

Issue Eighty One

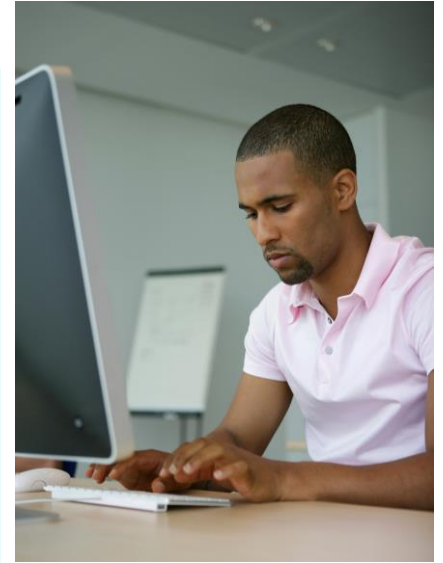
LAUNCHPAD

Winning email campaigns

Using email campaigns as a form of marketing can be hugely effective. They help you maintain an element of rapport, simply by touching base regularly with your current clients. And it's a great touch point to open a dialogue with prospects.

Reporting and statistical data from an email marketing platform can also provide an insight into your contacts, by seeing who opened the email and who clicked on different subject lines or links. It's great feedback on what people find interesting.

But before you go sending out emails willy-nilly, there are some crucial elements to take into consideration when contacting clients via email. Here are just some of the basic pointers. You can also go as far as thinking about the day of the week and time of day you send the email, to generate more readership. Do your research, have someone on your team who works on this and, over time, you'll be surprised by the results.



Get approval

These days there are strict rules surrounding invasion of privacy and, in this instance, spam. Before you send an email to a customer or prospect, you need to have their approval for you to contact them. When filling out client forms or retaining any sort of information, use this as an opportunity to ask if they'd like to receive promotional information or emails relating to your products or services. Another thing to remember is the unsubscribe button. This is almost as important as the request for approval and needs to be evident in all your client communications. Do your research about what needs to be included, and add these to your email templates.

Quality Content

You know when you receive uninteresting snail mail in the post at home? Before you even look at it, it's crunched into a ball and thrown in the bin. Well, unless your emails have substance, the same thing is going to happen: instant deletion. If you don't have anything good to say, don't say it at all. If you find your emails are lacking in quality content, send them out less frequently so that you have some interesting information when you do send something out. Of course, if you have a special promotion or some exciting news, you can deviate from the plan and send this out as a special bulletin.

Get Personal

Thanks to technology, we can now use real names in bulk email marketing campaigns, rather than just a 'hi there'. Regardless of the software program you're using, it should have the capability to perform this task. What you'll need to do first is ensure your database captures information correctly, so that when your email is sent out, Mary isn't receiving Robert's letter.

Don't bombard

No one likes to be hounded. If you bombard your clients with constant emails, they'll very quickly unsubscribe. How much you have to tell people will drive how regularly you send emails. But consider also how many other businesses may also be emailing your clients and the sense of pressure or outright annoyance this creates. For your own email campaigns, once a week or fortnight is generally best and perhaps even as infrequently as once a month.



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INDEX

Winning email campaigns	1
Productivity boosters!	2
Creative office space	2
Simple Health Tips	2
Grab their attention! Tips for crafting email subject lines	3
FYI... Coworking	3
Great team: great business	4
Safeguard your Wi-Fi	4

Productivity boosters!

Creative office space

Where we choose to work from ends up being the one spot we spend most of our time. So why not make it comfortable and enjoyable?

It's no news that being inspired is motivating, and that this in turn boosts productivity. A creative working environment caters to individuals, rather than the larger corporate. As a business owner, it's a good idea to let an employee's inner creative shine, but it's also important to set this example yourself.

This isn't the time to pretend you're Google. Don't go and buy everyone a pair of roller skates or install a rooftop bar (though there's no need to cross it off your wish list just yet if the idea appeals to you). Think laterally about what would work for your business (and your budget). Here are some ideas for promoting a vibrant environment to enhance your team's productivity and your business' success.

First of all, it's important to have an element of order. Chaos is generally not the likely inspirer of productivity, nor motivation. Ensure you have tidiness to a degree and organisation most of the time. Declutter your work station, so you don't waste precious time looking for stuff or procrastinating.

Many offices are open plan these days or are in a co-sharing environment. Be aware of your surrounds and other people's zen when arranging your workspace. Have headphones at the ready, should you choose to listen to music, or simply use this as a signal to colleagues that you need some time out or that you're in lock down. Don't go crazy hanging obtrusive objects from the ceiling or bringing in anything too bright or noisy unless you have the luxury of four solid walls and reasonable sound insulation.

Think about what inspires you. Do you like to go fishing? Do you enjoy art? Maybe you have a favourite artist? Are there particular family photos that bring back fond memories? Surround yourself with images you love to create an element of inspiration. This can also be a good talking point with peers and can help them get to know you better.

These small efforts from yourself can potentially have a huge impact on employee attitudes and team morale as you encourage your team to follow suit. If you're not sure where to start, organise a team meeting and discuss it together. Collaborate on some ideas to inject some creative spark into the environment – you may be impressed with how much of a difference it makes.



Simple Health Tips

It's true in life that when we feel better, we perform better too. Of course, this extends to our workplace environment. If you want to be able to give the best to your business and reap the best results in return, you need to feel tip top.

This isn't about a complete overhaul, crash diets or boot camp. It's simply about some minor lifestyle changes both in and out of the office that can have a positive effect on you and your business. It may also filter through to your employees.

Get up!

First of all you need to be aware of your physical well-being. As humans, we are not designed to sit for long periods of time. When we do, it badly undermines our posture, our energy and in turn our productivity. Get off your backside as much as you can. Take walking phone calls, get out of the office for meetings and don't limit it to cafes where you're likely to sit back down, or even worse, gorge on muffins. Think about walking through the local park or along the street when discussing issues with clients or colleagues. Organise to exercise during lunch hours or even encourage your colleagues to join you. Most importantly, stand up regularly and stretch. Our muscles compact after long periods of sitting, so it's important to give them a breath of fresh air and a burst of energy.

Start right

Remember to fuel the machine with the right foods and start the day right. It's not just an old wives' tale that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, so don't skip it and make it healthy. If you're stumped, look online – there are truckloads of websites and blogs with simple, easy to follow ideas for healthy meals. In the office, take time away from your desk and drink plenty of water.

Stay right

Invite a nutritionist to come and speak to your team, to provide tips on eating right. Plan ahead for meals by making lunch the night before, so that you're less likely to crumble under the pressure of cravings. Get rid of vending machines in the office because the bottom line is that they're not doing you any favours. Make casual Friday a shared lunch day based around salads in summer and soups in winter.

Inspire and motivate your team by what you're doing. You could leverage this into team building activities or just fun ways to let off steam, burn off workday stress and boost the productivity of your business.

Grab their attention! Tips for crafting email subject lines

In the fast paced world we live in, it's easy to overlook or ignore the constant stream of emails entering our inbox. Clicking to delete is a common management strategy. So, what can you do to encourage someone to open your email and read it? A great subject line is where you start. A catchy and attention grabbing subject line is more likely to entice your readers to stop what they're doing and take the time to engage with your communication. Here are some quick tips when constructing the perfect subject lines.

Sweetness and light

No one wants to read the whole email in the subject line. It needs to be short, simple and straight to the point. According to a study done by the email marketing brand MailChimp, the subject line should be no more than 50 characters in length. Sometimes subject lines of just one word can be the most effective and enticing.

Make it urgent

Creating a sense of urgency with call lines like 'One Day Only' and 'Limited Edition,' can grab a reader's attention and pull them in hook, line, and sinker.

Break the numbers rule

We've all been told that we write the word for a number, instead of using the number, but in this instance, it's more enticing and attractive to readers to see a 5, rather than a five. For example, 'The top 5 things to get Dad for Father's Day'. This is simply more visually appealing for your readers.

Ask a question

Asking a question in the subject line instantly starts the reader thinking about an answer, and it spurs curiosity to read further into your email. In a sense, it's a form of click bait.

Personalise it

If you've stored away client information, it's likely you'll have birth dates or information on the time they first became a client. Send happy birthday or anniversary emails on these dates in a celebratory tone, letting them know you haven't forgotten about them.

Take the time to consider subject lines as they are almost as important as the email itself. Without a good one, your carefully crafted text may end up as an instant delete.

'Early to bed, early to rise, work like hell and advertise.'

Ted Turner, Entrepreneur and Businessman

FYI... Coworking

Startups and home-based businesses often reach an awkward in-between phase: you need to keep your costs down and a small-scale approach to office space does this for you. Your business might be growing but you don't yet want to commit to taking on additional employees or signing a lease for commercial floor space. But every so often you need something more than your current setup.

Coworking might give you this. It's a phenomenon which has been popping up internationally over the last few years. Essentially, it's on-demand shared office space. More often than not these days, it's a central hub that rents space.

Flexibility is a key selling point. You might want to hot desk for several hours while you're between flights or need office space for one or more people while you work on a special project. You could need a meeting room for a crucial planning session with new clients or one you rent for a morning a week for your CBD meetings. You might just want to be able to connect your laptop to internet and a printer. Or you might want a space with hardwired internet access and VoIP telephones. Plans range from casual hot desk space to permanent workspace on a part- or full-time basis.

Coworking can also appeal to independent contractors, people on the road or anyone who works in relative isolation. It can be a cost-effective way to meet changing business needs.



ENGINE ROOM

Great team: great business

That age old saying, 'family first', can also be true in the workplace. Your employees, your team, are much like a family unit, and without them you don't really have a business.

It may sound clichéd, but employees are much like the cogs of a wheel, each performing individual tasks to make sure everything runs smoothly. It's true, you need clients to make money, but a great team is part of your business' foundations and to have one you need to lay a little ground work first.

Here are some ways to ensure you are looking out for your team players.

Treat them as individuals

One of the biggest mistakes managers make is forgetting that employees are humans and adults. People have lives and often things come up. Obviously, you don't want to be a pushover or taken for granted, but occasionally life is tricky and it pays to have an element of empathy when a team member comes to you with an issue.

Be communicative, ask questions and be as understanding as possible.

Engage

Go further than email or message communication and make time for face to face interaction. Whether it's a regular weekly meeting, communal morning tea or Friday afternoon drinks, it's important to have that interaction.

Interact on a personal level - learn about family, favourite hobbies, television programs or sports teams. By doing this, you will not only build trust, but you'll also build respect.

Incorporate these few simple things into your daily interaction with employees. It will help you to build a longstanding and loyal staff base. It will also help build your reputation as an employer of choice to draw in higher calibre candidates for positions in the future.

It's possible someone could scan, identify and breach your Wi-Fi network. Have a chat with your IT provider about what protocols might best protect you when taking care of business on the road.

Be my guest (but only a bit)

Guest networks can be useful. You can use them to allow visitors and customers complimentary network access but guest networks don't allow outsiders to look at your files or other devices on your network. If you don't want visitors to have this access, turn it off in your settings. If you do want to allow this kind of access, set a password for it, change it often and only make it available to visitors on a one by one basis.

Your specialist provider will be able to advise you on appropriate measures to take and issues to look for. For instance, you might consider a network monitoring app so that you can scan for uninvited guests. Keep software and hardware up to date and make sure this includes cyber-security.

An Important Message

While every effort has been made to provide valuable, useful information in this publication, this firm and any related suppliers or associated companies accept no responsibility or any form of liability from reliance upon or use of its contents. Any suggestions should be considered carefully within your own circumstances, as they are intended as general information only.



Safeguard your Wi-Fi

Safeguarding your network is a business priority. But as most of us are neither rocket scientists nor hackers, it's hard to keep up with the constant turnover of computer security innovations. Most of us rely on our local IT gurus to keep our precious business information secure. However, it's still important to stay aware of potential risk areas and take some simple precautions to minimise the risk.

Your Wi-Fi network is potentially one of these risk areas. Since its advent, more and more of us can take care of business on the move. Smart devices have only accelerated this. What can you do to make sure your Wi-Fi doesn't provide hackers with a backdoor into your business network?

P455W0rd

Always. Always. Always protect your Wi-Fi network with a password. And not 1234567 or lower case 'password' or your baby's birthday or any of the data readily available from your Facebook account. Any of these are easy ways in to your router setup and could open you up to the possibility that a random someone can view or change your security keys.

No passing trade

Are you doing business at a coffee shop in the mall? The boarding lounge at the airport? Your hotel? Be aware that your network may be vulnerable in situations like these.