



## **Rethinking Your Email Marketing in 2022: A Quick Guide to Success**

Email marketing is one of the most personal forms of digital marketing. When users opt in, your organization interacts with them on a deeper level. Email makes it easier to gain trust, build loyalty and, most importantly, keep a steady flow of patient appointments.

## ABOUT OUR QUICK GUIDE TO EMAIL MARKETING

Simply emailing newsletters to leads in your organization's customer relationship management (CRM) system is not going to cut it. Even the most well-intentioned user may flag your email to read later and never come back to it. Across all industries, the average open rate (number of subscribers who open an email) is a mere 11%.

And let's say they do open your email. That's only half the battle. You need to continuously provide engaging content so that your organization stays top of mind when users need care. It's a tall order, but you've come to the right place.

Our quick guide offers practical tips and examples to help your organization reap the rewards of finely tuned, well-crafted email marketing. We also provide insights from top healthcare organizations that are crushing it and have the metrics to show for it.

### Learn how to:

1. Commit to marketing automation
2. Stand out in a sea of marketing emails
3. Welcome and nurture new subscribers
4. Develop emails that users can't wait to read
5. Feed the content beast
6. Use your CRM platform to the fullest
7. Define and refine your efforts through analytics



Getting access to someone's contact information is about as close of a touch point as you can get to your customer.

-HENRY EBARB, CEO AND COFOUNDER OF EIGHTFOLD

## TIP 1: Commit to Marketing Automation

People subscribe to a healthcare newsletter because they think it can help meet their needs. These needs vary wildly and may include stage-of-life healthy living tips, COVID-19 updates or chronic disease information. When users receive emails that don't align with their needs, they might not open them. Or even worse, they'll unsubscribe.

No single newsletter could possibly meet the needs of all subscribers. But with subscriber lists in the thousands, what's the best way to segment your audience? What's the most efficient method of delivering the right content to each segment? How will you know if you were successful? When you commit to marketing automation, the answers are at your fingertips.

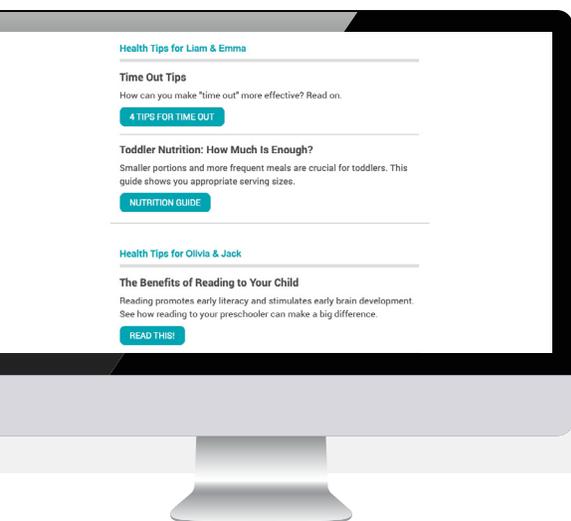
Marketing automation uses tools and data within your CRM to deliver custom content based on your audience's interests. Automation makes it possible to:

- Segment your subscriber list based on specific attributes, like age, gender and interests
- Respond quickly after someone subscribes by sending a welcome email
- Schedule content delivery so that you don't have to manually coordinate every newsletter release
- Personalize messages by including the user's name in the greeting



Email marketing can get messy quickly. Automation sets efficiencies and consistencies for engaging with audiences.

-JENNIFER COFFMAN, EMAIL MARKETING MANAGER AT CLEVELAND CLINIC



Nationwide Children's Hospital has marketing automation down pat. Prompts within the sign-up feature of their Health e-Hints™ newsletter ask subscribers how old their children are. Automation then takes over so that they receive age-appropriate newsletter content.

Parents of toddlers receive health tips for young children while parents of teens learn how to take care of young adults. As children get older, the system automatically adjusts their settings to the next age group, so parents always receive timely, relevant content.

## TIP 2: Stand Out in a Sea of Marketing Emails

When trying to stand out, simplicity rules. You have few words and little time to demonstrate that your email is worth a click. A thoughtfully crafted subject line and snippet along with a good mobile experience can slow your subscriber's roll so that they absorb every juicy detail.

Here's how:

- **Start with a short, compelling subject line:** Your subject line should create a sense of urgency without feeling spammy. And you have only 25 to 50 characters to do it. A busy subscriber will likely scan past "[Organization Name] Spring Newsletter." But "How to Feel Your Best This Spring From [Organization Name]" will likely pique their interest.
- **Write an enticing snippet:** This is the first line of text after the subject line. Leaving it blank could result in an error message. Instead, use this small window of opportunity to share an interesting fact, summarize your email or highlight a new offering. It's just one line, so be concise.
- **Use mobile-friendly design:** Users are often opening your email on their phone, so keep things tight and clean. Succinct content and smart use of headers make for easy reading. And don't go overboard with images. When they don't display correctly, images become big white gaps that detract from your content.

## TIP 3: Welcome and Nurture New Subscribers

After users sign up for your newsletter, a little extra effort helps build meaningful relationships. If you play your cards right, these baby steps ultimately land more people in your clinics.

People appreciate welcome emails, and chances are in your favor that they'll open them. Welcome emails should be short, sweet and easy to read. Sending more than one is an ideal way to nurture new users.

These emails should:

- Thank users for signing up and excite them for what's to come
- Introduce users to your newsletters, describing email frequency and topics covered
- Emphasize the value of what you are offering, especially if some content is available exclusively through these emails

What should the email not include? A call to action. You're trying to build the relationship. Asking users to commit to your brand at this early stage feels disingenuous and might prompt some to unsubscribe.



### 8 out of 10 people

will open a welcome email, generating 4 times as many opens and 10 times as many clicks as other email types, according to [HubSpot](#).



“Email helped us achieve increased trust and engagement with the brand and supported patient-growth initiatives. But we had to start small.

– THERESE LOCKEMY, DIRECTOR OF DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AT JOHNS HOPKINS MEDICINE

## TIP 4: Develop Emails That Users Can't Wait to Read

Email marketing allows users to know your organization in a different light. There are so many things that make your brand special. Your other marketing assets can't possibly cover all of them.

Your newsletters also provide a way to connect with users about relevant news stories or topics that really hit home, like managing personal healthcare spending. This type of newsletter gold keeps users coming back for more.

Go beyond basic health topics and information with articles about:

- **COVID-19:** It's on everyone's mind, and the virus does not seem to be going away anytime soon. Are there changes in protocols patients need to know about? Are there myths that your clinicians can help dispel? What information can you provide to help people feel safe when coming to your clinics?
- **Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI):** Your program's DEI efforts can be a boon to the patient experience. Inform users about steps you're taking to make staff, patients and the community feel welcome in your facilities.
- **Impact on the field:** Talk about research activities or clinician leadership in national professional organizations. Users may be more likely to seek care from your organization when they learn it's home to doctors with a national presence.
- **Health reform topics like value-based care:** Write these articles in a way that emphasizes patient benefits. For example, with the popularity of high-deductible plans, users have a growing appreciation for organizations that make the most of their out-of-pocket expenditures.



When COVID-19 vaccinations became available, UCLA Health used email marketing automation to let users know they were eligible. The approach was well received and had a substantive impact.

“ We sent invitations on a rolling basis to specific patient populations, inviting the highest risk and eligible patients first. Our unique open rate for this campaign was 60%. Immediately after deploying the emails, we saw an uptick in appointment scheduling and inbound communications.

-ANNE MACHALINSKI, SENIOR MANAGER OF MARKETING OPERATIONS AT UCLA HEALTH

## TIP 5: Feed the Content Beast

Once you've enticed users with your exceptional content and easy-to-read format, they'll expect regular emails from you. It can be challenging to keep developing fresh content — especially if you're managing newsletters on multiple topics. But you don't need to reinvent the wheel.

How to feed the content beast:

- **Get personal:** Introduce the people behind the services you offer. Clinician and staff interviews are easy to pull together and make for compelling content. This information may already exist in clinician profiles, and all you need to do is summarize.
- **Repurpose existing blog and web content:** UCLA Health has perfected this process. "We partner with our content editor to determine which pieces to repackage for email. We then write a headline, adjust copy and add a call to action. The information goes into our template, and we resize images. Then we're ready to send," says Anne Machalinski, Senior Manager of Marketing at UCLA Health.
- **Riff off newsletter articles that performed well:** Compile a "Top 10" list at the end of the year highlighting popular articles. And write articles with follow-ups. For example, an article about the benefits of sleep could be followed up with a patient success story from your sleep medicine program.
- **Let national health awareness activities guide the way:** February is American Heart Month. March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. Repurposing existing content on these topics can help your organization raise awareness.

## TIP 6: Use your CRM Platform to the Fullest

CRM platforms have tools that enhance both the user and operator experience. You can also tap into some enhanced features with a little technical assistance. As you gain experience with email marketing, these features make it easier to attempt more ambitious goals.

How to use your CRM platform to the fullest:

- **Ensure it's clear who the email is from:** Messages from "DoNotReply@[Organization Name]" are likely to end up in spam folders. Modify the sender name to clearly state your organization name and the newsletter topic.
- **Customize templates:** Keep design on brand by using your specific colors and other design attributes. You can also create custom content blocks to emphasize key points or calls to action. Customizations also help simplify design by removing blocks or columns you don't use.
- **Cleanse data and data capture:** Review subscriber lists and remove duplicate entries. And get rid of nonfunctioning email addresses. If there are consistent data gaps, like a missing business name, double-check your subscriber sign-up forms to make sure they're capturing it.



As many as  
**4 in 10 people**  
look at the sender name  
when determining whether  
to click on an email,  
according to an [email marketing study](#).



“ Breaking the mold of off-the-shelf templates helps you create emails that are on-brand and present content in the best light. It gives a look and feel that conveys authority.

-HENRY EBARB, CEO AND COFOUNDER OF EIGHTFOLD

**TIP 7:**

## Define and Refine Your Efforts Through Analytics

Some newsletters will be more successful than others. Analytics provide valuable insights into what's resonating with audiences and where there's room for improvement. This information is available in real time, so check early and often — and be responsive to what the data shows you.

Define and refine your efforts by monitoring key analytics. These include:

- **Open rate** shows how many users open the email by clicking on it. The [healthcare industry open rate average](#) is 22%. This metric is a good indicator of whether your subject lines and snippets are compelling.
- **Click rate** is the frequency with which users click on links in your emails. It tells you how engaging your content is. When users are having a good experience, clicking around comes naturally.
- **Bounce rate** includes emails that don't get delivered because the address does not exist, or server issues prevent delivery. Remove these email addresses from your lists so that they don't skew your metrics.
- **Unsubscribe rate** is the number of people who unsubscribe after receiving a newsletter. People who unsubscribe aren't likely to give your newsletters a second chance, which is why outstanding content and a personalized experience are essential.



If you are not managing the campaigns and understanding the behaviors and overall data, it can affect your relationship with your audience and your company's reputation. Don't set and forget.

-JENNIFER COFFMAN, EMAIL MARKETING MANAGER AT CLEVELAND CLINIC

Now it's time to put it all together. Take these tips and examples and help your organization soar to email marketing success in 2022.

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