Testing for Better Results

A/B testing allows you to compare two versions of an email to see which one performs better. This could mean testing subject lines, CTAs, or even email layouts. For example, you might send half of your audience one subject line and the other half a variation to see which gets a higher open rate.

When running A/B tests, remember that they take longer since both versions need time to collect engagement data. If you have a strict send time, start the test earlier to ensure results before the final send.

> **PRO TIP**
>
> A/B tests take longer, so if you want your emails delivered to your recipients by a particular time, you have to start the send earlier.

Leveraging Personalization

Personalization makes your emails feel more relevant and engaging. Even small touches, like using a recipient's first name or referencing their past purchases, can improve open and click-through rates.

3 Easy Ways to Personalize Your Emails

Use Their Name	Recommend Based on Their Past Purchases	Send Emails Based on Their Interests
A subject line like "*Cameron, here's something just for you*" makes the email feel more personal.	If a customer recently bought boots, send them recommendations for matching accessories or similar styles.	If a subscriber prefers home décor over fashion, tailor their emails to showcase new furniture arrivals instead of clothing sales.

These are just the basics, but personalization can make a big difference in how customers engage with your emails. We could write an entire book on the power of personalization. Keep an eye out for our upcoming free downloadable on this topic!

TTG Insider Advice:

"Today, it's easy to personalize the emails to include a customer's first name and suggest personal product recommendations based on their past purchases."

- COURTNEY DUMONT
SENIOR STRATEGIST AND ANALYST, TTG

Going Beyond: Advanced Tips for Email Marketing Success (con.)

Ensuring Good Deliverability

Deliverability refers to whether your emails successfully reach recipients' inboxes rather than being flagged as spam or blocked. Good deliverability means your emails are successfully delivered to the intended audience, ensuring they have the opportunity to see and engage with your message. Factors like a clean email list, avoiding spammy language, and using a trusted email service can help improve your deliverability.

To improve deliverability, follow these best practices:

- **Use a Dedicated Sending Domain**
  Sending emails from your own domain (rather than a default email marketing platform domain) increases the chances of landing in inboxes instead of spam folders. If your platform offers default domains, opt to self-authenticate your own instead. Not sure how? Your email provider's customer support can walk you through technical items like finding out your domain's CNAME.

- **Run Spam Deliverability Tests**
  Use tools like Lemwarm or MailReach to check whether your emails are being marked as spam before sending. Many spam "trigger words" that were once problematic (like "free") are no longer an issue if you're using a properly authenticated sending domain.

Optimize Your Sender Information

- Send emails from a real person rather than a generic "no-reply@" address.
- Choose a sender name that aligns with your business (depending on your business and goals, this may be your name or your business's name).

Going Beyond: Advanced Tips for Email Marketing Success (con.)

Staying Compliant with Email Marketing Laws

To avoid legal issues and maintain trust with your audience, make sure your emails follow industry regulations:

- Ensure compliance with email marketing laws like the CAN-SPAM Act (read more on the FTC website here).

- Have an up-to-date privacy policy linked in your website footer. Keep in mind that this is a legal document and it is best to seek advice from an attorney.

- Include an opt-out link and physical business address in every email footer. Most email platforms add these automatically, but double-check during setup to ensure accuracy.

Email Marketing Don'ts

Avoid these common mistakes that can harm your deliverability and reputation:

- Never purchase email lists or import contacts who haven't opted in, which can lead to blacklisting.

- Don't scrape emails from LinkedIn profiles or other public sources.

- Do not add everyone you meet at a networking event to your email marketing platform. Always ask for permission first.

By implementing these advanced strategies, you'll refine your email marketing approach, improve engagement, and ensure long-term success with your campaigns.

PRO TIP

The opt-out link and address are typically added automatically by the email marketing system, but you should review them in your tests. Note that this information is pulled from your profile/account in the email marketing system. So, make sure this information is correct upon setup (e.g., don't use a P.O. Box or corporate office if you have a physical location that you want contacts to visit).

klaviyo

Make the Move to Klaviyo!

Need help moving to or setting up Klaviyo? We're here to help! Choose from free or paid plans to set up your account, import contacts, and start email marketing fast. With Klaviyo, you'll gain access to valuable data that will help you understand your customers better so you can deliver more personalized, relevant content.

VISIT **TECHNOLOGYTHERAPY.COM/MOVE-TO-KLAVIYO-PROGRAM T**O LEARN MORE

RESOURCES & INSIGHTS

We truly hope this guide has helped grow your email campaign knowledge and confidence. Here are all the linked resources mentioned in the guide in one place for your convenience:

TTG Blogs:

Glossary of Terms
https://technologytherapy.com/making-sense-of-email-marketing-jargon/

Understanding Spam Filters
https://technologytherapy.com/understanding-spam-filters-why-retail-marketing-emails-get-blocked/

The Power of Email Segmentation
https://technologytherapy.com/tailoring-your-message-the-power-of-email-segmentation/

Tips to Ace Klaviyo Signup Forms, Notifications, & More
https://technologytherapy.com/tips-to-ace-klaviyo-signup-forms-notifications-and-more/

The Importance of Analytics for Content Marketing Decisions
https://technologytherapy.com/the-importance-of-analytics-for-content-marketing-decisions/

18 Email Subject Line Styles You Need to Test for Your Retail Business
https://technologytherapy.com/email-subject-line-styles-for-retail-marketing/

How to Collect Consumer Data
https://technologytherapy.com/how-to-collect-consumer-data-in-2025/

Tools:

Lemwarm

Mailreach

TTG Videos:

How to Create a Content Calendar
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SN-yAGrD8Ak

Image Optimization Tips
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oelJgtlOvVY

Tips for A/B Testing
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ax2O3kw_fiE

Statistics:

ROI of email marketing stat
https://www.litmus.com/blog/infographic-the-roi-of-email-marketing#:~:text=For%20every%20$1%20marketers%20spend,&%20consumer%20goods:%2045:1

Email marketing revenue worldwide stat
https://www.statista.com/statistics/1461804/email-marketing-revenue-worldwide/

Millennials and Gen Z email marketing
https://www.statista.com/statistics/1338365/email-marketing-consumers-usa/

Resources:

FTC website for legal compliance
https://www.ftc.gov/business-guidance/resources/can-spam-act-compliance-guide-business

TTG's Free Personas Guide
https://technologytherapy.com/downloadables/personas/

Litmus blog about email file sizes
https://www.litmus.com/blog/guide-to-email-file-size-and-load-times