



We wanted to share with you an interesting article by Chip House - a veteran in the email marketing industry and widely known as a deliverability expert. He and his team help all our clients achieve maximum - deliverability, open & click-thru rates.

Business Card in Hand Doesn't Mean "Opt-in"

The business card has long been an important instrument to a salesperson attempting to build their network, and in turn, their success. This was true long before email marketing came to be, though the collision of the two hasn't always been pretty.

Big surprises are ahead for the unwary salesperson (and their company) who don't carefully manage their contacts derived from business cards.

What's the problem?

According to Jupiter Research, the average b-to-b delivery rate, not counting bounces, is 89%. What factors are driving businesses to block or eat emails at such a rate? In addition to the general rise in spam, the business community in general is to blame. At least in part, I think it has to do with the poor way that many businesses have managed their B2B lead acquisition campaigns. In many cases, a large part of some companies' prospects come from personal meetings, tradeshows, and other events where business cards change hands. This makes sense. But what doesn't make sense is just adding all of the email addresses derived in this manner to the company marketing database and beginning to send weekly sales pitch emails.

How you get the card makes a difference.

Certainly the way you capture the business card has a lot to do with how you might use it. If it is captured in a face-to-face meeting with a handshake, then you'll have implicit permission from that recipient to contact them at least once via phone or email and try to strike up a conversation, or spark his or her interest in what you're selling. However, if the card was merely placed in a fishbowl at your booth for a chance to win something, then you'll be treading up hill a bit. In this situation, it should be only one email only asking the recipient to opt-in, sign-up, fill out a trial form or something else before you can communicate with them again.

Approach it like a one-to-one business or personal email communication.

The golden rule applies here. Treat others how you would want to be treated yourself! With personal or one-to-one business email you don't harass someone every week until they yell at you to go away. So why would you get a business card, then add it to your marketing database and force the recipient to unsubscribe if they want to be removed from further communications? Let's be serious. Respect the wishes of your potential clients and you're more likely to get a sale over time, and less likely to do you, your brand and your deliverability some measure of damage.

Capture date and time in your database.

The ability to prove you have permission to email a name is critical. Ensure you keep a record of the date and time that you captured an subscriber's opt-in in your CRM database or contact file. If captured online, capture their IP address if possible.

Permission marketing is the only way to improve the reputation for business to business email.

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