myweeklymarketing.

Janice Hostager: 0:04

I'm Janice Hostager. After three decades in the marketing business and many years of being an entrepreneur, I've learned a thing or two about marketing. Join me as we talk about marketing, small business and life in between.

Janice Hostager: 0:16

Welcome to My Weekly Marketing. In 2025, it's predicted that more than 376 billion emails will be sent and received every day. That's insane, right? So you might be wondering if it's even worth the effort to use email as a form of marketing. How can you stand out in a crowded inbox? Even though the number keeps going up, email still has the highest ROI of any marketing platform. For every dollar spent on email, an average you can expect to see is $36 in return. That's a 3,600% ROI. So, although it seems like email is either dead or coming to the end of its line, it's very much alive and well. So today I want to talk about why your emails may not be working or converting.

Janice Hostager: 1:16

Conversion is a marketing term and it's sort of like scoring a goal in a soccer game. It's when someone who sees your marketing like an ad or an email as we're talking about today and not only pays attention to it, but also takes the action you want them to take. For example, if you send an email asking people to click a link to read an article or to buy something, and they actually click that link, that's a conversion. It's all about turning interest into action and getting the results from your marketing. Okay, so today we're going to cover common conversion roadblocks with your email marketing, crafting effective email content, overcoming common objections and analyzing audience engagement. So first up, let's understand some common conversion roadblocks or some common reasons why your email marketing just doesn't seem to be working.

Janice Hostager: 2:09

So let's start with one of the most critical elements your subject lines and your preview text. These are like the headlines of your email. They need to grab attention and entice your audience to open that email. Without a compelling hook, your email could easily get lost in their crowded inbox. The subject line is the most important part of your email because if it's not compelling, your email won't get read and all the hard work you put into writing that email and putting it all together will just end up in the trash folder and nobody wants that, right? So think of your subject line as your first impression. It needs to be clear, concise and intriguing. This is the part people often miss. Ask yourself does

it promote value or create curiosity? Does it address a pain point or offer a solution? For example, let's say you have a pet shop. Rather than saying new pet food in your subject line, say maybe something like the one thing your dog can't live without.

Janice Hostager: 3:11

Teasing adds to intrigue and, although it's not appropriate in all cases, it does get more opens. No doubt about it. I put a lot of time into my subject lines, and I'll often split test them, meaning a portion of my audience, like 10 to 20%, will get one subject line and another 10 to 20% will get another subject line. Once a winner is determined, the winning email gets sent to the rest of my list. Writing split tests on emails can help increase email return on investment by up to 82%. But if you're just starting to grow your list, I would wait till you have about a thousand people on it, so that you have a statistically significant number of people that you're sending it out to. Otherwise, the results can be a little bit skewed.

Janice Hostager: 3:55

Next, pay attention to your own email habits. What do you click on and what do you not click on? Do you open emails in your inbox that have a subject line that says something like sale ends today, or do you prefer the ones that lead with value, such as three reasons why you're not losing weight? Also, emojis can increase open rates, sometimes significantly, depending on your industry. I mean, if I have emojis in an email from my bank, I'd probably be a little suspicious, but from my hair salon? Sure thing. Emojis make your email stand out in a sea of black and white. And don't forget about the preview text. It's often overlooked. The preview text is a snippet of text that appears next to your subject line in the inbox. Use it wisely to provide a teaser that complements your subject line and encourages people to open.

Janice Hostager: 4:52

Okay, issue number two poor email design and layout. Your email needs to be visually appealing and easy to navigate. On average, most people send about 11 seconds or so reading an email, which literally gives you only seconds to make an impact. Fortunately, this is pretty easy. Most email service providers, like Mailchimp or what I use, which is Kit, will give you templates to use or they'll allow you to create your own template using HTML if you're handy in that way. A clean and professional design not only improves readability, but also reflects your brand and its credibility. Consider using white space effectively, using a clear hierarchy of information, and ensure that your call to action really stands out. Too much text gets lost in the process, so provide clear sections with different backgrounds or boxes within the layout if you have a lot of text on your email.

And don't forget mobile responsiveness. These days, most people check their emails on their phone, so your design must look great and function well on the big screen, but also on the small screen and with people that have chunky fingers, so something to think about when you're putting them together.

Janice Hostager: 6:02

Issue number three is irrelevant content. Your subscribers have different needs and interests, so I recommend segmenting your list and personalizing your content to cater to those needs and differences. Remember our pet shop example. No amount of emails about dog food that are sent to guinea pig owners will convert like zero percent. Plus, they may get frustrated and just unsubscribe. Segmenting them based on their interest or previous purchases, their demographics, their industry or other relevant data will help you get the results you're looking for, and it's easy to set up segmenting in most email programs. Segmenting can increase conversion rate as much as 760%. Wild, right? By segmenting your list, you can personalize the content, which creates a greater connection that goes beyond a generic email blast. Personalization, including using their name, shows your audience that you understand them as individuals, which can significantly increase engagement and loyalty.

Janice Hostager: 7:06

Also, think about the timing of your emails. Sending a promotional email too late or too early can impact your conversion rates too. Once you have an understanding of who your ideal customer is. That'll help you determine when to send your emails. For example, if you're in the B2B space, then sending them during the workday, usually in the morning or at noon, would work better. For the B2C space. You might try to schedule them on weekends or evenings. Test and see what works best for you.

Janice Hostager: 7:36

Issue number four overly promotional or salesy language. Let's talk about the tone and language of your emails. Being too pushy or salesy can really turn off an audience. I know you've been on the receiving end of these because I have too. Your email should focus on providing value and building relationships rather than just pushing your products or services. Let me say that again for the people in the back. Your email should not be all about sales. You need to address their needs in a helpful and genuine way and provide value consistently. When your ideal customer knows there's going to be something good in the email, they're going to open it, even if you're selling alongside it. I have a gentle sales pitch in the bottom of every single one of my weekly emails, but I also give lots of value. I give away freebies, lots of information and things that my ideal

customer will love. I also include a story which gives them a glimpse into my personal brand and my personal life. So striking a balance between promoting your offerings and providing value will educate and entertain your subscribers and keep them on your list. Educate and entertain your subscribers and keep them on your list.

Janice Hostager: 8:46

Next, here's some strategies for creating compelling email content. The number one thing I do is write my emails with a picture of my ideal customer in my head. I talk to this customer as if I'm having a conversation with my good friend, who is the customer. My brand is less formal, so how you write your email should be aligned with your ideal customer and how they like to be talked to. For me, this works really well. If you're not clear on who your ideal customer is exactly and not really sure how to talk to them, then download my free ideal customer profile and I'll put the link to that in the show notes.

Janice Hostager: 9:22

Understanding your audience's preference and behaviors is the backbone of all successful marketing. It's not just about sending out emails. It's about who you're sending them to and what they want to hear and what they want to learn from you. So why is this important? Well, imagine that you're at a party and you see a friend there with her daughter. Her daughter's 10 years old. You're going to talk very differently to your friend than you would to the fourth grader. You would use different examples, different wording, different illustrations. It's the same with marketing. When you understand your audience, you can tailor your message to resonate with them so that you can connect with them.

Janice Hostager: 10:00

But sometimes I get stumped when putting emails together and I don't know where to start. One of my majors in college was art and one of the things my design professor always said was nobody creates in a vacuum. So I kind of take in that with me and use it when I'm creating anything. So I have a folder on my computer called email swipe file. When I get an email that has a great subject line or is just written in a really compelling way, I just save it, I just tuck it away. It can be a source of inspiration. Now, please don't steal anyone's email text. That's not what I'm saying at all.

Janice Hostager: 10:35

But you can definitely get an idea, or get a nudge to get an idea rolling, by looking at other people's work, especially if it's well done. You can also use ChatGPT, which I use about as often as my swipe file, for inspiration. Sometimes, especially when I'm tired or

under pressure to get something written. I have, like this mental block, and so I'll have to go to ChatGPT to write a first draft. That's enough to move me along the creative highway and just kind of generate some ideas of my own and some examples of my own, so that I'm not taking straight up from Chat GPT either, because, frankly, that content isn't always so good, but it's enough to kind of give me ideas and get me unstuck. I use actually both of these sources for writing engaging subject lines, for crafting clear and concise body copy to create stories and emotional triggers and incorporating the calls to action that drive clicks.

Janice Hostager: 11:37

So there are a couple other issues that people ask me about, and the first one is email delivery issues. Emails that end up in spam folders or are not reaching their intended recipients. They're due to deliverability issues and can hamper the effectiveness of any email campaign that you send out. So there are a lot of factors that go into deliverability, even on the side of the recipient. But here are a few tips for that. Number one maintain a healthy email list. So what that means is regularly clean out your email list by removing inactive or invalid email addresses. This can be done with an automation, so that people who have not opened your emails in, say, a month or two, can be sent a re-engagement email to find out if they still want to be on your list. After all, you don't want somebody on your list if they're not going to buy from you. So if they're not the right person, it's better to fish or cut bait.

Janice Hostager: 12:35

So the other thing you can do is to use a double opt-in to make sure that the subscribers consent to receiving your emails. A double opt-in is when people sign up for a freebie that you may offer using a form and they need to click a link in their email before they get the freebie. It helps weed out spammers and bots, so it's a good thing to do. The second thing to do is use a reputable email service provider. So choose an email service provider with a really good reputation for email deliverability and make sure that they provide tools for managing and monitoring your metrics so that you know when who's opening it and when it's being sent, and all those the good analytics that you need to keep track of and then also authenticate your emails. So this gets a little techie, but you want to implement your SPF, DKIM and DMARC authentication protocols to verify your email sender identity. That will help you increase trust with the email service providers that you're sending to.

Janice Hostager: 13:41

I did a whole podcast about this episode 40, and this started in last year, in 2024. The big email companies like Google and Yahoo enacted some additional setup to try and curb spam. It's actually pretty technical, so I recommend that you go back and listen to that episode with my friend, Scott Hartley, or make sure your email service provider can walk you through the process. It involves adding data to your website server, so I'm not going to even attempt to walk you through that on a podcast. Next, you want to make sure you optimize your email content so you make sure that none of the email you're sending out is at all spammy, not a ton of pictures or images or misleading subject lines that could trigger spam filters. Sometimes even the text that you write can trigger a spam filter, and a lot of email service providers have spam checks right on their platform.

Janice Hostager: 14:36

And you want to engage with your subscribers on a regular basis. So if you maintain consistent communication with your subscribers to keep them engaged, that they will know to expect your emails. If you only email them intermittently and kind of infrequently, they may forget who you are and flag you as spam. I recommend sending an email one time a week at minimum, so that you stay top of mind with your customer and, as I said earlier, give them lots of value in the emails.

Janice Hostager: 15:08

The last thing I want to talk about is some technical challenges, because I get asked these a lot too. Dealing with email marketing platforms, managing subscriber lists and navigating the technical aspects like email design and automation tools can be overwhelming sometimes. That's why I use something like an email service provider like Kit, who makes it all really easy, so you don't really have to go into the depth of the email service and look at the code and all that stuff. They make it really easy drag and drop and I recommend that you check them a. So the last thing you want to do and I want engagement. One powerful tool in your marketing arsenal is your analytics. By tracking these metrics like open rates, click-through rates and conversion, you gain some really valuable insight into what's working and what can maybe improve down the road.

Janice Hostager: 16:02

These numbers tell a story about your audience engagement with your content, whether or not they're intrigued enough to open your emails and click through to your website or even make a purchase. Now, these numbers vary widely from industry and across audiences, and all that, but generally an average open rate across all industries is around 15 to 25 percent. Like I said, that can also vary. Generally, a good open rate is

considered to be above 20 percent. Higher open rates indicate that your subject lines are strong and your emails are resonating with your audience.

Janice Hostager: 16:41

Your click-through rate, also called your CTR, is always lower. Your click-through rate is when someone clicks on your email to go to your website or whatever you're linking to. The average click-through rate for emails is around 2-3%. Again, this can vary a lot based on your industry and your audience. A good click-through rate is typically above 3%. A higher click-through rate indicates that your email content is engaging and good and you have a compelling call to action.

Janice Hostager: 17:11

The numbers always tell a story about where the problem is. If you have a high open rate but a low click-through rate, look at your call to action and see how engaging your email is. If you have a low open rate, look at your subject lines and make sure your emails are well segmented and appealing to your audience. So there's a lot to think about when putting your email marketing together. Remember to spend time and focus on the subject line, the message, the timing to create emails that are compelling and get engagement. Thanks so much for joining me today. For more information about anything we talked about on our show today, visit myweeklymarketingcom. Forward slash 102. And if you have any questions for me, please feel free to go to Instagram and DM me at Janice Hostager Marketing. See you next time. Bye for now.